

Sunita Williams touches down on Mother Earth

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Cape Canaveral

Stuck in space no more, NASA astronauts Butch Wilmore and Sunita Williams returned to Earth on Tuesday, hitching a different ride home to close out a saga that began with a bungled test flight more than nine months ago.

Their SpaceX capsule parachuted into the Gulf of Mexico in the early evening, just hours after departing the International Space Station. Splashdown occurred off the coast of Tallahassee in the Florida Panhandle, bringing their unplanned odyssey to an end.

Within an hour, the astronauts were out of their capsule, waving and smiling at the cameras while being hustled away in reclining stretchers for routine medical checks.

It all started with a flawed Boeing test

flight last spring.

The two expected to be gone just a week or so after launching on Boeing's new Starliner crew capsule on June 5. So many problems cropped up on the way to the space station that NASA eventually sent Starliner back empty and transferred the test pilots to SpaceX, pushing their homecoming into February. Then SpaceX capsule issues added another month's delay.

Sunday's arrival of their relief crew meant Wilmore and Williams could finally leave. NASA cut them loose a little early, given the iffy weather forecast later this week. They checked out with NASA's Nick Hague and Russia's Alexander Gorbunov, who arrived in their own SpaceX capsule last fall with two empty seats reserved for the Starliner duo.

Wilmore and Williams ended up spending 286 days in space - 278 days longer than anticipated when they launched. They



NASA astronaut Sunita Williams gives a thumbs-up after being helped out of a SpaceX capsule onboard the SpaceX recovery ship

circled Earth 4,576 times and traveled 121 million miles (195 million kilometers) by the time of splashdown.

"On behalf of SpaceX, welcome home," radioed SpaceX Mission Control in California. "What a ride," replied Hague, the capsule's commander. "I see a capsule full of grins ear to ear."

Dolphins circled the capsule as divers readied it for hoisting onto the recovery ship. Once safely on board, the side hatch was opened and the astronauts were helped out, one by one. Williams was next-to-last out, followed by Wilmore who gave two gloved thumbs-up.

Wilmore and Williams' plight captured the world's attention, giving new meaning to the phrase "stuck at work" and turning "Butch and Sunita" into household names. While other astronauts had logged longer spaceflights over the decades, none had to deal with so much uncertainty

or see the length of their mission expand by so much.

Wilmore and Williams quickly transitioned from guests to full-fledged station crew members, conducting experiments, fixing equipment and even spacewalking together. With 62 hours over nine spacewalks, Williams set a record: the most time spent spacewalking over a career among female astronauts.

Both had lived on the orbiting lab before and knew the ropes, and brushed up on their station training before rocketing away. Williams became the station's commander three months into their stay and held the post until earlier this month.

Their mission took an unexpected twist in late January when President Donald Trump asked SpaceX founder Elon Musk to accelerate the astronauts' return and blamed the delay on the Biden administration.

Gujarat village goes over the moon

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Mehsana

Residents of NASA astronaut Sunita Williams' ancestral village Jhulan in Gujarat's Mehsana district on Wednesday celebrated her safe return by bursting firecrackers, distributing sweets, dancing and offering prayers to the local deity.

Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel also extended congratulations through X to "our very own Sunita Williams" and said people in India take immense pride in her connection to "our" land, celebrating her as a "shining example of our shared heritage and aspirations".

As soon as a SpaceX capsule carrying Williams and astronaut Butch Wilmore splashed down near the Florida coast in the US after their nine-month stay at the International Space Station (ISS), the villagers erupted in joy, bursting firecrackers, dancing and chanting "Har Har Mahadev".

The villagers had organised a 'yagna'

praying for Williams' safe return. They said their happiness knew no end and hoped to see Williams visit her ancestral village soon and inspire school students who are already filled with curiosity and following in her footsteps.

Students of the local government school gathered to celebrate the occasion by performing garba, a traditional Gujarati folk dance, and took out a procession with Williams' photo to the nearby temple of goddess Dola Mata.

As the procession made its way from the school premises to the temple of goddess Dola Mata, the students danced and sang and distributed sweets on their way.

