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TRUMP VOWS TO TARIFF INDIA BACK Canada slams and in so many other ways to

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA NEW YORK/WASHINGTON

S President Donald Trump criticised the high tariffs charged by India and other countries, terming them as "very and announced reciprocal tariffs from April 2 on nations that impose

levies on American goods. Trump made these remarks in an address to the Joint Session of the Congress on Tuesday. It was the first address of his second term in the White House, On January 20, Trump was sworn in as the 47th President of the US.

"If you don't make your

however, under the Trump administration, you will pay a tariff and in some cases, a rather large one," Trump

"Other countries have used tariffs against us for decades and now it's our turn to start using them against those other countries. On average, the European Union, China, Brazil, India, Mexico and Canada - have you heard of them? And countless other nations charge tremendously higher tariffs than we charge them," Trump said. "It's very unfair. India charges us auto tariffs higher than 100 per cent." February, President



President Donald Trump gestures as he addresses a joint session of Congress at the Capitol in Washington

administration would "soon" impose reciprocal tariffs on countries such as India and China, reiterating what he had said during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the US capital last month. Trump has made it clear to Prime Minister Modi that India will not be spared from Washington's reciprocal tariffs and emphasised that "nobody can argue with me" on tariff structure.

"China's average tariff on our products is twice what we charge them. And South Korea's average tariff is four times higher. Think of that. Four times higher. And we give so much help militarily

South Korea. But that's what happens. This is happening by friend and foe," Trump said. "We've been ripped off for

decades by nearly every country on earth, and we will not let that happen any longer," Trump said. Asserting that this system is

"not fair to the United States" and never was, Trump said that reciprocal tariffs will kick in from April 2.

"Whatever they tariff us other countries, we will tariff them. That's reciprocal, back and forth," Trump said amid applause from Republican lawmakers.

Continued on page 2

US trade war PRESS TRUST OF INDIA specific American, Donald,"

TORONTO

anadian Prime Minister ✓ Justin Trudeau on Tuesday called American tariffs "very dumb" and said that US President Donald Trump is appeasing Russia while launching a trade war against Canada.

In a news conference, Trudeau said that Canada would plaster retaliatory tariffs on more than \$100 Billion of American goods in response to Trump's tariffs.

'Today the United States launched a trade war against Canada, their closest partner and ally, their closest friend. At the same time, they are talking about working positively with Russia, appeasing Vladimir Putin, a lying, murderous dictator. Make that make sense," a visibly angry Trudeau

Trump imposed tariffs against Washington's three biggest trading partners, drawing immediate retaliation from Mexico, Canada and China and sending financial markets into a tailspin

Just after midnight, Trump put 25 per cent taxes, or tariffs, on Mexican and Canadian imports, though he limited the levy to 10 per cent on Canadian energy.

"What he wants to see is a total collapse of the Canadian economy because that will make it easier to annex us," Trudeau said. "That is never going to happen. We will never be the 51st state." Trudeau addressed Trump

directly by his first name. "I want to speak directly to one

Trudeau said. "It's not in my habit to agree with the Wall Street Journal, but Donald, they point out that even though you're a very smart guy, this is a very dumb thing to do." Later Tuesday, US Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick said the US would likely meet Canada and Mexico "in the middle", with an announcement coming as soon as Wednesday. Lutnick told Fox Business

News that the tariffs would not be paused, but that Trump would reach a compromise. "I think he's going to figure out, you do more, and I'll meet you

in the middle in some way," Lutnick said. A senior government official said Trudeau told the premiers of Canada's provinces in a call Tuesday afternoon that he

Wednesdav. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorised to speak publicly about the call.

hopes to speak to Trump on

In a post on Truth Social earlier Tuesday, Trump said: 'Please explain to Governor Trudeau, of Canada, that when he puts on a Retaliatory Tariff on the US, our Reciprocal Tariff will immediately increase by a like amount!" Trump has

threatened Canada's sovereignty, provoking anger in the country.

Canadian hockey fans have been booing the American national anthem at recent NHL and NBA games. Trudeau channeled the betrayal that

many Canadians are feeling. Continued on page 2

REC

CBI Bofors next

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has sent a judicial request to the United States (US) seeking information from private investigator Michael Hershman, who had expressed willingness to share with Indian agencies crucial details about the Rs 64-Crore Bofors bribery scandal of the 1980s, officials said Wednesday. Hershman, head of the Fairfax Group, visited India in 2017 to attend a conference of private detectives. During his stay, Hershman appeared

on various platforms, alleging that the investigation into the scam was derailed by the then Congress government and stated he was willing to share details with the CBL

He had claimed in an interview that he was appointed by the Union Finance Ministry in 1986 for investigation of violation of currency control laws and money laundering by Indians abroad and tracking of such assets outside

India and some of them pertained to the Bofors deal.

The CBI also approached the Finance Ministry seeking documents pertaining to engagement of Hershman and if any report was submitted by him but the records of that time could not be furnished to the agency. The agency took note of Hershman's claims in several interviews and announced in 2017 that the matter would be investigated according to due process. The need for Letters Rotatory arose because letters and reminders to the US authorities on November 8, 2023, December 21, 2023, May 13, 2024, and August 14, 2024, did not yield any information.

A Letter Rogatory is a written request sent by the court of one country to the court of another country to obtain assistance in the investigation or prosecution of a criminal matter. The requests to the Interpol also did not yield any outcome.

Continued on page 2

CBI signals rail to haul promotion system

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA NEW DELHI

fter several rail officials were Anabbed in a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) trap pertaining to cases related to jobs, promotions in the Indian Railway networks, the Railway Board in a high level meeting on Wednesday decided that all departmental promotion examinations for the 13 Lakh rail employees will be done by the Railway Recruitment Board (RRB) via centralised examination through Computer Based Test (CBT) aptitude.

Sources in the railways said all zonal railways will have to prepare a calendar for the examination and all examinations will be conducted on the basis of a calendar only. "This has been decided after a long experience of transparent, fair, and highly appreciated examinations conducted by RRB in recent years,"



A day earlier in a massive crackdown the CBI arrested 26 railway officials, including a senior divisional electrical engineer of East Cental Railway for allegedly leaking papers of a departmental examination and seized ₹1.17 crore cash during its raids. The railway officials were arrested on Monday night for allegedly leaking papers of

examination for the elevation to posts of chief loco pilot at Mughal Sarai, the agency said, adding the exam was to be conducted on Tuesday. The arrest came just a fortnight after

the central probe agency arrested five railway officers, including two of the Indian Railway Personnel Service (IRPS) posted in Vadodara Division, for alleged bribery in favouring candidates departmental examination, officials said on Wednesday. As of now, there used to be internal

vacancies and promotions were

'fixed', which had a huge nexus from

top officers to other stakeholders

making it a huge racket and cartelisation for the stakeholders. The decision was taken after the days' meeting reviewed how the RRB is used to conduct examination without any complaints, with all the

transparency Continued on page 2

China raises stakes for India, US

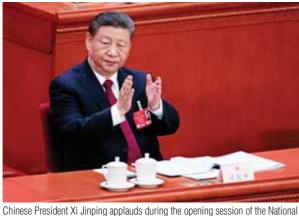
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

on Wednesday Cannounced a 7.2 per cent increase of its national defence budget totalling to \$249 billion this year amid its hectic efforts to modernise armed forces, including fast paced development of warships and

defence planned expenditure for the country is 1.784665 Trillion yuan (about \$249 billion) this year, according to a draft budget report submitted to China's Parliament by Premier Li Qiang, state-run Xinhua news

agency reported. Last year, China increased its defence budget by 7.2 per cent to about \$232 Billion (1.67 Trillion yuan).

China has the world's secondlargest military budget after



People's Congress (NPC) at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, China

the US whose latest defence spending amounted to over \$890 Billion as proposed by President Donald Trump.

The Chinese defence spending is amounted to three times that of India's \$681,210 Crore

(\$78.8 Billion). defence budget figures are viewed by critics with scepticism in the light of massive military modernisation, including building aircraft carriers, rapid including

construction of advanced naval ships and modern stealth aircraft being carried out at a feverish pitch by the Chinese military. Announcing the annual budget which includes the defence spending at the opening of the annual session of China's parliament, the National People's Congress (NPC) Chinese Premier Li said last year (made major new progress in national defence and military development.

Li emphasised on the Chinese President Xi Jinping's core leadership of the ruling Communist Party as well as the People's Liberation Army (PLA) and the military follow the party leadership.

Xi is also the Chairman of the Central Military Commission (CMC) which is the overall high command of the military. Continued on page 2

Senior IPS daughter into gold smuggling

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) on Wednesday said that the gold bars seized from Kannada actress Ranya Rao at the Kempegowda International Airport were valued at ₹12.56 Crore. Rao is the stepdaughter of senior IPS officer Kamachandra Rao, a senior police official said. The DGP-rank officer is currently serving as the Chairman and Managing Director of the Karnataka State Police Housing and Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited.

Her father Rao said he was not aware of daughter's activities. "She got married four months ago and hasn't visited us since. We are unaware of her or her husband's business dealings. This has come as a huge shock and disappointment. The law will take its course," said Rao, adding "she has let us down.

The total seizure in the case stood at ₹17.29 Crore, including assets worth Rs 4.73 Crore, marking a significant blow to organised gold smuggling networks.



the 14.2 kg haul is one of the largest gold seizures at Bengaluru airport in recent times. In a statement, the Ministry of Finance said the DRI successfully intercepted a passenger carrying foreignorigin gold bars worth ₹12.56 crore at the Kempegowda International Airport, Bengaluru. specific "Acting

intelligence, DRI officers intercepted an Indian woman, aged around 33, who had arrived from Dubai to Bengaluru on an Emirates flight on March 3. Upon examination, gold bars weighing 14.2 kg were found ingeniously concealed on her person," the statement read.

Continued on page 2

Naxal as maid nabbed

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

The Delhi police Crime Branch has arrested a 23year-old woman Naxal operative from Jharkhand, who had been living in the national capital and working as a domestic helper under a false identity, from Pitampura area of outer Delhi.

The accused, identified as 'R," had been residing in Pitampura since 2020 and was taken into custody following a crime branch operation based on secret intelligence. Originally, a resident of

Village Kudaburu in West Simbhum district of Jharkhand, she was wanted in connection with multiple police encounters and was booked under various sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), Arms Act, Explosives Act, and the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, according to Delhi Police. On March 26, 2023, a non-bailable warrant was issued against her by a court in Iharkhand.

The alleged Naxalite arrived in Delhi in 2020 and after assuming a false identity took up work as a domestic helper in Noida and various parts of Pitampura.

Delhi, eventually settling in "Based on months of

surveillance and intelligence gathering, the crime branch received credible information about the presence of a Maoist extremist in the National Capital Region (NCR), Deputy Commissioner of Police (Crime) Vikram Singh said.

The officer further said that on March 4, the team carried out a raid in Maharana Pratap Enclave, Pitampura, resulting in the arrest of the Naxalite. The accused was born into a farming family and was recruited into the CPI (Maoist) faction at the age of

received intensive "She training for five years at a camp led by a commander Ramesh named Jharkhand's Kolhan forest. training covered ing sophisticated The handling sophisticated weapons such as INSAS rifles, SLRs, LMGs, hand grenades and .303 rifles," DCP said. In 2016, she joined the CPI

(Maoist) extremist group led by Ramesh, whose camp was situated in the hills of the Kolhan forest. At the time, the camp accommodated 300-450 individuals, including 40-50 women, 4-5 children of her age. Her involvement in Naxal involvement in Naxal activities began when she was 10-years-old

Continued on page 2



Al trainer under lens, pilots grounded | SP MLA Abu Asim Azmi suspended

TN RAGHUNATHA MUMBAI:

India (AI) All Illula (III)
Wednesday terminated the services of a trainer pilot for lapses, while it removed 10 other pilots -- who underwent training under the trainer pilot ---from flying duties pending an investigation.

The AI management's action against the trainer pilot came after a whistle-blower alleged that a simulator trainer pilot had failed to properly discharge his duties during recurrent simulator training for pilots.

"A detailed investigation was conducted and, following a review of the evidence, the allegation was corroborated. Accordingly, the said trainer pilot's services are being terminated," an AI statement

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

38-day

pilgrimage to the holy cave

shrine of Shri Amarnath ji in

South Kashmir is all set to

According to an official spokesperson, the decision to

this effect was taken at the

48th board meeting of Shri

Amarnath Ji Shrine Board

chairmanship of Lt Governor

Manoj Sinha at Raj Bhawan in

"This year, the yatra will commence on July 3, simultaneously from both the

routes - the Pahalgam track in

Anantnag district and Baltal

in Ganderbal district, and it

under

commence from July 3.

underwent recurrent training under the trainer pilot have been removed from flying duties pending further investigation," the statement

As per the complaint, the simulator trainer pilot did not perform his duties during the regular training sessions for pilots, though the details of exact nature of the purported lapses were not immediately available.

Air India had in the past faced action from the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) for failing to report certain incidents and nondisclosures.

After initiating action against its trainer pilot and taking off 10 other pilots from the flying India has

Amarnath yatra to start on July 3

meeting was attended by

members of the shrine board

which proposed various

measures and interventions to

further improve the facilities

and services for the devotees.

Considering the likely increased inflow of pilgrims

for the Amarnath Yatra, the

meeting discussed measures

for the enhancement of

lodgement capacity at centres

in Jammu, Srinagar and other

locations, operationalization

of yatri facilitation centres for

e-KYC, issuance of RFID

cards, on-spot registration of

pilgrims at number of

locations including Nowgam

and Katra railway stations, the

Raksha Bandhan,"

"As a precaution, ten pilots who voluntarily reported the matter to the DGCA as part of our voluntary disclosure practice, and has commended the whistle-blower for stepping forward

It may be recalled that the Tata Group took over loss-making India from the Government in January 2022. In a statement, Air India said that it had implemented the Tata Code of Conduct to establish clear behavioural expectations and accelerate cultural change to that of a Tata Group company.

"This included comprehensive training for all employees on Tata's ethos and ethics-related policies, such as anti-bribery anti-corruption whistleblowing, among others," it added. "An Apex Ethics Committee

the discussed that these facilities

requirement.

enhanced at Baltal, Pahalgam,

Nunwan, and Pantha Chowk

Srinagar, as per the

Reviewing the progress

achieved on various ongoing

works undertaken by the line

departments, the LG stressed

on the need for ensuring

adequate arrangements and

requisite amenities at various

locations enroute the yatra.

He also called for increasing

capacity at Yatri Niwas, Pantha Chowk, Srinagar, the

spokesperson

decongestion measures at holy

cave and lower holy cave

among others were also

deliberated in detail in the

spokesperson said.

spokesperson said. He said the must also be suitably

led by senior management oversees efforts to foster a culture with zero tolerance for unethical behaviour. Extensive awareness campaigns are regularly conducted reinforce expectations," statement said

TN RAGHUNATHA MUMBAI

In a significant development that came a day after he

came in a severe flak from

members of both the Houses

Legislature, Samajwadi Party

MLA Abu Asim Azmi was on

Wednesday suspended from

the State Legislative Assembly

for the entire budget session eulogising

Parliamentary Affairs Minister

Chandrakant Patil moved a

motion seeking suspension of

Azmi, a four-time MLA, for

the remainder of the ongoing

budget session. During the discussion that followed, senior ruling BJP MLA Sudhir

Mungantiwar upped the ante and rooted for the termination

Speaker

Narwekar put the motion

seeking Azmi's suspension moved by Patil to voice vote

which was adopted unanimously by the House.

Following the adoption of the

motion, the SP MLA will remain suspended till the

remainder of the budget session which will end on

Earlier, speaking on the

motion seeking suspension of

Azmi from the House, Patil

said that the Samajwadi Party

Aurangzeb as "an able administrator" and made an

objectionable remark about

Maharaj, son of iconic

Maratha warrior Chhatrapati

process, Azmi tarnished the

image of the State Assembly.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

had

described

Sambhaji

"In the

March 26.

Chhatrapati

Shivaji Maharaj.

of Azmi's membership.

the

emperor Aurangzeb.

Maharashtra

Mughal

According to AI, a structured process for capturing conducting allegations, investigations and enforcing strict consequences was also introduced. These are logged by a team, and investigated experienced independent external interference.

The airline said that under this process, in 2024 alone more than 30 Air India employees have been terminated for various ethical breaches, with numerous others receiving other disciplinary action.

CBI signals rail to haul...

From page 1

"From 2015 to till date more than seven Crores candidates have been examined through computer based tests without paper leakage impersonation, remote login, and use of spy devices," explained a railway board official. The process involves selection of exam conducting agency through an open tender will have to go strict auditing checklist for all the available facilities like toilet outside not allowed, 100 percent CCTV coverage and recording to be done two hours pre-exam and one hour post exams.

The SOPs involves IP based CCTV surveillance for better resolution, reliable and uninterrupted connection; isolation from commercial and other residential area. "All mouse and key clicks to be recorded with time stamp audit purpose. Information about city of exam to be disclosed 10 days before the actual date of examination venue/centre of examination has to be made available only four days before the exam Exam centre will be allotted through a computerized and generation randomised avoiding manual intervention," said official. The conducting team and the exam centre personnel will get the information about candidate just two hours before the examination. The board decided that the question paper has to be in bit encryption) and last minute decryption will happen only when the candidate actually logs in. Finally multiple layers of invigilation will monitor the entire exercise to make it fool

his questionable remarks. Azmi should be suspended from the House till the last day of the ongoing Assembly session," the minister said. "My suspension is nothing but

Taking serious cognisance of

from Maharashtra state Assembly

injustice done not just to me but to the millions of people whom I represent... I would like to ask the government whether two types of laws are followed in the state? One law for Abu Azmi and another law for Prashant Koratkar and Rahul Sholapurkar, "Azmi said in a video post on X.

'I have said whatever historians and writers have claimed about Aurangzeb Rahmatullah Ali... I have not made any derogatory comments about Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, Sambhaji Maharaj. But still, if anyone has been hurt by my statement, then I take back my words, my statement," Azmi

Azmi said that his side should have been heard before ordering his suspension. "I will approach the Speaker for remedy. I will also explore avenues where I can get justice," he said.

Azmi's suspension from the Maharashtra Assembly evoked strong reactions - both in his defence and against him. Slamming the Maharashtra Assembly's decision to suspend Azmi, former Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister and Party Samaiwadi Akhilesh Yadav wrote on X, he "If the basis of said: suspension starts getting influenced by ideology, then what difference will remain freedom between

In his defence of Azmi, Azmi said: "Whether it is our MLAs or MPs, their fearless wisdom is unmatched. If some people think that by 'suspension' one can put a rein on the tongue of truth, then this is the childishness of their negative thinking. Today's free thinking

person says, 'we don't want

expression and slavery".

Uttar Pradesh chief minister and BJP leader Yogi Adityanath said: "I want to tell and BJP Samajwadi Party leaders that they believe in the thoughts of the person in whose name you do politics. Today, the Samajwadi Party is moving away from the principles of Dr Ram Manohar Lohia. They have made Aurangzeb their idol....Remove that person from (Samajwadi) party and send him to UP, we will

provide him necessary treatment....The person who feels ashamed about the heritage of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, instead of taking and considers Aurangzeb as his idol, does he have the right to stay in our country?" 'On one hand, you keep

blaming Mahakumbh; on the other hand, you praise a person like Aurangzeb, who destroyed the temples of the country. Why can't you control that MLA of yours? Why didn't you condemn his statement?," Adityanath said. In the heated debate that took place in both the Houses of the Maharashtra Legislature on Tuesday, Shinde ďubbed Azmi as a descendent of Aurangzeb. Members in both the Houses came down heavily on the

controversial Mughal emperor who, they said, tortured Sambhaji Maharaj killed brutally Maharashtra deputy Chief Minister and Shiv Sena chief Eknath Shinde led the attack on Azmi both the State Assembly and Council. The members claimed Azmi

was a descendent of Aurangzeb, who tortured Maratha king Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj and brutally killed him. Deputy Chief Minister and Shiv Sena head Eknath Shinde led the attack on Azmi both in the legislative council and

assembly. Speaking in the Upper House, Shinde said: "Abu Azmi is purposely insulting Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and (his son) Chhatrapati Sambhaji's Sambhaji. Maharaj's bravery and Aurangzeb's cruelty will give goose-bumps to people".

Aurangzeb tortured Sambhaji Maharaj in an inhuman way. Abu Azmi referred to Aurangzeb as an able administrator who built temples but he razed Kashi Vishveshwar temple. The Mughal emperor not only killed Hindus but also people from other religions," Shinde

"Aurangzeb lost even after he won, but Sambhaji, through his bravery, won even after his sacrifice. He (Aurangzeb) was a demon.Even a true Muslim will not forgive the progeny of traitors. It is wrong to eulogise Aurangzeb," Shinde said, as he demanded the termination of the membership of Azmi

spokesperson said. deliberat He said it was further meeting. will culminate on August 9 on **CBI Bofors next**

From page 1

Jammu.

The CBI got a green signal from the Union Home Ministry on sending the LR to the US on January 14 this year. The agency informed the Special Court, which cleared the LR application of the CBI on February 11. "It is requested that in order to

collect both documentary as well as oral evidence, for ascertaining the fact relating to the claims made by Michael Hershman, in the abovementioned interview, it is conduct investigation in the United court had noted while clearing The Delhi High Court had advocate Ajay Aggarwal in the CBI's application for the

"We will stay committed to

the Party's absolute leadership

over the people's armed

forces, thoroughly implement the system of ultimate responsibility resting with the chairman of the Central

continue improving the political conduct of the

leadership of the Communist

Party unlike the armed forces

of other countries which

government.
"We will step up military

and

readiness, speed up the

development of new combat

capabilities, and establish a

under

Chinese

Military

military," he said.

functioned

functioned

training

framework

Commission,

under the

of modern

military

combat

had registered the case in 1990, three years after a Swedish radio channel had alleged that bribes were paid by Bofors to politicians and defence officials of India to clinch the deal. The allegations created a big scandal for the then Rajiv Gandhi-led Union government and have been used by rival parties to target the Congress.

The Bofors Scam pertains to allegations of a Rs 64-crore bribe in a Rs 1,437-crore deal with Swedish firm Bofors for the supply of 400 155mm field Howitzers. The CBI filed the exonerated Rajiv Gandhi in 2005.

China raises stakes for India, US

Chinese characteristics, so as

to firmly safeguard China's

sovereignty, security, and development interests," Li

said in his work report submitted to the NPC.

On Tuesday, Lou Qinjian,

spokesperson for the NPC, defended China's increasing

defence expenditure, saying

that "peace needs to be

kept under 1.5 per cent for

In his budget speech, Li said

China will complete the tasks

laid down in the 14th Five-

Year Plan for strengthening said.

safeguarded with strength".

maintained growth

many years.

military theories with the military, intensify the

Since 2016, China's annual support for the development

China's defence expenditure support between civilian as a share of GDP has been sectors and the military, so as

growth for nine years in a mechanisms row, he said, adding that strengthening

reforms,

defence-related

single-digit armed forces and refine the

strengthening

technology, he said.

issuance of the LRs. The CBI 2004, nearly 13 years after he was assassinated by the LTTE in a suicide attack.

In 2005, the Delhi High Court quashed all charges against the remaining accused noting that the CBI failed to prove that the money transferred by Bofors to various agents by Italian Ottavio businessman Quattrocchi was meant to be paid as a bribe to public

2005 decision in the apex court in 2018 but it was

servants in India. The CBI appealed against the

dismissed on the grounds of delay. The Supreme Court, however, allowed it to raise all the points in an appeal filed by

implementation of major

defence-related projects, and

move faster to develop the

network information system.

The government will also

promote military-civilian

framework and layout of

'We in government at every

level will provide strong

of national defence and the

to consolidate and strengthen

the rock-solid unity between

the military and the

government and between the

military and the people," he

refine

science,

for

mutual

The Gurugram Metropolitan Development Authority (GMDA) has signed an MoU with Maruti Suzuki India Ltd (MDIL) and Utkrisht Society

> management as well as increase safety on the city The objective of this project is to eliminate/reduce manual intervention enforcement and challan system, reduce traffic fatalities by implementation of strengthen ITMS and enforcement of traffic rules as

through traffic enforcement.

Canada slams US trade war

the US in 2023 in Michigan,

Ontario Premier Doug Ford

also told The Associated Press

that he would stop the sale of

nickel and rare minerals to the

Ontario and other provinces

already began removing

American liquor brands from

government store shelves. The

Ontario sells nearly USD 1

billion Canadian dollars (USD

687 million) worth of

American wine, beer, spirits

A government official said

and seltzers every year.

Liquor Control Board of

New York and Minnesota.

powered 1.5 million homes in Lutnick called Ford after

for Safe Harvana, to further

strengethen effective traffic

junctions in Gurugram and Manesar areas have already been installed. These camera feeds are monitored round the clock by police department for city surveillance & traffic management. MSIL will further install 400

wherein 1200 cameras at 218

Gurugram signs MoU with Maruti

to improve traffic management

CCTV cameras equipped ITMS technologies which would include hardware and software for Red Light Violation Detection System (RLVDS), Speed Violation Detection System (SVDS), Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR), helmet detection, Electronic Challan System at multiple junctions of various road stretches in the well as induce behavioral City and ensure its integration change of road commuters with GMDA command and control center to monitor the GMDA has already completed traffic in the city.
Phase 1 of the CCTV project Additionally, Utkrisht Society

Ford's press conference and

asked him to stand down. The

official, who spoke on

because they were not

authorised to speak publicly

the US commerce secretary

The official said Lutnick told

Ford that Trudeau's "very

comments by other Canadian

officials were not helpful, but

said Lutnick seemed to

acknowledge the tariffs are a

part of negotiation toward a

comment

about the call, said Ford told

condition of

he'll go harder.

dumb"

trade deal.

anonymity

and

for Safe Haryana, is a non-profit initiative of Haryana State Police set up with an aim public-private to foster partnership on the subject of safety, between the Haryana Police and the industry in the state, with road safety being one of the focus areas.

The Haryana State Police is responsible for the maintenance of law and order for the entire City including road traffic management as well as for the improvement of road safety in the City.

The Gurugram Police works in

coordination with GMDA, Municipal Corporation of Gurugram (MCG), Public Works Department, Haryana, National Highways Authority of India etc., and is responsible for traffic enforcement as well as investigation and data collection of road crashes within the City. "GMDA, MSIL and Utkirsh Society will collaboratively work towards intensifying improved traffic management systems in Gurugram," said said P.K. Aggrawal, Consultant, Smart City Division, GMDA.

Senior IPS daughter into gold smuggling

From page 1

According to the Ministry, the contraband, valued at Rs 12.56 crore, was seized under the provisions of the Customs Act, 1962

"Following the interception, DRI officers searched her residence on Lavelle Road, Bengaluru, where she lives

with her husband. The search led to the seizure of gold jewellery worth Rs 2.06 Crore and Indian currency amounting to Rs 2.67 Crore," the statement added. The 32 year old actress was charged under the anti-smuggling provisions of the Customs Act, 1962, and remanded to

14 days of judicial custody.

