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INSIDE

WORLD 8  
EU LEADERS OPEN  
EMERGENCY SUMMIT ON  
DEFENCE AND UKRAINE AID



## INDIA BREACHED IN UK



External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar during a conversation with Director and CEO of Bronwen Maddox at Chatham House, in England PTI

## Rana seeks stay of extradition to India

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ NEW YORK

Mumbai terror attack accused Tahawwur Rana has moved an "emergency application" with the US Supreme Court against his extradition to India, claiming that he will be tortured there since he is a Muslim of Pakistani origin. Rana, 64, a Canadian national of Pakistani origin, is currently lodged at a metropolitan detention centre in Los Angeles. He is known to be associated with Pakistani-American terrorist David Coleman Headley, one of the main conspirators of the 26/11 attacks. Rana has filed an "Emergency Application For Stay" with the Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States and Circuit Justice for the Ninth Circuit. President Donald Trump last month announced that his administration approved the extradition of "very evil" Rana, wanted by Indian probe agencies for his role in the 26/11 attacks, "to face justice in India". This followed the rejection of his review petition by the Supreme Court in January. Now, Rana is seeking a stay of his extradition and surrender to India pending litigation (including exhaustion of all appeals) on the merits of a petition he filed in February. In that petition, Rana argued that his extradition to India violates United States law and the United Nations Convention Against Torture "because there are substantial

grounds for believing that, if extradited to India, petitioner will be in danger of being subjected to torture." "The likelihood of torture in this case is even higher than as petitioner faces acute risk as a Muslim of Pakistani origin charged in the Mumbai attacks," the application said. The application also said that his "severe medical conditions" render extradition to Indian detention facilities, a "de facto" death sentence. It cited medical records from July 2024 showing that he has multiple "acute and life-threatening diagnoses," including multiple documented heart attacks, Parkinson's disease with cognitive decline, a mass suggestive of bladder cancer, stage 3 chronic kidney disease, and a history of chronic asthma, and multiple COVID-19 infections. "Accordingly, petitioner certainly has raised a credible, if not compelling, factual case that there are indeed substantial grounds for believing he would be in danger of torture if surrendered to Indian authorities." "Further, because of his Muslim religion, his Pakistani origin, his status as a former member of the Pakistani Army, the relation of the putative charges to the 2008 Mumbai attacks, and his chronic health conditions he is even more likely to be tortured than otherwise would be the case, and that torture is very likely to kill him in short order."



## Trump issues last warning to Hamas

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ WASHINGTON

President Donald Trump on Wednesday issued what he called a "last warning" to Hamas to release all remaining hostages held in Gaza, directing a sharply worded message after the White House confirmed that he had recently dispatched an envoy for unprecedented direct talks with the militant group. Trump, in a statement on his Truth Social platform soon after meeting at the White House with eight former hostages, added that he was "sending Israel everything it needs to finish the job." "Release all of the Hostages now, not later, and immediately return all of the dead bodies of the people you murdered, or it is OVER for you," Trump said. "Only sick and twisted people keep bodies, and you are sick and twisted!" The pointed language from Trump came after the White House said Wednesday that U.S. Officials have engaged in "ongoing talks and discussions" with Hamas officials, stepping away from a long-held U.S. Policy of not directly engaging in the militant group.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

## Babbar Khalsa terrorist arrested

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ LUCKNOW

In a major counterterrorism operation, the Uttar Pradesh Special Task Force (STF) and Punjab Police have arrested a suspected terrorist linked to Babbar Khalsa International (BKI) and Pakistan's intelligence agency, the ISI. The suspect, identified as Lazar Masih, a resident of Kurliyan village in Ramdas area of Amritsar, Punjab, was nabbed around 3.20 a.m in Uttar Pradesh's Kaushambi district. Addressing a press conference in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh Director General of Police (DGP) Prashant Kumar said Masih had planned a major terrorist attack during the

Maha Kumbh in Prayagraj. The Maha Kumbh was held at Prayagraj from January 13 to February 26. "However, due to intensive security checks at the religious gathering, he failed to execute his plan," he said and added: "The arrest of the terrorist also verifies smuggling of arms and drugs from Pakistan into India". He added the U.P. STF succeeded in recovering some explosives material and illegal arms from the terrorist. Among the seizures made are three active hand grenades, two active detonators, one foreign-made pistol and 13 cartridges of foreign make, the officer said. Besides, a white coloured explosive powder, an Aadhaar card

with a Ghaziabad address, one mobile phone without SIM card was also seized from his possession, he said. According to security officials, Masih was actively working for Swaran Singh, also known as Jeevan Fauji, the head of BKI's Germany-based module. He was reportedly in direct contact with ISI handlers based in Pakistan. Investigators revealed that Masih had escaped from judicial custody in Punjab on September 24, 2024, and had been evading arrest since then. His capture is being considered a significant breakthrough in preventing potential terrorist activities in India.

## Motor mouth cleric derides Shami



BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ LUCKNOW

All India Muslim Jamaat president Maulana Shahabuddin Razvi Bareilly has criticised Indian cricketer Mohammed Shami for not fasting during Ramadan. The cleric stated that fasting is an obligatory duty in Islam, and anyone who deliberately avoids it is committing a sin. Maulana Razvi claimed that by choosing not to fast, Shami had committed a grave wrongdoing in the eyes of Islamic law. "Islam mandates fasting as one of its fundamental obligations. If a healthy person does not observe Roza, they are guilty in religious terms. Mohammed Shami was seen drinking water during a Champions Trophy match, which means he was not

fasting. This is a serious offense in Islam," he said. The cleric added that since Shami was playing a match, it indicated that he was physically fit. "If he was capable of playing, he was also capable of fasting. By drinking water in public, he has sent the wrong message to the community. He will have to answer to God for this," Maulana Razvi asserted. The cleric's remarks have sparked mixed reactions. While some religious figures expressed their disappointment, others defended the cricketer, arguing that professional athletes often have different requirements due to the physical demands of their sport. Maulana Zaheer Khan calls the controversy uncalled for. "Islam is a progressive religion.

It has some prohibitions for persons keeping Roza. It is up to a person to keep Roza on that day or not. In case of Shami, he is on national duty and it is of paramount importance that his body remains hydrated during each game. So, drinking water or not keeping roza on match days is permissible," he said. Shami's coach, Mohammed Badruddin, dismissed the criticism, asserting that the bowler was not in the wrong. "Nothing is above the nation. Shami is playing for his country, and that should be the priority," he stated. Senior BJP leader and MLC Vijay Bahadur Pathak defended Shami and said that sports and religion should not be intertwined. "Shami is a dedicated athlete who has brought glory to India on multiple occasions. If he felt fasting might affect his performance, it must have been a difficult decision for him. He is a proud Indian, and his commitment to the game should not be questioned," Pathak said. Shami played a crucial role in India's four-wicket victory over Australia, helping the team secure a spot in the Champions Trophy final. The Indian bowling attack, led by Shami, restricted Australia to 264 runs, with the pacer claiming three wickets for 48 runs in his 10-over spell. This is not the first controversy to emerge during the tournament.

## RSS ignites Marathi-Hindi fire in Mumbai

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Hours after he was pilloried by political leaders of all hues for his statement that "those coming to Mumbai from outside need not necessarily learn Marathi," a chastened RSS leader Bhaiyyaji Joshi on Thursday did a U-turn and said, The language of Mumbai is Marathi and it is natural to expect living in the metropolis "to learn, understand and read Marathi". On a day when Shiv Sena (UBT) Uddhav Thackeray demanded that Bhaiyyaji Joshi be booked for sedition for his statement, Maharashtra chief minister Devendra Fadnis was forced to intervene in the matter and issue a statement in the state Assembly saying that "Marathi is the language of Mumbai and Maharashtra. It is an integral part of Maharashtra's cultural heritage" and it will be "respected and preserved". Seeking to douse the political fire unleashed by Joshi, Fadnis made a categorical statement in the state Assembly. "Marathi is the language of Mumbai, Maharashtra. The state government and the people living here should adopt it. Marathi language is a part of the culture and identity of the state, and it should be the duty of every citizen to learn it. The Marathi language will be respected and preserved in Maharashtra, and it is an integral part of our cultural heritage." After the chief minister's statement, Joshi issued a clarification on his stand on the importance of Marathi in Mumbai and Maharashtra, seeking to end the raging controversy over the

remarks that he reportedly made at a function held at Ghatkopar in north-east Mumbai on Wednesday night. Speaking at a function held at Ghatkopar, Joshi had said: "Mumbai does not have a single language, Mumbai has many languages. Different areas have different languages. For example, the language of Ghatkopar is Gujarati. Similarly, you will find fewer people speaking Hindi in Girgaon. There, you will find people speaking Marathi...people coming to Mumbai may necessarily have to learn Marathi". Before long, Joshi came in for a severe flak from leaders of different political parties, including the Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena (UBT), Sharad Pawar-headed NCP (SP) and Congress. Demanding that Joshi be booked for treason, Uddhav Thackeray dared the RSS leader to make such remarks in Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala, West Bengal and come back. "Just because the Marathi manoes does not complain that does not mean that you can say anything and get away. Bhaiyyaji Joshi should be booked for treason. How can Bhaiyyaji Joshi make such a statement? This is what I call it sadist mentality. This is a ploy to break Mumbai. Even Prime Minister Narendra Modi had indulged in this kind of divisive tactics during the campaigning for the state Assembly polls when he spoke about 'batenge toh katenge,' the Sena (UBT) chief said. "Marathi is our state language, and such a statement amounts to treason. The statement is treason,"



Shiv Sena (UBT) Rajya Sabha member Sanjay Raut said. "Bhaiyyaji Joshi is trying to divide Mumbai on the issue of language. Kem cho, kem cho seems like this is the only thing that will be heard in Mumbai now," NCP (SP) group leader Jitendra Awhad said. "Mumbai, along with Maharashtra, has Marathi as its primary language. However,

RSS leaders have historically shown a bias against Mumbai's Marathi-speaking populace," Maharashtra Congress general secretary Atul Londhe said. Sena (UBT) leader Aaditya Thackeray also hit out at Joshi saying: "The language of this land is Marathi, just like Tamil is in Tamil Nadu and Kannada is in Karnataka. The ideology of the BJP is to keep disrespecting Maharashtra. Yesterday, Suresh Bhaiyya ji said that the language in Ghatkopar could be Gujarati, but this is absolutely not possible. The language of Mumbai is Marathi. This government even halted the Marathi Bhasha Bhavan in Mumbai because they want to disrespect Maharashtra and the Marathi language," Aaditya said.

## First woman officer tames Jaguar

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In a first, Flying Officer Tanushka Singh has become the first woman pilot permanently assigned to IAF's Jaguar fighter jet squadron. It marks a significant step in gender inclusion in combat roles. The officer will shortly report for duty. While other women have flown the Jaguar during training, Tanushka's permanent induction into the squadron is a first. The Jaguar is a key tactical strike aircraft for the IAF, known for its precision attack capabilities. Hailing from a family having served in the armed forces,



Tanushka initially considered a career in the Indian Army. However, she shifted her focus to the Air Force after learning about the opportunities available to women. She underwent training at the Air Force Academy in Dundigal, Telangana, followed by specialised training on the

Hawk MK 132 aircraft. Born in Uttar Pradesh, she has lived in Mangaluru since 2007. She completed her schooling in Suratkal and later studied in Mangaluru. She also earned a B.Tech in electrical and electronics engineering in 2022. Incidentally, the first batch of three female pilots - Avani Chaturvedi, Bhawana Kanth and Mohana Singh were inducted in Indian Air Force fighter squadron on 2016. Squadron Leader Mohana Singh later made history as the first female fighter pilot in the country to be cleared to fly the indigenous Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas fighter jet last year.

Mohana Singh, along with Avni Chaturvedi and Bhawana Kanth, was part of the trio of female pilots in the Air Force's fighter streams. In the early days, the three pilots flew various aircraft from the Air Force's fighter fleet. Currently, they are flying the regular fleets of Su-30MKi and LCA Tejas Indian Air Force (IAF), the world's fourth-largest air force, currently accounts for around 20 women fighter pilots. The service opened its fighter stream to women, a watershed in India's military history, in 2016. It has opened all frontiers for women and is giving them opportunities on a par with their male counterparts.

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# Modi pays obeisance at goddess Ganga's winter abode at Mukhba

PM emphasises on boosting year round tourism in U'khand

PNS ■ UTTARKASHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi participated in the winter tourism programme after flagging off a trek and bike rally at Harsil, Uttarakhand. He also performed puja at the winter abode of goddess Ganga at Mukhba. Addressing the gathering, he expressed his deep sorrow over the tragic incident in Mana and extended his condolences to the families of those who lost their lives in the accident. He said the people of the nation stand in solidarity during this time of crisis, which has provided immense strength to the affected families.



Ganga has now embraced him as her own. The Prime Minister described this as Ganga's affection and love for her child, which brought him to her maternal home in Mukhba village and had the honour of performing darshan and puja at the shrine. Remarking on his visit to the land of Harshil, recalling his fond memories of the affection shown by the local women, whom he referred to as "Didi-Bhuliyas", Modi highlighted their thoughtful gestures of sending him Harsil's rajma and other

local products. He expressed his gratitude for their warmth, connection and gifts.

The Prime Minister also recalled his visit to Kedarnath, where he had declared that, "this decade would be the decade of Uttarakhand". He remarked that the strength behind those words came from Baba Kedarnath himself and highlighted that, with Baba Kedarnath's blessings, this vision is gradually becoming a reality. Emphasising that new avenues for Uttarakhand's

progress are opening up, fulfilling the aspirations that led to the state's formation, Modi noted that the commitments made for Uttarakhand's development are being realized through continuous achievements and new milestones. He added, "winter tourism is a significant step in this direction, aiding in harnessing Uttarakhand's economic potential" and congratulated the Uttarakhand government for this innovative effort and extended his best wishes for the state's progress.

"Diversifying and making the tourism sector a year-round activity is important and necessary for Uttarakhand", said the Prime Minister, remarking that there should be no "off-season" in Uttarakhand, and tourism should thrive in every season. He mentioned that currently, tourism in the hills is seasonal, with a significant influx of tourists during March, April, May, and June. However, he added that the number of tourists drops drastically afterward, leaving most hotels, resorts, and homestays vacant during winters. He pointed out that this imbalance leads to economic stagnation for a large part of the year in Uttarakhand and also poses challenges to the environment.

# PM Modi pats CM Dhama's back again

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The chemistry between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and chief minister Pushkar Singh Dhama was visible during the visit of PM Modi to Harshil and Mukhba in Uttarakhand district on Thursday. After endearing the local crowd by starting his speech in Garhwali in Harshil, the PM termed Dhama as his younger brother and an energetic chief minister. The PM said that during his past visit to Kedarnath, he had said that the third decade of this century will belong to Uttarakhand. He said that the government led by chief minister Dhama is doing

endeared him to PM Modi due to his approach, energy and vision he has for the State. The successful organisation of 38th National Games and implementation of Uniform Civil Code in Uttarakhand have been praised by PM Modi.

