



Minor girl sets self ablaze after rape bid by youth

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A minor girl set herself ablaze following an alleged rape attempt by a neighbour in Malihabad. She suffered 60 per cent burns and is undergoing treatment, police said.

The victim's father, who is a driver, told the police that on Thursday, when his wife's health deteriorated, he took her to the hospital. During this time, his daughter was alone at home.

2 cops held hostage in fight over land dispute

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Land dispute in Lucknow's Banthra area escalated on Saturday night when the accused clashed with police officers responding to a call about the altercation.

wall and stated that both parties had been brought to the police station for further action.

RETIRED JUDGE'S SON RUNS OVER TWO STRAY DOGS

An organisation responsible for the welfare of stray dogs alleged that the son of a retired judge allegedly ran over two stray canines with his car in Gomti Nagar, resulting in the death of one of them.

A CCTV footage also surfaced, showing two dogs resting on the roadside when a car (Swift) drives over them. The complaint was registered at the Vibhuti Khand police station by the organisation.

Mayor lays foundation for roads connecting 3 temples in Chowk

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Mayor Sushma Kharkwal on Sunday laid the foundation stone for the construction of internal roads leading to Shri Badi Kali Ji Temple, Lal Temple, and Dwarkadhish Temple in Chowk.



CLASSIFIEDS

NOTICE
I, BHAWANA RAI, W/o Service No-9425182L, Rank: NK, Name: Mahesh Kumar Rai of Unit 6/11 GR, declare that in my husband's Service Record, my date of birth was inadvertently mentioned as 19.02.1985 while my correct date of birth is 18.02.1985 which is declared vide affidavit dated 01.03.2025 sworn before the Executive Magistrate at Lucknow.

NOTICE
It is hereby informed that my son, Shri Sanchit Patel's date of birth was mistakenly recorded as 10/07/2012 in all documents instead of the correct date 10/07/2011. From now on, his date of birth should be considered as 10/07/2011 only.

REQUIRED
Adharshila College of Professional Courses (APCC) Raj Nagar, NH-232, Raibareli Post:-Asst. Professor for Home Science 01, Geography 01, Psychology 01. Eligibility:-55% Marks in Related Subject in M. A. with NET/Ph.D Pay Scale: - As per Lucknow University / UGC norms. Contacts:- 9454855857, 8299214485, 9453848622 Manager (Chandra Prabha Singh)

सूचना
सर्वसाधारण को सूचित किया जाता है कि जुड़िया कृष दस्तावेजों में मेरा नाम शिव नंदन (SHIVE NANDAN) व जन्मतिथि 12-10-2000 दर्ज हो गई है जो कि गलत है मेरा सही नाम शिव नंदन पाल (SHIVE NANDAN PAL) है व सही जन्मतिथि 01-07-1949 है जो कि मेरे आधार में भी दर्ज है । शिव नंदन पाल निवासी 1444 संजय गांधी नगर नौबस्ता कानपुर नगर उ०प्र०

सूचना
सर्वसाधारण को सूचित किया जाता है कि जुड़िया कृष दस्तावेजों में मेरा नाम ममता देवी (MAMTA DEVI) व जन्मतिथि 04-10-1984 दर्ज हो गई है जो कि गलत है मेरा सही नाम ममता (MAMTA) है व सही जन्मतिथि 01-01-1983 है जो कि मेरे आधार में भी दर्ज है । ममता निवासी 1444 संजय गांधी नगर नौबस्ता कानपुर नगर उ०प्र०

NOTICE
It is informed to the general public that the original registry/original documents of land number 271/0.2340 hectares, recorded at number 1, section 732, page 39/50, serial number 1146, belonging to Mahipal Singh, son of Late Guljarial, resident of Village Barauna, Pargana Pali, Tehsil and Thana Sawajpur, district Hardoi, were lost on the way while going from home to Tehsil Sawajpur on 15-1-2025. Despite extensive searching, they have not been found. Anyone who finds the above original documents is requested to kindly inform Mulpal Sharma. Address: Same as above. Contact: 8756474973

NOTICE
It is informed to the general public that the original allotment letter number Sale-1234 dated 15.07.1991 of House no. E.W.S.553 Barra 3 Kanpur Nagar and the original Possession letter have been lost somewhere i.e. cannot be found. Union Bank of India Kanpur Nagar intends to create equitable mortgage in respect of the above property details of which are given. In this notice, if any person claims any interest or ownership in the property or has any other objection, he may make a representation to the bank within in fifteen (15) days of the notice. Vijay Kr. Yadav Union Bank of India empaneled Adv. Chamber behind DM office Court Compound Kanpur Nagar Mob. 9415424888

According to the victim's family, Abhay had gone to a tea shop in the locality when he got into an argument with Aftab and Kaif, who worked at a nearby meat shop owned by Arman. Aftab reportedly asked Abhay if he had attended Maha Kumbh, and when he said yes, the accused allegedly made derogatory remarks. When Abhay objected, they allegedly abused and assaulted him. Fearing for his safety, Abhay ran home, but the accused followed him. They allegedly forced their way into his house, dragged him outside, and thrashed him on the road. Abhay's elder brother Naveen said the family is terrified after the attack. Indiranagar Inspector Sunil Tiwari confirmed that a case has been registered against Arman, Aftab, and Kaif based on the family's complaint. The accused have been arrested, and an investigation is underway.

Ekana stadium gets ₹28-cr tax notice

PNS/PTI ■ LUCKNOW

The Lucknow Municipal Corporation has issued a Rs 28.42 crore property tax notice to the Bharat Ratna Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee International Cricket Stadium, also known as Ekana stadium.

tration had previously objected to the tax assessment, but those objections were deemed baseless. Ekana stadium Director Uday Sinha called the notice "against the rules." "We will soon meet the Chief Minister and seek justice," he told said.

2 held for stealing mobile phones at music concert

Lucknow (PNS): Two Mumbai residents, posing as music lovers, travelled to Lucknow to attend a Honey Singh concert on Friday as part of a plan to steal mobile phones. The duo managed to steal six expensive mobile phones worth around Rs 5 lakh during the event, police said.

BJP govt conspiring to end quota by privatising institutions: AKY

Lucknow (PNS/PTI): Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav on Sunday accused the BJP-led Uttar Pradesh government of conspiring to end jobs and reservation by privatising government institutions in the state. The former chief minister claimed that the state government is hell-bent on privatising two power distribution companies - Purvanchal and Dakshinanchal Viduyt Vitran Nigam Ltd.

get the opportunity of reservation. The BJP government is working on the "policy of loot, lies and dishonesty", he said. CPI (ML) FLAYS YOGI GOVT The CPI (ML) criticised the Yogi government for the increasing violence against Dalits, alleging that government concessions and protection have emboldened criminals who are now attacking and even killing Dalits.

CITYBRIEFS

LEPROSY PATIENT SEARCH CAMPAIGN

As part of the National Leprosy Eradication Programme, MLA Mukesh Sharma inaugurated the Leprosy Patient Search Campaign (LCDC) at the Community Health Centre on Naval Kishore Road.

ed government initiatives to support children in jails, including education, nutrition, and mental health services. Keynote speaker Dr KA Pandey, a faculty member at Ram Manohar Lohia National Law University, shared his personal experience of growing up with an incarcerated parent.

on aligning students' skills with industry needs. The training, meant for B.Tech students in second year and above, covers tools in design, CAD, 3D printing, motor control, and Python programming.

INTERACTION



As part of SATAT MILAP, Kumaon Battalion at Lucknow Garrison under HQ MUPSA carried out an interaction with veterans, Veer Naris and widows of Hardoi district on February 28 to make them aware about various schemes of the Directorate of Indian Army Veterans/Central Government / State Government and keep continuous feedback mechanism where veterans can share their grievances to enable the nodal unit to timely address the grievances for redressal with respective branches/Directorate.

KALAM PRAGATI

The Kalam Pragati programme was launched at Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Technical University (AKTU) in partnership with the training & placement department and ERA Foundation. This initiative offers a free 30-hour training course in 'Innovation & Design Thinking and Robotics' to engineering students.

HONOURED

President of the Mohanlalganj Vyapar Mandal, Ajay Pandey alias Satyam, was honoured with an honorary doctorate degree by Bharat Virtual University for Peace and Education in New Delhi on Sunday.

Referral hospital to come up in Gomti Nagar Extension

Lucknow (PNS): A referral hospital will be established in Sector-7, Gomti Nagar Extension and its layout plan has been approved by the Lucknow Development Authority (LDA), Vice-Chairman Prathmesh Kumar said in a meeting on Sunday.

Traders urge MLA to address encroachment, waterlogging issues

Lucknow (PNS): Traders from Bhoothnath Adarsh Vyapar Mandal met the MLA for Lucknow East, OP Srivastava, on Sunday to request the removal of encroachments from the roads in the Bhoothnath Market.

Three teachers booked for kidnapping Class 10 student

Ballia (PTI): Three teachers of a convent school have been booked for allegedly kidnapping a Class 10 student in Uttar Pradesh's Ballia district, police said on Sunday.