Naxal as maid nabbed

From page 1

She joined the notorious Naxalite camp Bhakpa Maovadi Ugarvadi Jeevan Bhakpa Kandulna. During her time there, she underwent a rigorous and intense training regimen for five years, where she was groomed as a trained Naxalite.

Between 2018 and 2020, she actively participated in three with encounters Jharkhand Police -- first in Kolhan (2018), then in Porahat (2019), and later in Sonua (2020) alongside her company commander, Jeevan Kandula.. Following these confrontations, she was instructed by her faction commanders to relocate to Delhi, said the DCP.

During her interrogation, it is revealed that it is revealed that she had undergone training extensive sophisticated handling weapons, including SLR, INSAS, LMG, Hand Grenade and the 303 rifle, among others. During foot patrols with the gang, she uses to carry INSAS rifle.

Acting on the instructions of her faction commander, she relocated to Delhi. Upon arriving in Delhi in 2020, she

and began working as a house cleaner in Noida, Uttar Pradesh, and various parts of Delhi. She settled in the Pitampura area, where she remained undetected, living discreetly

Multiple FIRs were registered against her at Sonua Police Station, Jharkhand, under serious charges, including criminal conspiracy, attempt to murder, and waging war against the state. She will be produced before the court for further legal proceedings. The arrestee is wanted in case

FIR No. 19 dated 11.04.2020, registered under Section 147/148/149/307/353/120B/1 21/121-A Indian Penal Code, 1860, read with Section 25(1A)/25(1B)(a)/35 Arms Act, read with Section 3/4/17 Explosive Act, read with Section 10/13 Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, Police Station Sonua, Jharkhand. On 26.03.2023, the court of SDJM (P), Chaibasa, Jharkhand, issued a Non-Bailable Warrant for the arrest of the lady accused (R). Accused arrestee "R" has been booked by way of Kalandara under Section 41.1 Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 read with Section

35(1)(C) Bharatiya Nagarik

Suraksha Sanhita 2023.

TRUMP VOWS TO TARIFF INDIA BACK

From page 1

"Canadians

are

Canadians are angry. We are

going to choose to not go on

vacation in Florida," Trudeau

said. "We are going to choose to try and buy Canadian

products ... And yeah we're

probably going to keep booing

The premier of Ontario,

Canada's most populous

province, said that he would

issue a 25 per cent export tax

on electricity sold to the US

and may later cut it off

completely if the American

persist.

the American anthem."

hurt.

Ontario

"Whatever they tax us, we will tax them. If they do nonmonetary tariffs to keep us out of their market, then we will do non-monetary barriers to keep them out of our market. There's a lot of that too. They don't even allow us in their market. We will take in trillions and trillions of dollars and create jobs like we have never seen

before," Trump said. He added that "I did it with China, and I did it with others and the Biden administration couldn't do anything about it because it was so much money they couldn't do anything about it."

He added that the US has very large deficits with both Mexico and Canada. "But even more importantly, they have allowed fentanyl to come into our country at levels never seen before, killing hundreds of thousands of our citizens and many very young, beautiful people, destroying families. Nobody's ever seen anything like it. They are in effect receiving subsidies of hundreds of billions of dollars. We pay subsidies to Canada and to Mexico of hundreds of billions of dollars. And the United States will not be doing that any longer. We are not going to do it any longer." Trump is implementing a 25 Prime Minister Modi in the

per cent additional tariff on imports from Canada and Mexico and a 10 per cent additional tariff on imports from China. In a retaliatory action, Canada said that effective March 4, 2025, it is imposing 25 per cent tariffs on USD 30 billion in goods imported from the United States.

Mexico said it will announce reciprocal action on Sunday. China also announced it will impose additional tariffs of up to 15 per cent on imports of

key US farm products. In the past, Trump has called India "tariff king" and a "big abuser". Last month, during a joint press conference with

White House, Trump had said that India has "been very strong on tariffs", and "I don't blame them, necessarily, but it's a different way of doing business. It's very hard to sell into India because they have trade barriers, very strong Trump had noted that as a

signal of good faith, Modi had recently announced the reductions to India's "unfair, very strong tariffs" that limit US access into the Indian market very strongly.

'And really, it's a big problem, I must say. India imposes a 30 to 40 to 60 and even 70 per cent tariff on so many of the goods and, in some cases, far more than that. As an on US cars going into India, which makes it pretty much impossible to sell those cars." Trump had said that the US trade deficit with India is almost USD 100 billion, and Modi and he agreed that 'we'll begin negotiations to address the long-running disparities that should have been taken care of over the last four years — but they didn't do that — in the US-India trading relationship, with the goal of signing an

"Ānd we want — really, we want a certain level playing field, which we really think we're entitled to, and he does also, in fairness, so we're (USD 2.4 billion) over 2023. | concealed her true identity

agreement.

billion in 2024.

billion, up 3.4 per cent (USD 2024, a 5.4 per cent increase

hard," Trump said. Commerce Minister Piyush

trade talks with his US total goods trade with India was an estimated USD 129.2

1.4 billion) from 2023. US goods imports from India totalled USD 87.4 billion in 2024, up 4.5 per cent (USD 3.7 billion) from 2023. The US goods trade deficit with India was USD 45.7 billion in

going to work on that very Goyal is in Washington for counterpart Howard Lutnick. As per US estimates, the US

The US goods exports to India in 2024 were USD 41.8



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MINISTRY OF

BJP, Congress slam Kejriwal's grand security parade: 'VIP arrogance at its peak'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) chief Arvind Kejriwal came under fire on Wednesday as the rival BJP and Congress criticised him for using a "VIP convoy" despite not holding a constitutional post.

BJP and Congress leaders slammed

Kejriwal's extravagant security arrangements, questioning how he who claims to be a "common man" could be travelling with a convoy of luxury cars, fire brigades, ambulances, and over 100 commandos, especially since he is no longer an MLA or chief minister. His own party's Rajya Sabha MP, Swati Maliwal, also criticised Kejriwal for his massive cavalcade, claiming it was "bigger

than Donald Trump's." Highlighting the absence of Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann from the convoy, the BJP accused Kejriwal of displaying "VIP arrogance at its peak."

Amid an ongoing buzz over his potential entry into the Rajya Sabha, Kejriwal who is currently in Punjab to attend a 10-day Vipassana meditation course at the Dhamma Dhaja Vipassana Centre near Hoshiarpur, beginning from Wednesday. Accompanied by the cavalcade, which included more than 100 Punjab police personnel and bulletproof vehicles, the couple was escorted by a convoy, which raised the eyebrows of many. The controversy erupted over his "grand security parade" in the state, at the cost of public money, as the "lavish convoy" included ambulances and fire brigades and luxurious cars following him to the

Vipassana centre. The BJP launched a scathing attack on Kejriwal accusing him of using his 10-day Vipassana meditation retreat in Punjab as a pretext to enjoy a lavish lifestyle. Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva also claimed that Kejriwal is seeking a Rajya Sabha seat after his party lost the Assembly polls in the national capital. "After losing the election, he (Kejriwal) is now looking for a Rajya Sabha seat because he is addicted to a luxurious lifestyle. Vipassana is just an excuse, the real reason for his presence in Punjab is the turmoil in the AAP's Punjab unit,"

Sachdeva said. He also criticised the highsecurity arrangements for Kejriwal in Punjab. Responding to concerns over the AAP leader's security, Sachdeva said, "What kind of threat does he have from Khalistani elements with whom he had dined and from whom his party collects money? It is a fact that the AAP has been taking funds from these anti-national elements for elections. This is nothing but

a trick to loot public money."

In a sarcastic tweet on Wednesday, Maliwal who recently accused Kejriwal of shifting priorities for power following speculations that he may enter the Upper House from Punjab asked why he was "so afraid of the people of Punjab who have given so much love". "Kejriwal, who criticises the whole world for VIP culture, is today roaming around with a security cover bigger than Donald Trump," she

Delhi Minister Manjinder Singh Sirsa also criticised the AAP national convenor over the alleged misuse of public funds, questioning the extensive security and arrangements during his visit to Punjab. "There are cars worth more than '2 Crore, fire brigades, ambulances, and more than 100 commandos in his (Arvind Kejriwal's) convoy for his 'Vipassana' What type of a common man is he?... Arvind Kejriwal is wasting Punjab's money. His purpose is not 'Vipassana' but to fulfil his dream of becoming a CM... The people of Ludhiana will never let Sanjeev Arora (candidate from Ludhiana West) win,' he said.

The Congress has also spared no words to slam Kejriwal. Congress leader Sandeep Dikshit, who contested the New Delhi seat against Kejriwal and BJP's Parvesh Verma in the February 5 Delhi Assembly polls, accused the AAP chief of getting used to a "pompous and lavish lifestyle".

Thave been saying for 10 years that he is greedy for power. When he used to get votes on the basis of simplicity, even then, we used to say that his simplicity was just a pretence... He has become so used to the extravagance that comes with power that he has 100 vehicles in his convoy to accompany him for a meditation retreat," Dikshit added

AAP cannot dictate government's agenda: CM Rekha Gupta |

Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Wednesday hit out at Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), asserting the opposition party cannot dictate her government's agenda while reiterernment's agenda while reiterating the BJP dispensation's commitment to fulfilling its poll promises. "Nobody needs to remind us how many days are left... We will work as per our agenda, they will not dictate it," said Gupta.

The AAP has been mounting pressure on the newly-formed

pressure on the newly-formed BJP government to expedite the rollout of its promised scheme of providing ₹2,500 monthly assistance for women. The party has consistently raised the issue in the first assembly session and staged multiple protests.

In the run-up to the BJP-led Delhi government's first budget, Gupta held a series of meetings, including with women's groups, to address key issues concerning women's safety, financial assistance, education and infrastructure. As part of these consultations, she also interacted with private school associations and trade bodies to gather inputs for the 'Viksit Delhi Budget' set to be presented between March 24

Gupta led a detailed discussion with women's groups during the 'Mahila Samvad' at the Delhi Vidhan Sabha, where the participants



CM Rekha Gupta during interaction with women's organisations regarding 'Viksit Delhi Budget' in New Delhi

educational opportunities, She highlighted the ongoing installation of CCTV cameras consultations with women's and access to sanitation facilities. She assured that their feedback would be taken into account in the budget. "Detailed dialogue was held

with various women's organisations for the expectations and suggestions from the budget were of the developed Delhi Budget 2025-26. During this, ensure they are incorporated into government policies "the important topics related to women's empowerment and welfare were discussed will be towards incorporating the suggestions received in this meaningful discussion in the draft of the

upcoming budget," she said. organisations for upcoming Viksit Delhi Budget and said the discussions covered various issues, including health, safety and economic empowerment. "All expectations of women into government policies," the

Viksit Delhi budget, women mainly raised issues like women safety, financial assistance,

Chief Minister said.

women's participation, better education, CCTV cameras and availability of toilets. She said that "the work which the Delhi government could not do earlier, will definitely

be completed now by her government. Necessary steps will be taken by the government on health, education, special facilities for women and other important issues. It is important that we

work by understanding the

expectations and needs of the

Following her meeting with private school associations, Gupta emphasised the government's commitment to

bridging the gap between private and government schools. "Our vision is for schools. "Our vision is for schools to guide and support students while we work together to make Delhi's education system the best in the country," she said. The chief minister also met with trade organisations at the Delhi Secretariat to seek their inputs and announced plans to visit slum areas over the next three days to interact directly with women and youth. "The upcoming Delhi budget will be one that fulfils the hopes of the people," she asserted, reaffirming her commitment implementing the

election promises. Gupta announced that over the next three days, she would visit the slum areas to interact with women and understand their concerns.

Additionally, she plans to engage with youth to know their perspectives. "The objective of this dialogue program is to improve the living standards of the citizens of Delhi, especially women, and to make the budget according to the needs of all those sections," the Chief Minister remarked.

"The upcoming Delhi budget will be one that fulfils the hopes of the people," she asserted, reiterating her commitment implementing all promises lection

manifesto. The chief minister further stated that there have been many issues which have been

pending since the last government. She also said that they will take opinion of experts and law and ensure that animal rights are protected and also help the public.

or the problem of stray does across problem of stray dogs across the city. We will have to take the opinion of experts and the law on this. We have to work to ensure that animal rights

to ensure that animal rights are protected and also help the public," said Gupta.
Earlier on Wednesday, AAP workers put up posters across Delhi with the message "only three more days," seeking to build pressure on the BJP government. government government over its "promise" to roll out ₹2,500 monthly financial assistance to women by March 8. March

celebrated International Women's Day. The AAP has been pressing the newly-formed BJP government to accelerate the implementation of its ₹2,500 monthly financial assistance scheme for women.

The party has repeatedly raised the issue in the Assembly, staged multiple protests, and even put up posters across Delhi with the message "only three more days", highlighting the government's promise to roll out the scheme by March 8, which coincides

EWS admission: First draw conducted on Wednesday



Delhi Education Minister Ashish Sood

Pioneer photo

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI**

The first computerised draw of lots for admission of students under the Economically Weaker Section (EWS) and Disadvantaged Group (DG) categories for entry-level classes in private schools was conducted on Wednesday for 42,000 seats. According to Delhi Education Minister Ashish Sood, the draw of lots was organised in the presence of parents and media to ensure limit of 2.5 Lakh increased to five Lakh.

To ensure that the process was completely fair and beyond any doubt, the draw was conducted digitally standalone through a computer, eliminating any chances of manipulation.
Multiple television screens
were installed at the venue so that parents could witness the process in real-

At the event, two children were given the honor of initiating the draw.

Bhavesh, a resident of Shamnath Marg, son of Gayatri, pressed the draw button for KG and Class 1, while Bhavika, daughter of Anita from Laxmi Nagar, initiated the draw for Nursery.

This year, the Delhi Government has also taken a major step towards educationexpanding accessibility by increasing the EWS income limit from

allowing more children from underprivileged backgrounds to benefit from quality schooling. Sood said that in previous

₹2.5 Lakh to ₹5 Lakh,

years, the admission process lacked transparency. For nursery admissions, a total of 24,933 seats were available, for which 1,00,854 applications were received. For Kindergarten (KG), 4,682 seats were available, attracting applications.

In class 1, 14,430 seats were 62,598 applicants, shared.

The minister added that the schools for entry-level admissions were around 3,134 — 1,299 for nursery, 622 for KG and 1,213 for class 1. "The draw for nursery was successfully conducted, and all data was immediately secured. A three-member committee was directed to send a signed CD containing the information to the Director of Education," Sood said. Once the results are declared, parents and guardians can verify the admission status by visiting

Delhi at edudel.nic.in. To check the results, they need to navigate to the designated admission section, enter the required details such as the application number or registered credentials, and view the allotment status.

the official website of the

Directorate of Education

Parvesh Verma inspects Yamuna by boat, highlights garbage removed

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

As the Yamuna river's purifi-cation was amongst the principal commitments pledged by the BJP during the recentlyconcluded assembly elections here, Delhi Irrigation and Flood Control Minister Parvesh Verma on Wednesday inspected the Yamuna by boat to evaluate the cleaning project and said 1,300 tonnes of garbage had been removed from the river in the past 10 days. He took a boat ride at the boat club and went to Signature Bridge and from Signature Bridge to Okhla Barrage via Chhat Ghat at ITO. The minister also interacted with officials overseeing the operations and cleaning reviewed progress on various sites. The focus is on the 13 km stretch from Signature Bridge to ITO, and Okhla Barrage to Chhat Ghat ITO, which is extremely polluted.

Later, he held a meeting with officials to assess the progress of the cleanup effort and said, "All drains in Delhi will be connected to sewage treatment plants (STPs) and their capacity will be increased to prevent untreated wastewater from flowing into the river." Cleaning the Yamuna was one of the key promises made by the BJP for the recentlyconcluded Delhi Assembly

Minister further elaborated the government's initiatives on the cleaning of the river and stated that the development of the Yamuna Riverfront has already begun; adding that the government will increase the capacity of the



the cleanliness efforts at Yamuna ghats in New Delhi

STPs (Sewage Treatment Plants) and new STPs will be set up in industrial

He also stated that sewage treatment plants (STPs) will be installed for the 18 major drains that release effluents into the river. "All STPs are expected to be installed within two years," Verma said.

He asserted that over the past decade, no significant efforts had been made to clean the river, "not even on paper." "It never even occurred to the previous government to work for the Yamuna. But now, not only the Delhi government but the PMO itself is involved," Verma added. "In 2023, Delhi faced a flood. Previously, all the floodgates were closed," Verma said. He assured people that there will not be a flood situation in the Capital again. The gates of barrages will be

raised wherever it is needed to

prevent flooding. "Our biggest commitment is to completely clean and restores

the Yamuna. As of now, 1,300 metric tonnes of garbage have been removed in the last 10 days," Verma said. Discussing future initiatives, Verma said common treatment

plants would be installed in industrial areas to ensure proper disposal of chemical Moreover, works to repair and

increase the height of security walls at the ITO Barrage gates are underway to prevent flooding, the minister said, adding special drives are also being conducted to clean the riverbanks and develop green zones. "We have instructed the Delhi Development Authority to develop the Yamuna Riverfront that would transform the riverbank into a tourism and cultural hub, Verma said.

Delhi police carries out citywide patrolling to strengthen security

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police have launched a citywide 'general gasht' (patrolling) aimed at providing heightened surveillance, preventing crime, and responding promptly to emergencies during the early hours, an official said on Wednesday. According to the police, the patrolling started at 9 pm on Tuesday and concluded around 2 am, with a heavy police presence across the national

This comes days after Union

Home Minister Amit Shah chaired a high-level law and order review meeting. Deputy Commissioner

Police (Dwarka) Ankit Singh said, "All police personnel from Dwarka, along with officials from units like IFSO, Special Cell, DPA, DAP, Crime Branch, Special Branch, Speci Special Branch, and traffic police, among others, patrolled high-priority areas, including residential colonies, commercial hubs, and public spaces.

He added that the patrolling, supported by both foot and vehicle patrols, with increased monitoring of vulnerable spots, helped deter criminal activity, reassured public confidence, and enhanced community engagement during the night. CČTV surveillance, APNR cameras, and mobile units were used to track suspicious activities and ensure rapid response capabilities, he said. During the operation, DCP (Southwest) Surendra Choudhary said that 500 police personnel, including seven Assistant Commissioners of Police (ACPs) and 111 upper subordinates, were deployed throughout the district.

Anti-encroachment drive carried out near Yamuna floodplain

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

An anti-encroachment drive was carried out on Wednesday near the Yamuna floodplain area in Delhi's northeast Shastri Park, leading to protests from local residents against the author-

ity. "To maintain law and order and prevent any disruptions during the demolition, a heavy police force was deployed, along paramilitary personnel," a senior police official said. Pinky Kashyap (21), a fivemonth pregnant woman with a one-and-a-half-year-

old daughter to take care of,

said, "Where will I go with

my child in this condition?

We don't have enough

money to rent a house or a room. My husband earns only ₹12,000 a month and, in a city like Delhi, it is extremely difficult to afford rent, along with other expenses."

Her husband works as a shopkeeper in Greater Kailash. Seema, in her 50s, has lived under the fear of displacement. That fear has now become a reality. 'We have lived in constant

fear that someone might come and ask us to leave. We are poor, where will we go with our children? If we could afford to pay rent, we would not have been living here," she said. According to a local, around

notice on March 2.

200 families residing there were served the eviction 6. Independents

SFI secures majority in AUDSC polls PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI

 $T^{
m he\ Students'\ Federation\ of}$ India (SFI) on Wednesday secured a majority in the Ambedkar University Delhi Students' Council (ÁUDSC) elections, winning 24 out of 45

Held after a six-year gap, the elections saw enthusiastic participation by students across campuses, with the SFI making significant gains on the Karampura campus besides making debut on the Lodhi Road and Qutub Institutional Area campuses, a statement issued by the SFI

The final seat tally on the Kashmere Gate campus saw the SFI winning 16 seats, AISA 4, ABVP 2, and

Karampura campus, the SFI won 5 seats, AISA 2, ABVP 1, and Independents 4.

The Lodhi Road campus saw the SFI secure 1 seat, with Independents winning the other 2, while the ABVP and AISA failed to open their accounts.

On the Qutub Institutional Area campus, the SFI won both seats, while the ABVP and AISA drew a blank.

The SFI has thus emerged as the leading force in the AUDSC and will play a key role in electing the fivemember central coordination committee (CCC), the highest decision-making body of the

council. "In 2018 and 2019, the SFI won the majority and led the CCC. This time, despite the administration's attempts to delay the elections, we ensured democracy was restored," Shefali, SFI secretary at Kashmere Gate, said.

The left-wing student organisation also claimed that the results reflected the rejection of right-wing student politics. Anan, SFI convenor at Karampura Gate, alleged that

the ABVP attempted to influence the students through faculty appointments in new departments, but failed to gain any traction."The students overwhelmingly rejected ABVP's communal and divisive politics," he said. Meanwhile, the All India Students' Association (AISA) also secured representation in the student council, but raised over concerns

irregularities in the election

Government approves ₹6,811 Crore 'Mangalsutra' jibe turning ropeway projects in Uttarakhand

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

The government on Wednesday approved two government on ropeway projects in Uttarakhand — Sonprayag to Kedarnath and Govindghat to Hemkund Sahib Ji — at a total cost of ₹6,811 Crore to help significantly reduce the travel time to the pilgrimage sites and boost tourism.

The construction of these two ambitious projects is likely to be completed in four to six years. The two ropeways will be constructed under the National Ropeways Development Programme -

Parvatmala Pariyojana. The decisions of the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, were announced by Information Broadcasting Ashwini Vaishnaw. Minister

The Sonprayag to Kedarnath ropeway is planned to be developed in public-private partnership and will be based on the most advanced Tricable Detachable Gondola technology having the capacity to carry 1,800 passengers per hour per direction (PPHPD), which could ferry 18,000 passengers

12.4-km ropeway project comfortable from Govindghat to connectivity Hemkund Sahib Ji too will be developed on Design, Build, Finance, Operate, and Transfer (DBFOT) mode at a total capital cost of ₹2,730.13

Currently, the journey to the Hemkund Sahib Ji is a challenging 21-km uphill trek from Govindghat and is covered on foot, by ponies or using palanquins. The proposed ropeway is planned to provide convenience to pilgrims visiting the Hemkund Sahib Ji and the tourists visiting the Valley of Flowers, and will ensure alllast-mile connectivity

connectivity between Govindghat and Hemkund Sahib Ji. The journey to the Kedarnath temple is a challenging 16-km uphill trek from Gaurikund and is currently covered on foot, ponies, palanquins and helicopter. The proposed ropeway is planned to provide convenience to pilgrims visiting the temple and ensure all-weather between connectivity Sonprayag and Kedarnath.

"The ropeway project will be a boon to the pilgrims

Vaishnaw informed that the environment-friendly, connectivity and reduce travel time in one direction from about eight to nine hours to about 36 minutes, an official release said.

The minister said 23 Lakh pilgrims visited Kedarnath shrine last year and the number is expected to rise to 36 Lakhs, with the ropeway project. The Hemkund Sahib Ji proposed ropeway would provide convenience to pilgrims and tourists visiting the Valley of Flowers. It will ensure all-weather last mile connectivity between Govindghat and Hemkund Sahib Ji.

This ropeway is also planned to be developed in public-private partnership and will be based on Monocable Detachable Gondola (MDG) from Govindghat to Ghangaria (10.55 km), seamlessly integrated with the most advanced Tricable Detachable Gondola (3S) technology from Ghangaria to Hemkund Sahib Ji (1.85 km) with the capacity to carry 1,100 passengers per hour per direction (PPHPD) and could ferry 11,000 passengers per dav.

Vaishnaw informed that 1.77 Kedarnath as it lakh people went to site, located in the pristine provide an Hemkund Sahib Ji last year. Garhwal Himalayas.

true: Kharge slams Modi

Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge on Wednesday attacked Prime Minister Narendra Modi over rise in gold loans and said his remarks during the Lok Sabha polls campaign about 'stealing of mangalsutras' have come true with women forced to mortgage their gold ornaments under his rule.

Citing media reports, Kharge claimed that between 2019 and 2024, four crore women mortgaged their gold and took a loan of ₹4.7 Lakh Crore.

In 2024, 38 per cent of the total loans taken by women are from gold loans, he said. In February 2025, RBI data showed that gold loans

increased by a whopping 71.3 per cent in a year, the Congress chief said.
"Narendra Modi ji, you had talked about 'stealing of mangalsutras'. That has now come true. In your rule, women have been forced to mortgage their gold ornaments.

First you made women's 'stri-dhan' disappear by implementing demonetisation, now due to inflation and falling household savings, they are financiers are cutting down run," Kharge said, hitting forced to mortgage their on lending for the first time out at the prime minister.



Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge

most valuable thing — their jewelery," Kharge said in his post in Hindi on X. During the Lok Sabha polls

campaign last year, Modi had alleged that the Congress will take away 'mangalsutras' redistribute the wealth of the

Kharge alleged that the Modi government has worsened the condition of the economy so much that middle class families who buy two-wheelers are now unable to repay their loans. In view of rising loan defaults, two-wheeler

since 2019, he claimed. He said 75 per cent of people buy two-wheelers on loan so that they can repay it slowly, but the financial crunch is so severe that as compared to last year, loans worth about ₹2 Lakh Crore are still outstanding till September 2024, which has increased by ₹40,000 Crore in a year. Two-wheeler sales have declined by six per cent in February 2025, Kharge

"Recession, financial crunch and reduction in spending capacity - this is the essence of the economy you run," Kharge said, hitting

added.

'Hindu awakening' on agenda of RSS top body meeting

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

An analysis of the prevailing scenario in the country, including the issue of "Hindu awakening", is on the agenda of a three-day meeting of the Akhil Bharatiya Pratinidhi Sabha, the highest decision-making body of the RSS, that is scheduled to begin in Bengaluru from March 21.

The meeting will also prepare a framework of various programmes and campaigns to be taken up this year and review the progress made on the work that was expected to be completed in the run-up to the centenary year of the Swayamsevak (RSS), the Rashtriya Sangh organisation said in a statement.

The RSS will complete 100 years of its foundation on Vijayadashami (Dussehra) this year.

In [']a statement, Akhil Bharatiya Prachar Pramukh of the RSS Sunil Ambekar said the meeting of the Akhil Bharatiya Pratinidhi Sabha will be held in Bengaluru from March 21 to March 23. The meeting will be held on the premises of the Janseva Vidya Kendra located at

Channenahalli. Ambekar said the annual report of the RSS for 2024-25 will be discussed at the meeting. "Along with the critical analysis on it, reporting on special initiatives (of the Sangh) will also be done at the meeting," including country,

to be done in the run-up to the completion of 100 years of the RSS on

framework of various programmes, events and campaigns will be prepared at the meeting," he said.