The observers point out that the union government has remained benevolent towards the State in approving development projects, the latest being sanctioning of multi crore ropeway projects for Kedarnath and Hemkund Sahib. It is pertinent to mention here that CM Dhama had first



an appreciable job in this direction. When the CM approached PM Modi after the latter had finished his address, the PM patted his back after a warm shaking of the hands. Similar chemistry was visible between the two leaders during the opening ceremony of the National Games in Dehradun on January 27. The BJP leaders are of the view that CM Dhama has

of all directed the State administration to work on the concept of winter char dhama Yatra. The concept behind this Yatra was to ensure that pilgrims visit the State for having darshans of deities during the winter months as well when the four shrines are closed. During his last visit to New Delhi, the CM invited PM Modi to take part in the winter Yatra which he accepted.

## CANDID NOTES



**Gajendra Singh Negi**

### Winter Yatra

The visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to picturesque Harshil and Mukhba, the winter abode of goddess Ganga in the Uttarakhand district on Thursday will surely give a fillip to the religious, spiritual and adventure tourism during the winter months in the Himalayan State. The past experience of the State shows that the visitor footfall increased to the places such as Kedarnath, Mana and Adi Kailash after the PM, who enjoys very good appeal in the masses visited them. Uttarakhand has so far succeeded in branding winter tourism by inviting the PM and launching a campaign in media and social media platforms. The real challenge, however, lies in managing the travel of tourists and pilgrims during the harsh winter seasons. Infrastructure such as parking places, public toilets and other facilities including the hotels and eateries are needed to be constructed in Mukhba, Kharsali, Joshimath and Ukhimath, the winter abodes of Gangotri, Yamunotri, Badrinath and Kedarnath respectively. Similarly the condition of roads needs to be improved in the above mentioned places and other areas to ensure a safe journey to the visitors during winters.

### BJP's bustle

Beneath the apparent tranquillity on the surface, intense political activity, one-upmanship and even brinkmanship is going on in the State unit of the Bharatiya Janata Party in Uttarakhand. Organisational elections are underway in the party and many senior leaders are said to be contending for the top positions including that of the president of the State unit after the end of the tenure of incumbent Mahendra Bhatt. Speculations are in rife that the chief minister Pushkar Singh Dhama will soon undertake a reshuffle of his cabinet which is causing sleepless nights to a couple of powerful ministers. Four positions in the Dhama cabinet have been vacant for quite some time now and it is believed that a cabinet expansion is also on cards. Many MLAs of the saffron party including seasoned ones and first timers are vying with one another for a berth in the cabinet. Additionally, the exercise to appoint position holders in the State government is also said to be underway for which a large number of party leaders have staked their claims.

### High spirits

The increase in per capita income in Uttarakhand is getting reflected in the revenue earned by the Excise department which is increasing appreciably year after year and is expected to be in excess of Rs 5,000 crore in the year 2025-26. The local liquor aficionados and tourists visiting the State are filling the coffers of the Himalayan State thus contributing to its economy. The data released by the officials of the cash rich Excise department shows that the per capita consumption of the alcohol in the State is Rs 4,217 per year which is more than neighbouring Delhi (Rs 1,842), Uttar Pradesh (Rs 2,269), Himachal Pradesh (Rs 2,988) and Haryana (Rs 3,765). Interestingly this data of the Excise department does not include the volume of the liquor sold in the army run canteens which, thanks to the high percentage of ex-servicemen and serving armed forces personnel, is also quite high.

# President Murmu to lay foundation stone on June 20, Rashtrapati Ashiana to become public park

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The President Droupadi Murmu will lay the foundation stone for an ultra-modern public park at the sprawling 132-acre Rashtrapati Ashiana on Rajpur Road here on June 20 to turn this presidential estate into a public park. This significant initiative aims to enhance public engagement with Rashtrapati Ashiana while promoting green initiatives, health, and cultural activities. A meeting chaired by additional secretary Rajesh Gupta was held on Thursday at Rashtrapati Ashiana with senior officials of the Uttarakhand government to discuss the project's development. Gupta informed that a Detailed Project Report (DPR) is currently being prepared, ensuring that the park is equipped with world-class amenities, innovative designs and sustainable infrastructure. Once completed, the park will be dedicated to the people of Uttarakhand. Highlighting the vision behind this initiative, Gupta stated that it reflects the President's commitment to participatory administration and community-driven development. The park will



serve as a vibrant center for environmental conservation, fitness, and cultural activities, aligning with the aspirations of the people of Uttarakhand. He emphasised the need for concerned departments to ensure timely completion of essential infrastructure, including electricity, water supply, traffic management, parking, communication, security and public order. He urged officials to provide their suggestions for enhancing the park's accessibility and public-friendly design, instructing them to incorporate these inputs into the DPR. The park, located in the heart of Dehradun, will feature numerous attractions, including a multi-activity zone, cycling tracks, world-class sports facilities, a children's play area, walking and jogging

tracks, a forest-nature trail and water features. To ensure the park aligns with public expectations, citizens are invited to share their feedback and suggestions via the official Rashtrapati Bhawan website. The feedback form is available at <https://rb.nic.in/ashiana> until April 6, and can also be accessed through a QR code. Additionally, Gupta reviewed the progress of the 21-acre Rashtrapati Ashiana complex, which will be opened to the public on June 20. Visitors will have the opportunity to explore facilities such as a visitor facilitation center, horse riding, an amphitheater, an art exhibition space, a cafeteria and a souvenir store. He directed officials to ensure all development work is completed within the stipulated deadlines.

# Government planning ropeway from Jankichatti to Yamunotri

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The Uttarakhand government is considering building a ropeway from Jankichatti to Yamunotri temple under the public-private partnership mode. The Tourism minister Satpal Maharaj shared this during his participation in the Harshil-Mukhba programme of Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday.

He stated that Uttarakhand tourism is set to gain momentum following Modi's recent visit to Harsil-Mukhba in Uttarakhand district. He expressed gratitude on behalf of the people of Uttarakhand, highlighting the significance of this visit in promoting year-round tourism in the State. Maharaj stated that following chief minister Pushkar Singh Dhama's request, Modi's visit to Harshil-Mukhba will not only

encourage winter tourism but also contribute to the overall development of tourism throughout the year. He said that this will create employment opportunities for local youth and attract tourists from across the world, giving a new dimension to tourism in Uttarakhand.

He also acknowledged the PM's announcement of a ropeway project for the Kedarnath and Hemkund Sahib. He said that the initiative will greatly benefit elderly pilgrims and women travelling to Kedarnath and Hemkund Sahib, making their journey more accessible. He reiterated the government's commitment to promoting winter tourism and addressing the concerns of local priests.

He said that appropriate measures are being taken to resolve land-related issues through proper land settle-

ment which will be beneficial for the region. He also stated that as part of the Vibrant Village programme, a destination master plan has been developed for Jandug village in Uttarakhand, with efforts underway to renovate old structures and convert them into homestays. Under the central government's Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Augmentation Drive (PRASAD) scheme, projects worth Rs 9.93 crore have been undertaken to develop facilities at Yamunotri and Gangotri Dham.

The master plan for these pilgrimage sites is progressing rapidly. Maharaj also shared that a helipad is being constructed at Yamunotri to improve accessibility for visitors. He said that with these developments, the State government aims to enhance tourism infrastructure and ensure better facilities for pilgrims and visitors, strengthening Uttarakhand's position as a year-round tourist destination.

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# Pahadis rally in Gairsain, seek Aggarwal's ouster

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

A large number of people attended the Pahadi Swabhimani rally in the summer capital Gairsain in Chamoli district on Thursday. Various organisations had given a call for the rally to register their protest against the use of abusive language by cabinet minister Prem Chand Aggarwal during the budget session of the Vidhan Sabha.

people of mountainous areas. They said that the people of the State are sensitive and the minister's comment has hurt their feelings. The speakers also expressed dismay at speaker Ritu Khanduri for not allowing Badrinath MLA Lakshpat Singh Butola when he tried to raise the issue of abusive language of the minister.

The Chamoli district Congress president Mukesh Negi told The Pioneer that a large number of Congress workers attended the rally. "We are Pahadi first and then members of the Congress party. We will not allow anyone to insult us and hurt our sentiments. The CM should remove minister Aggarwal and the BJP president Mahendra Bhatt should apologise for trying to shield the abusive minister," he said.

The speakers in the rally included Congress MLA Madan Bisht, UKD leader Pushpesh Tripathi, convener of the Bhoon Kanooon Samiti Mohit Dimri, president of the Chamoli unit of the Congress Mukesh Negi and the chairperson of Gairsain Nagar Panchayat Mohan Bhandari. The speakers demanded that the chief minister Pushkar Singh Dhama should immediately remove minister Aggarwal for abusing the

**IIFL FINANCE**  
**CIN: L67100MH1995PLC093797**  
**Regd. Office:** IIFL House, Sun Infotech Park, Road No. 16V, Plot No. B-23, Thane Industrial Area, Wagle Estate, Thane - 400604  
**Tel:** (91-22) 41035000 • **Fax:** (91-22) 25806654  
**E-mail:** [reach@iifl.com](mailto:reach@iifl.com) • **Website:** [www.iifl.com](http://www.iifl.com)

### PUBLIC NOTICE FOR AUCTION OF GOLD ORNAMENTS

It is hereby notified to all concerned borrower(s) in specific and the public, in general, that we, IIFL Finance Limited ("IIFL") are auctioning gold ornaments of defaulted customers who neither regularized their loans nor paid the outstanding amount despite being informed through registered auction notices and repeated reminders. Public auction of the gold ornaments pledged in the following loan accounts will be conducted on **10.03.2025 from 10 AM** at following district Centre **DEHRADUN-SRI RADHA KRISHNA MANDIR GL - IIFL FINANCE 01 A, FIRST FLOOR, ABOVE BIBA SHOWROOM, DILARAM CHOWK, RAJPUR ROAD, DEHRADUN-248001**. Any change in venue or date (if any) will be displayed at the auction center. If for any reason the auction cannot be held on the date mentioned here in or the auction does not get completed on the same day, IIFL reserves the right to conduct or proceed with the said auction on any subsequent date with same terms and conditions. If the customer is deceased, then all the conditions pertaining to auction will be applicable to nominee/legal heir.

**Gold Loan A/C No. :** GL32814242, GL32834352, GL32974000, GL32984286, GL33405107, GL33450762, GL33457046, GL33727321, GL33738436, GL33758608, GL33809923, GL33881650, GL33888395, GL33935692, GL31133211, GL31144056, GL33382429, GL33468654, GL33476584, GL33550712, GL33600242, GL33870389, GL33890611, GL32932647, GL32952617, GL33669220, GL33760598, GL33795494, GL32401845, GL32947962, GL32949618, GL33073676, GL33223911, GL33238811, GL33814607, GL31110023, GL31121284, GL31660882, GL31675212, GL33001793, GL33015725, GL33490765, GL33513885, GL33898866, GL33908843, GL31103656, GL311178194, GL31178194, GL311729517, GL31330312, GL33147702, GL33223207, GL33229026, GL33235616, GL33341780, GL33350657, GL33521297, GL33540694, GL33734205, GL33835232, GL33875689, GL31526737, GL32627156, GL33157764, GL33174945, GL33184678, GL33191121, GL33281849, GL33288884, GL33384926, GL33398458, GL33687760, GL33708318, GL33786576, GL33797462, GL33808809, GL33814492, GL32092379, GL32096951, GL32966244, GL32986413, GL33034282, GL33056635, GL33528416, GL33539840, GL33657093, GL33669713, GL33678593, GL33774942, GL33796288, GL33875865.

The Auction shall be conducted on "AS IS WHERE IS", "AS IS WHAT IS" and "WHATSOEVER THERE IS" basis and IIFL does not make any representation or warranties regarding quality, purity, caratage, weight or valuation of the said gold ornaments. IIFL, at its absolute sole discretion, may either postpone or remove, any of accounts from auction list and any proceedings without prior notice and without assigning any reason therefor and to reject any or all the bids or offers without assigning any reason for the same. Details of defaulting borrower(s) pledged ornaments and other details have been displayed at the respective branch. The defaulter borrower(s) have an option to repay the entire dues including up to date interest and all applicable charges and close or regularize their loan account even after publication of this notice but in any case, till the date of auction, failing which the pledged gold ornaments will be sold and balance dues (if any) will be recovered with interest and costs. However, the defaulter loans which are closed or regularized on or after this publication, will have to bear the proportionate publication charge. Borrowers are requested to submit/update their latest bank account details to enable timely refund of excess auction proceeds, if any.

For detailed information, terms and conditions, contact the concerned branch office of IIFL Finance Limited.

Place: DEHRADUN  
 Date: 07.03.2025

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## Police claim 30 per cent drop in road accidents in Dehradun compared to 2024

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Dehradun has recorded a 30 per cent decrease in road accidents in the first two months of 2025 compared to the same period in 2024. A total of 91 road accidents were reported in the initial two months of 2024 while only 65 were recorded in 2025, the senior superintendent of police Ajai Singh claimed. The SSP attributed the decline to stricter enforcement against traffic violations and public alcohol consumption. He stated that actions against drunk driving have increased fourfold this year. Similarly, cases against dangerous driving, rash driving, stunt driving, speeding and wrong side

driving have risen three times compared to the previous year. Singh said, "The police have been taking continuous action against individuals consuming alcohol in public places. Over the past six months, more than 6,000 people found drinking in open spaces or inside vehicles have faced legal action. In the first two months of 2024, police took action against 811 drivers for violations related to rash driving, speeding and wrong side driving, leading to the seizure of 272 vehicles. In the same period in 2025, action was taken against 2,430 drivers and 1,014 vehicles were seized." He said that

in 2024, 182 individuals were arrested for drunk driving and their vehicles were seized. In 2025, the number rose to 852 within just two months, the SSP said. According to the SSP, the reduction in road accidents is also a result of strict action against public drinking. In the last six months, 6,127 individuals consuming alcohol in public spaces were detained, many of whom were found drinking in their vehicles by the roadside. The police's crackdown on public drinking has contributed to a decrease in accidents by preventing intoxicated individuals from driving, he said.

## District hospital bars doctors from prescribing outside medication

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The administration of Deen Dayal Upadhyay district hospital has issued an order to all its doctors instructing them not to prescribe any medication to patients from outside the hospital. This directive was prompted by recent incidents wherein some doctors reportedly prescribed medications to patients from outside the facility. Notably, these prescriptions were also not stamped with the doctors' approval. Informing about this, the medical superintendent of the district hospital Dr VS Chauhan informed that the Health department directed the hospital administration to temporarily deploy several doctors to other hospitals in light of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to promote winter tourism in Uttarakhand. As part of this, one orthopedic surgeon was temporarily assigned to Uttarkashi, along with a few other doctors, including a physician and a cardiologist, to Jolly Grant hospital. To maintain operations in the outpatient department (OPD), postgraduate doc-

tors in training were asked to manage the OPD for two to three days. However, these PG doctors have less experience, which has contributed to the confusion around prescribing medications to patients outside the hospital. Chauhan also said that PG doctors are not required to stamp prescriptions with the hospital's approval. Following this incident, the administration has taken strict measures to ensure compliance and has reiterated that no doctor should prescribe medications to patients outside the hospital. Moreover, in cases where certain medications are unavailable at the hospital, doctors have been instructed to prescribe medications from the Jan Aushadhi, where medicines are offered at very low prices, he said. Dr Chauhan emphasised the importance of regular inspections at the hospital to ensure that no doctor prescribes medications outside the facility. He stated that strict action would be taken against any doctor found violating this order.