FORM NO. 5 DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL 600/1 University road near Hanuman Setu Mandir Lucknow. (Area of Jurisdiction Part of Uttar Pradesh) SUMMONS FOR FILING REPLY AND APPEARANCE BY PUBLICATION

TECHNO INSTITUTE OF HIGHER STUDIES Courses Offered: B.Com (Hons.), B.A.-J.M.C., B.B.A., B.Com, B.Ed., B.Sc (Bio/Maths), B.V.A. (Paint/App. Arts), BCA, M.A.-J.M.C., M.Com (Commerce) Requires Assistant Professors, Qualification, Experience & salary as per U.G.C./Lucknow University Norms-

# CM directives to reduce road mishaps in UP

## Favours hospitals along both sides of expressways

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

To curb the growing menace of road accidents on highways and expressways, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has ordered effective action against unauthorised vehicles and overloaded trucks. He has also directed officials to close the liquor vends on the sides of expressways and highways. "No liquor shops should be permitted along expressways and highways," said, noting that the signages for these shops were often extensive and should be reduced in size. The chief minister chaired a meeting of the Uttar Pradesh State Road Safety Council on Sunday. The meeting was attended by ministers of the departments concerned, senior government officials, divisional commissioners, district magistrates, police commissioners, and superintendents of police. During the meeting, the chief minister issued essential directives to reduce road accidents in the state effectively. Reviewing the annual data on road accidents, the chief minister highlighted that 46,052 accidents occurred in 2024, resulting in 34,600 injuries and over 24,000 fatalities - figures he described as deeply distressing. Expressing concern at the delay in treatment of accident victims, the chief minister proposed setting up hospital facilities along both sides of all expressways, similar to food plazas. Emphasising the need for urgent action, the chief minister instructed all departments related to road safety to work in coordination to curb accidents. He also directed



Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath presiding over the meeting of Uttar Pradesh State Road Safety Council at his official residence on Sunday

officials to identify and rectify black spots on all state routes. Additionally, he called for setting up of trauma centres along with deployment of ambulances and trained medical staff at hospitals in all divisional headquarters. Chief Minister Yogi said that in 2024, out of 75 districts in the state, 20 districts, namely Hardoi, Mathura, Agra, Lucknow, Bulandshahr, Kanpur Nagar, Prayagraj, Sitapur, Unnao, Barabanki, Lakhimpur Kheri, Bareilly, Aligarh, Gautam Buddha Nagar, Shahjahanpur, Gorakhpur, Kushinagar, Budaun, Meerut and Bijnor, recorded the highest fatalities in road accidents. These districts accounted for 42 per cent of the total accident-related

deaths in the state, he pointed out. To address this issue, he instructed officials to identify the causes of accidents and enhance public awareness about road safety. He emphasised the importance of regular meetings of the Divisional Road Safety Committee, directing that they should be held monthly at the district level and quarterly at the divisional level to prevent road accidents. The chief minister expressed concern that only one meeting was held last year in six divisions - Ayodhya, Prayagraj, Varanasi, Azamgarh, Saharanpur and Agra - and called for an increase in the frequency of these meetings. However, he expressed satisfaction with the four meetings conducted in

Basti, Lucknow, Gorakhpur and Mirzapur. Additionally, the chief minister instructed the districts of Balrampur, Firozabad, Gonda, Chandauli and Jaunpur, which had fewer District Road Safety Committee meetings in 2024, to conduct meetings within this week. He also directed the 38 districts that held 10 or more meetings to continue organising them according to the government's SOP (standard operating procedure). Highlighting the primary causes of road accidents - overspeeding, drunk driving, wrong-side driving, jumping signals and mobile phone use - the chief minister stressed the need to raise public awareness. He urged the Basic Education Department,

Secondary Education Department and Higher Education Department to conduct activities related to road safety in schools and colleges. Furthermore, he recommended incorporating traffic rules into schools' curriculum under the Basic and Secondary Education departments. The chief minister also instructed authorities to prohibit buses without permits from operating on roads and to take strict action against unauthorised vehicles and overloaded trucks. He emphasised that vehicles from other states without permits must be stopped at the borders. Additionally, Chief Minister Yogi called for engaging with the Transport Association and Vehicle Association to ensure

that long-distance vehicles have two drivers. The chief minister highlighted the need to increase the number of cranes, patrol vehicles and ambulances on expressways and highways. He pointed out that surveillance cameras are installed on only four of the 93 National Highway Authority of India (NHAI) roads in the state. He instructed that cameras be installed on the remaining roads as well. Expressing concern over frequent accidents, he emphasised the need for foot over bridges at critical points on NHAI roads and directed officials to identify such locations and proceed with their construction. Additionally, he stressed that road safety signage must be installed on all major roads across the state. The chief minister also expressed concerns about minors driving e-rickshaws in urban areas and directed officials to enforce strict measures to prevent this. He called for verifying all e-rickshaw drivers and emphasised the need to keep the regional transport offices (RTOs) free from middlemen by conducting periodic random checks. Addressing the issue of traffic congestion, the chief minister pointed out that the state has adequate manpower to manage traffic efficiently. He suggested training personnel from the civil police, Prantiya Rakshak Dal (PRD) and Home Guard to improve traffic management. He instructed that table-top speed breakers be constructed near hospitals, schools and main markets to enhance road safety.

# Digital libraries to be set up at gram panchayat level

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a significant step toward modernising education in remote areas, the Yogi Adityanath government has decided to set up digital libraries at the gram panchayat level across Uttar Pradesh. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, in a high-level meeting, directed officials to implement the first phase of this initiative by establishing digital libraries in 22,700 gram panchayats. The initiative aims to provide children in rural areas with access to advanced educational resources, ensuring they keep pace with the digital era. In the meeting, the chief minister highlighted the need to connect rural students with digital education and provide them with high-quality learning materials. He stated that as education continues to evolve, it is crucial to make e-books, digital content, and other study resources easily accessible to children in villages. Digital libraries at the gram panchayat level will play a key role in this effort, he added. He said that each digital library will offer books, quizzes, videos, audio lectures, and other educational resources to make learning more engaging. The responsibility for managing these libraries will be given to the gram panchayats, with gram pradhan and panchayat secretaries overseeing their operations. Assistant

**The chief minister highlighted the need to connect rural students with digital education and provide them with high-quality learning materials.**

officials will be appointed to ensure smooth functioning and maintenance of these libraries. The Yogi government will invest Rs 4 lakh per digital library, with Rs 2 lakh for purchasing digital equipment such as computers, printers and internet facilities, and another Rs 2 lakh for buying digital and hard-copy books. The libraries will provide not only textbooks but also e-books and advanced study materials on various subjects. Additionally, students will have access to modern audiovisual tools and internet connectivity for online learning and research. A well-structured management system will be in place to help students easily access their preferred study materials. The government believes this initiative will enhance education quality in rural areas and boost digital literacy among students. This project is a crucial step toward the 'Developed India 2047' vision, which prioritises digital education.

# Over 1.25 cr pilgrims visit Ayodhya in 45 days

PNS ■ AYODHYA

As the Maha Kumbh festivities in Prayagraj captivated the nation, Ayodhya experienced an unexpected spiritual wave of its own. The sacred city witnessed an unprecedented influx of devotees, setting a new benchmark in religious tourism. Over a span of 45 days, from Makar Sankranti to Mahashivratri, estimated 10 to 12 Lakh devotees arrived daily, transforming Ayodhya into a hub of spiritual fervor. For the first time in history, the Shri Ram Lalla temple extended its darshan hours until 1 am to accommodate the ceaseless stream of pilgrims. Visitors lauded the Yogi government's developmental initiatives and crowd management strategies, which ensured a seamless pilgrimage experience. Anil Mishra, a member of the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust, revealed that more than 1.25 crore devotees visited the temple during this period, with AI-powered tracking and door metal detectors recording the footfall. Devotional offerings also saw a surge, with daily donations averaging around ₹15 lakh. The unprecedented rush provided a significant boost to the local economy, driving demand for prasad, flowers, and other religious offerings. Hotels, restaurants, and home stays, particularly those near the temple, remained fully booked, underscoring the success of government-backed employment schemes for local residents. To manage the massive crowds, authorities arranged shelter for 25,000 people and ensured adequate provisions for sanitation, drinking water, and waste management. Traffic diversions and holding zones at city entry points helped streamline the influx of pilgrims. Divisional Commissioner Gaurav Dayal highlighted that tight security arrangements allowed for an orderly darshan experience, setting the stage for even better preparations ahead of the upcoming Ram Navami celebrations.



Devotees take a dip in Sarayu river in Ayodhya

# Cows to play pivotal role in advancing natural farming

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Yogi Adityanath government is committed to making cows the foundation of natural farming, and is taking significant steps to protect stray cattle and promote cow rearing. In the recently presented Budget, a provision of Rs 2,000 crore has been made to protect stray cows. Strengthening this initiative, the government has also launched the Amrit Dhara Yojana, under which cattle rearers keeping two to ten cows can avail of loans of up to Rs 10 lakh from 10 banks on easy terms. Notably, for loans up to Rs 3 lakh, no guarantor is required. The government's focus on natural farming aligns with its vision of ensuring better health for people, land and water. Natural farming, which eliminates chemical fertilisers and pesticides, relies on cow dung and urine as organic fertilisers and pesticides. This dual benefit supports farmers and fosters self-sufficiency in cow shelters. Farmers gain nutritious milk for their families while enriching their

land with natural fertilisers, creating a sustainable and profitable agricultural ecosystem. Uttar Pradesh aims to emerge as a hub of natural farming in India. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath actively promotes this traditional farming method, integrating it with modern technology to enhance farmers' prosperity. Special emphasis is given to natural farming in villages along the Ganga and Bundelkhand, with plans to extend it to areas near local rivers. The post-pandemic world has witnessed a surge in demand for organic and locally produced food, creating a lucrative opportunity for farmers. With the global shift towards sustainable eating habits, organic produce fetches premium prices in international markets. The Central government also prioritises agricultural exports, further boosting Uttar Pradesh's farmers. The state's export figures have doubled in the past seven years - from Rs 88,000 crore in 2017-18 to Rs 170,000 crore in 2023-24. Increased exports of organic produce will not

only benefit farmers financially but also ensure long-term environmental sustainability. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has consistently emphasised cow protection since his first term. Cow shelters have been established statewide to support stray cattle, with maintenance funds allocated per animal. A Rs 1,001 crore provision was made in the supplementary budget before the latest Budget to strengthen these efforts further. The government aims to make cow shelters self-sufficient by transforming cow dung and urine into valuable economic resources. Various skill development programmes and MGNREGA schemes are helping farmers construct cow sheds, cattle barns and biogas plants at subsidised rates. Additionally, the Mini Nandini Yojana provides further incentives for cow rearing. Through these comprehensive measures, the Yogi government ensures cow protection, empowers farmers, promotes sustainable agriculture, and boosts Uttar Pradesh's position in global agricultural exports.