School teachers and locals said the goddess heard their prayers and brought Williams home safely. The procession, and the prayer that followed at the temple, was a way to thank her for her blessings, they said.

Principal of the primary school, Vishal Panchal, said that the entire village is ecsta-

tic and filled with pride upon Williams' return.

"The daughter of our village is the pride of the world. She stayed in space for such a long time and came back safe. We performed garba, burst firecrackers and distributed sweets. Our happiness knows no end," he said.

When Sunita Williams left for ISS on June 5 last year and her mission was delayed, the villagers came together to light up an 'Akhand Jyot' here on June 27 and took out a procession carrying the eternal flame to the temple of Dola Mata, praying for her safety, said a local resident.

"We are very proud and happy that she is back on earth. We are from the same family. Sunita is a great inspiration for the children, who all want to become like her," he said.

Villagers chanted prayers by placing Williams' photo near the temple goddess and distributed sweets as 'prasad', the offering to the goddess.

Earth missed you: Prime Minister Modi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

President Droupadi Murmu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Home Minister Amit Shah and Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge joined celebrities, politicians and others on Wednesday to celebrate the return of NASA astronaut Sunita Williams to Earth after nine months, terming her an inspiration for generations to come and lauding her determination. The Prime Minister said "the Earth Missed You."

The President said in a social media post India's daughter and her fellow astronauts have inspired everyone with their perseverance, dedication and never-say-die spirit.

"Congratulations to the entire team behind the safe return of NASA's Crew 9 mission on Earth! Their historic journey is a tale of determination, teamwork and extraordinary courage."

I salute their unwavering resolve and wish them excellent health!" she said.

"Welcome back, #Crew9! The Earth missed you," the prime minister said in his post.

"There's been a test of grit, courage and the boundless human spirit... Their unwavering determination in the face of the vast unknown will forever inspire mil-

lions. Space exploration is about pushing the limits of human potential, daring to dream, and having the courage to turn those dreams into reality.

"Sunita Williams, a trailblazer and an icon, has exemplified this spirit throughout her career. We are incredibly proud of all those who worked tirelessly to ensure their safe return. They have demonstrated what happens when precision meets passion and technology meets tenacity," the prime minister said.

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) termed Williams' extended stay in space a "remarkable achievement".

"A testament to NASA, SpaceX, and the USA's commitment to space exploration! Your resilience and dedication continue to inspire space enthusiasts around the world," ISRO said.

"The successful splashdown of #Crew9, accomplishing a challenging space expedition, is a testament to the power of human resilience.

It is an inspiring demonstration of how even the toughest hurdles can be overcome with sheer courage, patience, and dedication," Home Minister Shah said.

Transport scam EOW takes Raja Chakra on 3-day remand

PNS ■ BALESWAR

The Economic Offenses Wing (EOW) of the Odisha Crime Branch took BJD leader Raja Chakra on a three-day remand after getting the necessary permission from the Baleswar OPID (Odisha Protection of Interests of Depositors) Court on Wednesday. The court granted permission for the remand after reviewing the investigating agency's petition.

Earlier, the Crime Branch had filed a petition seeking a five-day remand to interrogate Raja Chakra in connection with financial fraud allegations. However, the court granted three days of custodial interrogation.

Soumyashankar Chakra, popularly known as Raja Chakra, a prominent leader of

the Biju Janata Dal (BJD), was arrested following allegations of his involvement in a multi-crore transport scam and mining irregularities in Keonjhar district.

Chakra was arrested on March 14 and was subsequently produced before the court by the Crime Branch. The investigation team is now expected to question him intensively regarding his involvement in the alleged financial misconduct.

Sources indicate that the Crime Branch is aiming to gather crucial information related to the money trail and possible accomplices involved in the financial irregularities. Investigators will also focus on recovering any misappropriated funds and identifying further leads in the case.

The next course of action will be determined after the completion of the three-day remand period, based on the findings of the interrogation. Further legal proceedings and court hearings will follow as the case progresses.