## DEDI to be established in U'khand: Rawat

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The Education minister Dhan Singh Rawat announced the establishment of the Devbhoomi Entrepreneurship Development Institute (DEDI) in the State, aimed at channeling the positive energy of students. He made this announcement during the Impresario 2025 event held at the Indian Entrepreneurship Development Institute (EDII) in Ahmedabad on Thursday. Rawat highlighted that the Devbhoomi Entrepreneurship Scheme, launched by the Higher Education department in collaboration with EDII, has initiated a revolutionary change in student entrepreneurship. He said that the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 promotes entrepreneurship and self-employment and through this scheme, Uttarakhand is setting a new model for the country. Over the past year and a half, students have developed and launched more than 700 products into the market, demonstrating their enthusiasm and success. He noted that significant progress is being made nationally by EDII in entrepreneurship, innovation, research and employment generation. Rawat expressed confidence that connecting youth with enterprises will help achieve the goal of a developed India by 2047. He said that Uttarakhand is establishing a model of spirituality and development. To enhance cooperation be-



tween Gujarat and Uttarakhand, an exchange programme for students and teachers will be initiated, in line with the concept of "Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat". Further, the Higher Education secretary Ranjit Kumar Sinha stated that a knowledge economy and an innovative society are essential for development. He asserted that with trust, skill and passion, business ideas can transform into entrepreneurship. He also pointed out that problems can lead to ideas, solutions and opportunities for startups. The director general of EDII, Sunil Shukla welcomed Rawat and other dignitaries, expressing readiness to provide all possible support to the state for developing an entrepreneurial ecosystem and creating a prosperous India. He expressed gratitude for the cooperation of the State government and the minister's announcement regarding the construction of the DEDI.

## Mahila Sarathi scheme to be launched on International Women's Day

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The Women Empowerment and Child Development (WECD) minister Rekha Arya announced that to empower the women of the State, the government will launch the Mahila Sarathi scheme on the occasion of International Women's Day. Arya stated that she will be the first user of Mahila Sarathi. For the first week, drivers will provide free rides to women to raise public awareness about the initiative. This scheme prioritises support for financially weak women, as well as widows and those who have been deserted, she said. She further added that the Transport department is conducting driving training for women and assisting

them in obtaining their driving licenses. As a pilot project, this initiative will start with 10 e-scooters, two e-auto rickshaws, and two e-taxi cars. Arya said that she will initiate the scheme from the camp office located in Yamuna Colony and will personally travel to IRDT Hall in Survey Chowk using these vehicles. Following her arrival, a demonstration of all the vehicles will take place in the IRDT auditorium. The vehicles for the pilot project have been secured through the CSR funds of an organisation. Arya said that after evaluating the results of the pilot project over the first six months, the scheme will be expanded to other cities in

the state. A fully professional mobile app has been developed to operate these vehicles, which features a user interface similar to that of popular commercial vehicle booking apps. Arya highlighted that many safety features have been integrated into the vehicles for the protection of women drivers. GPS tracking will be implemented to ensure that either female drivers or passengers can receive immediate assistance in the event of any security-related issue. Both the police and transport departments are involved in this scheme. For the pilot project, driving training for women has already been conducted in Dehradun, she said.

## PNB inks MoU with Uttarakhand Govt on corporate salary package

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Punjab National Bank's Dehradun zone signed a memorandum of understanding with the Uttarakhand government on the corporate salary package here on Thursday. While the Uttarakhand government was represented by the director of treasury, pension and entitlement Dinesh Chandra Lohani the Dehradun zonal manager Sachchidanand Dubey signed the memorandum on behalf of PNB, Dehradun Zone. Dubey said after the signing cere-

mony that under this MoU, the bank would provide several benefits to the permanent State government employees who have accounts with the bank. The benefits include personal accident (death) insurance, permanent total disability insurance and partial disability insurance. Besides, the customers will be provided with free cheque books, housing and car loans sans processing fees and Demat account opening facility among others.

## Three family members die after tractor trolley and bike collide

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Three family members were killed after their motorcycle was allegedly hit by a tractor-trolley in the Kunda police station area near Kashipur, Udham Singh Nagar district late on Wednesday night. The three victims were travelling to Kashipur to get medicine when the accident occurred, as per the officials. Officials informed that the deceased have been identified as Bagga Singh (36), his mother Preeto Kaur (69) and his 12-year-old nephew Shiva. Singh was re-

portedly taking Shiva to a private hospital in Kashipur for medical treatment. According to the officials, the victims were reportedly tripping when their motorcycle hit a tractor-trolley carrying green peas. All three died on the spot. The officials informed that as per a witness, the driver of the tractor-trolley fled the scene immediately after the collision. Police arrived at the scene and took the bodies into custody for post-

mortem examination. They said that police are investigating the case.

## 11 busy junctions in Dehradun to get traffic lights

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The administration will install traffic lights at 11 busy junctions of Dehradun district from next month. Dehradun district magistrate Savin Bansal claimed that Dehradun is set to witness significant improvements in road safety and traffic management as the district administration moves forward with plans to install traffic lights at 11 busy junctions.

Smart City budget. As part of these efforts, work has begun on addressing waterlogging issues at ISBT Chowk. A new drainage system is under construction to prevent the area from being submerged during the monsoon season.

The budget also includes provisions for the maintenance of the drainage system after its completion, ensuring long-term relief for commuters and travellers, he said. He further informed that beautification work has also started at key locations, including Sai Mandir Junction, Kuthal Gate and Dilaram Chowk.

These areas are being decorated with artistic elements reflecting the cultural heritage of the state. Public spaces and main roads will feature artwork showcasing local traditions, religious sites and memories of statehood movement activists. The initiative aims to offer visitors a glimpse into the region's cultural identity, he added.

The tender process for the project has been completed and installation work is scheduled to begin next month. He said that besides this, the city's major intersections are now equipped with 150 integrated CCTV cameras for real-time monitoring of traffic and road safety. According to Bansal, this marks the first time in five years that such an initiative has been undertaken in the Dehradun district.

He also stated that to support infrastructure development and beautification, the district administration has allocated Rs 10 crore from the

**उत्तराखण्ड पॉवर कारपोरेशन लिमिटेड**  
(उत्तराखण्ड सरकार का उपक्रम) कारपोरेट आईडेंटिटी संख्या : U40109UR2001SGC025867, विकेटोरिया क्रॉस विजेता गवर सिंह ऊर्जा भवन, कांठली रोड, देहरादून-248001, दूरभाष- 0135-2763672-75, वेबसाइट- www.upcl.org

**निविदा सूचना**  
अधोहस्ताक्षरी द्वारा अनुमती फार्म से निविदाये दो भागों में आमन्त्रित की जाती है। जिसके प्रथम भाग में धरोहर राशि दूसरे भाग में न्यूनतम दर एवं शर्तें निहित हैं। निविदा प्रपत्र इस कार्यालय से निविदा के समूह अंकित निर्धारित देय पर इस कार्यालय से किसी भी कार्य दिवस में प्राप्त कर सकते हैं। धरोहर राशि अधिशासी अभियन्ता (मुख्यालय) के पक्ष में छः माह के लिए बन्धित हो तथा डाक से निविदा प्रपत्र मंगाने पर रु० 100.00 (डाक खर्च) अतिरिक्त देय होगा परन्तु निविदा प्रपत्र का डाक से देशी अथवा खो जाने पर विभाग उत्तरदायी नहीं होगा। निविदा खुलने के दिन यदि अवकाश घोषित हो जाता है तो निविदा अगले कार्य दिवस को यथा-समय खोली जायेगी। निविदा उन्ही फार्मों को दी जायेगी जिन्होंने विगत वर्षों में समान प्रकृति के कार्यों का सन्तोषजनक रूप से सम्पादित किया है तथा जो आयकर/बिक्रीकर अदायगी का नवीनतम प्रमाण पत्र प्रेषित करेगा, निविदा प्रपत्र पाने के पत्र माने जायेंगे। अधोहस्ताक्षरी को निविदा निरस्त करने का पूर्ण अधिकार सुरक्षित है।

(1) निविदा संख्या-08/अं०अं० (का०में०)/2024-25

क्र० सं०	कार्य का नाम	धरोहर राशि (रु० में)	निविदा शुल्क (रु० में)	निविदा खरीदने की अन्तिम तिथि	निविदा डालने की तिथि	निविदा खोलने की तिथि
1	Annual maintenance work of Air Conditioners at non residential buildings of V.C.V. Gabar Singh Urja Bhawan UPCL Dehradun.	20,000.00	250+GST	25.03.2025 at 11:30 hrs.	25.03.2025 at 12:00 hrs.	25.03.2025 at 12:30 hrs.

No.-: 107/EE(CM)/UPCLA-2 Date:- 06.03.2025 अधिशासी अभियन्ता (का०में०)

राष्ट्र हित में बिजली बचाये, बिजली बचाने हेतु एलईडी बल्ब का प्रयोग करें। (टोल फ्री नं० 1912) विद्युत बिलों के 24x7 ऑनलाइन मुताबत हेतु [www.upcl.org](http://www.upcl.org) पर जाएं। (विद्युत चोरी को सूचना टोल फ्री नं० 18001804185 / फ़ैक्स नं० 0135-2760911 पर दें।)

**कार्यालय आबकारी आयुक्त, उत्तराखण्ड, देहरादून**  
संख्या: 24.442-46/सात लाई०-48/आबकारी नीति-2025/देहरादून: दिनांक: मार्च 06.2025

**विज्ञापित**  
उत्तराखण्ड आबकारी नीति विषयक नियमावली, 2025-26, 2026-27 व 2027-28 (त्रिवर्षीय आबकारी नीति) जो कि उत्तराखण्ड शासन आबकारी अनुभाग की अधिसूचना संख्या: 176/XXIII-1/2025-04 (01)/2025 देहरादून दिनांक: 05, मार्च, 2025 के अनुक्रम में सर्वसाधारण को सूचित किया जाता है कि वर्ष 2025-26 हेतु देशी मदिरा एवं विदेशी मदिरा की फुटकर दुकानों का व्यवस्थापन का कार्यक्रम निम्नवत् निर्धारित किया जाता है:-

क्र०सं०	विवरण	दिनांक
1.	समस्त देशी मदिरा/विदेशी मदिरा की फुटकर दुकानों के वर्ष 2025-26 हेतु नवीनीकरण की तिथि	07.03.2025 से 16.03.2025 तक
2.	फुटकर मदिरा दुकानों के नवीनीकरण के पश्चात अवशेष अव्यवस्थापित नदीनदीकरण की तिथि	19.03.2025 से 21.03.2025 तक
3.	प्रथम चरण की लॉटरी की तिथि	22.03.2025
4.	प्रथम चरण की लॉटरी के पश्चात अव्यवस्थापित मदिरा दुकानों के व्यवस्थापन हेतु द्वितीय चरण की लॉटरी हेतु आवेदन की तिथि	23.03.2025 से 24.03.2025 को अपराह्न 03.00 बजे तक
5.	द्वितीय चरण की लॉटरी की तिथि	24.03.2025 को सांय 05.00 से प्रक्रिया पूर्ण होने तक

जनपद में मदिरा की फुटकर बिक्री की दुकानों का नवीनीकरण एवं नवीनीकरण उपरांत अवशेष/अव्यवस्थापित मदिरा दुकानों को लॉटरी के माध्यम से प्राप्त करने हेतु इच्छुक एवं अर्ह आवेदक जनपद की दुकानों की सूची, निर्धारित राजस्व की सूची, अन्य आवश्यक विवरण एवं शर्तें तथा व्यवस्थापन की सम्पूर्ण समग्र सारणी विभाग की वेबसाइट [www.uttrakhandexcise.org.in](http://www.uttrakhandexcise.org.in) तथा [www.uk.gov.in](http://www.uk.gov.in) से प्राप्त जा सकती है एवं सम्बन्धित जनपद के कार्यालय जिलाधिकारी/जिला आबकारी अधिकारी व कार्यालय आबकारी आयुक्त, उत्तराखण्ड, देहरादून से भी प्राप्त की जा सकती है। मदिरा दुकानों के नवीनीकरण हेतु जनपदवार व्यवस्थापन कार्यक्रम की सूचना विभाग की वेबसाइट [www.uttrakhandexcise.org.in](http://www.uttrakhandexcise.org.in) तथा [www.uk.gov.in](http://www.uk.gov.in) पर उपलब्ध है और निर्धारित कार्यक्रम के अनुसार नवीनीकरण की प्रक्रिया संपादित की जाएगी।

नोट:- प्रदेश आबकारी राजस्व हित में फुटकर मदिरा दुकानों के व्यवस्थापन की समयसारिणी में आबकारी आयुक्त, उत्तराखण्ड द्वारा यथा आवश्यक परिवर्तन किया जा सकेगा जिसकी सूचना विभाग की वेबसाइट [www.uttrakhandexcise.org.in](http://www.uttrakhandexcise.org.in) तथा [www.uk.gov.in](http://www.uk.gov.in) से प्राप्त जा सकती है।

(हरिचन्द्र समवाल)  
आबकारी आयुक्त, उत्तराखण्ड।

## THE PIONEER CLASSIFIEDS PUBLIC NOTICE

The general public is informed that I have changed my name BABY FARIDA (old name) to FARIDA (new name). In future I should be known and recognised as Farida D/o Hamid Husain, Address: 155, Ballapur Road, Shri Dev Sunanagar, Dehradun, Uttarakhand

मेरे पुत्र के सैन्य अभिलेखोनुसार, मेरा गलत नाम व जन्मतिथि बृजमोहन सिंह- 01.01.1968 दर्ज है, सही नाम व जन्मतिथि बृजमोहन सिंह राजपूत - 01.01.1981 आधार नं. 340359302158 F/o आर्मी नं. 16026632L राइफलमैन गौतम कुमार सिंह, ग्राम वीर शिवाजी नगर मोहवा बाजार, पोस्ट- टाटीबंध, तह- रायपुर, जिला-रायपुर, छत्तीसगढ़-492001 है।

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It is hereby notified to all concerned borrower(s) in specific and the public, in general, that we, IIFL Finance Limited ("IIFL") are auctioning gold ornaments of defaulted customers who neither regularized their loans nor paid the outstanding amount despite being informed through registered auction notices and repeated reminders. Public auction of the gold ornaments pledged in the following loan accounts will be conducted on 10.03.2025 from 10 AM at following district Centre HARIDWAR-RANIPUR CHOWK GL - IIFL Finance Ltd. 10-B, GOVIND PURI, FIRST FLOOR RANIPUR MORE, HARIDWAR - 249407. Any change in venue or date (if any) will be displayed at the auction center. If for any reason the auction cannot be held on the date mentioned here in or the auction does not get completed on the same day, IIFL reserves the right to conduct or proceed with the said auction on any subsequent date with same terms and conditions. If the customer is deceased, then all the conditions pertaining to auction will be applicable to nominee/legal heir.