45 per cent of Kashmir and so

India to be \$5 Trillion economy soon, says Modi act as the foundation stone for AI, he said could contribute

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday said that the day is not far when India will turn a \$5 trillion economy as he urged all stakeholders to invest in people, economy, and innovation to create jobs and boost growth Speaking in a post-Budget

webinar on employment, Modi said the government has provided skill training to 3 crore youth since 2014 and decided to upgrade 1,000 ITIs and set up five centres of

Referring to an IMF report of February 2025, Modi noted that between 2015 and 2025, India grew by 66 per cent, making the country a \$ 3.8 trillion economy.

Observing that the country's growth surpassed that of several major economies, he said "the day is not far when



Prime Minister Narendra Modi addresses post-budget webinar on boosting job

direction to continue expanding the economy. He stated that capacity
Modi underlined the critical building and talent nurturing

India will become a \$ 5 trillion role of implementing budget economy." He also stressed the announcements in achieving importance of making right this vision and acknowledged investments in the right the significant contributions of all stakeholders.

national development and in the next phase of growth, greater investment in these sectors is essential.

"The vision of 'investment in people' stands on three pillars - education, healthcare, and skill development," he said adding that today India's

increase the number of

people visiting there by 10

times. Kedarnath is one of

the 12 sacred Jyotirlingas

situated at an elevation of

3,583 m (11968 ft) in the

Rudraprayag district of Uttarakhand. The temple is

open for pilgrims for about

six to seven months in a year from Akshaya Tritiya (April-

May) to Diwali (October-

November) and is visited by

about 20 Lakh pilgrims

annually during the season. Hemkund Sahib Ji is a highly

revered pilgrimage site situated at an elevation of 15,000 ft in Chamoli district

Uttarakhand.

Gurudwara established at the

holy site is open for about 5

months in a year between

May and September and is

visited by about 1.5 to 2 lakh

It is believed that Guru

Gobind Singh Ji, the 10th

Guru of Sikhs, meditated at

the site. It is also famous as

the meditation ground for

Lord Rama's brother Lakshmana. The trek to

Hemkund Sahib Ji also serves

as the gateway to the famous

Valley of Flowers, a national

park recognised as the UNESCO World Heritage

pilgrims annually.

adding that today, India's education system undergoing a transformation. He said this year's Budget

serves as a blueprint for India's future, and that investments have been prioritized equally infrastructure, industries, people, economy, and innovation.

Modi highlighted the PM Internship Scheme that was launched to provide new opportunities and practical skills to youth.

"We must ensure that businesses at every scale actively participate in this scheme. In this year's Budget,

additional medical seats, with the Prime Minister adding a target of adding 75,000 seats in the medical field over the next 5 years."

Modi also talked about the government's decision to give infrastructure status to the tourism sector, saying that it will generate jobs for youth.

He urged industry to invest in the healthcare sector and also talked about the potential of medical tourism to create jobs. Modi also emphasised the establishment of daycare cancer centres and the development of digital healthcare infrastructure to ensure quality healthcare reaches the last mile. Modi highlighted that the

tourism sector has the potential to contribute up to 10 per cent to India's GDP and employment opportunities for crores of vouth. "50 destinations across the country will be developed with a focus on tourism," said

that granting infrastructure status to hotels in these destinations will enhance ease of tourism and boost local employment. Highlighting the expansion of

the Mudra Yojana to support homestays, Modi also stressed on initiatives like 'Heal in India' and 'Land of the Buddha' to attract global tourists. "Efforts are being made to establish India as a global tourism and wellness hub." "To cater to a larger population, planned urbanisation is essential. We have decided to allocate ₹1 lakh crore to the Urban Challenge Fund. The private sector, especially the real estate industry, must focus on planned urbanisation," he said. The government has given skill importance development at par with the infrastructure sector, he

allocated ₹500 Crore for AIdriven education and research in the budget.' He also stated that India will set up National Large Language Model for Language

lakhs of crores to the economy.

"In this direction, we have

development of AI capacity.
"India has become the thirdlargest startup ecosystem in the world," said the Prime Minister, adding that several measures have introduced in this budget to promote startups.
He mentioned the approval of

a ₹1 Lakh Crore corpus fund to boost research and innovation. This will increase investments in emerging

Modi noted the provision of 10,000 research fellowships at IITs and IISc, which will foster research and provide opportunities for talented

Engineer Rashid

seeks custody parole

he said, adding, "In addition to the issue of Hindu awakening, an analysis of the current scenario of the discussion on the follow-up activities, is also included in the agenda of the baithak." Ambekar said the meeting will review the progress made on the work expected

Vijayadashami.

Rahul vows to fight for railway porters' rights amid financial hardships | Court discharges ex-Chhattisgarh

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI**

Drawing attention to the financial difficulties faced by railway porters, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday said they risked their lives to help people during the stampede at the New Delhi Railway Station last month and yet their voice was not being heard.

The former Congress president, who posted on his YouTube channel a video of his recent interaction with porters at the New Delhi railway station, asserted that he would fight for their rights.

Gandhi also urged people to share suggestions on the 'Awaaz Bharat Ki' portal to improve crowd management and strengthen security.
"We will listen to the voice



of India!" he said on X. The increasing number of stampedes at railway stampedes at ranway stations and other public

tragedies," he said. In his post accompanying the video of his interaction with porters, Gandhi said, places is a matter of great concern, Gandhi said, noting that many innocent people lose their lives or get there again. During the interaction, they told me averyone together "We need to think together how everyone together to boar about how to prevent such made every possible effort Prayagraj.

to save people's lives on the day of the stampede."

"Whether it was trying to remove people from the crowd, ensuring that the injured reached the ambulance

administration, or taking out the bodies of the dead using their physical abilities, handcarts or spending money from their own pockets, they helped the passengers in every way," the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha said.

Gandhi thanked them for saving many lives and helping in the relief work during the stampede at the

station on February 15. At least 18 people were killed in the incident at the New Delhi Railway Station, which was witnessing a surge of passengers waiting to board trains

CM Baghel in 2017 sleaze CD case

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

special CBI court here has Adischarged Adischarged senior Congress leader and former Chhattisgarh chief minister Bhupesh Baghel in a 2017 alleged sex CD case purport-

alleged sex CD case purport-edly featuring a former BJP minister, citing lack of evi-dence, his lawyer said. Special Magistrate (CBI), Raipur, Bhupesh Kumar Basant considered Baghel's discharge application and granted him relief on Tuesday, noting there was no sufficient evidence to prove sufficient evidence to prove the allegations levelled against him in the chargesheet filed in the case, senior counsel Manish Datt told PTI.

made out against the 63-year-old Congress leader, the counsel said, adding the order copy will be made available on Wednesday. over

Elated development, Baghel, who stepped down as CM after the Congress lost the 2023 assembly polls, took to X and posted "Satyamev Jayate" (truth alone (truth triumphs).

A discharge application is a request to end a criminal case before the trial begins. A court may allow such a plea if it finds lack of sufficient evidence to proceed against the accused. State communication wing head Sushil Anand Shukla also hailed The court noted no case is ruling.

"Satyamev

Congress the CBI court's

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ **NEW DELHI**

Tailed Jammu and Kashmir MP Engineer Rashid on Wednesday sought custody parole to attend the upcoming Parliament session, claiming he was not a security threat.

submission before additional sessions judge Chander Jit Singh, who reserved the verdict for March 7 after hearing arguments on the

The plea seeking Rashid's interim bail or custody parole was filed by advocate Vikhyat Oberoi on February 27, following which the court sought the National Investigation Agency's (NIAs) response on March 3. The counsel previously argued that Rashid was seeking custody parole being a parliamentarian and needed to attend the upcoming session to fulfil his public duty.

Custody parole entails a prisoner being escorted by armed police personnel to the

Referring to Rashid's submission of questions on the functioning of J&K departments in Parliament, the lawyer said, "I have put in questions for all those departments. And I am therefore requesting debates on all those questions. I completely abide by the ruling of the high court (that its order of custody parole will not be treated as a precedent)...I am only trying to argue that in the face of the

he could be allowed to represent his constituency. "I am only requesting that he (Rashid) needs to go to Parliament for the people. It is not my condition. It is not my contention that it is the fundamental right of my client to attend Parliament. It is my summation that it is a fundamental duty to attend it," the counsel said. The NIA counsel opposed the

submission and said being a parliamentarian, did not entitle a person exceptions from the effect of detention. "Today, he is a person who is an MP (seeking custody parole on grounds of fulfilling his duty).
Tomorrow, a doctor may be saying that I am accused of an offence, but I need to conduct surgery to save the lives of people and that my patients are waiting? Can he conduct surgery?... So any person may say that I have to perform my duty, I have to discharge my function...," the NIAs

function...," the NIAs counsel argued. Sheikh Abdul Rashid, known as Engineer Rashid, defeated Chief Minister Omar Abdullah in the 2024 Lok Chief Sabha polls in Baramulla. Rashid's regular bail application is currently

pending before the court. The second part of Parliament's budget session would begin on March 10 and end on April 4.

The judge on September 10 granted interim bail to Rashid to enable him to campaign for the assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir.

Rashid surrendered in Tihar Jail on October 27. He has been lodged in Tihar jail since 2019 after he was arrested by the NIA under the

Unlawful (Prevention) Act in a 2017 terror funding case.

Delhi HC orders Centre, state to register marriages in three months

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday ordered the Centre and Delhi government to comply with the Supreme Court's directions over compulsory registration of marriages in three months.

A bench of Chief Justice Devendra Kumar Upadhyaya and Justice Tushar Rao Gedela said it was "pathetic and appalling" that the 2006 apex court order, asking all marriages to be compulsorily registered irrespective of was faith, not implemented by

authorities. "This is pathetic actually. It is appalling as to how you are not implementing the order of the Supreme Court," it added.

The high court also issued notice to both governments on a petition seeking informed about it.

direction to the Ministry of Home Affairs to prepare rules for a centralised database of marriage registration.

The Supreme Court, in February 2006, ruled that all marriages, irrespective of religion, compulsorily registered and directed the Centre and all states to frame and notify rules for this within three months.

Pursuant to the top court's the Delhi directions, government issued an order on April 21, 2014 containing certain provisions for compulsory registration of marriage.

The order is known as "Delhi (Compulsory Registration of Marriage) order, 2014.

However, various deficiencies and lacunae were pointed out in the rules by the petitioner, who said the state and the Central governments were

Petitioner Aakash Goel said

in the absence of an appropriate legislation as desired by the Supreme Court in the 2006 judgment, the mechanism available for registration of marriages was

not only inadequate and

HIGH COUR

also did not fulfil the object of compulsory registration of marriages. "We call upon the ministry concerned

Government of India and the Delhi Government to look into the matter and take caused hardship to people appropriate steps which will seeking registration, but it be warranted in law and also appropriate steps which will

Granting three months' time, the bench asked for the

decisions of the Centre and the state government in terms of its order to be filed before the next hearing on

When the Delhi government counsel said it had framed rules in line with the apex court's directions, the bench said the rules were only executive in nature. "There has to be an enactment as per the directions of the Supreme Court... You have to respond to the needs of people and frame rules for smooth registration of marriage. That's the need of the hour. These are not the things which should come to the court," it added.

The plea has sought a direction to the Ministry of authorities concerned.

for ensuring the directions issued by the Supreme Court are complied with," the bench database of marriage as "disaggregate state-wide databases" do not help achieve the objective of the Supreme Court judgment as a person can easily marry and register in Delhi, while being already married and registered in another state. It also sought directions to

the Centre to maintain the centralised database and make it available in advance to citizens so that correct whereabouts of families were known while giving a goahead for a wedding. The petition also sought a

direction for modifying certain clauses of the Delhi Compulsory Registration of Marriages Order, 2014 to allow online registration of marriages with the virtual presence of a married couple and witness before the

Rashid's counsel made the

place of visit. Oberoi said the Delhi High

Court had granted custody parole for two days enabling Rashid to attend the parliamentary sessions.

evidence, I am not a security threat.' He argued Rashid as a

parliamentarian represented

Libel case: Didi removes lawyer close to Abhishek | Centre pays mere lip service

SAUGAR SENGUPTA KOLKATA

In an apparently small but glaring incident that bear some faint indication of developing cracks in the relationship between Mamata Baneriee and her nephew Abhishek Banerjee, the Bengal Chief Minister has removed advocate Sanjoy Basu from the panel of her lawyers to defend a libel case filed against her by State Governor CV Ananda Bose. Now Mamata Banerjee's brief would be handled by senior Trinamool Congress lawyer and Serampore MP Kalvan Banerjee, sources said. Bengal Governor Doctor CV Ananda Bose had filed a defamation suit against Mamata on June 28, a day after the latter claimed that women complained to her that they were afraid to visit Raj Bhavan because of the activities happening there. This in the aftermath of a woman employee working in the Raj Bhavan had



West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee during a TMC's workers meeting

some top notch person in there. Basu who is a close aide of Abhishek Banerjee and handles

brought some accusations against his legal brief had reportedly been removed from many other legal matter of the State Government early this year. This after reports did the rounds that a new political party had been formed in Bengal at his behest. Reports also said that "a close relative of the Chief Minister who was in touch with some BJP leaders was behind the new development." The reports were further buttressed by the conspicuous absence of junior Banerjee who is also the party general secretary - from a host of party programmes. However Abhishek raised the issue himself early this month in a party general meeting and confirmed his allegiance for the Chief Minister and her aunt saying he would continue to swear by the name of Mamata Banerjee. "People are questioning my loyalty to the TMC, but let me tell in front of you all that I will never cow down. I will never give into any pressure. Even if they cut my head the wind pipe will cry 'Mamata Banerjee zindabad' This is because like everyone I am also a soldier of Mamata

Banerjee," the TMC MP from Diamond Harbour said. The political grapevine has it that the junior Banerjee who is under pressure from the intelligence agencies post breaking of a number of scams including the teachers' recruitment scam was trying to find an avenue in the BJP so as to rid himself of the charges. A parallel group in the party says that the difference between the Chief Minister and her nephew is not related to the scams but to the ballooning ambition of Abhishek who wants to usurp power too soon a la Ajit Pawar. On whether the removal of Basu would mean much to the BJP State party leader Sajal Ghosh said, his party was "only concerned about the ouster of Mamata Banerjee," adding however that.

"Kalyan Banerjee is a failure as a lawyer and his handling of the case will further make it bad" for the Chief Minister.

to Tamil language: Stalin

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin on Wednesday alleged that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led union government paid mere lip service to Tamil language for the sake of votes and dubbed the ruling party at the Centre as Tamil's "enemy.

Writing to party workers as part of his series on the theme of "all-time opposition to Hindi imposition," Stalin recalled DMK founder leader CN Annadurai's views on the issue.

Decades ago, Anna had said that the party's objective is not to oppose Hindi, but to get equal recognition to Indian languages including

While the BJP claims that Prime Minister Narendra Modi held Tamil in high esteem and that the threelanguage formula is for the growth of languages of the states, the difference in allocation of funds for Tamil and Sanskrit would make it pretty clear that they are "enemies" of Tamil, Stalin

alleged. As per the Union Education Ministry's data, during the period between 2014 and 2023, the union government allotted ₹2,435 crore to the Central Sanskrit University and the National Sanskrit University. During the same period, only ₹167 Crore was allotted to Central Institute of Classical Tamil.

Fund allocation and expenditure has increased manifold for the promotion of Sanskrit and Hindi. "The union government, out-and-out, is functioning with a feeling of



Tamil Nadu CM MK Stalin participates in all-party meeting to discuss proposed

linguistic hegemony and pays mere lip service to Tamil for the sake of votes," the chief manifestation of dominance.

minister alleged. The BJP-led Centre, which is betraying Tamil Nadu by not allotting funds due to the state, is also betraying by not allocating funds for Tamil language and it is trying to "destroy" Tamil and languages

of other states through the "languages of dominance," Hindi and Sanskrit. Disapproving it, the DMK president said the consequences of imposing a language could be understood by perusing the history of world. "All Indian languages includ-ing Tamil listed in the 8th schedule of the Constitution

teristics," Stalin said. On March 4, Stalin wonare India's national languages," he said. However, if Hindi alone is claimed to be the national language, it is a

Claiming that Sanskrit is India's root language is an 'attempt to consign us to servitude.

If Sanskrit is taken as the root language, it meant that all other languages originated only from it. "That is, they are trying to establish that all the languages in India had their roots in Sanskrit. It was linguist Robert Caldwell who had, 175 years ago, by way of his studies had made it known to the world that Dravidian languages including Tamil had unique charac-

dered why the union government has not facilitated setting up of an institution to teach Tamil or other south Indian languages to people of states in north India.

Case against Ansal group for fraud, conspiracy in UP

The Uttar Pradesh police have registered a case against real estate developer Ansal Group on charges of cheating, criminal breach of trust, conspiracy and organised crime. The FIR was lodged a day after Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath directed officials to take strict action against the company and ensure homebuyers' interests are protected. During a session in the state assembly, Adityanath criticised the opposition Samajwadi Party, alleging that its previous government had shielded developers like the Ansal Group.

Even on Wednesday, he raised the issue in the state legislative council and said that the government will take punitive action against the Ansal Group. The FIR was filed at the Gomti

Nagar police station in Lucknow and names key people including Pranav Ansal, Sushil Ansal, Sunil Kumar Gupta, Francette Patricia Atkinson and Vinay Kumar

They have been booked under various sections of the Bharativa Nyaya Sanhita, including criminal breach of trust, cheating, forgery, criminal conspiracy, and organised crime.

In a separate financial blow to the company, the National Company Law Tribunal has admitted Ansal Properties and Infrastructure Limited into the Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016.

Lucknow court fines Rahul for non-appearance

BISWAJEET BANERJEE

Lucknow Court on AWednesday imposed a fine of ₹200 on Congress leader Rahul Gandhi for repeatedly failing to appear before it in connection with a case related to his remarks on freedom fighter Veer Savarkar.

The Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate (ACJM) also issued a strict warning, directing Gandhi to appear before the court on April 14, 2025, failing which he could face legal consequences. The case originated from a complaint filed by Nripendra Pandey, who objected to a statement made by Rahul Gandhi during a press conference in Akola, Maharashtra, on December 17, 2022. Gandhi allegedly referred to Veer Savarkar as "a servant of

the British" and "a pension receiver." The complainant argued that these remarks were inflammatory and aimed at inciting enmity in society. He also claimed that pamphlets containing similar comments were distributed among journalists at the event. A demand was made to register a case against Gandhi under Sections 153(A) and 505 of the Indian Penal Code for allegedly promoting discord through his

statements. During Wednesday's hearing, Gandhi's lawyer, Pranshu Agrawal, filed an application seeking an exemption from his personal appearance. He stated that Gandhi, as the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, had a pre-scheduled meeting with a foreign dignitary on the same day and was preoccupied with offi-cial responsibilities. The lawyer

assured the court that Gandhi was not deliberately avoiding the hearing and respected the judicial process.

The court, however, did not take Gandhi's absence lightly and imposed an ₹200 fine. It ordered his mandatory appearance on April 14, 2025, cautioning that failure to comply could result in the issuance of a non-bailable

Apart from the Savarkar-related case, Rahul Gandhi is also fac-ing another legal challenge stem ming from a statement he made during an economic survey in the run-up to the Lok Sabha elec-tions. Pankaj Pathak, president of the All India Hindu Federation Mandal, filed a complaint in June 2024, alleging that Gandhi's comments regarding the distribution of wealth hurt religious

Centre, Kerala government clash over pending ASHA workers' incentive funds

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Centre and the Kerala govrnment on Tuesday continued to dispute claims over the provision of funds for disbursing incentives to ASHA workers in the state.

While state Finance Minister KN Balagopal accused the Centre of not providing funds on time, Union Minister George Kurian refuted the claim, stating that those who hear such allegations will start respecting Narendra Modi once they properly inves-

Balagopal said that the Centre had yet to release ₹100 Crore in pending payments. He urged the Centre to increase the honoraria for scheme workers, including Accredited Social Health Activist

Balagopal said that Kerala had been raising this matter during the pre-budget meetings convened by the Union Finance Minister for the past two years.

Earlier, the office of State Health Minister Veena George stated that the claim that the Centre had allocated the full amount due to Kerala for centrally-sponsored

workers, and other scheme work-

ers needs to be appropriately enhanced," the Kerala finance

ed ₹636.88 Crore for the year 2023-24 under the pretext of cobranding, the Health Minister's

the financial year 2023-24. In its response on October 28, the Centre itself confirmed that the central share for Kerala in 2023-24 was yet to be disbursed, the

Ramdas Athawle invites Akash Anand to join party

BISWAJEET BANERJEE LUCKNOW

 $R_{(A)}^{
m epublican}$ Party of India Ramdas Athawle has invited Akash Anand, the estranged nephew of Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) supremo Mayawati, to join his party after he was expelled from the

"If he (Akash Anand) wants to take forward the mission of Baba Saheb Bhimrao Ambedkar, he should join the joins the party, the Republican Party of India will get more strength in Uttar Pradesh," Athawle said. On Monday, BSP chief Mayawati expelled Akash Anand, stating that his response to being relieved of his duties was "selfish and arrogant.'

"The interest of the self-respect and self-esteem movement of the most revered Baba Saheb Bhimrao Ambedkar and fol-

lowing the tradition of discipline of the venerable Kanshiram, Akash, like his father-in-law, is expelled from the party in the interest of the party and the movement, Mayawati posted on X. The former Uttar Pradesh chief

minister said, Anand's remarks after his removal from key posts reflected "a lack of political maturity.

She accused him of being influenced by his father-in-law, Ashok Siddharth.

Akash is not a sign of remorse and political maturity but is mostly selfish and arrogant under the influence of his father-in-law, which I have been advising people in the party to avoid," she said.

Mayawati further stated that Anand was expected to accept his removal from key positions in the BSP "maturely."

was relieved from all responsibilities, including the post of national coordinator, due to his continued influence by his father-in-law Ashok Siddharth. who was also expelled from the party. For this, he should have repented and shown maturity,' she added.

A day after being removed from all key positions, Anand said on Monday that he remained undeterred, drawing strength from the Bahujan movement's ideals.

gle was not about a career but about the fight for the selfrespect and self-esteem of marginalised communities.

He asserted that he would continue to dedicate himself to the party and fight for the rights of society as a true worker of the Bahujan movement.

He also called the decision an "In the All-India meeting of BSP on Tuesday, Akash Anand that "the test is difficult."

Chandrababu reassures Telangana on Godavari water plan

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu has assured the people of Telangana that there is no cause for concern regarding his government's plan to divert Godavari river water from Polavaram to Banakacherla, as the initiative is aimed solely at utilising excess water that would otherwise flow into the

Addressing a party meeting to celebrate the Telegu Desam Party's (TDP) victory in two graduates MLC elections on Tuesday, the chief minister a politic 'politicising" Andhra Pradesh's strategy to salvage water draining into the sea.

"I am appealing again, when water draining into the sea is taken to a famine-hit region, nobody should feel bad. Everybody should think about it," Naidu said, adding that he was appealing to all the Telugu

people.
Noting that some people are questioning what right does

water draining into the sea, Naidu wondered where the Telugu society is headed.

Reminding that he never opposed Telangana's Kaleshwaram project, the CM called on the neighbouring state to build projects on the Godavari river to use its waters. Highlighting that the Godavari river is the only hope for the Telugu people, the TDP supremo noted that up to 1,000 TMC water is draining into the Bay of Bengal.

Exhorting that interlinking rivers is his desire, including Ganga and Kaveri rivers, Naidu recalled that former prime also formed a task force for the

When I took up this matter with the prime minister (Narendra Modi), he said interlinking of rivers within states should be completed first, after which interlinking of rivers at the national level will become easy," Naidu said.

Calling for positive thinking among political leaders, Naidu said Telangana can utilise water available so that the leftover water can flow down to Andhra Pradesh.

Recalling the Vijayawada floods of 2024, he said rainfall in the upper reaches, especially in Telangana and Karnataka where projects could not be erected, had flown down to flood the city.
"That's why the lower riparian

states will always have authority. We are doing this (Polavaram to Banakacherla) for the betterment of Telugu people," he claimed. The Polavaram-Banakacherla

link project aims to route 200

TMC floodwater from Banakacherla in Nandyal district through a link canal. Expected to cost over ₹80,000 Crore, the project will render the southern state droughtproof by providing drinking water to 80 lakh people and irrigating three lakh hectares, supplementing 9.14 lakh hectares of land.

The project will also enable the supply of 20 TMC water to

Andhra Pradesh have to divert resources wherever they are

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE demand that the rate of honoraria for Anganwadi workers, ASHA

minister said.

tigate the matter.

workers.

"In Jaisalmer, I also reiterated our

health schemes in the last financial year was incorrect.

The Centre has thus not providoffice said in a statement.

It further stated that the minister had formally written to the Union Health Minister, the Union Health Secretary, the National Health Mission, and the State Mission, pointing out that ₹636.88 Crore was yet to be provided by the Centre for NHM in

statement claimed.

Karnataka legislature recommends restructuring BBMP

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **BENGALURU**

The joint select committee of the Karnataka legislature, tasked with reviewing the 'Greater Bengaluru Governance Bill, 2024', has recommended restructuring the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) by splitting it into a maximum of seven city corporations, in the Greater Bengaluru Area. It also provides for a constitution of a Greater Bengaluru Authority for coordination and supervision, and 30 months terms for the Mayor and the Deputy Mayor. The 13-member committee, headed by Congress MLA Rizwan Arshad, tabled the report in the Assembly on Wednesday. In July last year, the Greater Bengaluru Governance Bill was referred to a joint select committee, which had recently submitted the report to Assembly Speaker UT Kharder. According to the report, each city corporation should cover a population not less than 10 lakh, and the population density should be 5,000 inhabitants per square kilometre.

The revenue generated from the area for the local administration in the year of the last preceding census should not be less than ₹300 Crore per annum, it said, adding that each corporation should have 50 per cent employment in non-agricultural activi-

Tabling the report before the Legislative Assembly, Arshad

said the Bruhat Bengaluru be suitably named with a com-Mahanagara Palike was established in 2008, population of Bengaluru then was 70-75 lakh, while now in 2025 it has reached 1.50 crore, and there are about 1 crore vehicles in Bengaluru.

BBMP's area is about 786 sq km, for which the administration was run by one Mayor with a tenure of eleven months and a Commissioner, he said and added that BBMP is separate from parastatal agencies like --Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB), Bengaluru Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC), Bangalore Electricity Supply Company (BESCOM), Metro and others - and they are all functioning without any coordination. "There is centralisation of power in BBMP, there is no transparency, and there is corruption. There is a need for decentralisation of powers, if it doesn't happen it will lead to corruption and it won't be possible to provide good, transparent and effective administration. So, we have recommended restructuring of BBMP into various corporations. We have also made a recommendation regarding the

cies," he added. As per the report, each city corporation would have a Mayor, a Commissioner, a Joint Commissioner, standing committees, and ward committees. Each city corporation in the Greater Bengaluru Area should

tenure of the Mayor, for coordi-

nation at all levels between agen-

mon prefix 'Bengaluru', like --South City 'Bengaluru Corporation", "Bengaluru East City Corporation" and so on. The term of the Mayor and the Deputy Mayor is proposed to be 30 months, and a no-confidence motion can be moved only after six months from the commencement of their term, the report further said, while the city corporations shall have a term of five vears duration. Noting that the Greater

Bengaluru Area shall have civic authorities of the Greater Bengaluru Authority, the City Corporations and the Ward Committees, the report states that on the issuance of the final notification on this Act, the BBMP and such other local bodies notified shall cease to exist. It has also recommended for the

government to issue a notification for establishment of the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) within 120 days after the commencement of this Act. The GBA would be headed by the chief minister as the ex-officio chairperson, while the minister in charge of development of Bengaluru would be the ex-officio vice-chairperson. The ministers in the state representing the legislature constituencies in the Greater Bengaluru Area would be ex-officio members. The Chief Commissioner of the Greater Bengaluru Area would be the secretary while mayors of the city corporations are members, the

report said.