# Abandoned footwear at Ram temple posing problem

PTI ■ AYODHYA

For over a month now, the Ayodhya municipal corporation has been facing an unlikely problem - removing a huge pile of dumped footwear at the Ram temple over a change in the crowd management measures in place for devotees. Abandoned footwear "in lakhs" are being collected daily from the entry gate of the temple using JCB machines which are then loaded onto trolleys and taken away to be dumped at a spot four-five km away, officials of the municipal corporation said. According to officials, at Gate 1 of the temple, the primary entrance situated on Ram Path, devotees are asked to deposit their footwear. After completing a circular route of roughly half a kilometre inside the temple premises, people make their way to the same gate to collect the footwear. However, to manage the rush, the Ayodhya administration redirects people to exit via Gate 3 and other gates -

this is a five-six km journey to retrieve their shoes. Many just abandon the footwear and leave the temple barefoot, officials said. Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust member Anil Mishra said there has been a rise in visitors due to the Maha Kumbh. "Changes have been made in the arrangements for the past 30 days to ensure that the unexpected crowd of devotees can easily have darshan without any chaos," Mishra said. "Gate 3 of the temple complex has been opened. After visiting the temple, devotees are being guided out through this gate. So after the darshan, devotees proceed past Shri Ram Hospital. Due to the one-way track on Ram Path, devotees have to walk five-six km again to reach the shoe removal area," Mishra said. **Three arrested:** Three men were arrested on Sunday for allegedly taking money from people, promising them VIP passes for darshan at the Ram temple.

# Over 50,000 reunited with families at Maha Kumbh

PNS ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Amidst the sea of devotees who came to Prayagraj for a holy dip in the Sangam during the Maha Kumbh, many got separated from their loved ones. However, thanks to the foresight of the Yogi Adityanath government and its dedicated efforts, 54,357 individuals separated from their near and dear ones, were successfully reunited with their families. Among them, a significant number were women. The police also played a vital role in reuniting devotees from different states of India and Nepal with their families. The Yogi government implemented several exemplary initiatives to ensure this divine event's safety and seamless organisation. A key highlight was the establishment of the Digital Khoya Paya Kendra, which facilitated the swift reunion of more than 35,000 separated devotees and their families. During the amrit snan on Makar Sankranti (January 13-15), 598 individuals



Workers collect garbage at Sangam on Sunday during a cleanliness drive days after the conclusion of Maha Kumbh Mela in Prayagraj

were reunited, while 8,725 people were reconnected during Mauni Amavasya (January 28-30), and 864 devotees during Basant Panchami (February 2-4). Additionally, 24,896 individuals who got separated during other bathing festivals and on regular days were reunited with their families, bringing the total to 35,083 by the end of Maha Kumbh. On the initiative of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, 10 digital Khoya Paya Kendra were set up across the Maha Kumbh mela area. These centres

featured state-of-the-art artificial intelligence-based face recognition systems, machine learning and multilingual support. Non-governmental social organisations also played a commendable role, with Bharat Seva Kendra and Hemvati Nandan Bahuguna Smriti Samiti leading the efforts. According to Umesh Chandra Tiwari, director of Bharat Seva Kendra's Bhule Bhatke Camp, the camp successfully reunited 19,274 lost individuals with their families by the end of the event. All 18 children who were report-

edly lost were also safely returned to their families. The Khoya Paya Kendras proved particularly effective in reuniting separated individuals with their families and continuously tracking them until they were safely returned. On the final day of Maha Kumbh, Krishna Devi from Muzaffarpur, Bihar, was reunited with her family, as was Jangi Devi from Raipur, Chhattisgarh. Similarly, Jagjannan Dharu from Banke district, Nepal, and Bindi, wife of Sitaram Shah from Saptari, Nepal, safely reconnected with their loved ones. The successful reunions at these centres prompted heartfelt gratitude from the devotees, who expressed their appreciation to Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath for this thoughtful initiative. Through meticulous planning and compassionate efforts, Maha Kumbh 2025, which drew over 66 crore devotees, became a symbol of spiritual devotion and set a benchmark for efficient crowd management and humanitarian service.

# Two electrocuted

Lucknow (PNS): Two labourers carrying flower pots in a marriage procession were electrocuted after coming in contact with a high-tension power line in Bardah area of Azamgarh. Superintendent of Police (Rural) in Azamgarh, Chirag Jain, said the incident took place when the chariot of the wedding procession came in contact with the high-tension wire in Bhaiskur village under Bardah police station late on Saturday night. He said two labourers, identified as Golu (17) and Mangru (25), both of Jawahar Nagar, who were carrying the flower pots died on the spot and the

groom fainted. "The wedding procession from Kusmiliya village under the Mehnagar police station had come to the house of Lal Chand Saroj," the SP (Rural) said. He added that the marriage procession was on its way to the bride's residence when the iron pipe of flower pots came in contact with a live high-tension wire passing through the area and the two labourers were critically burnt. They were immediately shifted to a hospital but the doctors pronounced them dead on arrival. A case has been registered and further investigation is on.

# Five killed in accident

Agra (PTI): Five people were killed in a collision between two motorcycles here, police said on Sunday. The accident occurred late on Saturday night when a bike carrying four persons collided with another motorcycle carrying two riders, they said. According to police, the victims on the first motorcycle have been identified as Bhagwan Das (35), Vakil (35), Ram Swaroop (28), and Sonu (30)-all residents of the Saiyan

area. They were returning home from a wedding when the crash took place. "The four were returning home around 10 pm on Saturday on a Splendor motorcycle when it collided with an approaching Bullet bike," said Ram Lakhian, a relative of one of the deceased. The impact proved fatal for all four riders on the Splendor, while 17-year-old Karan, who was riding the Bullet, also succumbed to his injuries.



Government to go tough on drug traffickers: Shah

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday said the Modi government is unsparing in punishing drug traffickers who drag the youth into the dark abyss of addiction for the greed of money.



Union Home Minister Amit Shah Pioneer photo

In a social media post, Shah said under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the government pledges to continue combating the drug menace with ruthless and meticulous investigations to build a "drug-free Bharat".

Ahmedabad in 2019, where three people were arrested and sentenced to 14 years in jail. In July 2022, the NCB in Madhya Pradesh's Mandasaur intercepted two vehicles in Shahdol and seized 123.080 kg of ganja. Four people were arrested in the case and sentenced to 12 years rigorous

of imprisonment with a fine of Rs 2 lakh each. In the Chandigarh Zone last year, a parcel containing two hockey sticks packed with 438 grams of opium was intercepted at DHL Express, Ludhiana, by the officers of the NCB. Two arrested accused in the case were sentenced to three years of imprisonment by a Punjab court for their role in attempting to transport the opium to Canada.

Cochin International Airport. The examination of her luggage led to the recovery and seizure of 2.910 kg of heroin. She was subsequently arrested and a court in Ernakulam sentenced her to 11 years in jail. In January 2018, the NCB seized 450 grams of charas, leading to the arrest of one person in Dehradun, who was later sentenced to one year in jail.

India's policies needs comprehensive framework says Principal Secretary

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Any policy making in the Government setup must account for uncertainty, with a focus on a comprehensive framework and an outcome-oriented constructive mindset, said PK Mishra, Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister, in an interaction during a recent Business Standard Manthan Summit in the national Capital.

Modi focussed on readiness to address the challenges posed by being resilient and by introducing reforms to tackle the emergent issues. Mishra further elaborated how the Indian economy faced several challenges like geopolitical tensions, disruptions in global supply chains, and energy transition. In the event of Covid-19 pandemic when the whole world, including India, appeared to be in turmoil, India could navigate the challenges effectively and successfully.

(PLI) Schemes and leveraging of consumption base and demographic advantage of India among others. In the context of the ongoing protectionism and breakdown of the Washington Consensus, Mishra explained how our policy stance in our economic engagement with the world has been consistent. Citing examples of recent FTAs with Australia, UAE and EFTA, he referred to the ongoing negotiations with the UK and the EU. This approach will help us mitigating the emerging challenges, he added.

NHRC to organise human rights program for global south nations

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) in collaboration with Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) is organising a six-day Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) Executive Capacity Building Programme on human rights for senior-level functionaries of the National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) of Global South here from March 3-8, NHRC said here on Sunday.

Forty seven participants from the NHRIs of 14 countries of Global South are likely to attend it. These are Madagascar, Uganda, Samoa, Timor Leste, DR Congo, Togo, Mali, Nigeria, Egypt, Tanzania, Mauritius, Burundi, Turkmenistan, Qatar. This customised programme has been developed in accordance to the need of NHRIs of participating countries and feedback provided earlier. Eminent persons with domain knowledge and expertise in capacity building and imparting training, will be the resource persons.

perspectives, and share NHRC, India's experience over the past three decades to enhance awareness among participants of various NHRIs. It seeks to strengthen South-South cooperation, enhance collaboration and networking, and improve human rights protection mechanisms through comprehensive capacity building and experience sharing. The expected outcome includes developing a better understanding of international dimensions of human rights, a deeper understanding of NHRC, India's work in the field of human rights protection, and its best practices, which can be adopted by the other NHRIs, improved networking among NHRIs, fostering collaborations and partnerships at regional and international levels and enhanced capability to contribute towards the protection and promotion of human rights. The participants will engage in lectures and interactive sessions by eminent persons and practitioners in the field, cultural immersion and field visits.

40 per cent people have no access to education in mother tongue: UNESCO

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Forty per cent of the global population does not have access to education in a language they speak or understand, according to UNESCO's Global Education Monitoring (GEM) team. Despite countries' growing understanding of the role of home language, policy uptake remains limited. Implementation challenges include limited teacher capacity to use home languages, unavailability of materials in home languages and community opposition, it said.

that benefit all learners. The team, which has come up with a report titled "Languages matter: Global guidance on multilingual education", noted that as migration increases, linguistic diversity is becoming a global reality and classrooms with learners from diverse language backgrounds are more common. Over 31 million displaced youth are facing language barriers in education. The report was compiled on the 25th anniversary of International Mother Language Day, celebrating a quarter-century of dedicated efforts to preserve and promote the use of mother tongues.