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For detailed information, terms and conditions, contact the concerned branch office of IIFL Finance Limited.

Place: HARIDWAR Date: 07.03.2025

Sd/ AUTHORISED SIGNATORY IIFL FINANCE LIMITED

**Punjab & Sind Bank** Branch: Uddiwala, Dehradun  
xli is here by given that the original Sale deed of property situated in Mauza Jamolwala Pargana Pachowad Tehsil & Distt Dehradun Khata No. 42 (Fasal Year 1414 to 1419) Kharsa No. 80 Rakha 250 Sq. mtr. related to the original sale deed of the year 29.01.2013 which is duly registered in the Sub-Registrar's office Dehradun-II, Bahi No. 01, Jild 297, Pages 1 to 22 Serial No. 155 dated 29.01.2013 has been lost some where in the Court Premises Dehradun in the Month of May 2013 which has not been found despite a date of search. Reetu Singh D/o Shri Ram Kishan R/o H.No. 1635Arban State-II Distt- Haridwar, Haryana-125005 Further, Punjab And Sindh Bank Branch Office Uddiwala, Dehradun, intends to mortgage the above property. If any person finds it, or claims any interest or title in the property is requested to contact Punjab And Sindh Bank, Branch Office Uddiwala, Dehradun, within 7 days from the date of this publication.

**नेनीताल बैंक**  
THE NAINITAL BANK LTD.  
INFORMATION FOR CUSTOMERS/PUBLIC  
The Nainital Bank Ltd. is in the process of shifting its existing Haridwar branch to a new location. The customers are advised to take care of their lockers and the shifting of the locker is the sole responsibility of the respective customers. The shifting of the locker must be completed by 14th March, 2025. The details of the new premises is given as under:

Branch Name	Obsolete Address	New Address where Branch has been shifted
Haridwar Branch	Shree Chetan Jyoti Ashram, Bhupatwala, Haridwar-249401, Uttarakhand	Khasara No. 2 & 3, Bhoopatwala, Main Kharkhari Road, Haridwar, Uttarakhand

Date: 07.03.2025 Vice President

**नेनीताल दुग्ध उत्पादक सहकारी संघ लिमिटेड**  
(आई.एस.ओ. प्रमाणित उपक्रम)  
लालकुआँ, जिला नैनीताल (उत्तराखण्ड) दूरभाष : 05946 : 288061, 288127  
पत्रांक 5537-42/निविदा सूचना/अभि०/2024-25 दिनांक- 06.03.2025

**निविदा सूचना**  
सर्व साधारण को सूचित किया जाता है कि नैनीताल दुग्ध उत्पादक सहकारी संघ लि०, लालकुआँ (नैनीताल) की मुख्य दुग्धशाला में स्थापित ईन्टीपी० का वार्षिक रख-रखाव एवं संचालन कार्य हेतु बन्द निविदायों संस्था के प्रशासन अनुभाग में दिनांक 21.03.2025 को सांय 2:00 बजे तक आमंत्रित की जाती है। निविदा प्रपत्र रु० 1180.00 (यारह सौ अस्सी रूपया) डी.डी./नगद संघ कोषागार में जमा कर अभियंत्रण अनुभाग से प्राप्त किये जा सकते हैं। प्राप्त निविदाओं को उपस्थित निविदादाता के समूह दिनांक 22.03.2025 की अपराह्न 3:00 बजे खोला जायेगा। निविदा प्रपत्र यू०सी०डी०एफ० की आधिकारिक वेबसाईड [ucdfaanal.org](http://ucdfaanal.org) से डाउनलोड कर सकते हैं। निविदा प्रपत्र यू०सी०डी०एफ० की वेबसाईड से डाउन लोड करने पर रु० 1180.00 (यारह सौ अस्सी रूपया) का बैंक ड्राफ्ट जो "नेनीताल दुग्ध उत्पादक सहकारी संघ लि०, लालकुआँ" के नाम लालकुआँ में देय हो निविदा पत्र के साथ संलग्न करना अनिवार्य होगा। एक या समस्त निविदाओं को बिना कारण बताये निरस्त करने का अधिकार समान्य प्रबन्धक के पास सुरक्षित होगा।

नोट: उक्त निविदा पत्र एवं निविदा से सम्बन्धित जानकारी निविदा सूचना प्रकाशन उपरान्त किसी भी कार्यालय दिवस में सम्बन्धित अनुभाग से प्राप्त की जा सकती है।

अनुराग शर्मा  
निर्माता : ऑबल दुग्ध एवं दुग्ध उत्पाद सामान्य प्रबन्धक

# Global economies grappling with population crisis: Chandrababu

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■**  
VISAKHAPATNAM

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Thursday stated that the world's leading economies are grappling with a population crisis. Speaking at a book launch, Naidu emphasised that while these countries possess advanced resources such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) and cutting-edge technologies, they lack a sufficient workforce to operate them. "All top countries in the world are struggling. There is no population. AI and technology exist, but there are no people to operate them," he said. Citing examples of Europe, China and Japan, Naidu noted that ageing populations have become a significant challenge for these economies. However, he suggested that



Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman with Andhra Pradesh CM N Chandrababu Naidu during book launch of 'World History' written by former Minister Daggubati Venkateswara Rao in Visakhapatnam PTI

India remains largely unaffected by this issue. Over the past few months, the TDP supremo has urged the people of Andhra Pradesh to have more children to counter the declining population trend. Naidu also highlighted that India is at a pivotal moment in history. Recalling the Liberalisation,

Privatisation, and Globalisation (LPG) reforms introduced in the early 1990s under the Congress government, he said India gained a "first-mover" advantage in the

Information Technology sector. Expressing confidence in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Viksit Bharat 2047 vision, Naidu asserted that Andhra Pradesh would achieve similar progress through its Swarna Andhra 2047 initiative. Despite Andhra Pradesh facing multiple challenges, Naidu reaffirmed his determination to navigate them, envisioning the Telugu people as a globally leading community. Comparing the state's current situation to being on a "ventilator," he stated that he regularly seeks support from the central government to address its issues. On Thursday, he also requested assistance from Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. The event in the port city was attended by former Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu and Sitharaman.

# School paint sparks allegations of saffronisation in Odisha

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■**  
BHUBANESWAR

The BJP government in Odisha has decided to paint all government school buildings with a shade of orange, prompting the Opposition Biju Janata Dal (BJD) to allege that it is part of the ruling party's attempt at saffronisation of education. The BJD, on the other hand, asserted that the BJD, during its 24-year rule till June 2024, had painted school buildings green and student uniforms were green and white, similar to the party's colour code. The Odisha State Education Programme Authority (OSEPA) has recently issued an instruction to all district collectors about painting school buildings with 'Orange Tan-N' colour. "The government has been pleased to approve the new colour code. In this context, it is requested to issue suitable instructions to concerned field

functionaries for adoption of the approved colour code in all government schools, including PM SHRI schools, during construction, repair and renovation works," OSEPA state project director Ananya Das wrote to all collectors, who are the chairpersons of Samagra Shiksha in districts. This order would be in supersession of all previous instructions related to the colour code of school buildings, she said. Responding to the development, senior BJD leader Prasanna Acharya said it is "sheer politics and condemnable". "It is a peculiar psychology. I don't understand why this government is making such bogus decisions. What is the purpose? Can you change the education system by changing the colours? Can you infuse more energy among the children by changing the colour?" he asked. Alleging that the BJP is trying to infuse politics in the minds of schoolboys and girls,

Acharya claimed that nothing positive would be achieved by such a decision which involved crores of rupees of from the state exchequer. In his reaction, School and Mass Education Minister Nityananda Gond said the previous BJD government had changed the colour of the schools and painted them with their party colour code. "We are not changing the colour of the school buildings. It was the BJD government which had changed the colours of school uniforms to buildings. The decision will create a good environment and the schools will look attractive," Gond said. In October last year, the BJP government changed the colour of the school uniforms of students studying in classes nine and 10 of government and aided schools. The new uniforms have a combination of light brown, chocolate and clay-baked yellow colours.

# BJP brawls, walks out in Jharkhand Assembly, demands higher pensions for widows, PwDs

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■**  
RANCHI

BJP legislators on Thursday created a ruckus in the Jharkhand assembly, demanding an increase in the pension of widows and Persons With Disabilities (PwDs). The saffron party MLAs demanded a hike in the pension so that these people get financial assistance at par with beneficiaries of the 'Maiyan Samman Yojana'. The BJP legislators trooped into the well of the House, seeking a reply from the JMM-led government to their demand, and later staged a walk-out. They asked the government whether it intended to raise the pension amount of widows, physically challenged persons and elderly people at par with the beneficiaries of 'Maiyan Samman Yojana'. Under this scheme, the government provides ₹2,500 per month to women beneficiaries in the age group of 18 and 50 years. The government assured the agitating members that it would consider the demand. BJP MLA Satyendra Nath Tiwary first raised the issue during question hour. Replying to this, scheduled caste, tribe and backward class welfare minister Chamra Linda said 'Maiyan Samman' and pension are two different programmes. "Maiyan Samman is a government's women empowerment programme, while the pension scheme is run under the Centre-state share arrangement. There are complications in increasing the pension amount. If the Centre increases its share, we will also hike our share," Linda said.



Jharkhand CM Hemant Soren with his wife and JMM MLA Kalpana Soren during the Budget session of the state Assembly in Ranchi PTI

Tiwary said the population of widows in Jharkhand is around 2.85 lakh, while the number of physically challenged persons is around 72,000. "They receive only ₹1,000 a month, while 'Maiyan Samman' Yajana beneficiaries monthly receive ₹2,500. Interestingly, cooks in schools and health sahiyas (assistants) get monthly remuneration of ₹2,000, which is lower than the benefit of Maiyan Samman scheme," Tiwary said. Congress MLA Rameshwar Oraon also urged the government to address the alleged disparity. State minister Sudivya Kumar said that the government would soon increase the remuneration of cooks and health sahiyas to ₹3,000. BJP MLA Shatrughan Mahto again brought up the issue in a starred question. Dhanwar MLA and Jharkhand BJP president Babul Marandi said widows and physically challenged persons

should get a pension, which should be at par with the benefits of 'Maiyan Samman Yojana'. "I want to ask the government if it is in favour or not of the pension hike." Replying to this, parliamentary affairs minister Radha Krishna Kishore said that they would study the pension system of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Chandigarh and then will consider the demand. BJP legislators sought a specific reply from the government if it would increase the pension amount of widows and physically challenged persons. Subsequently, they trooped into the well of the House and raised slogans against the government. Speaker Rabindra Nath Mahato urged them to go back to their seats as the government assured them to consider the matter. The BJP legislators, however, continued to create a ruckus in the Assembly and then walked out of the House.

# Haryana CM urges CRPF trainees to serve impartially

**PARVESH SHARMA ■**  
GURUGRAM

Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini called upon the trainee officers of Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) to take a pledge to carry out their duties impartially and fearlessly. He also urged them to always be ready to protect the law and the Constitution, safeguard the rights of the people with sensitivity and stand firm in their commitment to truth, honesty and dedication, regardless of the circumstances. The Chief Minister was speaking as chief guest at the passing out parade ceremony of 55th batch of directly appointed Gazetted Officers of the CRPF in Gurugram on Thursday. A total of 39 trainee officers, including two women officers, passed from the CRPF academy after completing a rigorous training program. He expressed confidence that these 39 trainee officers would discharge their responsibilities

with utmost honesty and devotion, contributing to the integrity, unity, and sovereignty of the nation in line with the proud legacy of the CRPF. Commending the CRPF for its invaluable contribution to the country's internal security, the Chief Minister described the force as the backbone of country's security. He also commended the CRPF for adopting modern technologies and training techniques, which are helping to develop professional and capable officers prepared to face any challenges in the field. The Chief Minister further encouraged the newly passing out officers to engage in constant learning, stressing that ongoing education and re-learning are essential for success. He highlighted that the CRPF is progressing towards modernisation and empowerment, ensuring that the force remains equipped to tackle evolving security challenges. "Congratulating the trainee officers, their families, and the entire CRPF, the Chief



Haryana CM Nayab Singh Saini during the passing out parade of the 55th batch of DAGOs at CRPF Academy in Gurugram Pioneer Photo

Minister expressed his confidence that these officers would make significant contributions to the country's internal security and nation-building," he said. Saini also recalled the historic decision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to allow women in the Armed Forces, recognising the power of half the nation's population.

cent in the near future, he added. Highlighting the Haryana government's commitment to strengthening security forces, the Chief Minister said that special attention has been given to technical upgrades, resource enhancement, and the expansion of training facilities to better equip police force for any challenges they may face. "In addition, the state has established a dedicated Sainik and Ardh-Sainik Welfare Department to support ex-servicemen and paramilitary forces. In cases of martyrdom, families of Haryana soldiers serving in the armed forces and paramilitary forces receive a financial assistance of ₹1 Crore, along with a government job for one family member. To date, 415 dependents have been provided with jobs," he informed. Director General CRPF Gyanendra Pratap Singh, Director CRPF Academy Sunil Kumar Jha and others dignitaries were also present on this occasion.

# Congress to challenge BJP on key issues in Haryana Assembly

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■**  
CHANDIGARH

The budget session of Haryana Assembly, which will begin here on Friday, is likely to be a stormy as the Opposition Congress will likely corner the ruling BJP over a host of issues, including unemployment, paper leak, rising debt, law and order and farmers' plight. According to the tentative schedule of the Budget session, the session will begin with the Governor's Address on Friday. There will be general discussion in the House on the Governor's Address on March 10, 11 and 12. The Budget estimates for 2025-26 will be presented on March 13 by Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini, who also holds the Finance portfolio while general discussion on the budget will take place on March 17 and 18. As per the tentative schedule, the Budget session will continue till March 25. Congress leader and former Haryana chief minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda has said his party will strongly raise the issues including 'paper leak, unemployment, law and order and corruption'. "It has become clear to the entire state that the BJP is protecting the paper leak mafia, because one paper after another is getting leaked and there have been scams in every paper from the state board exams to recruitment

under this government," Hooda said recently. "One after the other, scams, including those related to mining, are being exposed. Corruption, unemployment and crime are continuously increasing in the state," Hooda alleged. The damage to farmers' crops because of recent heavy rain, "deteriorating law and order, rising debt" and other issues will also be raised by the party, he said. Indian National Lok Dal has said the party will prominently raise various issues related to public interest during the Budget session. Meanwhile, with the Assembly session beginning Friday, the Congress party is yet to name the Congress Legislative Party (CLP) leader. After BJP rode to power for a third consecutive term in Haryana in last year's Assembly polls, the Congress MLAs have attended three sittings of the Assembly without a Leader of Opposition. Meanwhile, during the Budget session, the government is going to bring a fresh version of the bill on the regulation of travel agents. Chief Minister Saini had recently said the travel agents involved in sending the state youth abroad through illegal routes are being identified and strict action will be taken against them. Saini had also said the government has made full planning to implement the 'Lado Lakshmi Yojana'.