Commissioner of BDA, Chairman of BWSSB, MD of BMTC, MD of BMRCL, MD of Bescom, Deputy Commissioner of districts, the commissioner of police, Bengaluru, Superintendents of Police, CEO

of Bengaluru Metropolitan Land Transport Authority, the MD of Bengaluru Solid Waste Management Limited, the Chief Town Planner, the engineer-inchief, the director of the Karnataka State Fire and Emergency Services would be members of the GBA. The commissioners of the city

corporations in the Greater Bengaluru Area would be members of the GBA, while all MPs, and the MLAs and MLCs whose constituencies lie within the area or who reside in the area of the GBA, would be members of the The government of Karnataka

would appoint officials not below the rank of the principal secretary as the chief commissioner of the GBA, for a period of three years subject to the pleasure of the government. As per the report, the chairperson of the GBA would convene meetings at least one meeting for every three months and the authority would prepare the budget every year. The committee held consultations with officers from various departments, legal experts, stakeĥolders and the public. About 19 official meetings were held and at the 20th official meeting the report was submitted to the Speaker, Arshad said.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE CHANDIGARH

 $F_{\text{Samyukta Kisan Morcha}}^{\text{armers associated with the}}$ (SKM) on Wednesday claimed they were not being allowed to head towards Chandigarh for a planned 'dharna' in support of their various demands.

In view of the dharna, barricades have been set at the Chandigarh-Mohali border points and security beefed up. The SKM, which is a conglomerate of more than 30 farmer bodies, has given a call for a week-long sit-in in Chandigarh starting March 5 in support of their various demands.

The outfit said farmers, who left for Chandigarh in tractortrolleys and other vehicles on Wednesday morning, were being stopped by the Punjab

In Moga, Krantikari Kisan Union (KKU) district Moga president Jatinder Singh said they were stopped at Ajitwal in Moga district by the Punjab Police when they were going to Chandigarh. Singh claimed some of them were "detained" by police.

Farmers also raised slogans against the Bhagwant Mann government for not allowing them to go to Chandigarh. In Samrala also, farmers were stopped by police from moving to Chandigarh, they said. The Chandigarh administration has denied permission to farmers to hold their sit-in at



Members of Samyukta Kisan Morcha stage protest against Punjab CM Bhagwant Mann-led government in Amritsa

Sector 34 in the city. On vacant place if they are stopped Tuesday, the Chandigarh Police had issued a traffic advisory, saying traffic movement on certain road stretches may be regulated on March 5 to ensure smooth vehicular flow and public safety.

On Tuesday, Punjab Police "detained" several farmer leaders, including Balbir Singh Rajewal, Ruldu Singh Mansa, Gurmeet Singh Bhatiwal, Nachhttar Singh Jaiton, Veerpal Singh Dhillon, Binder Singh Golewal and Gurnam Bhikhi.

SKM leader Joginder Singh Ugrahan on Tuesday had called upon farmer leaders to head towards Chandigarh. He had asked farmers to sit at a

Framework on Agricultural by police on their way to Chandigarh, telling them not to block any road. Mann on Tuesday lashed out at

several farmer bodies for resorting to protests every other day, turning Punjab into a "state of dharnas" and causing a huge loss to the state. Mann denounced farmer

organisations after talks between the Punjab government and Samyukta Kisam Morcha leaders to discuss farmers' demands broke down midway on Monday. The SKM, which had led the 2020 agitation against the now-repealed three farm laws, is demanding the withdrawal of the Centre's draft of the National Policy

Marketing, a legal guarantee to minimum support price as the Swaminathan Commission report, implementing the state's agricultural policy, purchase of six crops, including basmati, maize, moong, potato at minimum support price by the state government. They are also demanding a law

for debt settlement, ownership rights of land tillers ensuring canal water to every field, payment of sugarcane arrears, stopping "forcible" acquisition of land for the Bharatmala projects and jobs and compensation for kin of farmers who lost lives during the farmers' stir in

Beginning of a trade war

What began as a threat by Trump is now a full blown trade war as Canada, China and Mexico retalliate the US tariffs

he trade war initiated by President Trump against Trump against China, Canada, and Mexico has set off a chain reaction of retaliatory measures, creating uncertainty in global markets and posing risks to economic stability. While the administration aims to address specific national concerns through these tariffs, the broader implications suggest potential harm to both the US and global economies. As the situation evolves, careful consideration of the long-term consequences is essential to mitigate adverse effects on world trade. As promised by him in his President



Donald Trump launched a bold series of tariffs aimed at imports from

campaign President
Donald Trump launched a bold series of tariffs aimed at imports from China, Canada, and Mexico, a move that significantly escalated global trade tensions and set off a swift chain reaction of retaliatory measures. The president signed executive orders that imposed a 25% tariff on all goods from Mexico and Canada, and a 10% tariff on Chinese imports,. The administration argued that these measures were necessary to tackle issues related to illegal immigration and drug trafficking to protect American industries. In an effort to minimize any disruptive effects, an additional 10% tariff was applied to Canadian energy exports, including electricity, natural gas, and oil.

The response from the targeted countries was swift and forceful. Beijing retaliated by announcing tariffs of up to 15% on key U.S. agricultural products such as chicken, pork, soy, and beef, while also expanding restrictions on U.S. businesses. In Canada, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau countered with 25% tariffs on \$155 billion worth of American goods. Similarly, Mexico's President Claudia Sheinbaum imposed retaliatory tariffs against the United States, criticizing the unilateral decision and warning of its adverse effects on both national and foreign companies operating in Mexico. Analysts have warned that the tariffs could significantly hinder economic growth, with projections suggesting a contraction of 2.8% in U.S. GDP. The increased tariffs were also expected to drive up consumer prices, adding to existing inflationary pressures and potentially prolonging periods of his interest also expected to drive up consumer prices, adding to existing inflationary pressures and potentially prolonging periods of high interest rates. Global markets reacted negatively, with major U.S. stock indexes and shares in the automotive sector experiencing notable declines. Industries reliant on international supply chains, particularly the automotive sector, braced for production delays and increased costs as a result of these disruptions. The Trump administration maintained that these tariffs were a necessary tool to pressure foreign nations into addressing issues like drug trafficking and to incentivise domestic production. But the reality is different. The tariffs could ultimately have a net negative effect on the U.S. economy by driving up prices, reducing output, and dampening employment growth. In the unfolding saga of international trade, while the US administration's objective remains focused on addressing pressing national concerns, the broader consequences of this trade war hint at potential long-term harm for both the U.S. and the global economy.



A squirrel perches on a branch of red-silk cotton tree while feeding on flowers in New Delhi PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Balancing growth and conservation

Large-scale dredging and resource extraction projects at Kerala's Quilon Fish Bank have sparked concerns over marine biodiversity loss and ecological stability

ndia's ambitious Blue Economy vision is reshaping the way the country engages with its vast marine resources. At the heart of this transformation is Kerala, with the Quilon Fish Bank emerging as a crucial player in sustainable fisheries. However, recent concerns over large-scale dredging, resource extraction, and the long-term impact on marine biodiversity have raised important questions about balancing economic growth with ecological stability.

The Quilon Fish Bank, known for its rich biodiversity and high productivity, is among India's most significant fishing grounds. Spread across Kollam and ndia's ambitious Blue Economy

grounds. Spread across Kollam and Alappuzha districts, this region is a vital breeding ground for numerous fish species and shrimp. Kerala's fisherfolk have long depended on these waters for

their livelihood, mak-ing sustainable fisheries management crucial for the state's economy and food security.

However, recent developments, such as the planned dredging of 242 square kilometres of the seabed in Kollam, have sparked

widespread concern. Reports indicate that India's Geological Survey has identified 7.45 billion tonnes of sand in Kerala's coastal and offshore areas. While the government sees this as an opportunity for economic development, local communities four it may lead to helpitet destruction loss. fear it may lead to habitat destruction, loss of fish stocks, and increased coastal erosion. The controversial dredging project is part of a larger Blue Economy initiative aimed at tapping into the ocean's resources for economic growth.

While this approach has potential, questions remain about its long-term sustainability and impact on Kerala's delicate marine ecosystem. The Blue Economy concept emphasizes responsible and sustainable use of marine resources to drive economic progress. India, with its vast coastline and rich maritime heritage, has identified the Blue Economy as a critical driver of growth in the 21st century. The government's policy framework seeks to integrate economic growth with environmental conservation.

While large-scale resource extraction, such as sand mining and deep-sea fishing, forms part of this vision, efforts are also being made to minimize ecological disruption. Scientific research, eco-friendly technologies, and strict regulations are being implemented to ensure sustainability.

One of the key objectives of India's Blue

Economy plan is to modernize the fisheries



reduce dependence on overfished species and promote a more balanced marine ecosystem. Despite the promising aspects of the Blue Economy, concerns remain about its impact on marine biodiversity.

ing not just marine species but also the livelihoods of thousands of fishing families. Experts warn that Kerala's geographical location-between the Arabian Sea and the Western Ghats-makes it particularly vulnerable to environmental degrada-

To address these concerns, the government has been expanding Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) to safeguard critical habitats. These conservation zones play a vital role

scale coastal protection projects, such as artificial reefs and mangrove restoration, are being undertaken to mitigate the impact of erosion and habitat loss. However, these efforts need stronger support from the central government to ensure long-term effectiveness. The future of the Quilon Fish Bank and Kerala's fisheries sector hinges on finding a middle ground between economic growth and environmental sustainability. While resource extraction and development projects are necessary for progress, they must be undertaken with strict environmental safeguards.

India refine its own Blue Economy strategy.Kerala's government has also taken

steps to enhance coastal resilience. Large-

A multi-stakeholder approach involving the government, local fishing communities, environmentalists, and global experts is essential. Policymakers must prioritize scientific research and ecological impact assessments before approving large-scale marine projects. Empowering local communities with alternative livelihood options, enhancing conservation efforts, and enforcing stricter regulations on resource extraction can help ensure a sustainable future for Kerala's fisheries. India's Blue Economy vision holds immense promise, but its success will ultimately depend on how well it balances development with ecological responsibility.

(The writer is associate professor at Centre

For South Asian Studies; views are personal)



VULNERABILITY TO COASTAL EROSION The Quilon Fish Bank is a prime examin replenishing fish stocks and maintainle of this dilemma. Dredging and sand mining, while economically lucrative, have the potential to disrupt fish breeding cycles, alter ocean currents, and increase

already under stress due to climate change and unregulated fishing practices. Further extraction of marine resources could push it to a tipping point, endanger-

vulnerability to coastal erosion. The frag-

ile balance of Kerala's coastal ecosystem is

ing biodiversity. Additionally, advanced monitoring systems are being introduced to track fish migration patterns and regulate fishing activities, ensuring long-term marine health. Countries like Norway, Japan, and

Australia have successfully implemented sustainable fisheries policies that balance economic interests with conservation.

Learning from these models can help

faces. Where did we go wrong, and how can we build resilience alongside success?

When yesterday's children return as tomorrow's hope The rise in youth crime in Kerala is a stark reminder of the challenges this generation

They carry with them innovative solutions to problems we have long considered intractable. They approach challenges

with a fluidity and adaptability that my generation often struggles to comprehend. Their apparent detachment from traditional structures is not apathy, but rather a reconfiguration of priorities, a reshaping of engagement that might prove trans-

formative for our world. Yet this hopeful vision is not with-

ALTER OCEAN CURRENTS, AND INCREASE

SECOND pinion

■ime flies A whole lifetime can sometimes feel like a fleeting frame in the vast reel of existence Few things make me more aware of this than watching children grow. I have no children of my own to mark the passing years with each birthday they celebrate, but as a mentor and educator, I have been surrounded by young

minds in various stages of becoming. I have watched them transition from wide-eyed learners to self-assured adults, carv ing out their place in the world. Yesterday, one of my earliest students visited me with his fiancée and parents, carrying wedding invitations, gifts, and a bouquet of memories from a time when he was just a six-year-old in shorts and tees. His visit felt like the culmination of a week steeped in nostalgia—a week in which I found myself thinking of all my past students, reaching out to some to check on their progress and well-being.

I was astonished at how they had grown—some still scaling academic heights with degrees and doctorates, others, like the one who visited me, embracing both career and companionship, settling into the rhythms of love and domestication. Not all seem set to become super achievers. Some were slow starters who gained momentum in the later years, some who were primed to blaze the trail, falling short in the end game. As I sat across from my former student, now a confident young professional with clear eyes and measured words, I found



out its shadows. The recent surge in youth-involved drug cases and violent crimes in Kerala sends tremors through our collective conscience. Young people, barely past adolescence, find themselves entangled in webs of addiction, exploitation, and criminality that threaten to define their entire existence. The

myself reflecting on the delicate threads that connect our jour-juxtaposition is jarring—young minds full of promise alongmomentary escape or misguided power. This stark contrast forces us to confront uncomfortable questions about the environments we create, the values we embody, and the support systems we provide for our youth. Where exactly have we faltered? Perhaps in our haste to prepare children for success, we have neglected to equip them for struggle.

In our eagerness to protect them from hardship, we may have inadvertently shielded them from the very experiences that build resilience. In our focus on academic achievement, we might have overlooked the cultivation of emotional intelligence and moral courage. It's hard to put a finger on the fault lines that have caused the fractures. In the face of these complex challenges, I find solace in the knowledge that those who have passed through my classroom have largely become contributors to society rather than detractors from it. This is not entirely to my credit. Countless factors shape a person's trajectory, but I take quiet pride in having played some role in their formation. To have contributed, even modestly, to the development of honest, thoughtful, and capable individuals is perhaps the greatest measure of success in a mentor's life. Our purpose in this world is not measured by personal achievements or accolades, but by the lives we touch, the potential we help nurture, and the humanity we help foster.

(The author is a Dubai-based columnist and children's writing coach. She has published six books. Views are

Letters to the Editor

Textile industry needs support

Madam — Apropos of the article 'Export Potentials of Punjab ...' (March 5), presents an interesting reading. But the trend in the country remains different. Only slogans galore and solutions are nil. The second largest provider of employment is the cotton industry in India. The direct employment it provides is around 40 million. Besides this, there are micro units and allied feeding industries providing employment to many more millions. The cotton business has been suffering for years due to various internal as well as external factors. In the same way, the spinning mills also feel suffocating due to various factors. Declining exports, unviable cotton prices, growing costs of manufacturing, and a number of such factors are quoted to be disturbing the functioning of mills. It is a pity that a good number of mills are closing their operations, throwing millions of workers out of their jobs, besides

their due negative impacts on export earnings.

The industry, with debt-funded capex, finds it too difficult to manage the show anymore. Actually, in most of the mills, the number of permanent workers availing themselves of employee-related benefits is too low, and the vast section of the workforce is made up of contract, outsourced, casual, contingent, and barrack segments, who are paid too little and do not avail themselves of any benefits meant for permanent workers. In spite of such huge savings from the labour component, the mills are closing down due to various reasons that the governments

can alone resolve. For example, the cost of power is felt of ethnic violence in Manipur. The opposition parties should to be unviable. Export subsidies need to be provided. In the absence of required intervention from the state or the Union governments, a good number of mills are already closed, and many are nearing closure. It is said even banks are not inclined to advance these industries anymore. It is time to attend to this segment as a priority, as slogans are not a solution.

A G RAJMOHAN J ANANTAPUR

Lasting peace in Manipur

Madam— Apropos of the editorial 'A fresh start or fleeting relief? (March 4), it is very apparent that the Union Government's efforts and monitoring of Manipur ethnic violence for quite a long time are bearing fruit and steadily succeeding for normalcy. Unless the roots of the ethnic violence and secessionist underground activities are identified and addressed, the violence may erupt again. Drug trafficking, opium cultivation, missionaries' separatist activities, and foreign intervention from across the border must be handled iron-handedly.

The arms and ammunition snatched by warring outfits from the police and paramilitary forces should be recovered, and no mercy should be shown to those who attacked police and armed forces. The Parliament should approve the extension of the President's rule, and rather, Manipur should be directly ruled by the Centre as a Union Territory until complete normalcy is restored. The neighbouring states of Manipur should not feel the heat and face the consequences

work in unison with the Union Government in resolving Manipur violence and restoring peace. VISHAL MAYUR I TUMAKURU

Supreme Court warns influencers

Madam — The Supreme Court's call for regulating digital content to uphold morality while protecting free speech is crucial. The rise of social media influencers like Ranveer Allahbadia has raised serious concerns about the unchecked spread of vulgarity under the guise of free expression. His content, deemed obscene by many, is a clear example of why stricter guidelines are necessary. While free speech is a fundamental right, it does not give anyone a license to propagate content that corrupts young minds and disrespects societal values

The court's decision to allow Allahbadia to resume his show was not well received. Although it imposed moral restrictions on incoming content, individuals engaging in vulgarity should be banned for at least a year. This would make them aware of the mistakes they have made in reality shows, ensuring that they feel the consequences of their actions. Such punishment should serve as a lesson for future generations to refrain from committing similar acts The influence of such YouTubers extends to millions, and their impact on impressionable audiences cannot be ignored. The government must implement robust regulations to ensure that digital platforms maintain VINOD JOHRI I DELHI ethical standards.



The other back-to-back victory of Team India in the ICC Champions Trophy semifinals against Australia has filled Indians with extreme aspiration of becoming champions. We are just a step away from the dream of becoming champions. The last time Team India lifted the Champions trophy was in 2013. Despite Australia giving a challenging chaser score of 264 runs to India, the partnership by the batting order, bowling, and fielding has made India win by four wickets. Now that India has made a glittering entry to the finals of the ICC Champions Trophy for the third time, let us all make figures crossed for the victory of

India in the finals as well. Now that the Indian cricket team has done their hat trick of three successive entries in the finals, let's pray that India will lift the trophy by naming the third title to her name as Champions.

It's time for all eyes to be on Dubai International Stadium for the thrilling final match. We really wish to see Rohit Sharma's squad turn champions. Cricket fever will be in full swing on the upcoming Sunday to thrill the whole world of cricket lovers. We are hopeful for India to make the podium finishes with the trophy in hand and joy in the eyes.

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Understanding God and the Guru

A true guru recognises his limitations, serving only as a guide who connects disciples to the divine



e must understand the distinction between these fundamental entities in our lives. First, let me enumerate some commonly known qualities of God. He is omnipotent. This word is defined as having unlimited power. Only God fits this description. Is He not the Creator of innumerable galaxies? Similarly, God is omniscient. This word is defined as knowing everything. Who else except God fits this description? How much can a mere mortal know?

Albert Einstein famously said, "The more I learn, the more I realize how much I don't know." Then, God is omnipresent too. This word is defined as being present everywhere at the same time. And God is one and we are many. Lord Krishna states, "An eternal soul is My part only." (The Bhagavad-Geeta 15.7)Let us see how a genuine guru fares in these characteristics. He knows that whatever he has learnt in terms of spiritual knowledge, oratory skills, etc., is due to God's empowerment. God is much pleased by preaching amongst devotees. A genuine guru realizes that the source of his knowledge is God only. As regards omnipresence, a genuine guru humbly accepts that he is severely limited in being present with his disciples. Additionally a genuine guru never claims any similarity disciples. Additionally, a genuine guru never claims any similarity with God except being part of God. Because God is completely dif-

A genuine guru knows this fact more than others, who are not so knowledgeable. Being an incarnation of God never crosses his mind, because he knows that God incarnates for specific purposes. A guru's role is extremely limited. It is just to help get his disciples connected with God. And he strictly avoids attracting them to himself personally. Adi Shankaracharya is the role model for him, who preached "bhaja govindam". Now I will take up the famous verse, which is, "gurur brahma, gurur vishnu, gurur devo maheshvara, gurur

sakshat parambrahma tasmai shri guruve namah."

Can any mere mortal claim to be Brahma or Vishnu or Mahadeva, never mind all three of them? It is ludicrous to even imaghese are manifestations of God-not some ordinary ent they are eternal, whereas we are subject to repeated birth and death till liberated. So what is the meaning of this verse? It is simply that whatever a guru speaks has sanction from God; he is not deviating from His instructions. He is simply conveying the essence

That is how he represents God.A genuine guru ensures that he protects his disciples from any harm by his inappropriate actions. He does not promise anything more than helping them to establish a good connection with God. He tries to become a role model for taking shelter from God because that is how all can benefit. He knows that he cannot give anything more.

20He is aware of his severe limitations in this regard. He guides his disciples to get connected to God such that they can get what all God can give. (9.25)The conclusion is to seek help from a genuine guru, who can help in progressing in our eternal journey. And we should never get side-tracked by hopes of easy gains, because there are none. We have to deserve all that we hope to get including liberation by our efforts, not someone else's.

A genuine guru knows this fact and never leaves any doubt in the minds of those who trust him. He thus gets respect from his disciples, which he richly deserves. Additionally, some disciples may serve him personally and some may donate so that the guru can main-

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

A model of stability from China

While Western democracies struggle with internal gridlock, economic and stagnation, China's governance model continues to chart a course of long-term strategic vision



e Financial Times recently published an article on the question of who will succeed Xi Jinping. But perhaps the real question is not one of succession but of continuity—of how a governance model rooted in long-term vision, pragmatic adaptability, and national rejuvenation sustains itself beyond the tenure of any single leader. Unlike Western portrayals, often laden with exaggerated spectres from 'debt traps' to 'authoritarianism,' there are profound lessons to be drawn from China's trajectory—especially as Western democracies now find themselves gasping for air in the suffocating embrace of their contradictions. "Democracy is a failed joke," Ai Weiwei, the Chinese contemporary artist, remarked in a recent interview with The Independent—and perhaps never has this assertion been more starkly evident than in the shambolic decline of the liberal order. Governance, once regarded as the solemn responsibility of those entrusted with the future of their nations, has in the West deteriorated into little more than a revolving spectacle of populist theatre, corporate capture, and institutional paralysis.It is within this continuum that China now prepares to convene its most pivotal political gathering of the year that Two Sessions.

of the year—the Two Sessions.
The third session of the 14th National People's Congress (NPC) and the third session of the 14th National Committee of the Conference (CPPCC), scheduled to commence on 4 and 5 March respectively, are not mere ritualistic formalities but the very engine of governance in a system defined by strategic foresight rather than short-term electoral expedience. The Western world, entrapped in the myopia of its dysfunction, looks upon this grand assembly with bewilderment, unable to comprehend a system where efficiency supersedes obstruction and where governance is an instrument of civilisation rather than a battleground of perpetual paralysis.

As Beijing convenes these pivotal sessions, it does so with a purpose that far surpasses the partisan gridlock that has crippled Washington under Trump and reduced Brussels, under Ursula von der Leyen's leadership, to a stage of waning relevance. History does not bestow hegemony upon the indolent. It is earned through foresight, discipline, and a genuine commitment to civilisation's progress. The Western model, long heralded as the apex of governance, is now fraving



at the seams, consumed by internal strife, economic stagnation, and an ever-widening gulf between the governed and their rulers.

Meanwhile,

model, Chinese grounded in the philo-sophical profundity of Socialism Chinese Characteristics, marches for ward with unparalleled

resolve. "The path of socialism with Chinese characteristics is the only correct path for building a modern socialist country," Xi Jinping declared in his report at the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China in October 2017. What have the last few decades illuminated since China's opening up? "Reform and opening up is the key

definitive proclamation for a new global paradigm—one where dialogue supplants discord and where stability is not held hostage to the whims of declining empires. The very existence of Western diplomacy has been predicated upon coercion, economic subjugation, and military adventurism. China, by contrast, has demonstrated that genuine global leadership lies not in the proliferation of

conflict, but in its resolution.
This year's Two Sessions will reaffirm Beijing's role as an indispensable mediator of international crises, bringing adversaries to the negotiating table in a manner that the West, mired in its moral hypocrisy, has repeatedly failed to achieve. Consider the diplomatic masterstroke that saw China facilitate a rapprochement between Iran and Saudi Arabia—two historical adversaries long ensnared in the machinations of Western interventionism. This ethos extends to the Israeli-Palestinian crisis, where China,

to the Western penchant for war profiteering. While NATO expands its influence under the guise of security, China constructs bridges of diplomacy, demonstrating that true global leadership lies not in fuelling divisions but in fostering dialogue.But China's vision does not stop at terrestrial affairs. This year's Two Sessions will be held as the next frontier of human progress—space—

next frontier of human progress—space—becomes a new high-tech battlefield. While Western nations hoard technological advancements for geopolitical leverage, China has advanced an inclusive vision of cosmic exploration. The construction of the Tiangong space station, the pioneering lunar projects, and the Mars exploration programme are not mere scientific endeavours; they are emblematic of a civilisation that aspires not merely for national greatness but for the collective progress of humanity.
The essence of the Two Sessions lies in the

articulation of a governing philosophy rooted in long-term vision, adaptability, and the pursuit of collective progress. It is not governance dictated by ephemeral political cycles but by a civilisation's deeper consciousness. ness—one that understands its historical responsibility not only to itself but to the broader trajectory of human development. In an era where artificial intelligence and artificial general intelligence are reshaping economies, governance, and even social structures, China does not see these advanceical leverage but as elements of a broader mission: ensuring that technological evolution remains a force for human cohesion rather than fragmentation. What China has proven is that reform is not an event; it is the flow history recognising potential. Simultaneously, the shifting currents of global trade, exacerbated by protectionist measures and economic fragmentation, have reinforced the necessity of an alterna-

tive economic logic—one not shackled to the fluctuations of political expediency but rooted in the principle of enduring equilibrium. True strength is not found in dominance, but in resilience—the ability to absorb, adapt, and outlast. This defines China's approach to trade tensions: rather than engaging in titfor-tat economic skirmishes, the focus is on structural reinforcement—building self-sufficiency in critical sectors while ensuring that economic interdependence remains a mechanism of stability rather than vulnerability.