"Today 40 per cent of people globally lack access to education in the language they speak and understand fluently. In some low- and middle-income countries, this figure rises to 90 per cent. More than a quarter of a billion learners are affected," a senior GEM team member told PTI. "The first thing to note is that over the course of this decade, which has been marked by the pervasive influence of technology in young people's lives but also by the impact of COVID-19, learning levels have dropped sharply in both reading and mathematics. But the next thing to note is that the impact has been disproportionate on learners who are disadvantaged due to linguistic reasons," the official added.

points in reading and from 10 to 15 percentage points in mathematics. This suggests that learners who do not speak the language of instruction at home, whether for historical reasons or due to migration and displacement, are at a bigger risk of learning loss. "Countries face diverse linguistic challenges in education, stemming from both historical and contemporary factors. In the first category, often as a legacy of colonialism, languages have been imposed on local populations that prevented their use for instruction and created educational disparities. "At the same time, large linguistic diversity in some countries presents challenges for education systems, as resources for implementing multilingual education programmes tend to be limited," the report said.

languages to classrooms in richer countries, enriching linguistic diversity but also posing challenges in instruction and assessment. "These countries often grapple with issues such as language acquisition support for immigrant students, developing inclusive curricula that reflect diversity, and ensuring equitable access to quality education for all students, regardless of their linguistic background. The context each country faces means the policy solutions required are different," it added. The GEM team has recommended that educational language policies should prioritise context-specific approaches and language transition must be backed by curriculum adjustments and supported by teaching and learning materials adapted for that grade. "In countries with

significant immigrant populations, policies should support the development and implementation of effective bridging language programmes, qualified teachers, and support inclusive learning environments that cater to the diverse linguistic needs of all," it said. "In multilingual contexts, training should ensure proficiency in both home and second languages; teacher deployment could match the teacher's language fluency with the language of instruction of the target school; early childhood educators should be trained on culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogy," it added. Planning for strong support systems outside of schools to ensure the success of new multilingual education policies and supporting school leaders to foster inclusion in schools are also among the recommendations.

NIT Rourkela develops low-cost solar panel technology

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Researchers at the National Institute of Technology (NIT), Rourkela have patented a low-cost technology developed by them to extract maximum power from solar panels under changing weather conditions, according to officials. The innovation also responds quickly to changes in sunlight and temperature, allowing the system to consistently operate at peak efficiency and avoid any power fluctuations, they said.

the amount of power they generate changes throughout the day due to shifts in temperature and the intensity of sunlight. To ensure they always produce the most energy possible, solar systems use a technique called Maximum Power Point Tracking (MPPT). This is a smart system that helps solar panels produce the most electricity possible by adjusting voltage and current based on sunlight and temperature changes. It consists of a microcontroller that runs the MPPT algorithm, sensors to measure voltage and current, and a DC-DC converter that regulates power flow. "The system continuously monitors the solar panel's output and makes minor adjustments to keep it operating at peak efficiency, ensuring minimal energy waste. Traditional MPPT methods can waste energy and respond slowly when weather conditions change. They also require expensive current sensors, making them less

affordable for low-cost solar setups," Samanta said. "To overcome these limitations, we have developed a voltage sensor-based MPPT method that eliminates the need for current sensors, reducing system complexity and cost. Our approach uses a simple voltage sensor or a resistor divider circuit to track the Maximum Power Point (MPP) more accurately while maintaining stable and efficient steady-state operation, leading to improved tracking efficiency and better PV energy harvesting," he added. Samanta explained that their method prevents small power fluctuations that older techniques struggle with, ensuring stable and efficient power extraction. "It also responds quickly to changes in sunlight and temperature, allowing the system to consistently operate at peak efficiency. Additionally, by using only a voltage sensor or a simple resistor divider circuit, it reduces system complexity and cost. Its

adaptable design enables integration into various solar power setups, making it a versatile solution for a wide range of application," he said. The researchers claimed that the innovation has broad applications in the renewable energy sector, including eliminating the need for costly current sensors, reduces costs and makes it a good fit for affordable and small-scale solar projects. "The developed innovation can be used in solar-powered IoT devices such as weather sensors and remote communication towers, where maintaining reliable energy output is crucial. Affordable consumer solar products like home lighting systems and portable solar chargers, where cost and efficiency are key considerations and use in microgrid and off-grid energy solutions, providing a stable and reliable power source in remote or rural areas, are among other possible benefits of the innovation," Samanta said.

BJP targets Mamata after ECI clarifies voter ID duplication

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The BJP mounted fresh attack on Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, after the Election Commission of India (ECI) on Sunday came out with clarifications regarding duplication of Voters' ID card numbers, saying duplication did not necessarily mean fake ID cards. The Commission said that duplication of Electoral Photo Identity Card (EPIC) numbers might have taken place because decentralised, manual mechanism was followed before the voters' database was shifted to a digital platform adding the Commission would take steps to rectify things. In a statement referring to social media reports the poll panel said "it is clarified that while EPIC numbers of some of the electors may be identical, the other details including demographic details, Assembly Constituency and polling booth are different for the electors with the same EPIC

number. Irrespective of the EPIC number, any elector can cast a vote only at their designated polling station in their respective Constituency in their State or UT where they are enrolled in the electoral roll and nowhere else." Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee had earlier launched a scathing attack on the BJP Government for manipulating the ECI and influencing the Chief Election Commissioners in inserting fake names in the electoral rolls to influence the elections. She cites EPIC cards showing how the numbers of two cards were same whereas their holders were different. "There are several people who are complaining that duplicate names from Haryana or UP are appearing in their EPIC card numbers," Banerjee said adding this was a ploy to rig elections. "He did this in Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, Haryana, Maharashtra and Delhi. The leaders there could not catch the trick of

inserting the names of fake voters. But we have been able to catch their trick and we have directed the officials from the DMs and BDOs to the party workers and local leaders to start scrutinising the electoral rolls and catch the fake voters so that the BJP cannot bring in voters from Bihar, UP and Haryana to vote in Bengal," Banerjee said announcing a committee led by senior party leaders to start door-to-door scrutiny of the electoral rolls. Meanwhile apparently taking a cue from the ECI clarifications BJP leader Amit Malviya attacked Mamata Banerjee for allegedly preparing excuses before an impending defeat in the next year's Assembly elections. "It is a pity that the Bengal Chief Minister is resorting to misinformation to lay the groundwork for her imminent defeat in 2026 and weaken voters' confidence in the electoral system," Malviya said.

NGT summons Uttarakhand officials over illegal felling of 176 trees

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has asked the member secretary of the Uttarakhand Pollution Control Board (UKPCB) and the state's principal chief conservator of forests to appear before it in a matter regarding illegal felling of 176 trees in Udham Singh Nagar district. The NGT was hearing a petition on the unauthorised felling of trees during the development of a residential colony by private persons in the district's Chandpur village. In its order dated February 24, a bench of judicial member, Justice Arun Kumar Tyagi and expert member, A Senthil Vel said that according to a report submitted by a joint committee that was set up earlier, 176 trees were felled illegally and environmental compensation had to be recovered for it. The committee comprised the district magistrate, the Dehradun regional office of the Union Ministry of Environment Forest and Climate Change, and the UKPCB. Taking note of the report, the tribunal sought a response from the Uttarakhand chief secretary and others. "We also consider the personal appearance of the member secretary, UKPCB and principal chief conservator of forests (PCCF) before this tribunal physically or through video-conferencing on the next date of hearing to be essential for assisting this tribunal in just and proper adjudication of the questions involved in the case. "Accordingly, they are directed to remain present before this tribunal with the relevant record," the green body said. The NGT posted the matter for further hearing on April 7.

NOAA layoffs will impact forecasts, cyclone tracking in India: Experts

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Scientists and policymakers have voiced concern over the layoffs at the US climate agency, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), saying any reduction in observation data could affect monsoon forecasts and cyclone tracking in India. Hundreds of weather forecasters and other federal NOAA employees on probationary status were fired last week. These included meteorologists who do crucial local forecasts in the national weather service offices. "We are worried.

If NOAA reduces observations, there will be implications on weather forecasts. When ocean observations reduce, there is less data to assimilate. Hence predictability will reduce," M Ravichandran, Secretary, Ministry of Earth Sciences, told PTI. Climate scientist at the Indian Institute for Tropical Meteorology Roxy Mathew Koll termed the NOAA layoffs as a global crisis that could impact climate science. NOAA provides data and models that support weather-climate monitoring,

forecasting and disaster preparedness worldwide. "For India, the monsoon forecasts, cyclone tracking, and climate projections rely on NOAA's models," Koll, who is also among the authors of reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, said. He said the NOAA layoffs were not just a US issue, but a blow to climate science and action worldwide. "Half of the Indian Ocean's observational network is backed by National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Without this backbone, early warnings for floods,

heatwaves, and storms will weaken, putting millions at risk," Koll said. Another meteorologist said he has been receiving emails from his interlocutors at NOAA informing them about the layoffs and inability to continue work as before. "This is more than a budget cut. It is a direct threat to climate resilience, research, and preparedness worldwide. The world cannot afford to lose NOAA," Koll, a Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar awardee, said. India has deployed a number of argo floats,

moored buoys and drifting buoys for ocean observations for various weather forecasting models. While most of the instruments deployed by the Ministry of Earth Sciences are in the Indian Ocean, NOAA also has deployed similar instruments in the Indian Ocean as well as in other seas across the world. "Collaboration is key to science — and particularly climate research and action. Take this example — monitoring across global oceans is essential to predict India's weather and climate, but no single country can do it alone," Koll said.