Ahead of the October 2024 Haryana polls, the BJP had promised ₹2,100 to women as monthly financial assistance for the women under this scheme if the party returned to power. The Budget session is coming up and we will be making the provision of its budget, Saini had said. Meanwhile, ahead of the presentation of the Budget, Saini, in recent weeks, held pre-budget consultations with diverse groups to gather valuable suggestions. He also sought suggestions from ruling and opposition MLAs. Saini had on Tuesday said that the state budget for 2025-26 will be growth-oriented, with a special focus on sectors such as agriculture, education, health, sports, infrastructure, and women empowerment. He emphasised that the budget will lay a strong foundation for the state's progress and contribute to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of 'Viksit Bharat' (developed India) by 2047. "Our goal is to present a budget that drives prosperity for every citizen of the state," he added. Saini said the state government is working to improve the lives of people through various reforms. The state government has brought about a revolutionary change in governance over the past 10 years, marking the most significant transformation in over a decade, Saini added.

# Abhishek conspicuously absent from TMC meeting

**SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■**  
KOLKATA

Amid speculations of an widening crevice between Mamata Banerjee and her nephew Abhishek who is also the Trinamool Congress (TMC) general secretary the latter on Thursday remained conspicuously by his absence in the crucial core committee meeting of the party that the Bengal Chief Minister had constituted last week to deal with the alleged permeation of electoral rolls with "ghost voters" - as an alleged "part of BJP's ploy to win the next year's State elections." The leaders of the core committee - comprising Firhad Hakim, Subrata Bakshi, Arup Biswas among others considered close to the Chief Minister - met on Thursday to discuss the issue of "spurious" electoral rolls. According to sources close to the junior Banerjee he would hold a separate meeting on March 15 where he is likely to call all district and block level leaders. Though sources in the TMC said that much should not be read about Abhishek Banerjee's Thursday's developments there was hushed talks about his absence from the meeting. The junior Banerjee who is also an MP from Diamond Harbour constituency is reportedly unhappy with the way his own coterie being marginalised in the party. Incidentally the issue became public recently when Abhishek



West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee PTI

himself clarified his stand from a public platform. He told a party organisation meeting called by the Chief Minister at Netaji Indoor Stadium that rumors were being fanned that he was moving away from the party which he vowed to be untrue. "There is a propaganda in the social media that I am quitting the party. This is being done by the vested interests in the BJP. But I must say that I am not a traitor like Suvendu Adhikari or Mukul Roy. I had identified them as traitors who were betraying the party. I will not join the BJP come what may even if they cut my throat. I will still shout 'Mamata

Banerjee Zindabad. I will not join BJP. I will not betray the TMC or Mamata Banerjee," Abhishek had told the party members in presence of the Chief Minister. Meanwhile, in a related development senior TMC leaders including Subrata Bakshi, Firhad Hakim, Arup Biswas, Chandrima Bhattacharya and Ritabrata Banerjee on Thursday met the Chief Electoral Officer to discuss the permeation of fake voters in the electoral rolls. "We have alerted our leaders down the line and a statewide scrutiny is on. Hundreds of fake names are appearing that have been included in the voters' list. Many of these people live outside

Bengal and have different EPIC numbers in some cases they have the same EPIC numbers. This is a big scam and we have alerted the CEO about this and scrutiny will continue," said Bhattacharya. Earlier the Chief Minister had alleged that the BJP was filling the voters' list with ghost voters in order to win the 2026 Assembly elections like they allegedly did in Haryana, Maharashtra and Delhi. "The leaders in Haryana, Maharashtra and Delhi could not catch this trick but here we have caught it and will purge all the voters' lists clean. We will defeat the BJP once again," she said.

# Army hosts 'Arunachal Pradesh - India Centric Geospace' seminar

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■**  
DIBRUGARH

The Indian Army hosted a two-day seminar titled 'Arunachal Pradesh - India Centric Geospace' in Assam's Dibrugarh district, an official release said on Thursday. The two-day seminar, which began on Wednesday at Dinjan Military Station, was attended by senior military officials, policymakers and scholars. It provided valuable insights into the region's geopolitical, economic and development aspects, it added. Leading scholar and commentator on transboundary rivers, climate change and the Arctic, Uttam Kumar Sinha, emphasised the need for India to enhance its river management capabilities independently rather than reacting to China's activities. He stressed a scientific, sustainable and people-centric approach to infrastructure development.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

## A game changer

The strengthening of EU-India ties offers a promising path towards stability, prosperity and technological advancement

The European Union's outreach to India has gained significant momentum, marking a new chapter in their strategic relationship. In the wake of global disruptions, including the shifting stance of the United States under Donald Trump characterised by tariffs, the withdrawal of support for Ukraine, and disengagement from Gaza—the strengthening of EU-India ties emerges as a stabilising force in global geopolitics. European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen's recent visit to India underscores the EU's commitment to deepening ties with New Delhi. Meeting Prime Minister Narendra Modi at Hyderabad House, von der Leyen expressed the EU's high regard for India as a partner. She emphasised that as the two enter the third decade of their strategic partnership, "the best is yet to come." This sentiment reflects the EU's vision of India as a key player in shaping global economic and political landscapes. A focal point of their discussions was the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC), a crucial initiative aimed at boosting connectivity, trade and energy cooperation.



Given the evolving geopolitical dynamics, this corridor could serve as a counterbalance to China's Belt and Road Initiative, ensuring a more diversified and resilient global supply chain. A significant highlight of the India-EU partnership is its deepening engagement in digital and technological arenas. With India emerging as a technological powerhouse and the EU striving for digital sovereignty, collaboration in these areas can create a formidable synergy. The EU's focus on clean energy aligns with India's ambitious renewable energy goals. Such initiatives can help India and the

EU lead the global transition towards a sustainable future. Beyond technology and energy, trade remains a cornerstone of EU-India ties. Both sides are actively negotiating a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) that could unlock significant economic potential. The EU is India's second-largest trading partner and a comprehensive trade agreement would not only boost exports but also enhance supply chain resilience, particularly in a world grappling with economic volatility. With Trump's protectionist policies disrupting global trade, an EU-India trade pact could serve as a counterweight, ensuring that both economies remain competitive and open to global commerce. The collaboration on supply chain resilience will also be crucial in mitigating risks associated with overdependence on specific markets. With Trump's policies creating uncertainty in trans-Atlantic relations and global trade, the EU's pivot towards India reflects a strategic recalibration. The EU recognises India's growing role as a stabilising force in global affairs—both as a democratic counterweight to authoritarian regimes and as a crucial player in maintaining a rules-based international order. The EU-India partnership stands at a defining moment. With digital collaboration, green energy initiatives, and robust trade negotiations at the forefront, this relationship could reshape global economic and political alignments.

### PICTALK



An Indian myna perches on a red silk-cotton tree (Bombax ceiba), in Nadia

PTI

## A parent's reflection on society and the next generation

I was raised with the values of respect, resilience and financial prudence principles. yet, I sometimes wonder if these values still carry the same significance

I was born in a middle-class family 66 years back, less than 12 years after independence. My father was an engineer in a state government department. I came across my mother's diary a few years back. She had spent her life painstakingly balancing a low government income against the rising expenses of bringing up three children. My parents inculcated in us the value of money.

Another value that was deeply ingrained into our psyche by them was to respect everyone. I was taught that relationships were more important. A look of reproach from my mother was enough for me to realise my mistake if I was disrespectful.

This is what I tried to pass on to my children. I often look at them with pride. Having lived a better part of my life trying to hold on to these values, I now find myself at crossroads. Rapid urbanisation has resulted in concentration of bigger population in apartments.

Technology has evolved like never before to provide faster modes of communication. Society WhatsApp group is unfortunately used by a few people at the expense of har-



monious relationships. Recently, I found myself at the receiving end of a vitriolic diatribe. My fault was that I had taken the initiative of organising a cultural and literature festival.

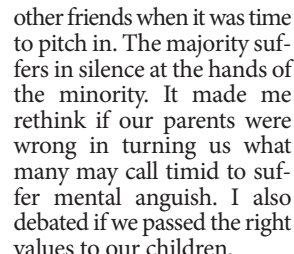
I sincerely believe that our youngsters need more exposure to the arts to navigate an increasingly fast-paced and more stressful world than what we grew up in. The language used by a few of these persons, who have claimed to be my good friends and neighbours over the past eight years, left me nonplussed at best and painfully hurt at worst. It should not have surprised me. These very people have been habitually doing the same followed by profuse apologies as it suits them. It just seems expedient to them in the murky world of society

politics. It does not matter to them if their actions are derogatory.

The condominium seems to be mirroring the happenings beyond the residential complex. I am left wondering that two factors that should create a unified society, are used to divide.

It is at times like these that I start doubting the values inculcated by my parents, and that in turn, I expect my children to follow. I talked to many other residents working with me for the festival. They were also indignant and sad about the way things were turning out to be.

They had their own stories to narrate. One lady was rudely told to curb her flair for taking good initiative. Another lady was left with only four



SANJAY CHANDRA

other friends when it was time to pitch in. The majority suffers in silence at the hands of the minority. It made me rethink if our parents were wrong in turning us what many may call timid to suffer mental anguish. I also debated if we passed the right values to our children. We were unanimous in our shared belief. I derived strength as I looked around, and talked to these parents, many of whom were younger. We have been right in teaching our children to be better humans. Our children are better than us. They are putting the same technology to better use. #Me Too, Girls' Right to Education, Let's Talk, Good Touch Bad Touch are only a few of the initiatives that they are pursuing with single-minded devotion to make this a better world. I am confident that they will set better examples for the next generations to raise their voices and not suffer in silence against the bullies

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

# When no solution is the only solution

Whether due to ego or rivalry, certain disputes become intractable, spanning generations. The irony is that winning does not always make one a winner



VINAYSHIL GAUTAM

One of the bigger challenges in life is to find an answer to a question dealing with life itself. The glib belief is that every problem has a solution. A wise-crack has rightly commented that every problem has a solution but the solution creates a problem of its own. If it were a simple, straightforward dimension, such as that, there would be nothing to worry about because problems and solutions would be in a dyadic relationship.

The problem arises when a problem is not solvable because two sides want a solution on their terms or indeed have no solution at all. This need not necessarily be an act of mischief, but it may be a simple case of jealousy/envy or indeed a bitter competitiveness that brooks no solution at all. The first exposure to such an intractable jungle-like situation today is that the two parties concerned themselves do not see a solution worth pursuing. This may be because of many reasons, one of them being that the person concerned may genuinely believe he has an upper hand and that he is not going to lose that advantage. Very often, this gets intertwined with ego, worth, or dislike.

If there are stakeholders beyond this, of a variety which see an advantage in the contending parties being maintained as contending parties, or there is a personal dislike between the two people concerned, then also a solution becomes well-nigh impossible. Thus, it is that certain problems have subsisted beyond generations and led to devastating wars which ultimately wiped out both parties, and there was nothing for the winner to take away at all. The story of the Mahabharata is a telltale story of the winners ultimately having nothing to gain, at least for the generation in play. In more recent times, World War I and World War II did not produce any obvious winners, and the world went



back to a full circle. The better-known cases of history have similar dots on a lesser scale and indeed, this can be true also in personal lives.

The long and short of it is, it takes more than a 'win' to become a winner. At a different scale altogether, personal dislikes and prejudices can be so large that one adopts an attitude where one concludes that, irrespective of the nuances, one will simply not work towards a solution. Here again, the resolution of the conflict becomes difficult. Hence, it is a fortunate situation where both sides want a situation of solution and therefore are open to it. This is so often a given in this set of circumstances that to pray for it would be to hope for the near impossible.

To expect divine grace to sort out the situation may be the only route forward. Other factors prevent a meaningful resolution of a conflict, one being a gender dimension and another as sibling rivalry. Be that as it



THUS, IT IS THAT CERTAIN PROBLEMS HAVE SUBSISTED BEYOND GENERATIONS AND LED TO DEVASTATING WARS WHICH ULTIMATELY WIPED OUT BOTH PARTIES AND THERE WAS NOTHING FOR THE WINNER TO TAKE AWAY AT ALL

may, it is necessary to recognise that no conflict can be eternal either. While it is true that generations have transferred the conflict from one to another, the nature of the conflict itself became an impediment to solutions, and if nothing else, the ego factor may become a primary determinant of the way forward.

Under such circumstances, the generational transformation of the rivals involved alters the nature of the solution that is feasible.

Indeed, no solution is feasible unless it is doable and sustainable. People often align together because of their own needs and then find arguments to sustain their position. In many cases, logic gives way to simple impulses and a non-thinking solution takes hold of the operationally powerful. The operationally powerful impose their solution, and the predictable happens.

The flawed solution is subverted by the party whose basic need for advantage

flowing out of the conflict was not met. Under such circumstances, it may be useful to suspend the conflict and learn to live with it rather than solve the problem. Avoiding a problem or indeed learning to live with it may at times be a solution. This can follow many routes including not letting the problem escalate.

The enigmatic context is that very often, as the needs of the combatants change, the search for solutions also becomes elusive. This is because one has no use for "the solutions".

The times have changed, and the solutions are passive because there is nothing left to enjoy in becoming a winner. It is therefore important to realise, in many cases, that a solution is only a solution if it makes winners of all concerned. However, that may be another matter altogether.

(The writer is a well-known management consultant of international repute. The views expressed are personal)

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

#### BLUE ECONOMY NEEDS PROTECTION

Madam — Kudos for 'Balancing growth and conservation' (March 6) for highlighting the most sensitive issue of conservation at Kerala's Quilon fish bank. This is only one of the several aspects of conservation, and its ignorance has a massive, devastating effect on the blue economy and fishing community. Fifty-six percent of our coastal population is directly and indirectly dependent on the blue economy. The conservation aspect of sustainable growth and development has long been ignored by the policymakers. The political ecosystem is insensitive to conservation. In fact, extensive conservation projects need to be conceived and implemented on all river fronts, particularly in the hilly areas. In the absence of geological studies and research and conservation, mass destruction of life and property in hills is caused by torrential rains and floods.

Several rivers are disappearing fast, causing mass annihilation of flora and fauna as well as cultivation. The Geological Survey of India should carry out wide-ranging and widespread surveys and research in hills, riverbeds, and coastal regions to ascertain and fetch fresh data. The Archaeological Survey of India should engage conservation architects for carrying out conservation of excavation sites, historic places and buildings, ancient temples, river fronts, and coastal regions. Against all beliefs and perceptions, the conservation projects are potential employers and sources of revenue. Unfortunately, our engineering colleges are producing fewer conservation architects. Urban development is incomplete without conservation. Oceanic studies and research institutions should be established in all potential regions for sustainable growth and development.

Vinod Johri | Delhi

#### US IMPOSES HEAVY TARIFF

Madam — US President Trump launched trade war against America's three biggest trade partners, drawing immediate retal-

## PM Modi inaugurates Vantara



The recent visit by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the inauguration of Vantara - Wildlife Rescue and Rehabilitation Centre in Gujarat's Jamnagar has hit the headlines with heart warming pictures of the PM spending happy moments with the animals there. Spread over 3,000 acres, Vantara—a brain child of Anant Ambani of the Reliance group is all set to become the world's largest zoo and

rehabilitation centre. The world class rehabilitation centre is equipped with modern veterinary technology, including ICU, MRI, CT scan, X-ray, dialysis, ultrasound and endoscopy units, besides research institutions and academic hubs.