WHILE WESTERN ECONOMIES DROWN IN INFLATIONARY QUAGMIRES AND INSTITUTIONAL CRISES, CHINA HAS CHARTED A PATH OF **ECONOMIC REJUVENATION THROUGH INDUSTRIAL** UPGRADING, AND THE INDOMITABLE PURSUIT OF TECHNOLOGICAL SELF-RELIANCE

choice that determines the fate of contemporary China," Deng Xiaoping once asserted. This ethos continues to guide China, as the nation refines its developmental trajectory with an adaptability that the West, bound by ideological rigidity, can scarcely fathom. China is not merely asserting its presence but reshaping the very contours of the global order. The Two Sessions have highlighted the profundity of China's economic strategy—one that is not predicated on the ephemeral illusions of speculative capitalism but on tangible infrastructural and technological advancement. While Western economies drown in inflationary quagmires and institutional crises, China has charted a path of economic rejuvenation through high-quality development, industrial upgrading, and the indomitable pursuit of technological self-

Yet the significance of the Two Sessions transcends economic imperatives. It is also a in defiance of Western inertia, has actively pursued dialogue among Palestinian factions. The hypocrisy of the liberal order is laid bare when the so-called torchbearers of democracy selectively disregard the suffering of those who do not fit within their geopolitical calculus

Beijing, undeterred by such duplicity, has asserted itself as an honest broker of peace, proving that a multipolar world is not an abstraction but an unfolding reality.Even in the maelstrom of the Ukraine conflict. where Western powers have inflamed tensions rather than defused them. China's peace proposal has emerged as the only substantive roadmap towards de-escalation.

President Xi Jinping has consistently emphasised that "confrontation, sanctions, and pressure will not solve the problem... what is needed is a mindset of common, comprehensive, cooperative, and sustainable security, resonating ever more powerfully in contrast

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

Healthcare divide: How tier-II and III cities are transforming medical access

Investments in advanced medical technology and government initiatives like Ayushman Bharat are making healthcare more accessible in tier II and III cities

ealthcare facilities in tier-II and III cities have long struggled with the disparity between affordability and accessibility of quality healthcare services. These cities often lack wellequipped medical centres, forcing patients to travel to nearby metropolitan areas for advanced treatment. The shortage of trained medical professionals further exacerbates the problem.

The doctor-to-patient ratio in these cities remains significantly below the WHO-recommended standard of 1:1000, often reaching alarming ratios such as 1:25,000.@The Accessibility GapOne of the major factors behind this situation is the concentration of healthcare resources in metropolitan areas. Government hospitals in smaller cities often grapple with overcrowding, long waiting lines, and outdated infrastructure. Meanwhile, private hospitals that offer advanced treatments are often unaffordable for the majority of the population. This leaves patients with limited options, pushing them to seek care in distant metro cities.

However, in recent years, several hospitals in tier-II cities have made significant strides in bridging this gap. The emergence of well-equipped hospitals outside major metropolitan areas is proving to be a game-changer for patients who previously had to travel long distances for treatment. Health Institutions like Subharti Hospital in Meerut exemplify how tier-II cities are evolving to provide comprehensive and affordable healthcare not only under



the Ayushman Bharat Mission but also for uninsured patients, reducing dependence on metropolitan hospitals.

Ayushman Bharat and Affordability One of the biggest challenges in tier-II and III cities is mak-

ing advanced healthcare both available and affordable. Many private hospitals offer high-end treatment

cessible to a significant portion of the population. To address this issue, some hospitals are designing cost-effective treatment models that prioritize patient affordability without compromising on quality. Additionally, government schemes and insurance programs such as Ayushman Bharat-PMJAY need to be further expanded and better implemented in these regions. Many eligible patients are unaware of their entitlements under schemes like PMJAY, leading to underutilization of available resources. Increased awareness and streamlined implementation of such initiatives can make a sig-

nificant difference in ensuring financial accessibil ity to quality healthcare. Advancements in Medical Technology Traditionally, hospitals in non-metro areas have

facilities, but their pricing structures make them inac-

and specialized treatment options. However, this perception is gradually changing. Many healthcare institutions such as Subharti Hospital in Meerut are now investing in cutting-edge medical technology, including advanced imaging facilities such as digital PET scans, high-resolution MRI and CT scans, and modern oncology treatment options like chemotherapy and radiation therapy.

The availability of these services locally is signifibeen perceived as lacking advanced infrastructure cantly reducing the burden on patients who would

otherwise have to commute to larger cities. A breakthrough in Meerut is the introduction of comprehensive treatment centres, particularly in fields like oncology. Cancer patients, for example, often face logistical and financial challenges when forced to visit different hospitals for diagnosis, surgery, chemotherapy, and radiation therapy.

The integration of these services under one roof in tier-II cities is improving patient outcomes and reducing treatment delays. Subharti Hospital, for instance, has emerged as a reliable healthcare provider in Western Uttar Pradesh, offering a full spectrum of oncology services in a single location, saving patients valuable time and resources.

The Road Ahead

Ensuring quality healthcare in tier-II and III cities requires a multi-pronged approach that includes expanding medical infrastructure, ensuring equitable resource distribution, increasing investment in medical education to address the shortage of trained professionals, and encouraging partnerships to enhance healthcare accessibility. As healthcare in India evolves, tier-II and III cities are poised to play a crucial role in expanding medical access beyond metropolitan areas.

Continuous efforts are needed to overcome existing challenges and create a healthcare system that s truly inclusive and accessible to all. With a focused approach towards affordability, accessibility, and technological advancements, the future of healthcare in non-metro regions holds immense potential. By addressing these challenges head-on, tier-II and III cities can become the next frontier in India's healthcare transformation.

(The writer is the Deputy Medical Superintendent of Subharti Hospital, Meerut. Views expressed are personal)

Ukraine ready to come to negotiating table: Trump

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA NEW YORK/WASHINGTON

President Donald Trump said he has received "strong signals" from Russia that it is ready for peace and that Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has written to him saying his country is ready to come to the negotiating table and also sign an agreement on minerals and security.

Trump made these remarks Tuesday night in an address to the Joint Session of Congress, the first of his second term in the White House.

"I'm also working tirelessly to end the savage conflict in Ukraine. Millions of Ukrainians and Russians have been needlessly killed or wounded in this horrific and brutal conflict with no end in sight," Trump said.

He told Congress that on Tuesday, he received an "important letter" from Zelenskyy, in which he said that "Ukraine is ready to come to the negotiating table as soon as possible to bring lasting peace closer. Nobody wants peace more than the Ukrainians," Zelenskyy wrote in the letter, Trump said. Trump said that Zelenskyy went on to write in the letter that his team and him "stand ready to work under President Trump's strong leadership to get a peace that lasts. We do really value how much America has done to help Ukraine, maintain its sovereignty and independence. Regarding the agreement on minerals and security, Ukraine is ready to sign it at any time that is convenient for

Trump said he appreciates the letter and added that "simultaneously we've had serious discussions with Russia and I've received strong signals that they are ready for peace.



Wouldn't that be beautiful? Wouldn't that be beautiful?" he said amid applause.

... It's time to stop this madness. It's time to halt the killing. It's time to end the senseless war. If you want to end wars, you have to talk to both sides," Trump said. In a post on X, hours before Trump's address to Congress, Zelenskyy said Ukraine is "ready to work fast to end the war, and the first stages could be the release of prisoners and truce in the sky ban on missiles, long-ranged drones, bombs on energy and other civilian infrastructure and truce in the sea immediately, if Russia will do the same. Then we want to move very fast through all next stages and to work with the US to agree a strong final deal."

Zelenskyy said that Ukraine really does value how much America has done to help Ukraine maintain its sovereignty and independence. "And we remember the

moment when things changed when President Trump provided Ukraine with Javelins. We are grateful for this."

In the post, Zelenskyy also referred to the disastrous meeting between him and Trump in the Oval Office last week and said "Our meeting in Washington, at the White House on Friday, did not go the way it was supposed to be. It is regrettable that it happened this way. It is time to make things right. We would like future cooperation and communication to be construc-

Trump said that the United States has sent hundreds of billions of dollars to support Ukraine's defence with no security, with no anything and asked lawmakers if they want to keep it going for another five

Trump said that more than 2,000 people are being killed every single week in the conflict that is now in its third year.

That didn't happen," he said. A day before Zelenskyy wrote to Trump about Ukraine being ready to come to the negotiating table, the US President had temporarily suspended, with immediate effect, the delivery of all American military aid to Ukraine.

A report in The New York Times had quoted a senior administration official as saying that Trump had temporarily suspended the delivery of all US military aid to Ukraine and that the order takes effect immediately, affecting "more than USD 1 billion in arms and ammuni tion in the pipeline and on

This setback for Ukraine had come just days after Trump and Vice President J D Vance had a heated verbal exchange in the Oval Office with Zelenskyy, who was visiting the White House last Friday, and the two countries were all set to sign a rare mineral deal. But talks between Trump and Zelenskyy unravelled in a stunning exchange that played out in front of the global media. Vance told the Ukrainian

leader, "I think it's disrespectful for you to come to the Oval Office to try to litigate this in front of the American media.. you should be thanking the president for trying to bring you into this conference."

As the conversation grew heated, Trump said to Zelenskyy 'You're gambling with the lives of millions of people. You're gambling with World War Three. You're gambling with World War Three, and what you're doing is very disrespectful to the country, this country that's backed you far more than a lot of people say they should. Trump and Vance also criticised Zelenskyy for not being grateful enough for the support that the US had given so far to Ukraine in its war with Russia.

Island is ours, says Greenland PM in defiance of message from Trump

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ NUUK (GREENLAND)

Greenland's prime minister declared on Wednesday that "Greenland is ours" and cannot be taken or bought in defiance of a message from US President Donald Trump, who said his administration supported the Arctic island's right of self-determination — but added that the United States will acquire the territory "one way or another".

Greenlandic Prime Minister Múte Bourup Egede said the island's citizens are not American nor Danish because they are Greenlandic. The United States needs to understand that, he wrote in a post in Greenlandic and Danish on Facebook Wednesday.

The future of Greenland will be decided by its

people, he wrote. His post came hours after Trump made a direct appeal to Greenlanders in a speech to Congress on Tuesday, a week before islanders head to the polls for parliamentary elections.

We strongly support your right to determine your own future, and if you choose, we welcome you into the United States of America," Trump said. "We will keep you safe. We will make you rich. And together we will take Greenland to heights like you have never thought possible before," he added. But Trump also said his administration was

"working with everybody involved to try to get it," referring to his wishes to acquire Greenland

from Denmark, a longtime US ally.

"We need it really for international world security. And I think we're going to get it. One way or the other, we're going to get it," Trump said. Many in Greenland, a vast and mineral-rich island that is a semiautonomous territory of Denmark, are worried and offended by Trump's threats to seize control of homeland.

Asked about Trump's comments, Denmark's foreign minister said Wednesday he did not think Greenlanders wanted to separate from Denmark in order to instead become "an integrated part of America".

Lars Lokke Rasmussen sought to strike an optimistic tone, saying he believed that Trump's reference to respecting Greenlanders' right to selfdetermination was "the most important part of that speech".

"I'm very optimistic about what will be a Greenlandic decision about this. They want to loosen their ties to Denmark, we're working on that, to have a more equal relationship," the minister said during a trip to Finland.

Lokke added that it was important that next week's parliamentary elections are free and fair "without any kind of international intervention" Greenlanders will head to the polls Tuesday. Trump's recent comments about taking over the island have ignited unprecedented interest in full independence from Denmark, which has become a key issue during campaign season.

THE CONVERSATION DUBLIN

 \mathbf{W} hen Israel signed a ceasefire deal with Hamas in Gaza on January 15, the agreement was structured in three phases.

Phase one, a six-week period in which Hamas would release hostages in return for Israel releasing Palestinians detained in its jails, ended on March 1. The shaky deal has held for the full six weeks - just. At one point Hamas threatened to halt the exchange of hostages when it said Israel was breaching the terms of the deal.

The Netanyahu government responded – with US backing - by threatening to end the ceasefire in mid-February, saying that Hamas was not living up to its side of the deal.

The hostage releases have continued, although Israelis have been shocked and angered at the condition of some of the hostages after 17 months in captivity. Hamas has also taken advantage of the world's gaze during hostage releases to stage large parades of its fully armed fighters. On March 1, as stage one of the deal was due to end, Benjamin Netanyahu ordered a full blockade of humanitarian aid entering Gaza. Middle East expert, Scott Lucas, answered our questions as to what is happening and how this situation may play out.

Why has Israel decided to block humanitarian aid to Gaza?: The Netanyahu government's blocking of humanitarian aid to Gaza's population is part of a scheme to avoid a phase two of the ceasefire, while putting pressure on Hamas to extend phase one. That would allow the Israeli government to pursue the return of the remaining 59 hostages, alive or dead, held by Hamas while avoiding the requirements of phase two notably the withdrawal of the Israeli military from Gaza and the restoration of a Palestinian government in Gaza. Of course, those who will pay

lion Gazans, around 90 per cent of whom have been displaced amid 17 months of mass killing. But Israel's leaders are counting on that causing little concern, or at least significant action, by the international community.

the cost are more than 2.2 mil-

Wasn't the ceasefire deal dictated by a timetable?: Phase one of the agreement only stipulated that discussions for a phase two to begin within 14 days of implementation, which would have been about the start of February.

But the Netanyahu government reportedly sent mediators to Qatar without the authority to discuss phase two, only to ensure that hostage releases continued.

The limit of its cooperation has been sending representatives to Egypt and conferring with Donald Trump's Middle East envoy Steve Witkoff, with current discussions suggesting little prospect of agreeing phase

Demonstrators across 50 states unify a disparate opposition to Trump, his agenda ful," said Carol Goodwin, an

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

s Donald Trump prepared A Tuesday to address a joint session of Congress, protest groups gathered at parks, statehouses and other public grounds across the country to assail his presidency as dangerous and un-American.

The rallies and marches — set in motion by the fledgling 50501 Movement, a volunteerdriven group organised in the weeks after Trump's inauguration — mark the latest attempt at national resistance to the hardened support of Trump's "Make America Great Again" base and the success it has had Party in the president's populist

Yet some early scenes Tuesday vividly demonstrated the difficulty Democrats, progressives and everyday citizens face in marshalling a tangible response to Trump and the swift, sweeping actions of his second administration. Protesters have so many things to push back against — from tariffs to Trump's reset on the war in Ukraine to the aggressive and sometimes legally dubious actions of the Department of Government Efficiency and its leader, billionaire Elon Musk, that it's hard to know what to

focus on. 'There are so many things to fight, but I hope by being here we are starting some conversa-Strawn, who held a sign declar-

Space," followed by a smallprint litany of topics from Ukraine and tariffs to potential education cuts to the denial of climate and vaccine science. Around her in Atlanta were

hundreds of people marching and chanting about a range of Trump initiatives. There were Palestinian flags and Ukrainian flags, along with signs bemoaning Trump ending military aid to Ukraine as it fights off the invading Russian troops of Vladimir Putin.

Trump was called a fascist, a "Russian asset," "Putin's Puppet" and "Wannabe King," among other, more profane monikers. One signed implored "Punch Nazis," reflecting an increasing-Trump's presidency to Nazi ing "So Much Wrong, So Little Germany. Musk was a frequent

target of mockery and ire. But there were also appeals for transgender rights, abortion rights and diversity. One understated sign appealed simply, "Save Our Parks." Events were scheduled throughout the day in all 50 states, including later gatherings on the West Coast and in Hawaii

"They are Russian young peo-

ple, they're Ukrainian young

people. They're not Americans,

but I want it to stop," Trump said. Trump added that mean-

while, Europe has sadly spent

more money buying Russian oil

and gas than they've spent on

"Think of that. They've spent

more buying Russian oil and

gas than they have defending. We've spent perhaps USD 350

billion, like taking candy from

a baby. That's what happened.

And they've spent USD 100 bil-

lion. What a difference that is,

And we have an ocean separat-

ing us, and they don't. But we're

getting along very well with

them and lots of good things are

happening," he said.
"Biden has authorised more

money in this fight than Europe

has spent by billions and bil-

lions of dollars. It's hard to

believe that they wouldn't have

stopped it and said at some

point. Come on, let's equalise. You've got to be equal to us.

defending Ukraine, by far.

In Austin, Texas, those gathered at the statehouse leaned in to support Ukraine. Pops of yellow a nod to the colors of Ukraine's national flag — dotted the crowd as protesters affixed sunflowers to their hair, hats and clothing. The Texas crowd, which numbered in the hundreds, eventually made its way through downtown, chant-

Trump has got to go."
"I think protests can be impact-

Austin resident active in the local advocacy scene. "I think these smaller protests are valuable for the people who come to express their frustrations, and I think this movement will grow over time. For some participants, Tuesday

recalled 50501's first day of national action on February 5 or the many women's marches in 2017, at the outset of Trump's first term. But for many others, it was a new step in their engagement.

Goodwin said she was compelled to come out after the Oval Office exchange between Trump and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy tariffs against Canada and

French PM flays US for pause in aid

 $F^{\text{rance's prime minister decried}}_{\text{the US pause on providing}}$ "unbearable" on Tuesday, describing it as tantamount to abandoning Ukrainians and allowing for a possible victory by Russia.

"The word suspension' fools no one," Prime Minister François Bayrou said, addressing French senators and mounting what was his second sharp criticism of the administration of US President Donald Trump in as many days. "The suspension in war of assistance to an aggressed country signifies that the aggressed country is being abandoned and that one accepts — or hopes — that its aggressor wins, he said. "It's obviously unbearable," Bayrou said. The French premier, a close ally of President Emmanuel Macron, also argued against strong pressure that the White House is exerting on Ukraine to quickly negotiate an end to the fighting. Bayrou said that Ukraine needs to keep fighting for its very survival.

Pak mourns death of 18 in suicide bombings

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA PESHAWAR

Acity in northwestern Pakistan held funeral prayers and observed a day of a twin suicide bombing targeted a military base there the evening before and killed 18 people, including five soldiers. A militant group linked with the Pakistani Taliban claimed

responsibility for the bombing in Bannu on Tuesday evening, which also left 42 wounded. some of them critically. It was the latest in a spate of violence, including suicide bombings, that has hit the country in recent

The attack unfolded with two suicide bombers first blowing themselves up to breach the wall surrounding the base. Most of the local residents were breaking their daylong fast during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan or praying at a nearby mosque. The powerful blasts tore through walls and ripped off roofs and also severely damaged the mosque. After the explosions, other attackers stormed the compound and set off a firefight with

A statement from the army's media department on Wednesday said five soldiers

and 16 militants were killed. It "rammed two explosive-laden vehicles into the perimeter wall" at the base. Gunshots could still be heard

early Wednesday as security forces combed through the area, looking to clear it of any militants involved in the attack. At the scene of the bombings, a mechanical digger was clearing away rubble where homes used to stand, and debris-covered prayer mats lay crumpled on the mosque floor.

A day of mourning was being observed, said Bannu community elder Alam Khan, and joint funeral prayers were held later in the day for the victims at a sports complex in the area. "All education institutions are closed," Khan said, "Most shops are also shut. Rescue workers have completed their operation by recovering the bodies of three deceased worshippers who were trapped under the collapsed roof of the mosque.

Kremlin says Ukrainian law bans Zelenskyy from talks with Putin

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA MOSCOW

Ukrainian decree from A2022 ruling out negotiations with Russian President Vladimir Putin raises the question of who could sit at the table in potential peace talks aimed at ending their three-year war, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Wednesday. President Ukrainian

Volodymyr Zelenskyy "is still legally prohibited from negotiating with the Russian side", Peskov noted during his daily conference call with reporters. He said it was "positive" that Zelenskyy expressed readiness

Tuesday to negotiate peace with Russia as soon as possible. "But the details have not changed yet," Peskov added, apparently referring to the Ukrainian

Neither Ukrainian nor Western officials have recently mentioned the September 2022 presidential decree, signed seven months after Russia's cross-border invasion, in the context of US President Donald Trump's efforts to stop the fighting.

The Trump administration on Monday suspended its crucial military aid to Ukraine as the United States sought to pressure Zelenskyy into negotiating

an end to the war. It wasn't immediately clear whether the support would resume after Zelenskyy's seeming effort to placate Trump.

Ukrainian forces are toiling to slow advances by the bigger Russian army along the 1,000kilometer (600-mile) front line, especially in the eastern Donetsk region. The Russian onslaught, which has been costly for its troops, hasn't yet brought a strategically significant breakthrough for the Kremlin. The war of attrition has killed tens of thousands of soldiers and more than 12,000 Ukrainian civilians.

Zelenskyy, French President

Emmanuel Macron and British Prime Minister Keir Starmer could travel together to Washington, the French government spokesperson said Wednesday.

"It is envisaged that President Macron could eventually travel again to Washington with President Zelenskyy and his British counterpart," spokesperson Sophie Primas told reporters. She did not

elaborate. Macron was due to give a televised address to the nation later Wednesday about what he called the "great uncertainty" in

global affairs The three leaders travelled sep-

arately to Washington last week for meetings with Trump. In the early months of the war, Zelenskyy repeatedly called for a personal meeting with Putin but was rebuffed. After the Kremlin's decision in September 2022 to illegally annex four regions of Ukraine — Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhia — Zelenskyy enacted a decree declaring that holding negotiations with Putin had become impossible.

The decree enacted a decision by Ukraine's National Security and Defence Council to bolster Ukrainian defences and seek more weapons from the country's Western allies

pioneers who channeled 'hedonistic' machines awarded

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA WASHINGTON

Teaching machines in the way that animal trainers mold the behaviour of dogs or horses has been an important method for developing artificial intelligence and one that was recognised Wednesday with the top computer science award.

Two pioneers in the field of reinforcement learning, Andrew Barto and Richard Sutton, are the winners of this year's A M Turing Award, the tech world's equivalent of the Nobel

Research that Barto, 76, and Sutton, 67, began in the late 1970s paved the way for some of the past decade's AI breakthroughs. At the heart of their work was channeling so-called "hedonistic" machines that could continuously adapt their behaviour in response to positive

Reinforcement learning is what led a Google computer programme to beat the world's best human players of the ancient Chinese board game Go in 2016 and 2017. It's also been a key technique in improving popular AI tools like ChatGPT, optimising financial trading and helping a robotic hand solve a Rubik's Cube. But Barto said the field was "not fashionable" when he and his doctoral student, Sutton, began crafting their theories and algorithms

at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. "We were kind of in the wilderness," Barto said in an interview with The Associated Press. "Which is why it's so gratifying to receive this award, to see this becoming more recognised as something relevant and interesting. In the early days, it was not.'

Google sponsors the annual USD 1 million prize, which was announced Wednesday by the Association for Computing Machinery.

Barto, now retired from the University of Massachusetts, and Sutton, a longtime professor at Canada's University of Alberta, aren't the first AI pioneers to win the award named after British mathematician, codebreaker and early AI thinker Alan Turing. But their research has directly sought to answer Turing's 1947 call for a machine that "can learn from experience" – which Sutton describes as "arguably the essential idea of reinforcement learning

In particular, they borrowed from ideas in psychology and neuroscience about the way that pleasure-seeking neurons respond to rewards or punishment. In one landmark paper published in the early 1980s, Barto and Sutton set their new approach on a specific task in a simulated world: balance a pole on a moving cart to keep it from falling. The two computer scientists later co-authored a widely used text-



book on reinforcement learning.

The tools they developed remain a central pillar of the AI boom and have rendered major advances, attracted legions of young researchers, and driven billions of dollars in investments," said Google's chief scientist Jeff Dean in a written statement.

In a joint interview with the AP, Barto and Sutton didn't always agree on how to evaluate the risks of AI agents that are constantly

seeking to improve themselves. They also distinguished their work from the branch of generative AI technology that is currently in fashion — the large language models behind chatbots made by OpenAI, Google and other tech giants that mimic human writing and other media. "The big choice is, do you try to learn from people's data, or do you try to learn from an (AI) agent's own life and its own experience?" Sutton said.

Sutton has dismissed what he describes as overblown concerns about AI's threat to humanity, while Barto disagreed and said "You have to be cognizant of potential unexpected consequences

Barto, retired for 14 years, describes himself as a Luddite, while Sutton is embracing a future he expects to have beings of greater intelligence than current humans — an idea sometimes known as post-humanism. 'People are machines. They're amazing, won-

derful machines," but they are also not the "end product" and could work better, Sutton

"It's intrinsically a part of the AI enterprise," Sutton said. "We're trying to understand ourselves and, of course, to make things that can work even better. Maybe to become such

NASA's two stuck astronauts closing in on their return

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA CAPE CANAVERAL

NASA's two stuck astronauts are just a few weeks away from finally returning to Earth after nine months in space.

Butch Wilmore and Suni Williams have to wait until their replacements arrive at the International Space Station next week before they can check out later this month. They'll be joined on their

SpaceX ride home by two astronauts who launched by themselves in September alongside two empty seats.

During a news conference Tuesday, Wilmore said that while politics is part of life, it did not play into his and Williams' return, moved up a couple weeks thanks to a change in SpaceX capsules. President Donald Trump and SpaceX's Elon Musk said at the end of January that they wanted to accelerate the astronauts' return, blaming the previous administration.

But Williams, in response to a question, did take issue with Musk's recent call to dump the space station in two years, rather than waiting until NASA's projected deorbit in 2031. She noted all the scientific research being performed at the orbiting lab. "This place is ticking. It's just really amazing, so I

would say we're actually in our prime right now," said Williams, a three-time space station resident. "I would think that right now is probably not the right time to say quit, call it quits." Williams said she can't wait to be reunited with her Labrador retrievers. The hardest part about the unexpected extended stay, she added, was the wait by their families back home.

ISIS-K terrorist charged for role in 2021 Kabul airport bombing, Trump thanks Pak

 $A^{\text{n ISIS-K terrorist has been}}_{\text{charged with conspiring to}}$ provide material support to a designated foreign terrorist organisation resulting in death and faces life in prison for his role in the 2021 Kabul airport bombing, with President Donald Trump thanking Pakistan for help in his arrest. Mohammad Sharifullah, also known as "Jafar", has been charged by the US with providing and conspiring to provide material support and resources to a designated foreign terrorist organisation resulting in death.

Sharifullah has been arrested and is expected to appear in the Eastern District of Virginia Wednesday to face charges for his role in the August 26, 2021 Abbey Gate bombing at the Hamid Karzai International Airport in Kabul that killed 13 United States military service members and about 160 civil-

If convicted, Sharifullah faces a maximum penalty of life in prison. US President Donald Trump, in an address to the Joint Session of Congress, said that a "top terrorist" responsible for the August 2021 Abbey Gate bombing at Kabul airport as American forces withdrew from Afghanistan has been

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

The suspect in a car-ramming in the German city of

Mannheim that killed two people

gave no information about his

motive Tuesday as he appeared

before a judge who ordered him

held pending a possible indict-

The 40-vear-old German man was

arrested shortly after the car-ram-

ming Monday at around noon on

a busy pedestrian street in down-

town Mannheim in southwestern

Germany. Eleven people were

injured, five of them seriously, and

the latter were still being treated in

Mourners laid flowers in the city

Mannheim prosecutors and state police said a district court in the

city ordered the man kept in cus-

tody pending possible formal

charges on suspicion of two counts

of murder, five of attempted mur-

The investigators said in a state-

centre to honour the victims.

hospitals on Tuesday.

ment, investigators said.