Odisha to provide training to 50 tribal students for professional courses

PTI ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Odisha government will provide preparatory pilot training to 50 tribal students, mostly women, to make them ready for the professional course, an official said on Sunday. The Commerce and Transport Department of the Odisha government has recently issued a tender to hire a professional agency to provide the training. As per the tender document, the government, through the selected private agency, will identify at least 300 tribal students, from whom 50 will be shortlisted through proper

screening to impart the preparatory training. The selected 50 students, mostly women, will receive coaching, covering all selection parameters of airline cadet pilot assessment, in Bhubaneswar for eight weeks, the official said. The coaching is aimed at preparing the candidates to clear the cadet pilot assessment and also make them ready for the basic foundation programme syllabus set by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) and give an overview of the flying training course, he said.



www.dailypioneer.com

facebook.com/dailypioneer | @TheDailyPioneer | instagram.com/dailypioneer/

PAPER WITH PASSION

## A clash of diplomacy and dignity

A dramatic Oval Office face-off between Trump and Zelensky, marked by sharp exchanges, underscores global political instability

In a high-stakes meeting that captured global attention, President Donald Trump and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky clashed in a dramatic showdown at the White House. What began as cordial greetings quickly spiraled into an explosive exchange, leaving Zelensky visibly humiliated on the world stage—even as his defiant stance earned him renewed backing from European leaders. The encounter marked the first in-person meeting between Trump and Zelensky since Trump's return to power in January. Early on, smiles and handshakes gave way to heated words as US Vice President JD Vance pushed for a diplomatic resolution to the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict. Vance's remarks underscored a fundamental point: the need for serious diplomacy to end the war, while also implicitly contrasting Trump's previous approach with that of past administrations. However, as the dialogue unfolded, Zelensky's pointed references to the long history of



inaction—citing the annexation of Crimea and subsequent military struggles—sparked a vehement rebuttal. In a sequence of rapid-fire exchanges, Trump dismissed Zelensky's critiques and reminded him of the overwhelming military support provided by the United States, arguing that without this aid, Ukraine's resistance could have crumbled in days. Despite the abrasive tone and what many saw as a public humiliation, Zelensky's resistance during the meeting resonated far beyond the confines of the Oval Office. While Trump's unconventional style and bombastic rhetoric further alienated many European policymakers, Zelensky's defiant posture emerged as a symbol of unwavering national resolve. European leaders, long critical of Trump's erratic diplomacy, viewed

the exchange as evidence that Ukraine needed to assert its own dignity in the face of American grandstanding. Moreover, Trump's harsh social media post demanding Zelensky "come back when he is ready for peace"—served not only as a dramatic moment of political theatre but also as a catalyst for European unity in support of Ukraine. Zelensky's refusal to be cowed sends a powerful message to both his domestic audience and international supporters. The Zelensky US visit might strengthen Ukraine's negotiating position and ensure a more coordinated effort to counter Russian advances. Trump's return to a more unpredictable form of diplomacy has underscored deep-seated divisions within the international community. His blunt dismissals and confrontational tactics risk undermining the credibility of traditional US diplomatic channels, potentially destabilising long-established alliances. In contrast, Europe's reaction suggests a pivot towards a more measured, collective response that prioritises multilateral engagement over unilateral posturing. This divergence could reshape how global conflicts are addressed in the future, signaling a shift away from "big talk" and towards pragmatic, alliance-based strategies. The Oval Office showdown will likely be remembered as a defining moment in the ongoing Ukraine war and in the evolution of American foreign policy.

### PICTALK



A farmer prepares an agricultural land for paddy cultivation, in Nadia

## A new era for rural revival and inclusive growth

With a sharp focus on strengthening infrastructure and boosting holistic rural development, the UP budget underscores a visionary and inclusive agenda



KESHAV PRASAD MAURYA

The Budget presented by the BJP's double-engine government in Uttar Pradesh will go a long way in strengthening infrastructure and further boosting the holistic development of rural areas. The state government's mammoth budget of Rs 8,08,736 crore for the all-round development of the state reflects the inclusive and visionary approach of the government, taking full care of the poor, disadvantaged, youth, women empowerment and Annadatas. This budget is 9.8 per cent higher than last year's, indicating the government's pro-development agenda. Under the Prime Minister's vision of a developed India, special emphasis has been placed on rural areas.

The mainstay of the economy of the state is the rural sector and the government has been continuously working towards ensuring that the benefits of the schemes reach the deprived sections of the society. Believing in the credo of self-reliance, the government has been focusing on fortifying the development arcs of villages to make them self-reliant as they will play an important role in creating a strong Uttar Pradesh. While over 96 lakh rural families have benefited under the State Rural Livelihood Mission (USRLM), on the other hand, financial transactions worth Rs 31,103 crore have been facilitated through 39,556 Banking Correspondent Sakhis. Until now, more than two lakh women have become "Lakhpati Didi," helping them become self-reliant. Uttar Pradesh is also the first state in the country to guarantee concrete houses to the poor. Fulfilling Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas', the state government has already constructed more than 3.6 million houses in resolution. Providing further impetus to the cause, a provision of Rs 4,882 crore has been made in the Budget for the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Rural). Also, an amount of Rs 1,200 crore has been proposed under the Mukhyamantri Awas Yojana



(Rural). While the Prime Minister's empathetic leadership has ensured a roof over the heads of the poor, the state's economy has also been flourishing.

The government's efforts have ensured the economic growth rate of the state has been recorded at 11.6 per cent, which is higher than the national GDP growth of 9.6 per cent. Once considered a 'BIMARU' state, the estimated gross domestic product (GSDP) of the state has now risen to Rs 27.51 lakh crore, doubling from 2017-18. In line with this momentum, Uttar Pradesh's economy is expected to reach Rs 30 lakh crore in the next fiscal, which will significantly contribute towards making the state a \$1 trillion economy.

Along with the ramping up of infrastructure, Uttar Pradesh is now witnessing a revolution in the transportation sector. The North-South Corridor Plan will be implemented keeping in view road connectivity and highway expansion. Under this, Rs 200 crore has been provided for the widening and construction of roads. A budget of Rs 2,900 crore has been proposed for the widening of roads. Also, a provision of Rs 1,450 crore has been made



THE STATE GOVERNMENT HAS ALREADY CONSTRUCTED MORE THAN 3.6 MILLION HOUSES IN RESOLUTION. PROVIDING FURTHER IMPETUS TO THE CAUSE, A PROVISION OF RS 4,882 CRORE HAS BEEN MADE IN THE BUDGET FOR THE PRADHAN MANTRI AWAS YOJANA (RURAL)

for the construction of bridges and railway over-bridges to ease traffic congestion. The incredible growth has taken into account the need to further bolster youth empowerment and job creation. A budget of Rs 1,000 crore has been allocated under the Chief Minister's Youth Entrepreneur Development Scheme. Under the Swami Vivekananda Yuva Sashaktikaran Yojana, 49.86 lakh smartphones/tablets have been distributed to promote smart education. Free coaching is also being provided to the youth through the Abhyudaya Yojana. Renewable energy and artificial intelligence have been given special emphasis to ensure that youngsters do not fall behind. While the Artificial Intelligence City will be set up in Lucknow, plans are underway to set up a 500 MW solar power plant which will entail a cost of Rs 2,500 crore. Prime Minister Narendra Modi places special emphasis on ensuring the wellbeing of farmers and wants to ensure they do not fall behind in these changing times. In line with this, Annadatas have been placed at the top of the priority list in the mission of achieving the goal of 'Viksit Bharat'.

Under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana, Rs 79,500 crore have been distributed to farmers while Rs 496 crore have also been disbursed under the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana. The state's sugarcane production capacity has also increased from 72 tonnes to 85 tonnes per hectare, boosting the income levels of farmers.

The recently presented Budget will not only take the development of the state to new heights but will also transform rural India. From roads to digital infrastructure, farmers to industry, and women empowerment to a bright future for the youth, this Budget has been able to ensure that the needs of every section of society are taken care of. With the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana and schemes aimed at boosting the rural economy and infrastructure, Uttar Pradesh is rapidly moving towards fulfilling the dream of a self-reliant India. I am confident that this Budget will realise the vision of 'growth and progress' of UP and propel the state towards the exalted status of the most developed state in the country.

(The writer is Deputy Chief Minister of UP; views are personal)

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

#### FINDING FUNDS FOR FREEBIES

Madam — Apropos of the article 'Finding money for freebies: BJP faces an uphill task' (March 1), the statistical analysis and approach towards the funding of freebies is very realistic and compels the new BJP government to salvage the economy of the Capital. It is really challenging to mobilise the whopping revenue expenditure of Rs 20,100 crores on the promised direct cash transfer of Rs 2500 per month to women, Rs 3150 crores on cash assistance to the pregnant women, Rs 2500 crores on LPG cylinder subsidy, and Rs 30000 crores on education. Central funding of Rs 55000 crore is imperative. These figures are staggering and more than half the revenue expenditure budget of the Delhi state government. Many of the beneficiaries may not be deserving and needy of the freebies, but it can't be debated now and one section of people is providing resources for the others. Since it is a double-engine government, the central funding is a certainty.

However, the other state governments will expect the same level of funding from the Union government. However, the local municipal corporations must be asked for self-reliance and mobilise their own resources. There should be separate autonomous development authorities for Dwarka, Rohini and East Delhi. Earlier arrangements of separate MCDs for North, South and East Delhi were doing well and should be restored. The Delhi government should raise circle rates and stamp duties for properties as the market values have risen phenomenally. Liquor shops should be under government control without any licenses to private vendors and more taxes should be imposed on liquor consumption. New mandis, commercial, and industrial complexes should be constructed for raising additional resources.