Vantara which received the prestigious 'Prani Mitra' national award focusses on rescue, rehabilitation and protection of animals globally. The facility has through its various operations rescued abused, injured and endangered animals from different parts of the globe. The rehabilitation center has been designed to recreate a natural and nurturing environment akin to the lush habitats from which the rescued animals hail from.

M Pradyu | Kannur

iation from Mexico, Canada and China. Trump's government has imposed 25 per cent tariffs on Mexican and Canadian imports though Trump limited the levy to 10 per cent on Canadian energy. He also doubled the tariffs he slapped last month on Chinese products to 20 per cent. China retaliated with tariffs of upto 15 per cent on a wide array of US farm exports. It has also expanded the number of US companies subject to export controls and other restrictions by about two dozens. Canadian PM has said that his country would plaster tariffs on more than 100 billion dollars of American goods over the course of 21 days.

Mexican President has said that Mexico would respond to the new taxes with its own retaliatory tariffs. Trump has said that tariffs are intended to address drug trafficking and illegal immigration. He has also announced that the tariffs will come down only if the US trade deficit narrows. China has filed complaint with the WTO against US in response to Trump's tariff hikes on Chinese goods. Canada also had initiated disruptive

proceedings against US at the WTO on the additional tariffs. Trump's new tariff imposition will certainly rattle financial markets, raising concern about renewal inflation and business uncertainty in US and abroad.

P Victor Selvaraj | Tirunelveli

#### CONG LEADER COURTS CONTROVERSY

Madam — Congress spokesperson Sharma Mohamed stirred controversy by calling Rohit Sharma "fat for a sportsman" and the "most unimpressive" captain India has had. Congress is already losing deposits and the recent debacle at Delhi elections proved their worth and the high command must have decent control over the cadres by teaching them how to talk on a public platform. In a historic achievement, India captain Rohit has become the first captain to lead his team to the final in all four major Men's ICC tournaments.

A P Thiruvadi | Chennai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



## FIRST COLUMN

### THE RISE OF EU-INDIA DIGITAL COOPERATION

The EU and India are strengthening ties in digital governance, AI and semiconductor resilience



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

Even as President Trump of the USA was busy being the world's most popular content creator, the global forces were turning the gears of a strategic realignment. After the televised, admonishment of Ukrainian President Zelensky by US President Trump and his VP JD Vance, the former was seen with several leaders of the European Union. As the case may be European leaders didn't have much to offer to Ukraine, except a subtle message to make peace with the US President. It may be a matter of time, before, Ukrainian President Zelensky has to evacuate his bunker office in Kyiv and perhaps make way for a more, current US head of state worldview representative. The message for the world was clear, the US would no longer be happy to bankroll, what it considers vague political narratives, potentially considered to be the hallmark of a free liberal world order.

This world order, incidentally a post-World War creation, by the US, ensured free fair open markets, meant for the prosperity of all. What this free world order has achieved in the past many decades can be debated, however, it has ensured the US retains its supremacy in the economic prosperity index and so have many of the aligned nations including India (since the 1990s). Just before the US and Ukraine visible spat, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen led a large delegation of senior ministers to Delhi to re-establish the high-level EU India Trade and Technology Council conversations. Given the current geo-political landscape, one of the major focus areas was Digital Economy and Governance.

The European Union (EU) and India reaffirmed their commitment to deepening digital cooperation, emphasising shared values through their Working Group 1 on Strategic Technologies, Digital Governance, and Digital Connectivity. Both sides pledged to accelerate human-centric



digital transformation and advance key technologies, including AI, semiconductors, High-Performance Computing and 6G, to benefit both economies and societies. The two parties agreed to enhance research and innovation to improve competitiveness and economic security while promoting a cyber-secure global digital ecosystem. They also stressed the importance of Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) in fostering inclusive digital economies. Both sides committed to ensuring interoperability between their respective DPIs, safeguarding human rights, and protecting personal data and intellectual property. They also discussed mutual recognition of e-signatures to facilitate cross-border digital transactions.

On semiconductor collaboration, the EU and India focused on strengthening the resilience of supply chains and expanding joint research in areas such as chip design and sustainable technologies.

The two sides underscored their shared commitment to the responsible development of AI, agreeing to further cooperation through joint projects and the development of frameworks for ethical AI. They also plan to enhance cooperation on large language models and AI applications in sectors like climate change and bioinformatics. They also committed to implementing the Global Digital Compact, which was endorsed at the UN General Assembly in September 2024, and ensuring continued global support for multi-stakeholder internet governance at the upcoming World Summit on Information Society +20. It may be the right click for both the EU and India. The EU and India are seizing the opportunity to strengthen their digital and technological ties. Their renewed partnership signals a commitment to fostering a resilient, secure, and inclusive digital future, underpinned by shared values and mutual economic interests. As old alliances shift, new partnerships may define the contours of the evolving world order.

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

# Namaste at Oscars: Indian cinema has arrived



CHAITANYA K PRASAD

Indian storytelling captivates and inspire audiences worldwide. With the right strategy, this moment can shape the future of Indian cinema



The Namaste at the Oscars 2025 has reinforced the idea of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam: "The world is one family," a vision that transcends borders yet thrives on respect, mutual interdependence and a shared spirit of creativity. This symbolic gesture was not merely a greeting but a powerful moment of inclusivity, reflecting cinema's unique ability to bring together artists, audiences and creators from across the globe.

This moment at the Academy Awards highlights how soft power is no longer confined to diplomacy alone; it now permeates events, institutions, and cultural exchanges. Cinema, often regarded as the perfect brand platform for fostering relationships, stood at the centre of this phenomenon.

The Namaste was a gateway, introducing the legacy of Indian storytelling to a diverse global audience and reinforcing the deep cultural interconnect between nations through the lens of cinema.

Beyond its immediate impact, this gesture has set the stage for the future of the Oscars and similar global platforms. It paves the way for cultural ethos to play a larger role in how nations and their creative industries collaborate and connect. A simple, well-timed Namaste has given Incredible India a renewed global identity, transforming its participation in world cinema from occasional recognition to strategic influence.

Conan O'Brien's decision to open the Oscars with Namaste was not accidental. It was a statement, an acknowledgement that Indian cinema is no longer at the periphery of global storytelling. This was not a token mention of India, nor was it a cursory reference to its billion-strong audience.

This was a recognition of India's growing cinematic legacy and influence. India has long been part of Oscar history, but often through an external gaze. Films like Gandhi (1982) won big, Lagaan (2001)



A SIMPLE, WELL-TIMED NAMASTE HAS GIVEN INCREDIBLE INDIA A RENEWED GLOBAL IDENTITY, TRANSFORMING ITS PARTICIPATION IN WORLD CINEMA FROM OCCASIONAL RECOGNITION TO STRATEGIC INFLUENCE.

came close, and Slumdog Millionaire (2008) swept the Academy Awards, yet these narratives were largely shaped by Western filmmakers. The paradigm began to shift with R (2022), which not only won an Oscar for Naatu Naatu but also forced global audiences to acknowledge the unapologetic, high-energy storytelling of Indian filmmakers.

This shift was further cemented when Payal Kapadia's All We Imagine as Light (2024) won the Grand Prix at Cannes, a rare honour for Indian cinema. Films like Chaitanya Tamhane's The Disciple (2020), Rima Das's Village Rockstars (2017), and Nandita Das's Manto (2018) have been steadily breaking barriers, proving that Indian cinema is no longer defined by stereotypes but by diverse, powerful narratives.

The power of this Namaste must be harnessed beyond the Oscars. As India gears up for Cannes 2025, this moment should serve as a launching pad for stronger positioning. India's representation at global film festivals must be strategic; ensuring that films sent to these platforms reflect the depth, diversity, and dynamism of Indian storytelling.

The Cannes Film Festival has already been a crucial stepping stone for Indian cinema. From Neecha Nagar (1946) winning the Palme d'Or to Masaan (2015) winning the Un Certain Regard prize, India's legacy at Cannes has been long-standing. However, now is the time to transition from isolated wins to sustained influence.

The government and industry stakeholders must work together to ensure that Indian cinema is

not just participating but actively shaping the conversation. One powerful example of how such moments create ripples is Life of Pi (2012). When director Ang Lee won the Oscar for Best Director, he greeted the audience with a Namaste, acknowledging the deep Indian cultural influence on the film.

That moment reinforced India's storytelling traditions, but the Namaste at the Oscars 2025 is even more significant; it wasn't just about one film, it was about the entire Indian cinematic movement.

India must now leverage this momentum through platforms like WAVES, the country's film export initiative. WAVES has the potential to push Indian cinema into untapped markets, ensuring that films from independent, regional, and mainstream creators reach wider international audiences.

By riding the wave of this Namaste moment, WAVES can position Indian cinema not just as entertainment, but as a formidable cultural force. Strategic collaborations, international distribution networks, and dedicated Oscar campaigns must now be part of the plan.

If South Korea could orchestrate a global push for Parasite (2019), resulting in its historic Oscar win, India must now do the same, systematically pushing its best films into the international awards circuit.

This is not just about recognition; it's about claiming a rightful place in world cinema. The Namaste at the Oscars 2025 should serve as a wake-up call, a reminder that Indian cinema has evolved from

a land of fantasy to a nation of action. It is no longer a question of whether Indian films will win the Oscar; it is now a matter of when and how often. India is no longer a guest at the global film table-it is a host, a creator, and an influencer.

The Namaste was not just a greeting; it was an invitation for the world to recognise Indian cinema's true potential. The time to capitalise on this moment is now. With the right vision and action, this could be the defining decade when Indian cinema not only participates in global storytelling but leads it.

The world has acknowledged India. Now, Indian cinema must ensure that every frame, every story, and every festival presence echoes the power of that Namaste. The Namaste at the Oscars 2025 was more than a greeting-it was a defining moment for Indian cinema on the global stage. It symbolised India's growing influence in storytelling, marking a shift from sporadic recognition to strategic presence. To sustain this momentum,

India must leverage platforms like WAVES, push for global collaborations, and ensure strong representation at festivals. The world has acknowledged India's cinematic potential; now, it is time for Indian cinema to lead. With the right strategy, this moment can shape the future, ensuring that Indian storytelling continues to captivate and inspire audiences worldwide.

(The writer is former civil servant writes on cinema and strategic communication. Inputs provided by Zoya Ahmad and Vaishnavi Srinivasan)

# Ganges dolphin resurfaces in Charikadia river after 25 years

The conservation of the Gangetic dolphin is not just about protecting a single species; it is intrinsically linked to keeping the Ganga clean

The recent sighting of the endangered Ganges dolphin (Platanista gangetica) in Assam's Charikadia River at Dhakuakhana, Lakhimpur district, has sparked immense interest. Locally known as Sihu, this marks the first recorded presence of the species in the river since 1998, ending a 25-year absence. The prolonged disappearance of the Ganges dolphin from this waterway had fueled concerns over its dwindling numbers and possible extinction.

The disappearance of the species from the Charikadia River has been attributed to several factors, including hunting, habitat destruction, and depletion of food sources. Historically, Ganges dolphins thrived across major river systems



RAJESH KUMAR SINGH

in India, Nepal, and Bangladesh, including the Ganga-Brahmaputra-Meghna and Karnaphuli-Sangu river systems. However, their population has now become fragmented, with significant numbers surviving only in isolated sections of these river systems. The Ganges dolphin is a unique freshwater species that is functionally blind and relies

on echolocation to hunt. Despite its remarkable adaptations, the species faces severe threats, primarily due to habitat degradation from large-scale development projects, including dam construction, drainage works, and embankments.

Pollution further exacerbates the risks to their survival. Recognizing the urgent need for conservation, India has taken steps to protect the Ganges dolphin. The National Dolphin Research Centre (NDRC), the country's first dedicated research facility for this species, was inaugurated on March 4, 2024, in Patna, Bihar. Located on the Patna University campus, near the Ganges River, the center spans 4,400 square meters and aims to conduct in-depth research

on dolphin behavior, survival, and threats.

It also provides training to fishermen, equipping them with conservation techniques to protect dolphins during fishing activities. Despite conservation efforts, human infrastructure projects continue to pose significant challenges. The collapse of a four-lane bridge under construction over the Ganga River at Sultanganj-Agwani in Bihar for the third time has drawn attention to the environmental impact of such developments. In 1990, the Bihar government declared a 60-km stretch of the Ganga River from Sultanganj to Kahalgaon as the Vikramshila Gangetic Dolphin Sanctuary, aiming to protect the species while promoting eco-tourism. Recognizing the ecological



significance of the Ganges dolphin, the Government of India designated it as the national aquatic animal in October 2009 during the inaugural meeting of the National Ganga River Basin Authority (NGRBA), chaired by then-Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh.

The Vikramshila Gangetic Dolphin Sanctuary currently hosts approximately 250 dolphins, frequently observed between Shankar Talkies and

Manik Sarkar Ghat. While government agencies have made efforts to protect the species, conservationists emphasize that illegal sand mining must be curbed to ensure its survival. Large-scale sand extraction disrupts river ecosystems by altering water flow and destroying the dolphins' habitat and food sources, such as small fish. Mechanized sand mining further exacerbates environmental damage, creating deep trenches that negatively impact

river health. Experts warn that unless illegal activities are controlled, the already fragile dolphin population will continue to decline. On a more optimistic note, Union Water Resources Minister C.R. Patil has stated that the Namami Gange Mission-a large-scale initiative aimed at rejuvenating the Ganga-has contributed to a rise in the dolphin population. Experts view this as an encouraging sign of improving environmental conditions. According to the Wildlife Institute of India, approximately 4,000 Gangetic dolphins currently inhabit the Ganga and its tributaries, with nearly 2,000 residing in Uttar Pradesh alone. In response, the Uttar Pradesh government has introduced a tourism policy designating a dolphin sanctu-

ary within the Chambal Sanctuary to bolster conservation efforts. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's launch of Project Dolphin has significantly increased public awareness of the species. This initiative strengthens conservation measures while promoting the ecological health of the Ganga River. Further emphasizing its commitment to protecting the species, the Standing Committee of the National Board for Wildlife has designated October 5 as National Dolphin Day. With increasing awareness and conservation initiatives, there is renewed hope that these remarkable creatures will continue to thrive in their natural habitat.

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

# EU leaders open emergency summit on defence and Ukraine aid

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ BRUSSELS

Facing the prospect that the United States might cut them adrift under President Donald Trump, European Union leaders launched a day of emergency talks Thursday in a bid to beef up their own security and ensure that Ukraine will still be properly protected.

Friedrich Merz, the likely next chancellor of Germany, and summit chairman Antonio Costa discussed over breakfast in Brussels ways to fortify Europe's defences on a short deadline.

Merz pushed plans this week to loosen the nation's rules on running up debt to allow for higher defence spending. Meanwhile, the 27-nation bloc was waking up to news that French President Emmanuel Macron would confer with EU leaders about the possibility of using France's nuclear deterrent to protect the continent from Russian threats.