MANNHEIM (GERMANY)

brought to the country to face

did not name Trump Sharifullah and thanked the Pakistan government for "helping arrest this monster". UŠ Attorney General Pamela

Bondi said that the "evil ISIS-K terrorist" orchestrated the brutal murder of 13 heroic marines. "Under President Trump's strong leadership on the world stage, this Department of Justice will ensure that terrorists like Mohammad Sharifullah have no safe haven, no second chances, and no worse enemy than the United States of America," she said. FBI Director Kash Patel said

that thanks to the assistance of the FBI, Department of Justice, and the CIA, "we have secured Sharifullah's apprehension and transport to the US to face American justice. The FBI will never forget the loss of these American heroes, we will continue to hunt down those who viciously murdered our warriors, we will find all responsible and bring them to justice". Sharifullah was interviewed by FBI agents on March 2 and according to the court documents in the case seen by PTI, Sharifullah told FBI agents that he was recruited into ISIS-K in or around 2016 and has since then been a member of the ter-

Suspect in German car-ramming

information in his appearance

before a judge, "so that his motive

for the act is still unclear." A search

of his apartment in nearby

Ludwigshafen also turned up no

The investigation so far points to

mental illness, the statement

added. The suspect is believed to

have acted alone. Prosecutors and

police said that objects the man

had in his car and his home —

including a blank gun and written

documents — were being evalu-

The suspect tried to kill him-

self by shooting himself in the

mouth before he was arrested,

Tuesday's statement said. He

was initially taken to a hospi-

tal but subsequently handed

Officials said on Monday that

they had no indication of an

extremist or religious motivation.

Prosecutors have said the man,

whose identity was not revealed

in line with German privacy

He served a short prison sen-

rules has previous con

over to police.

case gives no info on motive

clues as to a motive.

and conducting activities on behalf of ISIS-K in support of multiple lethal attacks," including the attack on Embassv Guards in Kabul, Afghanistan on June 20, 2016 and the attack at the Crocus City Hall, a popular concert venue complex near Moscow, Russia on March 22, 2024 that killed approximately 130 people and injured numerous others.

The criminal complaint details the Abbey Gate attack on the Hamid Karzai International Airport (HKIA) on August 26, 2021, when American and other coalition military forces were conducting an evacuation operation at the airport as part of a larger operation to conclude US combat operations in Afghanistan. The attacks came just days after the Taliban took over Kabul. Abbey Gate was the main entry control point for the operation.

Thousands of civilians were at or near Abbey Gate on August 26 for evacuation processing. The attack was carried out by lone suicide bomber ISIS-K member named Abdul Rahman al-Logari at Abbey Gate. In the interview with FBI Special Agents, Sharifullah said that he was in prison in Afghanistan from approximately 2019 until approximately two weeks before the Kabul airport attack.

years ago and was convicted for

drunken driving. He had also

been investigated for a hate

speech offense on Facebook in

2018, for which he was fined.

prosecutors said without giving

Cars have been used as deadly

weapons in other acts of violence

Last month, a 2-year-old girl and

her mother died two days after

they were injured in a car-ram-

ming attack on a union demon-

stration in Munich, A 24-year-

old Afghan man who came to

Germany as an asylum-seeker

was arrested. Prosecutors said he

appeared to have an Islamic

In December, six people were

killed and more than 200 injured

when a car slammed into a

Christmas market in the eastern

city of Magdeburg. The suspect

is a 50-year-old doctor original-

lv from Saudi Arabia who had

expressed anti-Muslim views

anti-immigrant Alternative For

support for the far-right

extremist motive

Germany party.

in recent months in Germany.

further details.

This is to inform the general public that the Bank of Baroda, Bank of Baroda, S.S.I. Noida Branch, Sector-18, Noida, (U.P.). intends to accept the undermentioned properties standing in the name of M/s Hi Tech Engineering Industries, a Partnership Firm of Sh. Anil Kamboj, Sh. Giriraj Ratan Kothari and Smt. Neelam Goyal, as a security for the loan/credit facility requested by Anyone with any right/till/fedirects/!/daims.over.the Anyone with any right/title/interest/ claims over the undermentioned property is advised to approach the Bank within 10 days along with necessary proof to substantiate the claim. If no response is received within 10 days, it is

presumed that the property is free from any charge/claim/encumbrance, and the Bank shall proceed with the mortgage.

proceed with the mortgage.

Details of the Property-1: -Industrial Plot No 12,
Block W, Sector 11, Area 800 Square Meters, Built
Up covered Area 7,000 Square feet, Noida, G B
Nagar, UP, owned by M/s Hi Tech Engineering
Industries a Partnership Firm of Sh. Anil Kamboi,
Sh. Giriraj Ratan Kothari and Smt. Neelam Goyal Boundary/Survey No./Reg. No./Extent:- Regd Lease Deed duly registered in the office of Sub-Registrar, Noida, vide Addl. Book No 1, Volume No 911, pages 223-250, Document No 2197/2198, dated 15/11/1996.

Boundaries indicated in lease: East-18 meters Road, West Plot No W-07, North-Plot No W-11 South Plot No W-13.

Details of the Property-2: -Industrial Plot No 42, Block D, Sector 11, Area 800 Square Meters, Bull Up covered Area 1,300 Square meters, Noida, C B Nagar, UP, owned by Ms. Hi Tech Engineering Industries a Partnership Firm of Sh. All Kenberg, Sh. Clirical Paten Keltheri and Sext. Anil Kamboj, Sh. Giriraj Ratan Kothari and Smi

Boundary/Survey No./Reg. No./Extent: -Sub Registrar, Noida, vide Book No 1, Volume No 495/484, pages 197-202/191-192, Document No 8490/8491, dated 15/12/1986.

Boundaries indicated in lease: East-Plot No D 33, West 18 Meters Road, North-Plot No D-41 South Plot No D-43.

Details of the Property-3: -Industrial Plot No -71, Sector - Ecotech-10, Area 2000 Square Meters, Greater Noida, G B Nagar, UP Greater Noida, District-Gautam Budh Nagar, owned by Mis Hi Tech Engineering Industries, a Partnership Firm of Sh. Anil Kamboj, Sh. Giriraj Ratan Kothari and Smt Neelam Goval

Boundary / Survey No./ Reg. No. / Extent: - SR Greater Noida, vide Book No 1, Volume No 41613, pages 389 to 410, Document No 19022, dated 26/08/2022. Boundaries indicated in the lease: Directions not specified, however, bounded by Plot No 70, 72, 61, and 24 Meters Road.

Branch Details/Contact No.: - Mr. Anurag Singh

Advocate Details/Contact: - Deepak Singh, Delhi High Court Contact: 9999170066

Khand Indirapuram Ghaziabad UP. Sale De Registration Number 711, Date of Sale De 13.01.2009, Saller's name Ghaziabad developme uthority, buyer's name Vinay B Ravi and Paru /inay on 02 February 2025 we noticed that th iginal sale deed of the above mentioned proper vas missing from our possession, despite our be

FBI, DOJ Hq among 440 federal buildings listed for potential sale

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

The Trump administration on Tuesday published a list of more than 400 federal properties it says it could close or sell, including the FBI headquarters and the main Department of Justice building, after deeming them "not core to government operations."

The list published by the General Services Administration includes some of the country's most recognisable buildings and spans nearly every state, from courthouses to office buildings and garages. In Washington, D.C., it includes the J. Edgar Hoover Building, which serves as FBI headquarters, the Robert F. Kennedy Department of Justice Building, the Old Post Office PUBLIC NOTICE

ce is hereby given to the General Publi Neha Devi W/o Sh. Vijay Kumar i er of Plot of area measuring 70 Sq. Yds. thet no. 119min, & 120min, & 121m.

Chadar Pargana Dadri Tehsil & Distt Gautan 3udh Nagar, by virtue of Sale Deed date 25.08.2023, as Doc. No. 22108, executed by SMF undia Credit Company Limited (Formerl rullerton India Credit Company Limited General public hereby informed that if anybod assany charge/interest/title in the said property on you kind of dispute kindly inform the undersigne n writing on the below mentioned address with 17 days of the receiver. Rabul Rail Pathak. Advanta

in writing on the below mentioned address with 07 days of the present. Rahul Raj Pathak, Advoca SG Associates (Law Fir Fi I8, Lotus Pond Plaza, Vaibhav Khand, Indirapuram, Chaziabad U E-mail: sgassociatespl@gmail.com, Ph: 7011172764, 012044403

building, where President dollars are no longer spent on Donald Trump once ran a vacant or underutilised federhotel, and the American Red Cross headquarters. The headquarters of the Department of Labor and the Department of Housing and Urban Development are listed as well. Also on the list are the enormous Major General Emmett J. Bean Federal Center in Indiana, the Sam Nunn Atlanta Federal Center and the Speaker Nancy Pelosi Federal Building in San Francisco. Roughly 80% of the country's 2.4 million federal workers are based outside of metropolitan Washington, D.C. "We are identifying buildings and facilities that are not core to government operations, or non-core properties for disposal," the GSA said of the list of 443 properties. Selling the prop-

erties "ensures that taxpayer

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Sharan Deep S/o Sh. Raghbir Singh R/o
E-156, Naraina Vbihar, Delhi-110028, Owner
Of Plot No. 156, Block-E, Narainma Vihar, New
Delhi-110028, Vide DDA File No. F9(321)64/.
Lab. The original document I.e. Lease Deed,
Possession Letter, Possession Slip, D Form
And Occupancy Certificate of the above said
property have been lost or misplaced by us
and not traceable inspite of his best efforts.
An F.I.R./NCR to this effect has been lodged in
the Police Station, Crime Branch, Delhi (LR
No.2639035/2025 dated 04.03.2025.
Any person(s) claiming any rights, interest,
having any objection or found in possession
of original documents, may write/contact with
above named person at above Address/Phone
No. 9899001516 within 15 days from the
date of publication of this notice. The person
claiming any right, interest, objection with
respect to this property, can personally inform
or write to Deputy Director LAB or Director LAB,
Vikas Sadan, New Delhi.

PUBLIC NOTICE

To be known to all that We, Mayank Sharma S/o Sh.Jasveer Sharma, Manju Dwivedi W/c Sh. Manoj Kumar Dwivedi & Geeta Tripath W/o Sh. Madan Murari Tripathi all R/o C-6/2 S4, Yamuna Vihar, Delhi-110053 are the owne of Plot No. 254, Block-C6, situated at Yamuna

of Plot No. 254, Block-C6, situated at Yamuna Vihar, Delhi has applied for mutation of the aforesaid property in DDA. The original Allotment Letter, Possession Letter, Site Possession Slip, Form-C, Form-D & Perpetual Lease of the above plot have been lost. An IR/N/CR to this effect has lodged in Crime Branch, Police Station, New Delhi, vide SO No. 430/2014, LR No.2636258/2025 dated 03.03. 2025. Any person(s)claiming any right, interest, having any objection or found in possession of original documents, may write/contact with above named person at above address/phone No. 9315656151 within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice. The person claiming any right, interest, objections with respect to this property can personally inform

Ul UI/U2/4 (Uoc no. 2024/22/11/3396) il person/s having any claim against or in respect of le said Property, or any part thereof, by way of sale, exchange, mortgage lequitable/ registered or therwise), giff, trust, inheritance, family rangement, maintenance, bequest, partnership, ossession, lease, sublease, tenancy, license, lion have been part of the sublease, tenancy, license, lion have been part of the sublease.

समय 10:50 पर दर्ज है की इस समय मन HC हाजिर आना । की एक शिकायतकर्ता ने हाजिर आना आकर एक शिकायत पेर की जिसका सार इस प्रकार से है BADSHAHPUR POLIT STATION BADSHAHPUR SOHMAYD HWY, Near sul tehsil office badshahpur sector 68 gurugran haryana 122103 subject-FIR for loss of origina Sala Dead respected Sir/Madam We Viray Bay

Sale Deed respected Sir/Madam We Vinay B Ray

son of Shri N Balaravi and Parul Vinay wife of Vina

B Bayi current residents of H-201 Park view city

sector 48 Sohna Road Gurgaon here by lodge th

sector 46 Sonnia Road Guigaon here by lodge in the details of the sale deed are as follows - proper address SKB 918 Shipra krishna Vista Ahins Khand Indiraouram Ghaziabad UP. Sale Dee

forts to locate the document we have been una

sions."

to slash the size of the federal workforce and shrink government spending. Selling the desfederal government hundreds of millions of dollars, they claim, while also dramatically reshaping how major Cabinet agencies funded by Congress tration has also demanded that office every day.

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform to all concern that Smt. Lata

This is to inform to all concern that Smt. Lata Gupta alias Pushpa Lata Gupta alias Pushpala Lata Gupta alias Pushpalata Gupta Wio Late Shri Jagdish Prasad Gupta alias Sh. J.P. Gupta Rio Ba-2/11, Safdarjung Enclave, New Delhi-110029 who is the original allottee/owner of Residential Plot No. A-04, Sector-56, Noida (U.P.) & who expired on Dated 28/10/2/2025.

hat my mother executed a registered WIL

n mv fåvour i.e.. Smt. Meenu Jain W/o SI

/ipul Jain R/o 34, Alipur Road, Civil Lines Delhi-110054 which is registered in Sul Registrar New Delhi on dated 10/01/2025

So it is informed to all concern that the said

esidential Plot No. A-04, Sector-56, Noida

(U.P.) is going to be transferred in favour Smt. Meenu Jain W/o Sh. Vipul Jain R/o 3 Alipur Road, Civil Lines, Delhi-110054.

nvone has/have any objection he/she m

Noida Authority within 30 days from the date

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform to all concern that Smt. Lata

This is to inform to all concern that Smt. Lata Gupta alias Pushpa Lata Gupta elias Pushpalta Gupta Wio Late Shri Jagdish Prasad Gupta alias Sh. J.P. Gupta R/o B-2/11, Safdarjung Enclave, New Delhi-110029 who is the original allottee/owner of Residential Plot No. A-11, Sector-56, Noida (U.P.) & who expired on Dated 28/02/2025. That my mother executed a registered WILL in my favour i.e., Smt. Seema Bansal W/o Sh. Praveen Bansal R/o 1/60, West Punjabi Bagh, New Delhi-110026 which is registered in Sub Registrar New Delhi on dated 10/01/2025. So it is informed to all concern that the said Residential Plot No. A-11,

hat the said Residential Plot No. A-1

al space," it said, and "helps eliminate costly maintenance and allows us to reinvest in high-quality work environments that support agency mis-

The designations are part of Trump and billionaire Elon Musk's unprecedented effort ignated buildings could save the operate. The Trump adminisfederal workers report to the Several of the buildings on the

chopping block house agencies that Trump has long criticized and targeted, notably the FBI and Justice Department. The FBI and HUD headquarters are also prime examples of the brutalist architectural style that Trump has tried for years to eliminate, preferring traditional, neo-classical architecture

instead.

Eliminating federal office space has been a top priority of the new administration. Last month, GSA regional managers received a message from the agency's Washington headquarters ordering them to begin terminating leases on all of the roughly 7,500 federal offices nationwide.

In a follow-up meeting, GSA regional managers were told that their goal is to terminate as many as 300 leases per day, according to the employee, who spoke on the condition of anonymity for fear of retalia-

Musk's Department of Government Efficiency has listed scores of cancelled office leases on DOGE's official web-

site, raising questions around

the country about what will

happen to services provided

from those offices. Among the buildings on the list released Tuesday are a large federal building and courthouse in Los Angeles; a federal building in Oklahoma City that replaced one destroyed in a 1995 bombing; an IRS computing center in West Virginia and IRS service centers in Ogden, Utah; Memphis, Tennessee; Atlanta; Austin, Texas; Andover, Massachusetts; and Holtsville,

No. SSA-19016/4/2024-Media-SSA/

Mission Director, Samagra Shiksha Axom, Kahilipara,

To participate in this tender process through e-procurement

of submission as per prescribed schedule.

Samagra Shiksha Axom Kahilipara, Guwahati-19

Notice is hereby given to the Public that the registered sale deed no. 18457 dated 08th December 2005, executed between SH, ANUMOD SHARMA, s/c

All persons are hereby unequivocally informed not to deal or carry out any transaction with anyone on the basis of the said missing document. If anyone

32nd Milestone, NH - 08, Sector - 15 Part - II,

Place: Gurgaon Date: 04.03.2025

Gurgaon, Haryana - 122001 M: 9311755675

e tenders are hereby invited for the purchase and supply of following items Sr. Name of Work/Iten

For Verka Ferozepur Dairy Hiring of insulated vehicles for supply of packed milk and milk products on for one year for trip period of tender contract one year

ASC Faridkot Route Fazilka Arniwala Route

Corrigendum, if any, will be uploaded on website only

NA/12/28467/2023/42232 Dated CHD :- 3/5/2025

Dy. General Manager (Purchase

3.5 to 4.0 MT

Wreckage of fighter jet, bodies of pilots found in Philippines

ment that the suspect gave no tence for assault more than 10

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Manila : Philippine military officials said on Tuesday that rescuers have found the wreckage of a missing fighter jet and the bodies of its two pilots in a mountainous region of a southern province where they were deployed to fight communist rebels. The FA-50 jet lost communication during the combat mission with other air force aircraft after midnight Tuesday before reaching a target area in southern Bukidnon province. The other aircraft were able to return safely to an air base in central Cebu province after carrying out assaults, military officials said.

Malala visits hometown for first time after being shot

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA **ISLAMABAD**

Pakistan's first Nobel Peace Prize laureate Malala Yousafzai on Wednesday visited her hometown in

the troubled northwest of the country for the first time after being shot by the Taliban and met her family members.

She flew by helicopter to Barkana in Shangla district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, where she met with

her uncle, Ramazan, who recently underwent surgery in Islamabad after suffering from heart problems, and also visited the ancestral graveyard, The Dawn newspaper reported.

Local Karora Station House Officer (SHO) Amjad Alam Khan told Dawn.com that Malala was accompanied by her father, Ziauddin Yousafzai, and her husband, Aseer Malik, who she married in 2021.

SHO Khan said she also visited the school and college she had established in Barkana in 2018 to provide free education to approximately one thou-

sand girls in the district, which previously had no functional government college for girls. 'Malala met students, inspected classes and spoke to students while urging them to study and

make their future brighter," the SHO said, adding that the Malala Fund would ensure a high standard of education at the college free of

Malala also visited the home of her maternal family.

Also present was education activist Shahzad Roy, who runs the Shangla Girls School and College under Zindagi Trust. He briefed her about the facilities provided by the college. She returned to Islamabad after her short visit. Malala's first visit to Pakistan since being shot was in 2018. Following that, she visited Pakistan in 2022 to travel to areas devastated by unprecedented monsoon flooding and

met its victims. She also visited in January this year to attend the International Conference on Girls' Education in Muslim Communities held in Islamabad.

CHANGE OF NAME I, SANJAY JAIN S/o Shripal House Chand Jain R/o V-500/36B, Street No.-18, Vijay Park, Maujpur Delhi-110053 have changed my name to SANJAY KUMAR JAIN for all

PD(1630)C I, JC-709534Y NB/SUB/NT Jagadesh Vallabha, Serving at- Base Hospital, Delhi Cantt- 110010, declare that in my service records, my mother's name is wrongly recorded as Saraswathi. Her correct name is Vallabha Saraswathi, vide affidavit

PD(1631)C I, Anwari Bagam W/o- JC-472491L Sub Mustaq Ahmad, R/o- Vill- Sourai, PO- Semari Purusottampur, Lambhuwa, Dist- Sultanpur, U.P.- 228159, have changed my name from Anwari Bagam to Anwari Begum, vide affidavit dated 05/03/2025 before

I, Kavita Sisodiya, W/o

future purposes. PD(1629)A I, JC-709534Y NB/SUB/NT Jagadesh Vallabha, Serving

at- Base Hospital, Delhi Cantt- 110010, declare that in my service records, my father's name is wrongly recorded as Narayana. His correct name is Vallabha Narayana, vide affidavit dated 04/03/2025 before Notary Public Delhi.

dated 04/03/2025 before Notary Public Delhi.

Teh-Notary Public Delhi.

PD(1632)C

Shri Bharat Singh, R/O. Number B-3, Ramgarh, Azadpur, Delhi -110033. I, have changed my name to Kavita for all

LOST & FOUND

I, Sanjay Vasant Kharde S/o Sh. Vasant Ganpat Rao Kharde have lost original Allotment Possession Letter and Mutual Exchange Letter dt. 13.06.1991 of Flat No.105, Tower No.12, Supreme CGHS Ltd. (Supreme Enclave), Plot No.14, Mayur Vihar Phase-I, Delhi, finder please contact: 9811130598

PD(1634)A I, Iqbal Khan s/o Nawab Husain 1012, Gali Rajan, Farash Khana, Delhi-110006, I, have lost my partition Deed vide reg. No 4086, book No 1, Vol No. 11095, Pages 137 to 148, LR No: 2638703/2025, Mobile No. 9212373248.

PD(1635)C

was missing into up possession. Despite our efforts to locate the document we have been unable to find it. The loss may have occurred at gyrage we have checked all possible places where it we are attaching a copy of this sale deed willich was saved as a scanned copy we suspected that the deed may have been misplaced and there is no intention of theft or fraudulent activity on our part. how ever to prevent any misuse of the document we wish to formally report the loss and request that this fir be field tor record keeping purposes. Windly request you to take the nacessary action in this matter and provide us with a copy of this FIR for our records if any further information or documentation is required please let us know. Thank you for your attention to this matter sincerely SD Vinay B Ravi, Parul Vinay sardang fixer terries 27.02.2025 stifax wing is shi furtantif feral with 18 field fromary they aften have have the first action of the province of the first part of the f ोनानहीं पया गया है जो शिकाबत पर NCR रषट दर्जकर Date (दिनांक) 27/02/202 P.S. (थाना) Badshahpi PD(1633)C

Late Mr. Pawan Chaudhary son of Late

Any person (s) / institution sort of right claim, title or interest or lien of any kind whatsoever in the said property or any part thereof under by vitue of any deed/ documents or under inheritance, succession or otherwise is hereby called upon to put forth his a her / it's claim with the undersigned with documentary proof within 10 days of the publication of this public Notice, failing which same shall not be binding on my clients and it shall presumed that the said property is free from all sorts of encumbrances charges, lien etc and no claim whatsoever or of any type shall be entertained thereafter, in respect of property i.e. E-31, Mansrover Garden, New Delhi-15, Area 220 Sq. Yard Sanjeev Manchanda (Advocate), 55/06, Ashok Nagar, New Delhi-18.

Sd/- Mahinder Singh (Inspector No. 141GG PUBLIC NOTICE To whomsoever it may concerned The General Public is informed that

executed one Will dated 24.03.2015 of Garden, New Delhi-110015, 220 sq yard plot with house built thereon and document is registered on 24.03.2015 by SR-II. Delhi vide no. 206 book no. 3 vol. 8096 in favour of his Two sons ou of three sons (other son is Sh. Neera Chaudhary) and one daughter (Ms. Mamta Chaudhary) Thus, by Virtue of said WILL two sons i.e. Mr. Panka Chaudhary & Sh. Jalaj Chaudhary both resident & in physical possession and control of the property of same house are joint owner of this property AND HAVING RIGHT TO SELL as per "WILL". My clients are willing to purchase which is stated to be free from any lier or encumbrance or charges etc.

that the said Residential Plot No. A-11, Sector-56, Noida (U.P.) is going to be transferred in favour of Smt. Seema Bansal Wo Sh. Praveen Bansal R/o 1/60, West Punjabi Bagh, New Delhi-110026. if anyone has/have any objection he/she may file his/her objection alongwith the sufficient proof in the Residential Department of the Noida Authority within 30 days from the date of publication of this notice. Seema Bansal

PUBLIC NOTICE This is to inform to all concern tha Mr. Vijay Kumar Singh S/o Late Sh. Kunwar Singh R/o A-599, Sector-19, Noida, Distt. Gautam Budh Nagar, (U.P.) who is the original allottee of property Flat No. 7GF. Block-28. Pkt-7. Sector-82. Noida has sold the said property or General Power of Attorney basis to the

General Power of Attorney basis to the following person(s).

General Power of Attorney was executed on dated 04.03.2002 in favour of Mrs. Ishrat Begum W/o Mohd. Kalam R/o H.No. 2-177, Near H-33, Jhuggi Jhupadi, Sector-9, Noida, Distt. Gautam Budh Nagar, (U.P.) which is registered and the Agreement to Sell was not registered or not descent the Agreement Sollie Agreement Sollie. executed. Because the Agreement to Sell is not registered or no Agreement to Sell executed, so it is informed to all concern that the said Property Flat No. 7GF, Block-28, Pkt-7, Sector-82, Noida, is going to be transferred in favour of Md. Kalam S/o Md. Habib R/o H.No. 2-177, Noida, Distt. Gautam Budh Nagar, (U.P.). If anyone has/have any objection he/she may file his/her objection alongwith the sufficient proof in the Residentia Department of the Noida Authority within 30 Md. Kalam S/o Md. Habib

NOTICE INVITING e-TENDER

Guwahati-19, Assam invites tender through e-tendering process for supply of School Band Uniform from authorized dealer or manufacturer of uniforms/garments.

document, bidder should have valid Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) and have to register in the portal https:// assamtenders.gov.in by themselves. The tender should be submitted online as per date and time

Sd/-Mission Director.