Vinod Johri | Delhi

#### SEBI GETS NEW CHAIRMAN

Madam — Tuhin Kanta Pandey, the former Finance and Revenue Secretary, was appointed as the new chairman of the SEBI. The new appointment is crucial as the for-

### Decriminalise Indian politics



It is with reference to the editorial "Lawbreakers as Lawmakers." It is time to eradicate the influence of criminality in Indian politics. The rising number of elected representatives with criminal backgrounds in Parliament and State Assemblies is a matter of deep concern to all law-abiding and right-minded citizens. The increasing trend is dangerous and has steadily been eating into the vitals of democratic polity along with the growing corruption of a humongous

nature. Good governance gets seriously undermined when, for instance, criminals, gangsters, or mafia dons become the political bosses of bureaucrats and subvert the system to serve their interests. In 2005 the Supreme Court ruled that a sitting MP or MLA will be disqualified from contesting the election if convicted and sentenced to imprisonment for two years or more by a court of law.

The growing dependence of political parties on criminals for muscle power and electability must be stopped. It is high time all political parties came together and developed a consensus on keeping criminals—some with serious charges including kidnapping, rape, murder, grave corruption and crime against women—out of the system.

P Victor Selvaraj | Tirunelveli

#### US-Ukraine talks fail

Madam — The abrupt failure of US-Ukraine talks underscores a troubling loss in American diplomacy. Trump's insistence on securing indefinite rights to Ukraine's rare minerals in exchange for past aid—while rejecting Zelensky's request for security guarantees—was a blatant betrayal of trust. The talks' undiplomatic nature, with raised voices, Trump walking out and Zelensky skipping lunch, further damaged relations.

This shift signals that US commitments are now transactional, undermining credibility and emboldening adversaries like Russia. Such treatment of a war-torn ally weakens global trust in the US, proving that administration changes do not necessarily maintain the nation's moral or strategic responsibilities or commitments. The fallout from this episode will have lasting consequences on international alliances and geopolitical stability.

Gopalaswamy J | Chennai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

## Breakthrough 'Bedi cooling turban' a glimmer of hope for brain stroke

This innovative device selectively cools the brain—bypassing the complications of whole-body hypothermia—and comes in handy in the treatment of brain stroke

At the recently concluded 71st Annual Conference of the Indian Association of Cardiovascular and Thoracic Sciences, Dr Harinder Singh Bedi, Director of Cardiovascular and Thoracic Sciences at Park Greecian Hospital in Mohali, presented a groundbreaking technique designed to protect the brain from oxygen deprivation during surgery. Nicknamed the "Bedi Cooling Turban," this innovative method is a trailblazer in more ways than one.

It is well known that lowering the temperature of an injured organ can help reduce damage. However, the brain presents a unique challenge because whole-body cooling introduces its own set of complications, and in brain surgery, only the brain needs to be cooled. Even a brief period of oxygen deprivation can result in devastating consequences, such as a massive stroke.

Dr Bedi conceived the idea during intensive brainstorming sessions and set out to cool only the brain. Drawing on his vast experience, he designed a unique cooling



turban made of plastic tubes arranged in a coil. Once the patient is anaesthetised, the device is placed around the head and cold, sterile water is pumped through the coils using a specialised machine, cooling the brain while leaving the rest of the body unaffected. To date, this device has been successfully used in 48 cases to repair blockages in brain arteries, preserving brain function throughout. Dr Bedi refined his surgical skills in advanced cardiovascular techniques at Escorts Heart Institute and St Vincent

Hospital in Sydney, where he managed cases using whole-body cooling (hypothermia) to preserve organ function. At the conference, the technique received an enthusiastic response from 1,700 national and international expert delegates.

Dr Rajneesh Malhotra, Cardiac Director at Max Hospitals, expressed particular enthusiasm, suggesting that the technique be applied to more clinical cases to further safeguard patients' brain function. He noted that innovative techniques like this empower Indian surgeons to tackle

cases that might otherwise seem hopeless.

Dr Bedi confirmed that he plans to patent the technique and publish his findings so that it can be adopted worldwide to benefit similar cases. In conclusion, Dr Harinder Singh Bedi's innovative "Cooling Turban" technique represents a significant advancement in brain-protective strategies during cardiovascular and thoracic surgeries. By focusing cooling efforts solely on the brain, this breakthrough minimises the risks associated with whole-body hypothermia and opens new avenues for treating oxygen deprivation during surgery.

With successful application in 48 cases and enthusiastic endorsement from leading experts, this pioneering approach underscores the ingenuity of Indian medical innovation. Dr Bedi's commitment to patenting and sharing his findings promises to influence global surgical practices, ultimately saving countless lives and setting a new standard in patient care with excellence.

(The author is a columnist; views are personal)



GYAN BHADRA



## FIRST COLUMN

## DEALING WITH EXAM ANXIETY

Embracing positive thinking, smart study habits and relaxation can make exams a breeze



SAKSHI SETHI

Examinations are integral to the educational system and are designed to assess students' knowledge, understanding and skills. However, for many students, exams are a source of significant anxiety, leading to stress, reduced performance, and even physical or emotional distress. Overcoming exam anxiety requires a combination of psychological strategies, effective study techniques, and a supportive environment. By adopting a proactive approach, students can transform their exam experiences from overwhelming to manageable.

There is no denying that exam anxiety is real, but so is one's resilience. The anxiety can stem from various factors, including fear of failure, high expectations from parents or teachers, past negative experiences, or inadequate preparation. Symptoms of exam anxiety range from nervousness, restlessness and even difficulty concentrating to physical manifestations such as headaches, nausea and rapid heartbeat. Recognising these symptoms is the first step in overcoming exam-related stress. Dealing with exam stress can be a heavy load and can often make an individual feel lonely. A crucial aspect of managing exam anxiety is cultivating a positive attitude toward examinations. Students need to view exams as opportunities to demonstrate their learning rather than threats to their self-worth. A growth mindset can improve only through effort and practice and can significantly reduce anxiety. Use of positive affirmations such as "I am prepared" or "I can handle this challenge" can boost confidence. Additionally, normalising mistakes and failures as part of the learning process can help students overcome the fear of underperformance. One of the primary reasons for exam anxiety is inadequate preparation. Implementing effective study strategies can enhance confidence and performance. Creating a well-structured study schedule can help prevent last-minute cramming and ensure thorough coverage of subjects. Active



learning techniques, such as summarisation, mind mapping and teaching concepts to peers can also help retain information better. Practicing with past exam papers and taking mock tests can familiarise students with the exam pattern, reducing uncertainty and nervousness. Relaxation techniques can significantly reduce exam-related stress and improve focus. Deep breathing exercises, mindfulness meditation, and progressive muscle relaxation can help calm the mind before and during exams. Engaging selves in physical activities such as yoga, stretching, or even a short walk can release tension and improve concentration. Ensuring adequate sleep, maintaining a balanced diet, and staying hydrated contribute to overall wellbeing, making students more resilient to stress. A supportive environment at home and school plays a vital role in alleviating exam anxiety. In today's competitive environment, it becomes important for parents to encourage their children rather than pressurise them with unrealistic expectations. Study groups and discussions with peers can provide moral support and motivation, making exam preparation a less isolating experience.

What plays the most vital role is on the day of the exam, where students, by following simple yet effective strategies, can stay calm and focused. Following strategies such as arriving early, taking deep breaths, and engaging in light stretching before entering the examination hall can help reduce nervousness. Managing time effectively by allocating specific minutes to each question can help prevent panic. If anxiety arises during the exam, taking a few moments to pause, taking deep breaths, and refocusing can help prevent stress from escalating. Exam anxiety is a common challenge faced by students, but it can be effectively managed through self-awareness, positive thinking, strategic preparation, relaxation techniques, and a supportive environment. Ultimately, overcoming exam anxiety is not just about securing good grades but also about developing resilience and lifelong learning skills.

(The writer is an educator; views are personal)

## Is Forest Rights Act driving deforestation?



B K SINGH

Despite its noble intent to secure the livelihoods of tribals, the Forest Rights Act has inadvertently opened the door to rampant deforestation and widespread encroachment

The law has been enacted to confer rights over the use of forest lands by individual tribal or forest dwellers under their occupation on the prescribed cutoff date. Besides the individual rights, there is also provision for community rights over certain forests for benefits of collection of usufructs like beedi leaves, minor forest products, grazing, fishing etc. and rights can also be conferred to the communities for sustainable management of forest resources.

But the rights can be granted only when they are in actual possession of the forest land or have been enjoying the usufructs or sustainably managing the forest resources on or before 13-12-2005 for tribal and three generations (75 years) before this date for other traditional forest dwellers (OTFDs). Despite opposition from foresters, conservationists and environmentalists the law was enacted by the UPA government supported by left parties in 2005. This was followed by notifying the rules and the implementation from January 1, 2008.

Dipak Sarmah who succeeded me as the head of Karnataka Forest Department on my superannuation has observed on page 154 of his book titled, 'Forests Of Karnataka - Why And How Of Where They Are,' "Most of the benefits that had accrued in the forests since the 1980s by way of forest consolidation due to implementation of Forest (Conservation) Act appear to have been nullified as a result of the implementation of the Forest Rights Act. The ominous signs of fragmentation and loss of forests are already discernible in a number of states as evident from the biennial India State of Forest Reports published by the Forest Survey of India, Dehradun.

A clearer picture will emerge in about a decade or so, by which time we would come to realise the true impact of the Forest Rights Act on our forests. But it may be then too late to retrieve the losses. Foresters alone cannot prevent the unauthorised removal of trees and the destruction of forests. Villagers set fire to burn the wood and grab the land. Forests are perpetually subjected to encroachments with the support of local leaders. Even if police presence is ensured and the community's resistance is bulldozed while removing encroachments, the problem resurfaces and lands are again grabbed. Political leaders question the removal of cultivation when land is devoid of tree growth. Fresh plantations are damaged and the forest area is re-encroached. Practically all encroachments till 25th October 1980, when the Forest (Conservation) Act came into operation were already regularised by the Union Government.