It all underscored the sea change that has taken place in the two months since Trump took office and immediately started questioning the cornerstones of cooperation between the United States and Europe that had been the bedrock of Western security since World War II.

"Given these profound shifts in US policy, and the existential threat of another war on the continent, Europe must manage its essential defence tasks," the European Policy Center think tank said in a commentary.

The bloc will "take decisive steps forward," Macron told the French nation Wednesday evening. "Member states will be able to increase their military



Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy meets French President Emmanuel Macron on the sidelines of the European Council to discuss continued support for Ukraine and European defense, in Brussels on Thursday. PRESS TRUS OF INDIA

spending" and "massive joint funding will be provided to buy and produce some of the most innovative munitions, tanks, weapons and equipment in Europe," he said.

Adding to the ebullient message, he said that "Europe's future does not have to be decided in Washington or Moscow." Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy is taking part in the summit.

**Limited room to increase spending:** European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen has proposed a plan to loosen budget rules so countries that are willing can spend much more on defense.

Her proposal is underpinned by 150 billion euros (\$162 billion) worth of loans to buy priority military equipment. Most of the increased defense spending would have to come from national budgets at a time when many countries are already overburdened with debt.

France is struggling to reduce an excessive annual budget deficit of 5% of GDP, after running up its total debt burden to 112% of GDP with spending on relief for businesses and consumers during the COVID-19 pandemic and the energy crisis that followed Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Five other countries using the euro currency have debt levels over 100% of GDP: Belgium, Greece, Spain, Italy and Portugal. Europe's largest economy, Germany, has more room to borrow, with a debt level of 62% of GDP.

**Pressing security needs:** Part of any security plan is also to protect the increasingly beleaguered position of Ukraine. A Russian missile killed four people staying at a hotel in Zelenskyy's hometown overnight. He said that a humanitarian organisation's volunteers had moved into the hotel in Kryvyi Rih, in central Ukraine, just before the strike.

The volunteers included Ukrainian, American and British nationals, but it wasn't clear whether those people were among the 31 injured. Early this week, Trump ordered a pause to US military supplies to Ukraine as he sought to press Zelenskyy to engage in negotiations to end the war with Russia, bringing fresh urgency to Thursday's summit.

Thursday's meeting is unlikely to address Ukraine's most pressing needs. It is not aimed at urgently drumming up more arms and ammunition to fill any supply vacuum created by the US freeze. Nor will all nations agree to unblock the estimated 183 billion euros (\$196 billion) in frozen Russian assets held in a Belgian clearing house, a pot of ready cash that could be seized.

Still, the Europeans underlined the importance of the moment. "Europe faces a clear and present danger on a scale that none of us have seen in our adult lifetime. Some of our fundamental assumptions are being undermined to their very core," von der Leyen warned in a letter to the leaders ahead of their meeting.

But perhaps the biggest challenge for the EU will be to take a united stance at a moment when it's fractured, since much of what the bloc does requires unanimous support. Hungary is threatening to veto part of the summit statement on Ukraine. Even if the challenges are so daunting, Thursday's summit is unlikely to produce immediate decisions on spending for Ukraine or its own defenses. Another EU summit where the real contours of decisions would be much clearer is set for March 20-21.

# France steps in to provide military intel to Ukraine as US freezes vital information

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ PARIS

France is providing military intelligence to Ukraine after Washington announced it was freezing the sharing of information with Kyiv, French defence Minister Sebastien Lecornu said Thursday. The US said Wednesday it had paused its intelligence sharing with Ukraine, cutting off the flow of vital information that has helped the war-torn nation target Russian invaders, but Trump admin-

istration officials have said that positive talks between Washington and Kyiv mean it may only be a short suspension. American intelligence is vital for Ukraine to track Russian troop movements and select targets.

Speaking to France Inter radio on Thursday, Lecornu said France is continuing its intelligence sharing. "Our intelligence is sovereign," Lecornu said. "We have intelligence that we allow Ukraine to benefit from." Lecornu added that following

the US decision to suspend all military aid to Ukraine, French President Emmanuel Macron asked him to "accelerate the various French aid packages" to make up for the lack of American assistance.

Lecornu said that in the wake of the US decision, shipments of Ukraine-bound aid departing from Poland had been suspended, adding however that "Ukrainians, unfortunately, have learned to fight this war for three years now and know how to stockpile."

# Macron offers French nuclear deterrence to protect Europe

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ PARIS

French President Emmanuel Macron said Wednesday he will discuss with European allies the possibility of using France's nuclear deterrent to protect the continent from Russian threats, amid concerns over potential US disengagement. France is the only nuclear power in the European Union. Macron, in a televised address ahead of a special European summit Thursday, described Russia as a "threat to France and Europe," and said he had decided "to open the strategic debate on the protection of our allies on the European continent by our (nuclear) deterrent."

Macron said Russia is now spending 40% of its state budget in military spending, with plans to expand its army by 2030 with 300,000 additional soldiers, 3,000 tanks and 300 jet fighters. "Who can believe that today's Russia will stop at Ukraine?" Macron asked.

Allies need to make sure Russia would not invade Ukraine again after a potential peace deal is signed, Macron said. This means providing "long-term

support for the Ukrainian army" and possibly deploying European forces, he said. Those forces "would not fight on the front line, but they would be there, on the contrary, once peace has been signed, to guarantee that it is fully respected," Macron detailed. He said that a meeting of army chiefs of staff of European nations willing to be involved is to be held in Paris next week.

US President Donald Trump has pushed for Europe to carry more of the burden of protecting the continent, and Trump administration officials have indicated that the current US level of engagement may not be forever.

Macron also said he hoped to convince Trump not to impose tariffs on imports from Europe. Trump has threatened to impose 25% tariffs on European goods, arguing that the European Union has deliberately undermined trade with the US, which EU leaders have denied.

# S Korean fighter jets accidentally drop bombs, injuring 8 people

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ SEOUL

Two South Korean fighter jets accidentally dropped eight bombs on a civilian area during a joint live-fire exercise with the US military on Thursday, injuring eight people, officials said.

The MK-82 bombs released by the KF-16 fighter jets fell outside a firing range, the air force said in a statement. It apologised and expressed hopes for a speedy recovery of the injured and said it would offer compensation and take other necessary steps.

The air force said the fighter jets were taking part in the one-day firing drill

with the US military in Pocheon, a city close to the heavily armed border with North Korea.

The air force also said a committee would investigate the accident and examine the scale of the damage inflicted.

An unidentified air force official told local reporters that a pilot of one of the KF-16s had entered wrong coordinates for a bombing site. An unidentified Defence Ministry official told reporters that further investigation was needed to determine why the second KF-16 also dropped bombs on a civilian area.

In a televised briefing, Pocheon

Mayor Paek Young Hyeun called the bombings "awful" and urged the military to halt drills in the city until it formulates reliable steps that can prevent a recurrence. He said that Pocheon, a city of 140,000 people, provides three major firing ranges for the South Korean and US militaries.

Park Seong-sook, a 70-year-old eyewitness who was not hurt in the bombing, said she thought "a war has broken out." "It was such a loud sound," she said, adding that it left her trembling with fear. The military said later Thursday it has decided to suspend all live-fire drills across South Korea.

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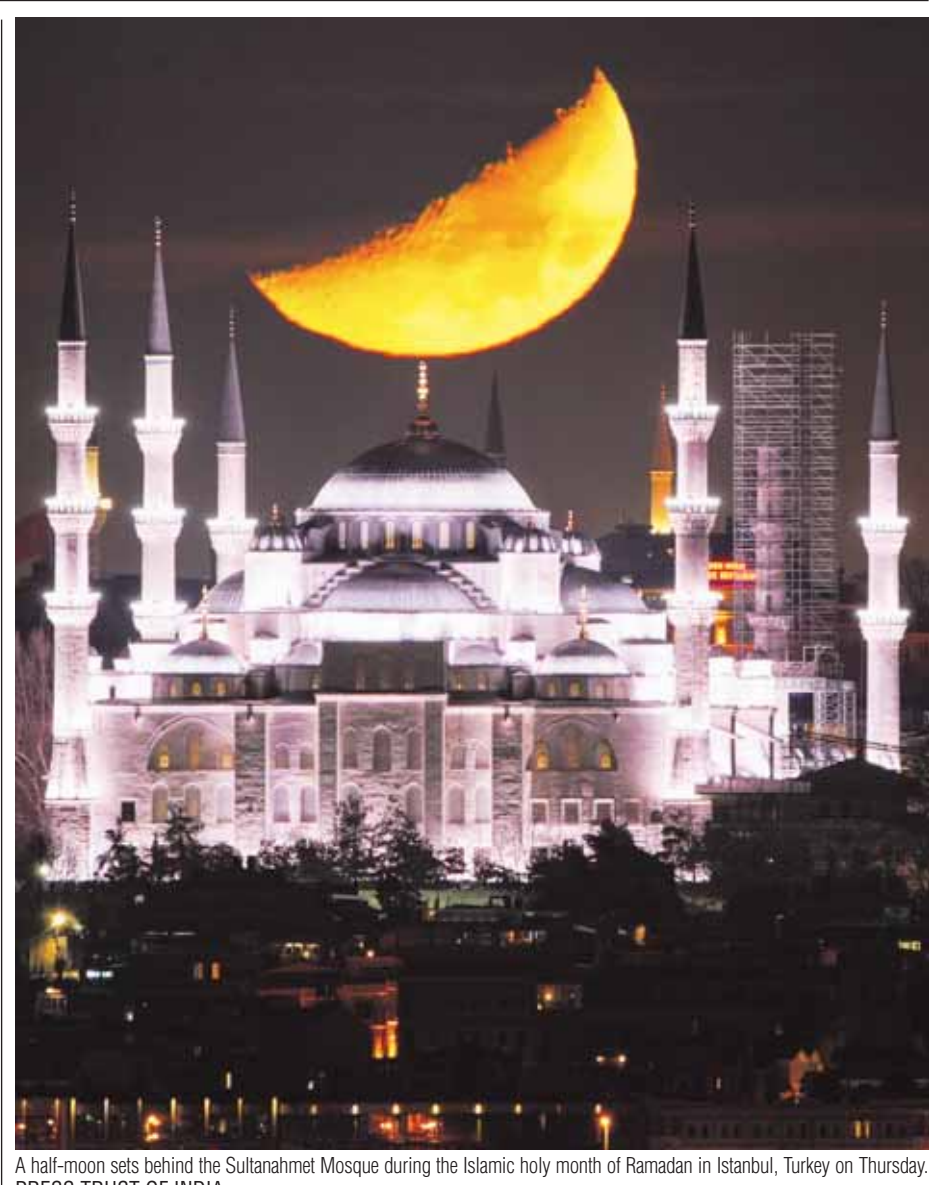
"It was such a loud sound," she said, adding that it left her trembling with fear. The military said later Thursday it has decided to suspend all live-fire drills across South Korea.

# Russian missile kills 4 in Zelenskyy's hometown hotel

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ KYIV

In Ukraine, a Russian ballistic missile killed four people staying at a hotel in President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's hometown during the night. Zelenskyy said a humanitarian organisation's volunteers had moved into the hotel in Kryvyi Rih, in central Ukraine, just before the strike, including Ukrainian, American and British nationals.

He didn't say whether those people were among the 31 injured. Russia fired 112 Shahed and decoy drones, as well as two ballistic Iskander missiles, at Ukraine overnight, the Ukrainian air force said.



A half-moon sets behind the Sultanahmet Mosque during the Islamic holy month of Ramadan in Istanbul, Turkey on Thursday. PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

# NZ diplomat in London loses his job over Trump remarks

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ WELLINGTON (NEW ZEALAND)

New Zealand's most senior envoy to the United Kingdom has lost his job over remarks he made about US President Donald Trump at an event in London this week, New Zealand's foreign minister said Thursday.

Phil Goff, who is New Zealand's High Commissioner to the UK, made the comments at an event held by the international affairs think tank Chatham House in London on Tuesday. Goff asked a question from the audience of the guest speaker, Finland's Foreign Minister Elina Valtonen, in which he said he had been re-reading a famous speech

by former British wartime leader Winston Churchill from 1938, when Churchill was a lawmaker in the government of Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain. Churchill's speech rebuked Britain's signing of the Munich Agreement with Adolf Hitler, allowing Germany to annex part of Czechoslovakia. Goff quoted Churchill as saying to Chamberlain, "You had the choice between war and dishonour. You chose dishonour, yet you will have war."

Goff then asked Valtonen: "President Trump has restored the bust of Churchill to the Oval Office. But do you think he really understands history?" As the audience chuckled at the New Zealand envoy's question, Valtonen said she would "limit myself" to saying that

Churchill "has made very timeless remarks," according to video of the event published by New Zealand news outlets. Valtonen's speech on Tuesday was billed as covering Finland's approach to European security at an event entitled Keeping the peace on NATO's longest border with Russia.

In response to questions from reporters, Foreign Minister Winston Peters said that Goff's remarks were "disappointing" and made the envoy's position "untenable."

"We have asked the Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Bede Corry, to now work through with Mr. Goff the upcoming leadership transition at the New Zealand High Commission in London,"

Peters said in a written statement. Goff has been New Zealand's envoy to the UK since January 2023. He did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Officials were "in discussion with High Commissioner Goff about his return to New Zealand," according to a written statement from New Zealand's foreign minister, which did not divulge more detail.

Former Prime Minister Helen Clark — who was Goff's boss during his time as a lawmaker — denounced his sacking in a post on X, where she wrote the episode was "a very thin excuse" for removing a "highly respected" former foreign minister from his diplomatic role.

# 'Bear with me', Trump says as both farmers, consumers brace for tariff effects

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ OMAHA (US)

Farmers and meat producers across the US can expect the new tariffs on Mexico, Canada and China and the retaliatory action from those countries to hurt their bottom lines by billions of dollars if they stay in place a while, and consumers could quickly see higher prices for produce and ground beef. But some of the impact on farmers might not be felt until the next harvest and some products might actually get cheaper in the short run for consumers if exports suffer.

And the price of corn, wheat and soybeans accounts for relatively little of the price of most products. Plus, President Donald Trump could offer farmers significant aid payments, as he did during the trade war with China during his first administration, to offset some of the losses. In his address to Congress

Tuesday night, Trump argued that agricultural imports hurt American farmers and asked them to "bear with me again" as he seeks to protect them. He didn't mention any additional aid. "I love the farmer," he said.

If the tariffs make farmers uneasy about investing in expensive tractors and consumers worry so much about groceries that they cut other spending, that would hurt the economy overall and could even lead to a recession. And consumers were already worried about record egg prices amid a bird flu outbreak. "Exactly how strong our economy is over time has a lot to do with US consumers' comfort with continuing to go out to restaurants and continuing to buy washers and dryers and just that general activity. And a lot of what we're talking about here is probably going to slow some of that," said Glynn Tonsor, an agricultural econ-

omist at Kansas State University. The situation has some farmers stocking up on equipment and supplies in preparation for prices to go up, but it's not like they can easily buy all their fertilizer ahead of time. And consumers might have a hard time stockpiling perishable products like avocados and ground beef.