Janasanyog/CF/3880/24/6-Mar-25

PUBLIC NOTICE FOR LOSS OF REGISTERED SALE DEED

Late Sh. V.D. Sharma (THE VENDOR), M/s. Clarion Properties Limited (THE COspace on different floors in the said commercial Complex known as 'THE GALAXY' situated at village Silokhara, Tehsil and District: Gurgaon, Haryana, has been lost/misplaced.

has already carried out or is going to carry out any proposed transaction, kindly inform the undersigned in writing on the below mentioned address within 07 days from the present publication Sd/- ANUBHAV SHARMA

Period/Tentative 01.04.2025 Security services provider 31.03.2026

2.5 to 3.0 MT

NOTE:

 For complete details regarding above tender (NIT), please visit our website i.e. www.verka.coop & e Tendering portal i.e. eproc.punjab.gov.in

HIMALAYA FOOD INTERNATIONAL LIMITED

(Formerly Known as Himalaya International Limited)
Regd. Office: 118, 1st Floor, 12 Gagandeep Building, Rajendra Place, New Delhi-110008
Tel. +91 11 45108609, Fax: +91 1704 225178 E-mail id: cs@himalyainternational.com | website: www.himalayafoodcompany.com

NOTICE OF POSTAL BALLOT

NOTICE is hereby given to the members of Himalaya Food International Limited (the "Company") that pursuant to the provisions of Sections 108, 110 and other applicable provisions, if any, of the Companies Act, 2013 ("the Act"), including any statutory modification(s), clarification(s), substitution(s) or re-enactment(s) thereof for the time being in force, read with Rules 20 and 22 of the Companies (Management and Administration) Rules, 2014 (the "Management Rules") as amended, Secretaria Standard-2 on General Meetings (the "SS-2"), Regulation 44 of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Listing Obligation: and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015 (the "SEBI Listing Regulations") read with General Circular no. 14/2020 dated April 8, 2020 and 17/2020 dated April 13, 2020, 22/2020 dated June 15, 2020, 33/2020 dated September 28, 2020, 39/2020 dated December 31, 2020 read with other relevant circulars, including General Circular No. 10/2021 dated June 23, 2021 General Circular no.20/2021 dated December 8, 2021 and General Circular no.3/2022 dated May 5, 2022 dated No. 11/2022 dated December 28, 2022 issued by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, in view of the COVID-19 pandemic (hereinafter collectively referred to as ("MCA Circulars") and other applicable laws, rules, circulars, regulations and notifications. ssued thereunder (including any statutory modification or re-enactment thereof, for the time being in force), the Company has ispatched the Postal Ballot notice on March 04, 2025 through electronic mode (e-mail) only to those shareholders ames are recorded in the Register of members and/or Register of beneficial owners maintained by the Depositories as o February28, 2025for seeking approval of the shareholders of the Company by way of Postal Ballot through electronic mean "e-voting") only, to pass the following resolutions as special resolutions:

Appointment of Mr. Bhushan Kumar Garg (DIN: 02393899) as an Independent Director of the Company

In compliance with the applicable provisions of the Act & MCA Circulars, the Company has sent notice along with rocedure & instructions for e-voting through electronic mode only, to those members whose names appear in the Registe of Members or Register of Beneficial Owners maintained by the Depositories as on Friday, February28, 2025 ("cut-of

date') and voting rights of the members are reckoned as on that day. Accordingly, physical copy of the Postal Ballot Notice along with Postal Ballot Forms and pre-paid business envelope is not being dispatched to the shareholders for this Postal Ballot exercise. Members are requested to refer e-voting instructions outlined in the notice to caste their vote on the resolutions proposed for their approval. Members are requested to give their assent/dissent to the proposed resolut through e-voting facility only. Pursuant to the Circular, the Company has completed dispatched of the notice of Postal Ballot through email on March 04 2025. The members who have not received the notice of Postal Ballot may download it from the website of the Company

www.himalayafoodcompany.com or from the website of stock exchange i.e. BSE Limited your email id is already registered with the Company/Depository Participant, login details for e-voting will be sent on you

The remote e-Voting period shall commence at 09:00 a.m. (IST) on Thursday, March06, 2025 and ends at 5.00 p.m (IST) on Friday, April04, 2025 (both days inclusive). The remote e-voting module shall be disabled by CDSL for voting Members who are holding shares in physical formor who have not registered their email addresses with the Compan /Depositories, can obtain login credentials for e-voting as per following procedure:

For members holding shares in physical form, please send scan copy of signed request letter mentioning your folio no. complete address, email address to be registered along with self-attested copy of PAN and any document (such as Aadhai Card, Driving License, Voter Identity Card, Passport) supporting the registered address of the member, by email to the Company at cs@himalyainternational.com For the members holding shares in demat form, please update your email address through your respective Depositor

M/s ChauhanPradeep& Associates, Practicing Company Secretaries represented by Mr. Pradeep Kumar Chauhar

Proprietor (CP No: 25669) have been appointed as the Scrutinizer to conduct the Postal Ballot through remote e-voting

The results of the Postal Ballot will be announced on or before Sunday, April06, 2025. The said results along with the Scrutinizer's Report would be communicated to the Stock exchange and uploaded on the website of the Company.

All grievances connected with the facility for voting by electronic means may be addressed to Mr. Rakesl Dalvi, Sr. Manager, (CDSL,) Central Depository Services (India) Limited, A Wing, 25th Floor, Marathor Futurex, Mafatlal Mill Compounds, N M Joshi Marg, Lower Parel (East), Mumbai - 400013 or send an email to helpdesk.evoting@cdslindia.com or call on 022-23058542/43 or toll free no. 1800 22 55 33022.

For Himalaya Food International Limite

Managing Director

rocess in a fair and transparent manner

Sanjeev Manchanda (Advocate), Supreme Court of India 55/06, Ashok Nagar, New Delhi-18

Cabinet approves changes to LHDC to include generic veterinary medicines

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

The Cabinet on Wednesday approved changes to the ₹3,880 Crore Livestock Health and Disease Control Programme (LHDC) to include the distribution of high-quality and affordable generic veterinary medicines to farmers.

The total budget provided for the Livestock Health and Disease Control Programme (LHDCP) was ₹3,880 Crore for 2024-25 and 2025-26.

"A decision related to livestock health has been taken in the Cabinet. Highquality medicines will be provided under the Pashu Aushadhi component of the scheme," I and B Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said after the Union Cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi.



Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw briefs on union cabinet decisions

component added to the LHDCP scheme, an official statement said.

The minister said Pashu Aushadi would be similar to Jan Aushadi Yojana. The generic veterinary medicines will be distributed through

Pashu Aushadhi is the new PM Kisan Samridhi Kendras and Cooperatives. Vaishnaw said traditional knowledge of veterinary

medicines will also be revived and documented as part of the scheme.

The Cabinet approved a provision of ₹75 Crore from

the total budget allocation for supplying good quality and affordable generic veterinary medicine and an incentive for sale of medicines under Pashu Aushadhi component. The scheme has three

components — National Animal Disease Control Programme (NADCP), Livestock Health and Disease Control (LH and DC) and Pashu Aushadhi.

Livestock Health and Disease Control Programme focuses on the prevention of diseases like Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD), Brucellosis, Peste des Petits Ruminants (PPR), Cerebrospinal Fluid (CSF), Lumpy Skin Disease, etc, through immunisation.

The scheme also supports door-step delivery of livestock health care and improving the availability of veterinary medicine. The minister stated that nine

states are ready to be declared as FMD-free zones. These states include: Punjab, Haryana, Uttarakhand, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Gujarat and Maharashtra. India is the world's largest

milk producer. Being FMD-free and having a systematic and well-documented vaccination programme will help in the export of milk and milk products in a significant way and improve farmers' income, he added.

The LHDCP will help in the prevention and control of livestock diseases through vaccination, surveillance and upgradation of healthcare facilities. Also, the scheme will improve productivity, generate employment, encourage entrepreneurship generate in rural areas and prevent economic losses of farmers due to disease burden.

Ad break: Pepsi pokes Coke with 'anytime' over 'half time'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

The never-ending hilarious ad war between beverage majors Coca-Cola and PepsiCo has taken off this season with Pepsico's 'any time' jibe at its bigger rival Coca-Cola's 'half time' campaign.
Replying to arch rival CocaCola's 'half time' campaign for

the ICC Champions Trophy 2025, PepsiCo came out with a full-page newspaper advertisement flipping the script with "any time" campaign with a direct hit on the cola major trying to grab the consumers' eyeball. In its 'half time' campaign

rolled out a month back across TV and digital platforms, the market leader sought to promote the idea of refreshing during pause times with a chilled soft drink.

However, PepsiCo with its witty 'any time' tag line kicked off the summer campaign with a message that why wait for a particular moment when every moment is better with a Pepsi in hand.

Pepsi in its latest ad has listed life's best moments - first time, thirst time, day time, play time, class time, pass time, crunch time, lunch time, chill time, one more time, dinner time, winner time, down time, town time, we time, me time - to enjoy the drink.

It has fondly brought back the days of humour and cheekiness marketing. This also attracted comments on the social media platforms, where people fondly remembered the 1996 ad war, when Pepsi had launched its ad campaign titled 'Nothing Official About It'.

PepsiCo had lost the official beverage sponsorship rights to Coca-Cola in the 1996 Cricket World Cup, which was jointly hosted by India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. Following that, Pepsico came

with the famous 'nothing official about it' campaign

President of IACC and Chancellor of Amity University, in his inaugural address, called

upon all attendees to actively

participate in the mission of

women's empowerment, echoing the sentiment that

"Women have to be empowered

Dr Lalit Bhasin, Past National President of IACC, provided a

President of IACC, provided a compelling perspective, asserting that Indian women have always been powerful. "When we say empower women,' we imply that someone else has to do it. However, Indian women have historically shaped societies with their resilience and

with their resilience and

The conference culminated in

determination," he remarked.

awards

to dream.

starring cricket icons Sachin Tendulkar, Vinod Kambli, and Mohammed Azharuddin.

"For those who remember, 'Nothing Official About It' wasn't just a campaign - it was

a cultural moment.

A take from the brand that turned into an obsession amongst the audience, proving that sometimes, not trying too hard is exactly the winning move. And now, decades later, Pepsi seems to be channelling same confidence," said PepsiCo in a statement.

When asked, Rediffusion Chairman Sandeep Goyal said: "Now they joust but they don't go for knock-outs."

Colas were once the most exciting and engaging category in FMCG. Over the years, many more categories have grabbed consumer attention and have got consumers engaged and involved. So colas are not centre stage any longer to the same extent as maybe half a century ago," he said.

BSES launches drone pilot training for Army veterans



Pioneer Photo

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

In a landmark initiative reflecting its unwavering commitment to the welfare of armed forces personnel, BSES, collaboration with the Army Welfare Placement Office (AWPO) has launched a transformative drone pilot placement training and program. This pioneering initiative is designed to ex-servicemen, empower those retiring within six months and Veer Naaris with cutting-edge skills, opening doors to rewarding careers in the rapidly expanding drone

Recognising the immense potential of this high-growth industry and the unique challenges faced by veterans transitioning to civilian life, this program aims to bridge the gap between military service and civilian employment through comprehensive, industryspecific training and robust placement support.
The drone pilot training and

placement program is a forward-looking initiative designed to equip 250 veterans and 50 Veer Naaris over a three-year period with specialised drone operation skills. This program opens pathways to careers in agriculture, infrastructure development, logistics, and more within the

burgeoning drone industry. Being conducted in small, focused batches of around 20 participants, the program offers an intensive 14-day curriculum covering both theoretical knowledge and hands-on practical experience. Trainees will gain expertise in flight operations, payload management, data analysis, and regulatory compliance, using advanced drone models such as White Hawk, Spidex, Nakshay, and Bhiman. Certified instructors from the Directorate Centeral from the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) will deliver the training, culminating in the awarding the of the mandatory Remote Pilot Certificate (RPC) for commercial drone operations in India.

Moreover, entrepreneurship support is embedded within the program, offering specialized sessions on setting up drone-based businesses, regulatory compliance, and development. business Participants will benefit from offline internships, enhancing real-world readiness, with job opportunities. The initiative is being coordinated by NGO partner You'. 'Sahayog care for

IACC hosts conference on women empowerment

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI**

Indo-American Chamber of Commerce (IACC) successfully hosted a thought-provoking conference on Women Empowerment in New Delhi under the theme "Celebrating Womanhood: Empower, Educate, Elevate." Womanhood: The event brought together distinguished leaders and advocates, emphasising the necessity of empowering women to drive societal progress. While speaking at the conference Mridula Pradhan,

Chairperson Foundation Trust, emphasised the dignity and respect of women, quoting a Sanskrit shloka: "Where women are respected, divine blessings follow." She advocated for true gender equality, urging that the slogan 'Beti-Beta Ek Saman' must be implemented in all spheres of life. Pradhan also stressed the importance of protecting women's rights, particularly reproductive rights. Former Union Minister Smriti Irani addressed the gathering, highlighting the strength of Indian women in overcoming challenges, particularly during the pandemic. She noted that Narendra



has taken government significant steps toward financial inclusion for women by providing bank accounts and loans, which women have successfully leveraged, leading to low non-performing assets. However, she pointed out that "the digital world remains biased against women, and addressing this challenge is Mallika

Chairperson of Chairperson of Special Olympics Bharat, reaffirmed that "Women's rights are nonnegotiable, and their dignity must be protected at all costs. She emphasised the additional challenges faced by physically challenged women and called for prioritising their inclusion and support. Dr Upasana Arora, Conference Chair, Executive Council Member of IACC, and Managing Director of Yashoda Super Specialty Hospitals, underscored the pivotal role of women in societal transformation. She "Empowerment of stated, women is essential for social upliftment. Women who are empowered must extend support to those who are not, creating opportunities for excellence. When women are empowered, society as a whole is empowered." Dr Åtul Chauhan, Regional

celebrating exceptional women leaders who have made remarkable contributions across various sectors: The 'Women Leader of the Year' award was bagged by Dr Amit Chauhan, chairperson, Amity Group of Schools, while the 'Excellence in Educational Leadership' award was given to Charu Modi, director, Godfrey Phillips India Limited. The 'Leadership in Gender Equality and Advocacy' award was given to Nina Gupta, managing partner, Bhasin and Co Advocates.

Centre imposes import curbs on platinum alloy

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA **NEW DELHI**

The government on Wednesday imposed import curbs on platinum alloy with less than 99 per cent purity to curb illicit imports of this precious metal blended with significant amounts of gold. Importers of such platinum alloys are now required to obtain import authorisation from the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) for the inbound shipments.

shipments.
The decision follows cases where this alloy blended with significant amounts of gold was imported to exploit the tariff differential between gold and platinum. "Import policy of platinum is revised from free to restricted except for platinum alloy of 99 per cent or more alloy of 99 per cent or more purity by weight of platinum," the DGFT said in a notification. To ensure a smooth supply of platinum for jewellery manufacturing and industrial use, the government allows the unrestricted import of platinum alloy with 99 per cent or higher purity of platinum.

Finance Commission in Bhopal

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

The Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG), K Sanjay Murthy, met with the 16th Finance Commission chaired by Dr Panagariya Arvind Wednesday in Bhopal.

According to a release issued by the CAG, the high-level consultation formed a critical part of the Commission's ongoing assessment of the financial landscape of the Centre and states. The deliberations mainly

focused on three key areas: Union and State Finances, Local Bodies, and Public Sector Enterprises (PSEs), among The Union, the states, local

bodies and the PSEs are under the audit of the CAG. In addition, the CAG also maintains the accounts of the

The CAG shared various audit findings for Union and states in various sectors, the fiscal challenges and stress points, including the gap between expenditure and non-debt receipts for the Union and states combined.

The key areas of concern include a decline in the state own tax revenue (SOTR) buoyancy of the States and varying levels of SOTR and non-tax revenue of the States, which underscore the need for more robust revenue collection mechanisms. The CAG drew attention to the

need for regular reporting of the Off Budget Borrowings, meeting the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) targets and the taking into account post audit liabilities computed by the CAG in his reports. This could be a crucial source of information for Finance Commission while examining extent of fiscal consolidation for the Union

and the States.
"The CAG's presentation drew attention to untapped revenue

Notably, areas such as stamp duty, registration fees, and state excise collections have been identified as having substantial potential for enhanced fiscal erformance. Recommendations in this regard include regular updates to market value guidelines, improved classification of property types, and the modern adoption technology-such as sensorbased systems and QR codes-to minimise revenue leakages and improve data accuracy,"

according to the release. In the realm of Goods and Services Tax (GST) administration, the CAG has also proposed several reforms aimed at widening the tax base and enhancing transparency. Suggested measures include the integration of unregistered goods and service providers into the GST framework via automated data collection and real-time information systems, along with improvised taxpayer verification processes. These initiatives are expected to not only streamline the tax collection process but also to more accurate apportionment of inter-state tax flows. The CAG gave a strong emphasis on the need to standardise accounting practices at all tiers of the government for transparent and ready availability of comparable fiscal information. The presentation called for the harmonisation of object heads of expenditure and adoption of

system by state governments without deviations. It was also highlighted that, as immediate measure, harmonisation of local bodies accounts with Central and state accounts may be attempted in top 100 cities. Such steps would facilitate the seamless

a uniform six-tier classification

consolidation of fiscal data and strengthen transparency in public financial management, thereby empowering policymakers with clearer insights into both revenue and expenditure.

An important highlight of the discussion endorsement of good practices, like that involving the establishment of a budget stabilisation Fund jurisdictions with surplus revenues.

"A key component of the meeting is centered on the financial management of local bodies. The CAG shared insights from performance audits across numerous urban local bodies and Panchayati Raj Institutions, pointing out issues such as incomplete devolution of functions, heavy dependence on Central and State grants, and low levels of own-source revenue," it said.

this regard. recommendations included integrating local body use of Integrated Financial Management System (IFMS) for onboarding the payment or fund transfer made by the states to the urban local bodies (ULB) and the rural local bodies (RLB) and streamlining accounting practices to ensure consistent and transparent financial reporting at the grassroots level. Need for development of specifically suited system for the processing of the transactions of the ULBs or RLBs and their accounts was suggested, which can be incentivised by the FC," it

Additionally, the presentation addressed the lack of oversight of State Public Sector Enterprises in submission of their Annual Accounts, urging corrective measures to address persistent and inefficiencies, and recommending close monitoring of disinvestment

CAG K Sanjay Murthy meets 16th | IRFC expands funding beyond Indian Railways



IRFC board of directors unveil Navratna status with CMD and CEO Manoj Kumar Dubey in center Pioneer Photo

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

Indian Railway Finance Corporation (IRFC), which earned Navratna status from the government, on Wednesday said that with this recognition, it can go beyond its present funding activities to the needs of the Indian railways to all other companies operating in the whole rail eco-system.

Interacting with the media persons to update the future plans after being awarded the Navratna status, IRFC CMD and CEO Manoj Kumar Dubey said the company, which was funding to the Indian Railways, has now got wider legroom to finance all other companies and activities which come under the rail logistics eco-system. On March 3, 2025, the government approved the

upgradation of IRCTC and IRFC to Navratna Central Public Sector Enterprises.

Dubey said that his company will have several edges as compared to his competitors when it comes to bidding for railway-linked projects because the IRFC maintains very low expenses, has access to cheap raw material (loan) and it wants a margin of over 40 paise, a margin it gets from the Railways currently.

He informed that the firm has funded ₹5 Lakh Crore to the Indian Railways till date, however, the Railways hasn't taken any loan from it for the past two years.

'As and when the railways require money, it has to come to us and that business is always assured to us. Apart from that, what we have embarked upon is anything back and forth linkage with the railways we wish to fund," Dubey said.

'We have found that in our gamut of systems others are funding with a big margin of 200 and 250 basis points. Think over a scenario that I am funding with anything between 40 bips to 150 bips and the kind of yield it will give to my bottomline," he added.

Dubey banked upon the

company's zero NPA status. "Out of all the three financial government the Rural institutions — Electrification Corporation Power (REC), Finance Corporation (PFC) and IRFC that can issue 54EC bonds (capital gain bonds), our nil NPA status makes us safest among all," he said.

A statement from the company said that it has already secured funding for 20 BOBR (Bogie Open Bottom Rapid discharge railway wagon) rakes for NTPC worth ₹700 Crore and was recently declared the lowest bidder to finance a Rs 3190 Crore loan for PatratuVidyut Utpadan Nigam Limited (PVUNL), a subsidiary of NTPC.

Renewable Energy Limited (NTPC REL), a wholly owned subsidiary of NTPC Green Energy Limited (NTPC GEL), has accepted IRFC's bid for ₹7600 Crore for a Rupee Term Loan (RTL) against its Request for Proposal," the press note "IRFC is also actively exploring

opportunities to fund rolling stock requirements for Indian Railways customers, container train operators, renewable energy needs of Indian Railways, Metro Rail Projects, port rail connectivity and PPP projects sanctioned by Indian Railways," it added.

Dubey said that IRFC has played a key role in funding nearly 80 per cent of Indian Railways locos, coaches and wagons, including the Vande Bharat Express trains. At present, nearly 86 per cent of the company is owned by the Ministry of Railways and nearly 13 per cent by all diverse shareholders in the country as well as overseas, he added.

Brewers association allege excise rules not uniform in Karnataka

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI**

Pointing towards increasing amount of arbitrariness in beer regulations in Karnataka, the Brewers Association of India (BAI) has said the State Government while dealing with the applications of rounding off of the declared price (DP) was favouring some companies.

The Karnataka government introduced the concept of rounding off of the DP (declared price) to nearest Rs 5 was introduced, while the application of one beer supplier, viz, M/s Som Breweries and Distilleries which applied with an upward price revision got approved without due documentary substantiation,

body of the beer industry, which represents India's largest beer makers such as the AB InBev, Carlsberg, and United Breweries (a Heineken company), said in its representation to the State government. "As a result, our member

companies, which are the investors and contributors to government revenues in the state, feel greatly aggrieved and discriminated against," said that letter and demanded the government to ensure level playing field for all beer suppliers in Karnataka. BAI has demanded that applications of its members should also be

the plea of BAI members were cleared with respect to put on hold, the BAI, the apex rounding off in the DP where there is no consequent change in the MRP.

Highlighting the biasness in implementation of excise rules, the BAI has stated that "this is against the ethos of fair competition and will do more harm than good in the long run for the industry, the government revenues, the consumers, local economy and investment in the state"

in beer sales in the state.

According to BAI Director General Vinod Giri, "in recent times we have been witnessing increasing amount arbitrariness in beer regulation in the state which is threatening the industry growth as is evident from the recent trends

Rubrik unveils new capabilities to enhance cyber resilience

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI**

"Additionally,

n its ongoing commitment to deliver comprehensive cyber Rubrik resiliency, Wednesday announced significant innovations designed to enhance protection for cloud, SaaS, and onpremises environments. The innovations aim to provide customers with even more ability to anticipate breaches, detect potential threats, and recover with speed and efficiency no matter where their data lives. "Cyber criminals will not stop innovating, and neither will we. Our utmost priority is the security, safety, and appropriate accessibility of our customer's data, regardless of where the data lives," said Arvind Nithrakashyap, chief technology officer and cofounder of Rubrik. "We are seamlessly integrating

new technologies across the world's major cloud platforms, SaaS offerings, and on-premises so our customers can better detect compromised data, enhance the speed of identifying affected data, and accelerate the discovery of clean entry points," he added. "The timing is critical, as leading Indian enterprises accelerate their cloud adoption, they also see cyber-risk and realise the urgent need for cyberresilience," said Ashish Gupta, managing director India and head of engineering, Rubrik

Real Madrid defeats Atletico 2-1 in Champions League

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA MADRID

A superb goal from Brahim Diaz helped Real Madrid maintain its dominance of the Madrid derby on Europe's biggest stage with a 2-1 victory over bitter rival Atletico in the first leg of their Champions League last 16 tie on Tuesday

Atletico has been beaten by the record 15-time European champion in both Champions League final matchups and has won only three of 11 meetings with their city rivals in UEFA competitions.

Also Tuesday, Arsenal made a massive step toward a quarterfinal spot with a 7-1 win at PSV Eindhoven. It was the biggest victory in an away match in the knockout stage of the Champions League, UEFA said.

"It's a massive result away from home in a competition that we love, that we miss for so many years," Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta said. "Today is a really special night for us.

On a good night for Premier League teams, Aston Villa won 3-1 at Club Brugge, and Borussia Dortmund drew 1-1 with Lille.

A tense encounter in the Spanish capital was decided by a moment of individual brilliance. Diaz scored the winner for Real Madrid after squeezing past a couple of Atletico players and curling a low strike into the far corner in the 55th minute.

Diego Simeone's team could not change the script after losing its finals to Madrid in 2014 and 2016. It was also eliminated the other two times they faced off in the knockout rounds

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Indian table tennis legend A Sharath Kamal will hang up his racket and the iconic

bandana later this month,

having stayed at the top of his

game for more than 22 years

and resisting the temptation of

lasting another Olympic cycle

In his own words, life has come

finest athletes who will say

goodbye to professional table

tennis in front of his friends and family in Chennai, where

the WTT (World Table Tennis)

Star Contender and his

swansong will be staged from March 25 to 30.

Sharath's contribution to the

game goes beyond the

staggering numbers, including

seven gold medals at the

Commonwealth Games, two

path-breaking bronze medals

at the Asian Games and five

appearances at the Summer

Paris last year was easily the

highlight for him as an

Olympian, having received the

honour of carrying India's flag

The results did not go his way

in the French capital but

considering his fitness and

ranking (he remains India's

highest ranked player at no.

42), Sharath decided to carry

on for another season and take

Games and Asian Games are

on the horizon but Sharath has

Commonwealth

at the opening ceremony.

Olympics.

it from there.

Another

at the ripe old age of 42.



- in the 2015 quarterfinals and 2017 semifinals

Playing at home at Santiago Bernabeu stadium, Real Madrid took the lead on its first chance through a great goal from Rodrygo. After being picked up down the flank, he cut inside the box, was too fast for defenders and beautifully curled the ball into the back of the net.

"It stemmed from a nice ball from Fede Valverde," Rodrygo said. "He absolutely read my movement and put the ball in behind the man covering me. I made a little dribble incide and the manual blick of the state of t inside and then smashed it off my

A Sharath announces retirement

"Not saying I am letting it go

completely, but this is certainly the end for us on the big tables,

in front of the big crowds.

Time to give my bandana and

"Grateful beyond words for all

the joy, for all the love, for all

the pain, for all the lessons, and

for all the people this sport has

For the better of the past two

younger generation to take up

the sport before Manika Batra

emerged to share that

Sharath not only lifted the

profile of the sport, he

announced the arrival of Indian table tennis on the

global stage and made his

presence felt against the all-

conquering Chinese and other

Asian giants including Japan

His booming forehand made

his opponents nervous and over time, he continued to evolve and developed an

Kamlesh Mehta, an Arjuna

awardee and another fine

player to have come out of

India, listed out the reason for

Sharath's longevity in the game.

"The game has changed so

much in the last 20 years.

When he started, he was not

doing the backhand banana

flick. He had to learn that

banana flick and strengthen his

"He was able to make those

changes, learn new things and

put it in his game. That's the

backhand.

equally lethal backhand.

racket some rest," he said.

given me

responsibility.

and South Korea.

Atletico patiently waited for an opportunity. It came in the 32nd minute and Julian Alvarez seized it with a spectacular strike. The forward collected the ball down the left, cut inside the box and curled the ball past Thibaut Courtois for his seventh goal in the tournament this season.

"I leave with the feeling that we competed well," Atletico coach Diego Simeone said. "We could have done more in terms of the goals we conceded. We must continue with this rhythm for the second leg, which will be tough and difficult, and in which we will have the support of our fans." Gunners romp to emphatic win

reason he could sustain himself for so long," Mehta told PTI.

As any elite athlete, Sharath had his share of ups and downs. The hip and hamstring injury he suffered during the

2015 World Championships was a major setback in his

"Many people had written him

off after that injury but he came back stronger," recalled

best results coincided with the

With Sharath now having the

support of a formidable bench

strength, India were able to

stun Japan for a bronze medal at the 2018 Asian Games.

Fellow Chennai resident G

Sathiyan was the architect of

happened when he and Manika teamed up to land a

historic mixed doubles bronze

in Jakarta. Even Sharath did

not see it coming on the highly

competitive confinental stage.

There was no stopping him as

he entered his 40s, bullish

about his returns at what was

going to be his final

Ahead of the 2022 edition in

Birmingham, he had to work

doubly hard to maintain his

fitness as his battered and

bruised body was not

responding to the zeal of a

unprecedented three gold

medals, he surpassed his own

With

Commonwealth Games.

unthinkable

that famous win.