The Act was operational from 2008 with the new cutoff date of 13-12-2005. It was only the vote bank; the OTFDs were brought in to benefit from the legislation though their encroachments till 25th October 1980 were regularised. It can be understood that OTFDs cannot have more than a generation-old encroachment on the new cutoff date, yet a floodgate of forest destruction was opened for them. Without having any consideration for the ecological security of the country, OTFDs went on a rampage, cleared the fresh tree growth, occupied lands and claimed rights. Ministry of Tribal Affairs, the nodal agency for implementation took up several reviews to monitor the progress of the



FOREST AREAS GIVEN FOR THE SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF GRAM SABHAS HAVE BEEN DEVASTATED, DEGRADED AND FRAGMENTED. THERE ARE PATCHES OF BAMBOO FORESTS IN MEDHA LEKHA GRAM SABHA WHERE ALL BAMBOO CLUMPS WERE CLEARED IN ONE STROKE IN 2012

states, further diluting the provisions in 2012 to ignore the only scientific evidence of satellite imagery interpretation among the evidence to be relied on in support of the claim. The claims of the tribal community, who had only to prove the occupation as of December 2005 were easily acceptable initially, but that too is now two decades old. Left-leaning forces and NGOs fought for claim cases of individual forest rights (IFR), community forest rights (CFR) and rights to manage the forest resources sustainably.

This has accelerated the deforestation. IFRs have already been granted to 2.2 million tribal and OTFDs, covering nearly 5 million ha of forest land. Several activists have written articles in newspapers and magazines showing a satisfactory performance over the grant of IFRs and suggesting the states focus their attention on CFRs and grant of forest rights for sustainable management to avail the provisions that have been neglected by the states so far. The estimates of the activists suggest that 30 million hectare forest lands comprising more than 40 per cent of the total forest area can be granted for CFRs and sustainable management.

They further argue that if this is done, it has the potential to secure the rights and livelihood of 200 million people including 90 million tribal. Local press in Hyderabad has recently brought out that seven lakh acres of forests have been occupied in 2022-23 and claims over four lakh acres for tribal were approved in Telangana before the 2023 Assembly election. State machineries have accepted the claims overlooking the reports of the concerned divisional forest officer. J Ramesh, Nature Friends

Environmental Development Society, Hyderabad, accused the state of pressurising officials for recognition of rights to ineligible individuals resulting in large-scale deforestation leading to the scam of unprecedented proportion.

There are reports from Rampachodavaram Forests division, Rajamundry (AP) that tribal department officials are granting rights in Papikonda National Park for money. A retired IFS M Padmanaba Reddy has filed a PIL for the scam. In February 2019, just before the Lok Sabha polls, states moved the Supreme Court to review its order of eviction of rejected IFR claims and allow them to re-verify. The court accepted it, but so far the states have not concluded and continue to accept the fresh claims. What signal does it send down the line?

The Act has provided unlimited time for filing claims and deforestation and bringing the land under plough can continue. No one has any concern about the ecological security of the country. It is to be understood that all rejected claimants are in occupation of the forest land, where they have already been successful in deforesting and clearing the area. More rejected claims are encouraged, and more deforestation takes place.

The only place where the CFRs and rights to manage the forests sustainably have been granted is the Gadchiroli district of Maharashtra. Section 3-1 (i) of FRA 2006 is relevant here, where rights can be granted to villages of Gram Sabha who have the experience of managing the area sustainably. Further the requirement of Section 4 (3) of the Act is also

essential for the grant of rights i.e. they should have the resource as on 13-12-2005 for tribal and 75 years before this date for OTFDs. Management rights have been granted in many Gram Sabhas of Gadchiroli overlooking both the provisions.

Activists are taking this example all over the country and pressing for a repeat of this. This has been frequently quoted example in articles and papers. What these authors have been hiding is the destruction of forests. Forest areas given for the sustainable management of Gram Sabhas have been devastated, degraded and fragmented.

There are patches of bamboo forests in Medha Lekha Gram Sabha where all bamboo clumps were cleared in one stroke in 2012. Forest officers were physically prevented from entering the area. Bamboo has not responded well to the clear feeling. The fresh regeneration is bushy and does not yield any usable bamboo culm. It yielded certain culms every four years when it was managed by the Forest Department.

The management of Medha Lekha Gram Sabha has not been sustainable and the area has not yielded culms in 2016, 2020 and 2024. Taking a cue from Madha Lekha, other Gram Sabhas have also started clear felling and over-exploitation of the resource. Further, the revenue realised from the sale proceeds has not been ploughed back for fresh regeneration activities and the management has become completely unsustainable.

(The writer is Retired Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Head of Forest Force, Karnataka; views are personal)

## The integral role of phygital in shaping India's rural economy

The emerging phygital model—merging the tangible strengths of traditional systems with the efficiency of digital innovation—is redefining growth

With over 1.4 billion inhabitants, India's economic landscape has evolved dramatically in recent years. Yet, while urban centres boom, the nation's rural heartland—home to around 908.8 million people as of 2022—continues to play a pivotal role in shaping the country's potential. Although initiatives like Digital India have ushered the country into a digital era with 806 million active internet users by February 2025, technology alone cannot resolve deep-seated infrastructural challenges. This is where the phygital model—a fusion of physical and digital elements—steps in to bridge the divide and ensure balanced growth. A New Era: The Phygital Approach



SAMEER MATHUR

Phygital combines the tangible benefits of traditional systems with the efficiency of digital technology, creating a hybrid framework that enhances accessibility, empowers local businesses, and fosters inclusive growth. In rural regions, where infrastructural deficits and resource limitations persist, phygital strategies are not about replacing established

methods but rather integrating them with modern digital solutions. This approach is proving transformative across key sectors such as banking, commerce, agriculture, healthcare, and public services.

**Driving Financial Inclusion** For years, traditional banking models have struggled to serve India's vast rural expanses. High operational costs, challenging geography, and low financial literacy have hampered efforts to bring modern financial services to remote communities.

While FinTech has broadened access through digital banking, a fully digital approach can alienate those who lack familiarity with smartphones or online transactions. The phygital model addresses these gaps by merging digital conven-

ience with physical touchpoints.

Systems like Aadhaar-enabled Payment Systems (AePS), micro-ATMs, and local banking correspondents empower rural residents to conduct transactions, access credit, and secure subsidies without the need for continuous internet connectivity. In many villages, Customer Service Points (CSPs) provide essential in-person support, guiding users as they gradually transition to digital financial solutions. Furthermore, partnerships between FinTech companies and local kirana stores or post offices have effectively transformed these outlets into mini banking hubs.

This integration allows people to withdraw cash, pay bills, and transfer money within their



locality, bypassing the need to travel long distances to bank branches and operating beyond standard banking hours. The result is a significant leap forward in achieving comprehensive financial inclusion.

**Reinvigorating Rural Commerce**

E-commerce has revolutionised urban shopping by altering customer habits and payment methods, but rural

consumers still rely heavily on cash transactions. A completely digital model often fails to resonate with these communities. Instead, the phygital model has emerged as an effective alternative by combining the reach of online platforms with the trust of local, physical commerce. Local kirana stores are increasingly functioning as pick-up points for online orders, ensuring that digital transactions are accessible even to those without digital payment capabilities.

Assisted commerce kiosks further support rural shoppers by helping them browse products, place orders, and make payments—often in cash—thereby bridging the gap between digital platforms and traditional retail.

**Transforming Agriculture** Agriculture remains the backbone of India's rural economy, providing livelihoods for more than 42 per cent of the population and contributing around 18.2 per cent to the nation's GDP. However, farmers have long contended with issues such as limited market access, dependence on intermediaries, and unpredictable weather. Phygital solutions are beginning to address these challenges by integrating digital tools with conventional agricultural practices.

Platforms like eNAM enable farmers to compare prices and market their produce directly, thus reducing reliance on middlemen. At the same time, traditional mandi networks continue to play an essential role in the trading process.

By ensuring that digital marketplaces and physical trading hubs operate in tandem, the phygital approach provides farmers with a more balanced and effective route to market.

**Enhancing Essential Services** Beyond commerce and agriculture, phygital innovations are making significant strides in healthcare and public service delivery. Rural communities have traditionally faced barriers to accessing quality healthcare. Now, telemedicine kiosks supported by trained health workers enable remote consultations with specialists, while mobile health units equipped with diagnostic tools bring medical care directly to remote areas.

(The writer is Managing Director and Founder of Roinet Solution; views are personal)











## YOGASANAS FOR BELLY FAT LOSS

BY YASH GUPTA

**O**besity is the most common problem among the elderly as well as the youth, the people and their lifestyle are forcing them to walk and have poor posture, which results in low confidence and prone to diseases. Due to sitting all day in front of a computer and workstations, it is obvious the belly from the button will say hello before you can speak. So, if you think there is a remedy that will burn the fat without you moving an inch, everyone would do it. It's better to choose your hard, either regret or discipline. Here we will look at the top 5 yoga asanas to reduce belly fat quickly. The flatter the stomach the more fabulous the life. Health is the new currency of the era. Make sure you own it and keep the wealth as long you live.

*The author is an Art of Living faculty, meditation & mind coach, professional yoga trainer.*



- Work on yourself, because it is the only thing that will stay,
- Work on yourself because it is the only thing you are working on at the end of the day.
- Work on yourself because you have to leave a legacy behind
- Work on yourself because this is how you win the mind.

### PURNA-PAVANMUKTASANA

Another wonderful and effective way to burn belly fat is to perform pawanmuktasana, as the name suggests yes you thought that right, it not only promotes belly fat loss but helps in gastric issues in the system. Simply lie down on your back bring both your knees to your chest and place your arms around your legs like you are giving a hug. Keep breathing and duck your nose in between your knees. Hold this position for 20-30 seconds and right before releasing the stretch, you may rock like a child back and forth and side to side. It will give a good massage to your spine and previously mentioned in earlier articles, a healthy spine healthy life. People with knee problems must do it under supervision.