The details of how the tariffs are implemented and whether any products are excluded will also matter. **How will farmers be hurt?:** Corn and soybean prices for this year's harvest already fell roughly 10% since the tariffs were first announced a couple of weeks ago. Joe Janzen, an agricultural economist with the University of Illinois, said that has "snuffed out" any profitability in those crops. He called Trump's comments that farmers may be able to sell more of their products at home "at best tone deaf."

"There is no domestic market for the amount of corn, soybeans, wheat, and other agricultural products that we now export in significant quantities," he said. Meanwhile, as crop prices decline, farmers might see their fertilizer bill jump because 85% of the potash American farmers use in fertilizer comes from Canada, which also supplies some nitrogen fertilizer as well. The Fertilizer Institute President and CEO Corey Rosenbusch said "an open, fair, predictable and transparent trade environment between the U.S. and Canada is vital."

"We need potash to raise healthier crops," said Minnesota farmer Danny Lundell, who hosted Gov. Tim Walz on his corn and soybean farm near Cannon Falls on Tuesday. "And it doesn't matter if you're big, medium or small, it's going to affect you."

But Iowa State agricultural economist Chad Hart said many farmers applied fertilizer to their fields last fall and may not have to pay the higher fertilizer bills until later. **What about meat prices?:** The United States imports a lot of lean beef to mix with fattier beef produced at American plants to make hamburger, and that imported beef will get more expensive because nearly half of it comes from Canada and Mexico. That's likely to show up in grocery stores in six to eight weeks. America exported more than \$1.8 billion worth of chicken and another \$8.4 billion in red meat to Mexico, Canada and China. These tariffs could easily lead to a 10% drop in exports, Tonsor said. If farmers aren't able to move that much meat overseas because of tariffs, they can seek to sell more domestically — but they'll likely have to discount prices. Bad for farmers, but potentially good for consumers. The impact will vary by prod-

uct. For instance, demand for steaks and bacon may remain relatively steady because little of that is exported, but the price of hams could drop in the US because Mexico is a major buyer of those. The price of specialty cuts like beef tongue that are almost entirely exported will plummet.

Livestock producers will see a bit of relief because the cost of the feed they use will decline, but Tonsor said they will still lose money overall. **How do farmers feel about this?:** "Farmers are very concerned," said Steve Kuiper, a director at the Iowa Corn Growers Association. "People just aren't buying stuff," he said, which is hitting big companies like John Deere and local suppliers that sell their equipment.

That's the case for farmers who grow table crops as well as commodities. Katy Rogers, who manages an organic farm outside Indianapolis, said that as

soon as Trump started talking about tariffs she bought everything she thought would see a price hike in the coming months. Kuiper hopes that the impacts of tariffs can be mitigated and eventually lead to a more level playing field that benefits farmers. He wants to see trade open with more countries. For instance, he said that for corn, China had already been favoring trade with Brazil, so he instead sees opportunity in places like India.

But Trump has threatened additional reciprocal tariffs on other countries on April 2, which could make it harder for farmers to shift their exports to other countries. **What is the lasting impact?:** Trump can do a lot to ease farmers' pain with aid payments. He gave them more than \$22 billion in aid payments in 2019 and nearly \$46 billion in 2020, though that year also included aid related to the pan-

dem. But Janzen notes that Trump is working to drastically slash spending across the federal government. Walz, who lost his bid to become vice president last fall, said the tariffs will hurt trading relationships and prompt buyers in China, Mexico and Canada to look elsewhere.

Some trade experts question how long Trump's tariffs will last as they boost prices for American consumers, including his base voters, who have long complained about inflation and rising food prices. "It is going to do nothing to help with the food inflation in the US," said Timothy Wise, author of "Eating Tomorrow" and expert on agricultural trade between Mexico and the US "I don't see it as sustainable. I don't find it plausible that corporate folks who surround Trump are going to sit back and allow him to destroy their foreign markets."









# VOICES THAT SHAPED THE WORLD

For centuries, women writers have challenged norms, reshaped narratives and transformed literature with their powerful voices, says SAKSHI PRIYA

**THE ROAD AHEAD**  
**TODAY, WOMEN WRITERS DOMINATE BESTSELLER LISTS, WIN PRESTIGIOUS AWARDS AND CONTINUE TO REDEFINE LITERATURE. MARGARET ATWOOD'S THE HANDMAID'S TALE REMAINS RELEVANT IN DISCUSSIONS ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS. BERNARDINE EVARISTO BECAME THE FIRST BLACK WOMAN TO WIN THE BOOKER PRIZE, PROVING THAT DIVERSE VOICES CAN NO LONGER BE SIDELINED. IN INDIA, WRITERS LIKE MEENA KANDASAMY, AVNI DOSHI AND JANICE PARIAT ARE PUSHING THE BOUNDARIES OF STORYTELLING; ENSURING WOMEN'S NARRATIVES REMAIN AT THE FOREFRONT OF LITERARY DISCOURSE.**

**WHY WOMEN'S STORIES MATTER**  
**WOMEN'S LITERATURE IS NOT A NICHE; IT IS AN ESSENTIAL PART OF OUR COLLECTIVE HUMAN EXPERIENCE. IT CHALLENGES STEREOTYPES AND DEEPENS EMPATHY. EVERY BOOK WRITTEN BY A WOMAN CARRIES WITHIN IT THE STRUGGLES, DREAMS AND HISTORIES OF THOSE WHO CAME BEFORE HER.**

For centuries, women have used literature as a means of resistance, self-expression and transformation. Yet, history has often overlooked their contributions, celebrating male writers while marginalising women's voices. From medieval poets to contemporary literary powerhouses, women writers have not only broken barriers but also redefined storytelling, shaping cultural and social narratives across the world.

**The Struggle for Recognition**  
 In earlier times, societal norms denied women access to education, making it difficult for them to enter the literary world. Many resorted to pseudonyms to get published. Mary Ann Evans wrote as George Eliot, while the Brontë sisters first published under the names Currer, Ellis and Acton Bell. Even Jane Austen's early works were signed "By a Lady." Despite these challenges, their narratives carried immense depth, challenging gender roles, class structures and moral dilemmas in ways that few male writers dared to explore.

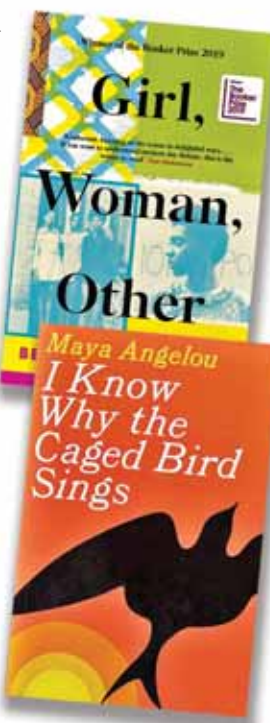
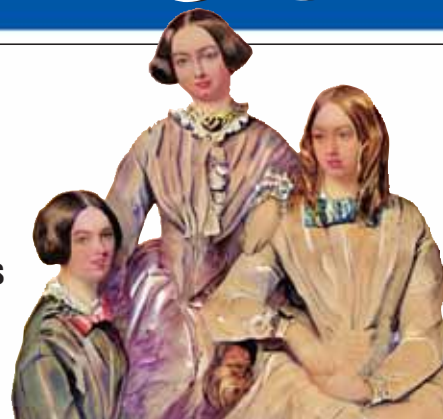
In India, the struggle was even more pronounced. For centuries, women's stories remained within the oral tradition, passed down through generations but rarely written. It was only in the 19th century that writers like Toru Dutt and Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain began breaking societal constraints. Hossain's *Sultana's Dream*, published in 1905, imagined a world where women ruled and men were confined to their homes, questioning patriarchal norms in a way that was revolutionary for its time.

The 20th century marked a turning point globally and in India. Women writers not only published under their real names but also dictated literary trends. Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* questioned the systemic suppression of women's voices in literature.

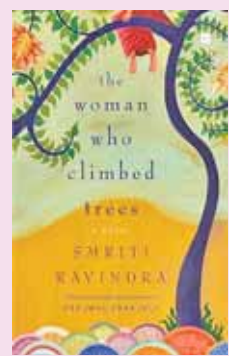
misogyny with raw honesty. In India, *Ismat Chughtai's Lihaaf* challenged conservative mindsets with its bold depiction of female desire. Kamala Das's poetry and autobiographical works fearlessly explored themes of identity, love and rebellion, inspiring generations of women to embrace their truths.

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *We Should All Be Feminists* reframed gender discussions for a new generation. In contemporary Indian literature, writers like Arundhati Roy, Jhumpa Lahiri and Perumal Murugan continue to challenge social norms, bringing stories of the unheard into mainstream cultural consciousness and discourse.

**THIS WOMEN'S DAY, LET US NOT ONLY CELEBRATE WOMEN WRITERS BUT ALSO READ THEM, AMPLIFY THEIR VOICES AND RECOGNISE THEIR ROLE IN SHAPING OUR WORLD, ONE STORY AT A TIME**



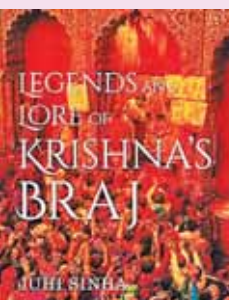
### MARCH READS



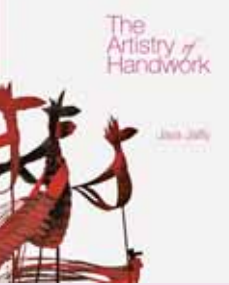
**Book:** *Woman Who Climbed Trees*  
**Author:** Smriti Ravindra  
**Publisher:** HarperCollins  
**Price:** ₹599



**Book:** *Everything the light touches*  
**Author:** Janice Pariat  
**Publisher:** HarperCollins  
**Price:** ₹599



**Book:** *Legends and Lore of Krishna's Braj*  
**Author:** Juhi Sinha  
**Publisher:** Niyogi Books  
**Price:** ₹1750



**Book:** *The Artistry of Handwork*  
**Author:** Jaya Jaitly  
**Publisher:** Niyogi Books  
**Price:** ₹395

## Strength, Sisterhood & Survival

**Fearless & Unstoppable**  
 For the trailblazers, risk-takers and rule-breakers who refuse to conform.  
 • *Lessons in Chemistry* by Bonnie Garmus - A brilliant scientist-turned-TV-star shakes up the male-dominated world of the 1960s.  
 • *Great Circle* by Maggie Shipstead - A daring female pilot battles societal constraints to chase her dream of flying.

With Women's Day approaching, we celebrate the resilience, strength and complexity of women through literature. From fearless heroines to deep explorations of sisterhood, identity and psychological suspense, these books capture the essence of being bold, unapologetic and true to oneself.

**Stronger Together**  
 Because the women who stand by us, our friends, sisters and chosen family, shape who we become.  
 • *Everything I Know About Love* by Dolly Alderton - A raw, witty memoir on friendship, heartbreak and growing up.

**Unapologetically Herself**  
 For those embracing every part of who they are.  
 • *Open When* by Julie Smith - A heartfelt guide to self-care, resilience and mental well-being.  
 • *The Path to Self-Love* by Ruby Dhal - A warm, empowering roadmap to putting yourself first.  
 • *The Book You Want Everyone You Love to Read* by Philippa Perry - A witty and wise take on relationships, self-discovery and emotional well-being.

**Women on the Edge**  
 Complex heroines, unsettling twists and gripping suspense that will keep you hooked.  
 • *Strange Sally Diamond* by Liz Nugent - A woman with a traumatic past unearths chilling family secrets.  
 • *None of This is True* by Lisa Jewell - A journalist's chance meeting with a mysterious woman spirals into a terrifying nightmare.

• *The Crash* by Freida McFadden - Trapped in a snowstorm, a pregnant woman realises her safe haven isn't what it seems.  
 • *The Wrong Sister* by Claire Douglas - A dark, twisted tale of sisterhood gone terribly wrong.

## Books That Uplift and Inspire Women

BY TEAM VIVA  
 Here's a specially curated list of books from Rupa and Aleph, celebrating the strength, resilience and brilliance of women.

**She Storms the Norms - Anisha Motwani & Priyadarshini Narendra**  
 A powerful sequel to *Storm the Norm*, this book shares inspiring stories of women who have shattered societal barriers and self-doubt to redefine success. A must-read for those who dare to challenge the status quo.  
**About the Authors**  
 Anisha Motwani is a business leader, speaker and author of the bestselling *Storm the Norm*. She serves as an independent director on various boards and has been recognised among the '50 Most Powerful Women in Indian Business' by Business Today.  
 Priyadarshini Narendra is a marketing and strategy expert with decades of experience in advertising, consumer research and consulting. She has authored fiction books and contributes to discussions on women in the workplace.

**1700 in 70: A Walk for a Cause - Gita Balakrishnan**  
 Follow architect Gita Balakrishnan's extraordinary 1,700-km journey across India on foot, exploring design's impact on life and culture. A story of endurance, discovery and the power of walking with purpose.  
**About the Author**  
 Gita Balakrishnan is an architect and founder of the Ethos Foundation, which promotes design awareness. An avid marathon runner, she has embarked on multiple walking expeditions, advocating for the role of design in everyday life.  
**Beyond the Bell: Preparing Students for Life - Chitra Prasad**  
 A transformative guide on holistic education, this book goes beyond academics, focusing on life skills,  
 values and personal growth to help students thrive in a rapidly changing world.  
**About the Author**  
 Chitra Prasad is an educationist with three decades of experience and head of the NSN Group of Schools. With a strong focus on values-based learning, she integrates spirituality into education to shape well-rounded individuals.  
**A Stitch in Time: The Biba Story - Meena Bindra**  
 The inspiring journey of Meena Bindra, who built Biba from a home-based venture into a fashion empire. A compelling story of passion, perseverance and the rise of India's fashion industry.  
**About the Author**  
 Meena Bindra, a pioneer in Indian fashion, founded Biba, transforming the salwar kameez into a modern style statement. From a small home-run business to a leading brand, her journey is a testament to innovation and determination.

**THE WALL FRIENDS CLUB**  
 A touching story celebrating the strength, trust and support found in women friendships across generations, says TEAM VIVA  
**About the Book**  
 As International Women's Day approaches, there is no better time to celebrate the power of friendship, resilience and support. *The Wall Friends Club* by Varsha Seshan beautifully captures the essence of human connection, showing how even the most unexpected friendships can shape our lives in meaningful ways. Told through an epistolary format, the novel follows two young protagonists, Anandi and Sriya, who form an unlikely bond through letters slipped into a hidden gap in a wall. Despite never meeting, their relationship grows into something deeply special, proving that true friendship goes beyond physical presence.  
 Varsha Seshan, speaking about the book, shares, "I love letters, old-fashioned letters, not just emails. I also had several pen pals as a child, which made me wonder ... could two children who never meet grow to be the best of friends? An epistolary novel has always seemed an exciting genre to explore, so here is my first one: *The Wall Friends Club*."  
 At its core, the story is about breaking barriers, embracing differences and find-

## A Story of True Friendship

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