Another

appearance

teenager.

expectations.

twilight of Sharath's career.

career.

Mehta.

Arsenal, which returned to the Champions League after a six-year absence last season, got off a shaky start and Jurrien Timber scored against the run of the play with a header at the far post, just after PSV hit the woodwork

The London team never looked back after that and led 3-0 at the half-hour

Seventeen-year-old Ethan Nwaneri doubled the lead in the 21st after his teammates combined well in the area to set him up. Mikel Merino then made the most of the confusion in the repeatedly failed to clear the ball.

A silly foul from Thomas Partey on Luuk de Jong in the box gave PSV some hope before halftime and Noa Lang converted.
But PSV crumbled once back from

the locker room. Arsenal captain Martin Odegaard scored twice, with Leandro Trossard and Riccardo Calafiori adding more luster to the

Dortmund held

Last season's runner-up Borussia Dortmund is evenly matched with Lille ahead of the second leg after Hakon Arnar Haraldsson's goal salvaged a 1-1 draw for the French

Dortmund led thanks to Karim Adeyemi's low shot from outside the box in the 22nd minute, but Canada forward Jonathan David sliced open the Dortmund defense with a through ball in the 68th for Haraldsson to level the score.

Aston Villa wins away

Aston Villa shook off its poor away form, and it was largely due to an own goal from a rival player.

A turning point came in the 82nd minute when Club Brugge defender Brandon Mechele beat his own goalkeeper with the teams tied 1-1. Mechele slid to stop a cross from Morgan Rogers, only to deflect into the back of the net.

Before that, the Belgian side had looked solid, enjoyed most of the possession and created the best chances in the second half.

Looking demoralized, the hosts then conceded a late penalty that was

converted by substitute Marco



WPL: UP Warriorz to face Mumbai Indians

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA LUCKNOW

Time is running out for UP Warriorz, who face a must-win situation against Mumbai Indians in their Women's Premier League match here on Thursday.

With their playoff hopes hanging by a thread, the Warriorz must bounce back from back-to-back defeats to stay in contention.

It was a disappointing homecoming for the Warriorz, who were comprehensively beaten by Gujarat Giants at the Ekana Stadium in their previous fixture.

The 81-run defeat not only pushed them to the bottom of the points table but also dented their net run rate. Now, with just a couple of games left, they must avoid a third consecutive defeat that could all but end their campaign.

The first-ever WPL match in Lucknow saw Beth Mooney producing a batting masterclass, guiding Gujarat Giants to 186/5, the third-highest total this season.

On a pitch that played true and offered value for shots, the Warriorz's batting unit producing

Warriorz's batting unit however failed miserably, Warriorz's raising serious concerns about their approach and execution. UP Warriorz have been struggling to settle on a stable batting order. Their latest experiment – pushing Georgia Voll to No. 3 – backfired, as they collapsed to 48/6 inside 10 overs, with only one batter from the top six reaching double digits.

Despite the collective failure, Chinelle Henry stood tall yet again.

The West Indian all-rounder's aggressive 14-ball 28 helped UPW limp past 100 before they were bowled out for 105. Henry, who has been their standout batter this season, has amassed 138 runs at an average of 34.50 and a staggering strike rate of 209-plus, highlighting her ability to score quickly even in

the top, UP Warriorz might

consider restoring Voll to her preferred opening role – a position where she flourished in the Women's Big Bash League.

Grace Harris, who has shown glimpses of form, will be crucial in the middle order. The Aussie's experience and power-hitting could provide

the much-needed balance. especially in crunch moments. Additionally, skipper Deepti Sharma, who has been quiet with the bat since her 39-run knock against Gujarat, will need to step up and deliver a captain's innings. Unlike their

Unlike their struggling opponents, Mumbai Indians find themselves in a relatively better position. Placed third on the table with six points, they remain in

contention to top the standings and secure a direct spot in the final. In the WPL format, the topplaced team qualifies directly for the final, while the second

and third-placed teams battle in an Eliminator to determine the other finalist. three With matches remaining for them, the inaugural edition champions in 2023, MI, have a realistic

chance of leapfrogging to the top, but they cannot afford another slipup, having lost to table-toppers Delhi Capitals in their previous outing, where their batting failed to click to be restricted to a modest 123/9. India skipper Harmanpreet

Kaur looked promising but failed to convert her start, falling for 22 off 16 balls, while Nat Sciver-Brunt struggled for fluency, managing just 18 off 22 balls. The English all-rounder, however remains a key figure however, remains a key figure in MIs campaign, having already scored 272 runs from five matches, including three fifties, at a strike rate of 147-

Incidentally, Sciver-Brunt had hammered an unbeaten 75 against UP Warriorz in the first leg, and her ability to Given the ongoing struggles at accelerating at will will make

box to make it 3-0 after PSV India to perform better in Special Olympics World Winter Games, says Mandaviya

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Union Sports Minister Manuskh Mandaviya on Wednesday expressed the confidence that India would surpass its highest-ever gold-medal tally when the country's athletes compete in the Special Olympics World Winter Games, scheduled in Turin, Italy from March 7 till

India is sending a strong 49member contingent including 30 special athletes for the Winter Games, which were last held in 2017 in Austria where the country won 73 medals, including 37

gold. The athletes will compete in six disciplines comprising alpine skiing, cross-country-skiing, floorball, short speed skating, snow boarding and snow shoeing.

"I am seeing tremendous enthusiasm among these Special Winter edition of the World Olympics



Games, India won 37 gold medals, and this time I am confident we will perform even better," said Mandaviya during a sendoff function held at the Dhyan Chand National Stadium.

'I really salute the parents of these athletes and Special Olympics Bharat, who have helped them reach this level. These athletes are very special to us, because what they are doing not everyone can do," the minister added. "You are an inspiration for the whole country."

(SAI) provided 11 national coaching camps for these

cities including Chandigarh, Narkanda, New Delhi, Gwalior, Noida and Gurgaon to help them prepare well.
Additionally, SAI provided equipment support for training and competition. The ministry has also sanctioned money towards airfare, boarding and lodging for the participation of contingent in Games.

athletes in various Indian

Mallika Nadda, the president of Special Olympics Bharat, commended the ministry for increasing the prize money ing medal in Special Olympics World

Cindy Ngamba set for a pro debut on all-female fight card

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

LONDON

Something stood out to Cindy Ngamba as she glanced around when Friday's all-female boxing event was first announced. So many world championship

belts. Ngamba wants one of her "I saw Natasha Ionas and

Lauren Price and Caroline Dubois with their belts, and I remember saying Oh, that looks nice, I would love to have one of them," she said. Achieving goals is kind of

Ngamba's thing. At the Paris Games, she became the first athlete competing as a refugee to earn a medal when she took bronze in the middleweight category.
A decade ago the Cameroonborn Ngamba thought she was about to be deported from Britain. Now she's set to make her professional debut at Royal Albert Hall. She's facing veteran Kirstie Bavington in a super welterweight bout in London as part of an all-female card headlined by the Jonas vs. Price welterweight world title unification fight.
"I can see it, that dream of me

having a belt and being the world champion," Ngamba told The Associated Press, "but at the same time you have to be in the present and you have to make sure you get the job done."

The 26-year-old Ngamba tries not to think ahead too much. That's because she knows circumstances can change so Ngamba had arrived in Britain



siblings live here, too — in north of Bolton, just Manchester, and set about learning English and trying to fit in. She picked up boxing at age 15, and it became an escape from the stress of worrying about her residency status. She described being arrested as

a teenager while checking in at an immigration center in Manchester.

"My case was still pending. I applied and they rejected it. When they reject your case, you have to go and re-apply again. I was in a situation where even though I was reapplying every time, they could have arrested me at any moment," she said.

"I visualized that they could arrest me in the street or in my house, in school or with my friends. I never knew it was going to be at an immigration center where I usually (went) every weekend."

Worried she would be deported, she thought to herself: "I have no one in Cameroon, no family in Cameroon. Who is going to take care of me?"

She was held overnight at a detention facility in London before being released.

Ngamba, who came out as gay when she was 18, eventually won her case and was given refugee status. Same-sex relations in Cameroon can result in prison sentences of

five years in the country.

LeBron James becomes first to score 50,000 combined points in NBA

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA LOS ANGELES

eBron James is well on his way Lebron James is well on the rewriting every previous definition of basketball longevity, and the 40-year-old star is now racking up numbers the NBA has never seen before.

James became the first player to score 50,000 combined points in the regular season postseason on Tuesday night, surpassing the mark with a 3pointer early in the first quarter of the Los Angeles Lakers' 136-115 win over New Orleans.

James finished with 34 points against the Pelicans after toppling another milestone in his unprecedented career.

"I mean, that's a lot of points," James said afterward, rubbing his

where I'm from. Picking up the game when I was a little kid and having a love for the sport, and hoping that someday I'd be able to play at the highest level. I've been able to do that and really enjoy my career. So it's definitely an honor. It's pretty cool to see

James already is the top scorer in NBA history in both the regular season and the playoffs. playoffs. Maintaining a spectacular level of play midway through his record-tying 22nd season, he is pulling away from the other reats of the game: Lakers great Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, who played 20 seasons, is a nowdistant second with 44,149 combined points.

James got ĥis milestone 3-pointer off an assist by Luka Doncic, a beard in wonder. "Obviously, the trivia tidbit that pleased both first thing that comes to mind is superstars. Doncic's arrival in



last month's seismic trade with Dallas the Mavericks has invigorated both James and the 17 victories in their last 20 like games. Lakers, who look

championship contenders with a seven-game winning streak and "It's amazing, watching him do this stuff at this age," said Doncic, who had 30 points, 15 assists and eight rebounds against New Orleans. "It's just unbelievable, that 50K points. I can't even explain how insane that is. He might get to 70K. You never know.

The Lakers recognized the milestone at the next timeout, with public address announcer Lawrence Tanter saying: "Ladies and gentlemen, we all have just witnessed history." James acknowledged the standing ovation with several waves from the bench. James is tied with Vince Carter

for the most seasons played in NBA history. But while nearly every other NBA player who lasted to his late 30s finished at a fraction of his peak powers, James' game shows no signs of

decline in his 40s He was named the NBA's Western onference player of the month earlier Tuesday after he averaged 29.3 points, 10.5 rebounds, 6.9 assists and 1.2 steals in February while playing more than 35 minutes per game for the Lakers, who went 9-2 to surge into second place in the West. With their victory over the Pelicans, the Lakers improved to

11-2 since acquiring Doncic. James has played in 1,548 regular-season games, trailing only Robert Parish (1,611) and Abdul-Jabbar (1,560). If he stays

healthy and elects to return for a record 23rd season, he will likely surpass Parish next winter. James has also played in 287 postseason games, the most in NBA history. He became the league's career playoff scoring

leader on May 25, 2017, when he

of 5,987 during the Cleveland Cavaliers' Eastern Conference finals game at Boston. James then became the top scorer

surpassed Michael Jordan's total

in regular-season history on Feb. 7, 2023, when he topped Abdul-Jabbar's record of 38,387 points during the Lakers' game against Oklahoma City. James' prolific scoring is due in

large part to his metronomic consistency. With his consistency. performance against the Pelicans, he has scored at least 10 points in 1,278 consecutive games since Jan. 6, 2007 — by far the longest such streak in NBA history. James' player of the month award

for February was his 41st, extending his own league record. He is also the oldest player to win the award, surpassing a 37-yearold Karl Malone in November

Smith announces retirement from ODI cricket | We still have not played

ustralia's stand-in Askipper Steve Smith on Wednesday announced his retirement from ODI cricket following his team's four-wicket loss to India in the Champions Trophy (CT) semifinal here but the star batter will continue to play Tests and T20 Internationals. The 35-year-old, who was leading the world champion side in the absence of an injured Pat Cummins, informed his teammates after

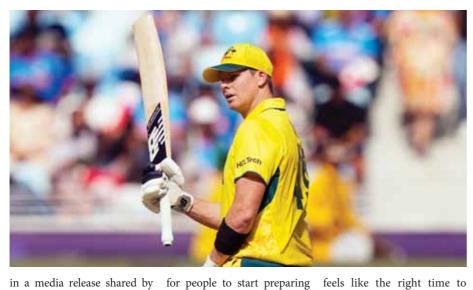
effect. Reflecting on his decision, Smith said it was the right time to step aside as Australia builds itself for the 2027 ODI

the match that he would be stepping away from the 50-over format with immediate

"It has been a great ride, and I have loved every minute of it," Smith said.

World Cup.

"There have been so many amazing times and wonderful memories. Winning two World Cups was a great highlight along with the many fantastic team-mates who shared the journey," he added



in a media release shared by Cricket Australia.

A key member of Australia's victorious 2015 and 2023 ICC World Cup-winning teams, Smith was named Australia's men's ODI Player of the Year in 2015 and 2021 and earned a place in the ICC men's ODI Team of the Year in 2015. He took over the ODI captaincy in 2015 and,

fittingly, led the side one last time in his final match.
"Now is a great opportunity

for people to start preparing for the 2027 World Cup so it feels like the right time to make way," he said.

The veteran of 170 ODIs said Test cricket remains a priority and he is looking forward to the World Test Championship Final in June.

"I feel I still have a lot to contribute on that stage," he

"Now is a great opportunity for people to start preparing for the 2027 World Cup, so it chipped in with 28 wickets at Tributes pour in from CA

Tributes poured in for the star with CA chief executive Todd Greenberg and chairman of selectors George Bailey hailing Smith's immense contribution to Australian

"Congratulations to Steve on an amazing One Day International career during which he has made a vast contribution to Australia's performances in the 50-over

performances in the 50-over format," stated Greenberg.
"Right up until his final ODI innings Steve exhibited an incredible ability to accumulate runs in all conditions and his astute leadership has been crucial in the team's ongoing success. the team's ongoing success including the 2015 and 2023 ICC World Cup victories.

'We're fortunate Steve still has much to offer in the Test and T20 arenas and I look forward to witnessing the next stage of one of cricket's great careers, Greenberg added.

Bailey echoed the sentiment. "We fully understand and support Steve's decision to from One International cricket.

perfect game: Gambhir

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA DUBAI

Not the one to be easily pleased, India head coach Gautam Gambhir said his team is still searching for that "perfect game" despite entering the Champions Trophy (CT) final with an allwin record and he is hopeful that it would come in the summit clash on Sunday.

India trounced Australia by four wickets in the first semifinal here on Tuesday, with senior batter Virat Kohli making a well-paced 84.

"See, in international sport, you want to keep improving. You don't say that you've ticked all the boxes. We still haven't played a perfect game. I will never be satisfied with the performances," Gambhir said in the post-match press conference.

Gambhir hoped that India can produce that "perfect game" in the Champions Trophy title clash on March 9.

"We still have one more game to go. Hopefully, we can play a perfect game. We want to keep improving, we want to be ruthless on the cricket field but absolutely humble off the field as well," he added. India have taken some bold calls such as playing four spinners, promoting Axar Patel to No.5 and pushing

suit the team's needs. It may look illogical from outside but for Gambhir they were minor pieces in the grand plans of keeping the players "out of the comfort zone" to extract the best out of

down KL Rahul to No. 6 to

"I think cricket is all about being out of your comfort zone, and that is how you grow. If everyone is in their comfort zone, then there is stagnation. So, I believe, and vou've seen the results. I know you guys will keep going back

to 3-1 in Australia 'But everyone in the dressing room is staying out of the comfort zone be it the coaching staff, be it the players and hopefully we continue to do what is important for Indian cricket,"



Praggnanandhaa draws with Shankland in Prague Masters

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA **PRAGUE**

randmasters Praggnanandhaa and Aravindh Chithambaram continued to remain in joint lead after drawing their sixthround games in the Prague Masters Chess tournament

Praggnanandhaa was held to a draw by Sam Shankland of the United States, while Aravindh split the point with Quang Leim Le of Vietnam to be on four points out of a possible six, on a day when all the games were drawn for the first time in the tournament. Praggnanandhaa

Aravindh continued to be followed by top seed Wei Yi of China, Anish Giri of Holland, Vincent Keymer of Germany and Quang Leim, all of whom are on three points apiece.

Another half-point behind are the Czech duo of Nguyen Thai Dai Van and David Navara, Gurel Ediz of Turkey and Shankland.

With three more rounds to come, Praggnanandhaa holds the edge over Aravindh as he is set to play the next two games with white pieces. Aravindh, on the other hand, has only one game with white

The seventh round will be crucial for Praggnanandhaa as he takes on Wei Yi, while Aravindh will meet Anish, who has drawn all his games so far.

Praggnanandhaa was under pressure for some time in the middle game against his American opponent, who played white. The opening featured a regular Italian game and Shankland threw

open the position with a knight sacrifice on the king

Soon after, Praggnanandhaa had to part with one of his rooks for a minor piece, and what resulted was a very complex position.

Navigating between better and equal thereon, the Indian allowed Shankland to go for a forced repetition and the game was drawn after 43

Playing white, Aravindh faced the Queen's gambit declined one of the most classical setup for decades now - and had his forces around the centre right

from the word go.
However, as the game progressed, Quang Leim remained impregnable, and players had exchanged as many as three minor pieces and two pawns.

The pawn structure took a small turn when Aravindh decided to part with his last bishop for a knight but black had nothing to worry about. The players soon arrived at a rook-and-pawns endgame where the draw was a just result after 32 moves.

In the Challengers section, the fortunes of Divya Deshmukh did not change as she suffered another defeat and was pushed to the sole last spot among 10 players. Vaclav Finel defeated Divya in a rook-and-minor-piece endgame leaving the Indian on 1.5 points.

Jonas Buhl Bjerre of Denmark regained the joint lead by beating Marc'Andria Maurizzi of France. The Dane shares the top spot with Nodirbek Yakubboev of Uzbekistan.

Sreesanth backs India to win Champions Trophy final PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Peam India simply looks Tunstoppable, exuding confidence, energy and dominance and World Cup-winning former India pacer exuding Sreesanth feels no side can stand in their way in the Champions Trophy final on

The Rohit Sharma-led side trounced reigning world champions Australia by four wickets in the first semifinal here on Tuesday to make it four wins out of four in the ICC showpiece. They now await the winners of

New Zealand and South Africa for the Sunday's summit clash.

'Doesn't matter who the opponents are in the final -India are going to win," the 2007 T20 World Cup and 2011 ODI World Cup winner told PTI Video.

There is so much positive energy. They are playing some wonderful cricket. The way



Virat Kohli anchoring the chase, the way Shreyas Iyer has stepped up – let's just keep our fingers crossed." Sreesanth also emphasised the importance staying

make way," he added.

Smith leaves behind a stellar

ODI legacy built over a period of more than 15 years, since

making his debut as a leg-

spinning all-rounder against

Over the years, he transformed into one of

Australia's most dependable

batters, accumulating 5,800

runs at an average of 43.28,

including 12 centuries and 35

the West Indies in 2010.

grounded. Let's be humble in our process. That's what Mahi bhai (MS Dhoni) used to say -- one of the best captains I've

played with. Even Sourav Ganguly used to say the same. Dada always used to say, let's be humble and trust the process. That's exactly what the Indian team

is doing... Gautam (Gambhir) bhai is doing a great job," he observed.

Mohammad Shami, returning after a 14-month injury layoff, has once again emerged as India's leading wicket-taker in a world tournament, claiming eight wickets. He shares the top spot with New Zealand's Matt Henry, both having taken eight wickets.

Shami was the highest wickettaker in the 2023 World Cup, with 24 wickets, where India finished as runners-up to Australia. That tournament

marked his last appearance before the injury layoff.

"Shami 'one of the biggest fighters. I remember seeing him bowl at the nets. I used to tell him, 'Shami, you will go a long way,' and I like it a lot because of the way he has

upgraded himself.
"Playing for the country, forgetting the past, looking ahead, even after coming back from injury and doing well, getting the wicket in the first

Sreesanth also believes India's domination in world cricket has well and truly arrived.

"Absolutely, there's no doubt that India will dominate world cricket for years to come. The talent pipeline is incredible from domestic cricket to Under-19 tournaments to women's cricket, the system is flourishing. We have to thank the BCCI and Jay Shah for building such a strong foundation. The support system, the sponsorships, the structure - India are well ahead of the rest of the world."



Trying to get my rhythm, says Shami

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

 $M_{\text{conceded that operating}}^{\text{ohammed}} \text{ Shami } \\ \text{as India's lone front-line pacer}$ after coming back from a lengthy injury layoff has been a heavy "responsibility" but said he is trying to regain his "rhythm" to suit the team's needs in the ongoing Champions Trophy (CT).
Throughout the ICC showpiece here, Shami has shared the new ball duties

shared the new ball duties with either Harshit Rana or Hardik Pandya because of the injury-forced absence of Jasprit Bumrah.

Rana is still learning the ropes, while Pandya is an allrounder and delivering 10 overs in an ODI is not precisely his territory. Shami has so far picked eight wickets in the tournament.

"I am trying to get my rhythm back and contribute more for the team. It is a responsibility when there are no two proper fast bowlers and I have to shoulder more responsibility," Shami said in a mixed zone interaction after India's semifinal victory Australia here on Tuesday night.

Shami said his workload is heavier without Bumrah steaming in at the other end but he is trying to give more than a 100 per cent to the role. "There is a load when you are the one main fast bowler and the other is an all-rounder. You have to pick wickets and lead from the front. "I have become used to this

load and am trying my best to make it easy for others and

he said. Shami was sidelined for over a year with an ankle injury that he picked durin the 2023 ODI World Cup. The veteran said he is now ready to shoulder the responsibility of bowling long spells.

give more than 100 per cent,"

"The trust debate ends when you get selected in the team. I don't think that one should worry about his fitness too much. We just need to put in the effort and see how your body takes it. After all, we are labourers.

"I am now ready to bowl long spells. Short spells are anyways easy – 6 balls or 12 balls – and in limited-overs cricket it doesn't matter he noted.

The 34-year-old has bowled his full quota of 10 overs against Bangladesh and Australia, while he bowled just eight and four overs against Pakistan and New Zealand respectively in the earlier matches, primarily because spinners bowled nearly 35 overs in those games. Being at one venue helped me

Shami said it is an advantage for him that all of India's Champions Trophy matches are being played in Dubai. "It has definitely helped us

because we know the conditions and the behaviour of the pitch. It is a plus point that you are playing all the matches at one venue. The main thing is to gauge

the conditions and know how the pitch behaves because you are playing at one venue and you can get to know it well,"

You cannot build pressure on Kohli: Agar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

 $B_{\text{Kohli can be a bowler's}}^{\text{atting stalwart Virat}}$ nightmare when on song and his repertoire of strokes make it nearly impossible to "build pressure on him", said Australian spinner Ashton Agar following another masterclass from the Indian ace in the Champions Trophy semifinal. Kohli added to his match-

winning unbeaten century against Pakistan in the group stage by slamming a fluent 84 against Australia in Dubai to guide India into the final of the marquee tournament.

"It is not the damage that he can do to the fence, it's just the fact that you cannot build pressure on him. So it's really hard to get him out in a sense. You never really feel like you're on top of him unless the ball is really spinning. And you don't get a lot of pitches in one-day



cricket like that," left-arm spinner Agar, who has taken 79 wickets across formats for Australia, said ESPNcricinfo's Match Day.

Kohli's ability to find the gaps and squeezing ones and twos with ease too drew praise the Australian cricketer, who said that for a bowler it's really "frustrating". "That's the frustrating part about bowling to him. He has

this fantastic ability to hit

your best ball, the top of

middle stump, slightly spinning away, he holds the bat's face slightly longer than middle other batters do, opens it in the last second, and hits it in the cover point gap. He's probably the best in the world at doing that and he's very difficult to build pressure on."

Agar added that Kohli was the fulcrum around which the Indian team built the overcome innings Australia.

"India batted around Virat run," said Manjrekar.

and allowed Virat to do his thing, hit the odd boundary and just keep ticking over. I saw a stat that Virat has scored the most singles since the year 2000, which is phenomenal. It was a bit of a masterclass from him and all batters contributed

beautifully. The guys who

Kohli's effort included 56 singles and four twos, indicating his exemplary fitness level. Former India cricketer

Sanjay Manjrekar added, the fact that Kohli is able to find the gaps despite five fielders inside the circle is a testament to his mastery over batting. 'Now you have five fielders

inside the circle, so it's not easy as it used to be -- like during our times -- when you had four fielders. Very rarely has he hit the ball straight to the fielder and hasn't got a

Playing fearless cricket while remaining calm has worked for me: Rahane

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata Knight Riders Ajinkya Rahane has credited his success in the Indian Premier League and domestic T20s to playing "fearless cricket" remaining calm.

The 36-year-old topped the batting charts in the previous edition of the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy with 469 runs, including five half-centuries, at a strike rate of 164.56. His aggressive approach also paid off in the IPL where he was the batting mainstay for Chennai Super Kings in the last two editions. "It was always about being an

anchor and the others would play around me. (But the) last 2-3 years, it's always about playing with freedom, fearless cricket and go out and back my game," Rahane, the brand ambassador of Skillhub Online Games Federation, said here on Tuesday.
"I am trying to do that (play

fearless cricket) but it's (also) about following my processes and routines and staying loyal and truthful to the game." Rahane, who led Mumbai into the Ranji Trophy semifinal and scored 467

runs, said he would carry the

confidence from domestic cricket into the upcoming edition of the IPL.

"For me, personally, batting-wise I am doing really well. Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy was really good for me, I had a really good domestic season. So, I am really confident about myself," he said.

"It is just about staying in the moment, staying calm and keep backing myself, not to think too much ahead and not to think about the past. It's always about improving and enjoying my game," he added. Rahane felt that India's victory in the Champions Trophy semifinal in Dubai on



Tuesday could also be attributed to the side not knockouts dwelling into the past record tournaments.

Before Rohit Sharma's side won the match by four wickets, India had never beaten Australia in the knockouts of ICC of tournaments since the quarterfinal of the 2011 World Cup in India.

India had lost to Australia in the 2015 Cricket World Cup semifinal, the 2023 World Cup final and the 2023 World Test Championship final. "Very happy that India has

won the semifinal against Australia and have entered the final. I want to congratulate the team and I am sure they will do well in the final," Rahane said.

"What happened in the past is gone, the team must be thinking about the present and their aim was to beat Australia... To beat them in the semifinal.

"Obviously, what has happened in the past keeps playing on the mind but, as a cricketer, your mind is always in the moment, in the present, to do well in that game to win the match," Rahane said.

Rahane, who has been appointed KKR captain ahead of the upcoming IPL season, said he would like the defending IPL champions to keep it simple.

"Our team is really good,

everyone is playing really well. We had a camp in Mumbai, all the domestic players were here but international players are also playing which is really good," 'We won the championship

last year but again this year it is about starting from the scratch, starting from zero T20 is a funny format and IPL is a challenging tournament. "I am happy and humbled to be captain of the KKR team. We would like to keep it simple, take one game at a time and stay in the moment and enjoy the format," Rahane

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