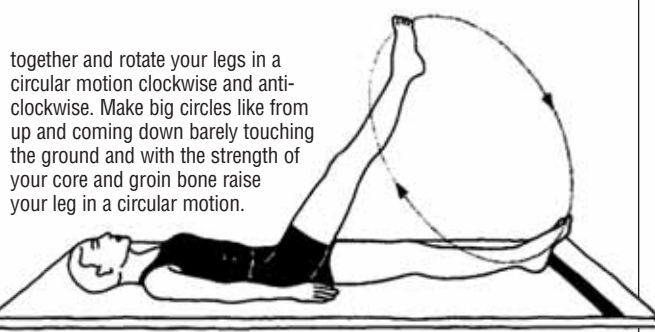
### NAUKASANA

Also known as the boat pose/posture. Looks very tough but with practice the core muscles function well and get those 3D abs. All you have to do is lie down on your back and lift your arms, feet, and eyes in the same line. At least 6 inches off from the ground, hold the position for at least 30 seconds, and later you can progress the number of times and for a longer duration. It promotes burning belly fat and building stabilized core muscles. Advisable to do an empty stomach and women on periods must avoid the asana. Make sure to continue breathing while holding onto the posture and relax in Shavasana very slowly.



### PADA CHAKRASANA

One's favourite exercise for belly fat loss is *leg rotation*. It is indeed the most effective way to build a strong core. It works on every single muscle major and minor, from the torso to the hips. Every muscle group is involved, working on the inner thighs and hip abductors. Just as above simply lie down with the same hand placement you have to do is keep your feet

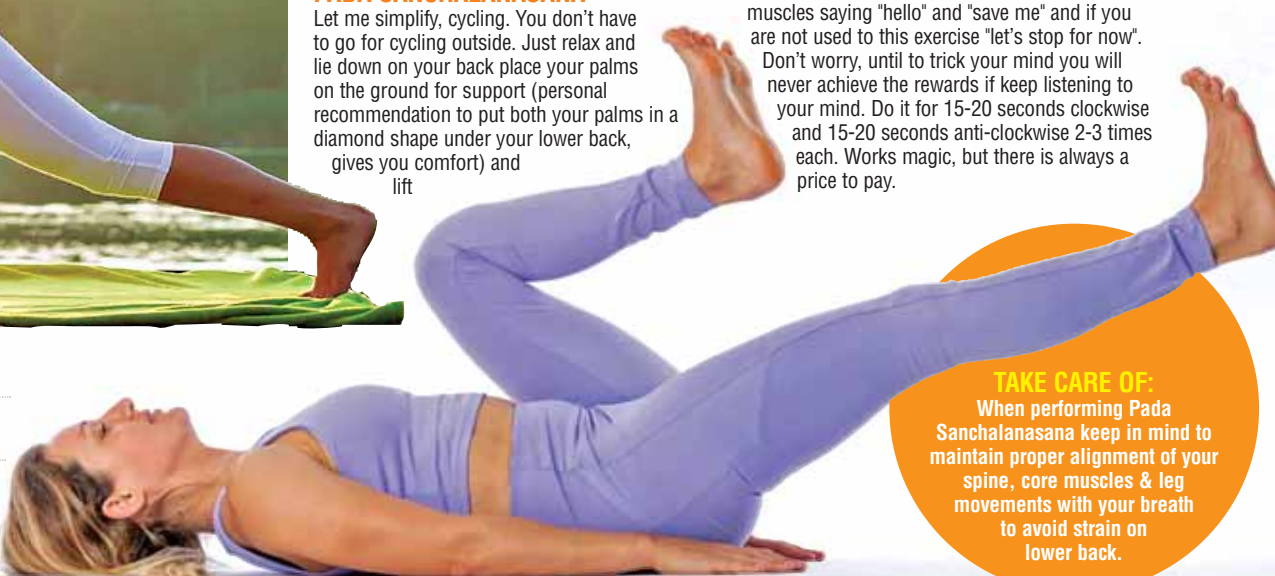


together and rotate your legs in a circular motion clockwise and anti-clockwise. Make big circles like from up and coming down barely touching the ground and with the strength of your core and groin bone raise your leg in a circular motion.

### PADA SANCHALANASANA

Let me simplify, cycling. You don't have to go for cycling outside. Just relax and lie down on your back place your palms on the ground for support (personal recommendation to put both your palms in a diamond shape under your lower back, gives you comfort) and lift

your legs. Start *cycling* and you will feel a lot of muscles saying "hello" and "save me" and if you are not used to this exercise "let's stop for now". Don't worry, until to trick your mind you will never achieve the rewards if keep listening to your mind. Do it for 15-20 seconds clockwise and 15-20 seconds anti-clockwise 2-3 times each. Works magic, but there is always a price to pay.



### TAKE CARE OF:

When performing Pada Sanchalanasana keep in mind to maintain proper alignment of your spine, core muscles & leg movements with your breath to avoid strain on lower back.

### SURYA NAMAKSARA:

A series of 12 asanas combined to form a perfect combination we call *sun salutation*. It is also known as the mother of all asnas. It starts with namaste and stretching the abdomen and then stretching the hamstrings bending forward and so on! The sequence we all know it, if you don't and are completely new to it, just google it. It will burn the fat faster resulting in a smooth and toned belly shape that every person desires when roaming beachside. There is and never be another substitute for *Surya Namaskar*. It helps in overall blood circulation in the body and stretching abdomen muscles resulting in good appetite and reduced bowel problems.

## Tasty Recipe Using Pistachio

**O**n the occasion of *World Pistachio Day*, Chefs have shared with *The Pioneer* delicious recipe that you can make using pistachios on behalf of *American Pistachio Growers*. *Pick Me Up Pista Bomb* is a recipe by *Chef Sanjeev Kapoor*, *Chocolate Pistachio Kunafa Cake* is by *Chef Shivesh Bhatia*. You can have a taste of all these dishes by preping the recipes:

### Pick Me Up Pista Bomb By Chef Sanjeev Kapoor

On behalf of *American Pistachio Growers*, Chef Sanjeev Kapoor shares the recipe for *Pick Me Up Pista Bomb*.

#### INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup American Pistachios; ● ¼ cup brown sugar; ● 1 cup rolled oats, toasted; ● 1 cup puffed amaranth (rajgira); ● ¼ cup honey; ● ¼ tsp cinnamon powder

#### METHOD

- Dry roast American Pistachios for 3-4 minutes on medium heat. Switch the heat off and allow to cool slightly.
- Put the roasted pistachios in a food processor jar and process to a coarse mixture.
- Heat a non-stick pan. Add brown sugar and 2 tbsps water and cook till the sugar melts.
- Add rolled oats, puffed amaranth, and

- coarsely processed pistachios. Add honey and cinnamon powder and mix till well combined. Transfer on to a plate and allow to cool slightly.
- Take small portions of the mixture with greased hands and roll each portion into a ball.
- Serve.



### Chocolate Pistachio Kunafa Cake By Chef Shivesh Bhatia

On behalf of *American Pistachio Growers*, Chef Shivesh Bhatia shares the recipe for *Chocolate Pistachio Kunafa Cake*.

#### INGREDIENTS-

- 1 tbsp butter; ● 1 cup kunafa dough; ● 2 cups pistachios; 1 tbsp oil; ● 3 tbsp icing sugar; ● For assembly; ● 2 layers of chocolate sponge; ● Chocolate glaze

#### METHOD-

- Set a non-stick pan on medium heat and add butter to it.
- Once the butter has melted, add the kunafa dough and roast till it becomes golden brown. Set it aside.
- To make the pistachio paste, add California pistachios in a blender jar along

- with oil and icing sugar.
- Pulse the entire mixture at regular intervals of about 1 minute until the pistachios start releasing some oil and turn into a paste.
- Combine this pistachio paste with the roasted kunafa to make the filling for the cake.
- To assemble the cake, place a layer of chocolate sponge on a stand or turn table.
- Spread the pistachio kunafa filling generously over the cake layer and sandwich it with another chocolate sponge.
- Now tightly wrap an acetate sheet around the assembled cake. Pour the chocolate glaze over the cake and pull the acetate sheet up to let the glaze drip down from all sides.

## Move Your Body, Lift Your Mind

### Move Your Body, Lift Your Mind

In an era where stress, anxiety, and depression are becoming increasingly common, the role of physical activity in promoting mental well-being has never been more crucial. While most people may associate exercise with physical health, its impact on mental well-being is also quite significant- from managing stress, boosting one's mood and enhancing the overall well-being. Studies indicate that who exercises regularly have improved mental health, healthier cognitive functions, and enhanced emotional well-being.

### But how this happens?

High levels of cortisol - a

primary hormone that body release in response to stress; can lead to increased anxiety and negatively impact your overall mental well-being. Engaging in regular exercise helps lower cortisol levels, making it easier to manage stress and maintain a balanced mood.

When you engage in physical activity, your body releases endorphins, those feel-good hormones that help reduce stress while increasing happiness and relaxation. They help relieve pain, relax, and lift mood. Exercise also promotes the production of serotonin and dopamine, neurotransmitters that play a key role in



regulating mood and preventing mental health disorders such as depression and anxiety.

### Cognitive Benefits of Physical Activity

Not only emotional well-being but exercise is also beneficial for better cognitive function. Regular physical activity has been linked to improved memory, concentration, and problem-solving skills as it reduces stress and anxiety. Regular exercise increases blood flow to the

brain, which enhances cognitive abilities and reduces the risk of neurodegenerative disorders such as Alzheimer's disease. Studies suggest that even moderate activities like walking or yoga can significantly enhance brain function and mental clarity.

— By Dr Parul Malhotra

### SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL BENEFITS

Physical activity is undoubtedly beneficial for your body and brain. But have you heard of social and emotional benefits of it? Ever wondered how exercising gives you opportunities for social connections. Let's see- joining a dance class, gym or yoga sessions introduce you

to meet like-minded people. Exercising with them builds a sense of community, offering emotional support and motivation. If you are lucky enough, you might find people who through their positive energy inspire you to become better versions of yourselves.