Naba Das murder reinvestigation Kin meet CM, submit letter for CBI probe

CB team probes airlifting operation from Jharsuguda
 RAJEEV RATHAN ■ JHARSUGUDA /BHUBANESWAR

Intensifying its reinvestigation into the murder of BJD leader and former Minister Naba Das, a team from the Crime Branch (CB) reached the Jharsuguda airport on Wednesday.

The move from the CB came after it recorded the statements of Naba Das' family members on Tuesday.

The investigation aims to uncover details about the airlift operation that transported Naba Das to Bhubaneswar after he was shot.

Officials are examining crucial aspects, including the exact time of the airlift, how it



was executed and who accompanied Das during the critical moments, sources said, adding that all details surrounding the airlift have been thoroughly scrutinised.

Earlier, the CB started the reinvestigation into the high-profile murder case by recording the statements of family members. A two-member team from the CB reached Das' residence in Sarbahal in Jharsuguda and recorded the statements of Das' son Vishal, daughter Dipali and wife Minati.

Meanwhile, Chief Minister Mohan Majhi met the family members of Naba

Das at the Lok Sabha Bhawan in the evening. Das' wife, daughter and son submitted a letter to Majhi urging for a CBI probe into the incident. The CM assured that he would ensure an impartial and proper probe into the incident.

In another development, BJP leader and Sambalpur MLA Jaynarayan Mishra reiterated his demand for a CBI probe into the murder of Naba Das.

"My demand remains unchanged. If the victim's family requests the State Government for a CBI probe, I will exert pressure on the government to ensure justice," said Mishra. As two years have already passed since the murder of Naba Das, Mishra expressed concerns over possible tampering of crucial documents and evidences.

In State Temp to fall by 3 to 5 deg after 2 days

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Wednesday predicted thunderstorm activity with lightning, gusty surface winds and hail over several parts of the State during the next four days, which is likely to provide respite from the heat wave.

With the IMD predicting high-velocity wind in several districts, the Special Relief Commissioner (SRC) has alerted the district Collectors to keep administrative ma-

chinery ready to face any eventuality.

People are advised to keep watch on weather alerts and take safe shelter during thunderstorm activity to protect them from lightning. Farmers are advised to use hail nets to protect vegetables and crops from hail.

The IMD said there would be no large change in maximum temperature during the next two days and fall by 3 to 5 degree Celsius over the State.

The Regional Office of the IMD has issued a Yellow

Amid heat wave School, Anganwadi timings revised

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

With Odisha experiencing severe heat wave conditions, the State Government has revised school and Anganwadi timings to protect children from extreme temperatures.

Revenue and Disaster Management Minister Suresh Pujari announced on Wednesday that morning classes would be introduced across the State from April 2.

All Anganwadi Centres will now function from 7 am to 9 am. This change applies to both centres operating from their own buildings, which previously ran from 9 am to 2pmM, and those functioning from school classrooms, which earlier operated from 7 am to 12 pm.

Chief Minister Mohan Majhi has directed authorities against power cuts during crucial hours. As per his directive, there will be no power outages from 11 am to 5 pm and from 9 pm to 6 am, ensuring uninterrupted electricity supply during peak heat hours.

Cong protests crimes against women, stalls Assembly

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Opposition Congress on Wednesday disrupted proceedings in the State Assembly demanding formation of a House Committee to address the growing number of crimes against women in the State.

The Assembly was adjourned twice by Speaker Surama Padhy, first at 10:35 am until 12:00 pm and again at 12:02 pm until 4:00 pm, after Congress members, holding placards and raising slogans inside the Well of the House, intensified their protests. As a result, the Question Hour, the Zero Hour and the debate on the adjournment motion were completely disrupted.

When the Assembly convened for the day at 10:30 am to begin the

Question Hour, the Congress members immediately entered the Well of the House. The Speaker urged them to return to their seats to allow the House to proceed, but they ignored the request and continued their protest, demanding formation of a House Committee to address the increasing incidents of violence against women.

The Congress members declared that they would not cease their demonstration until a committee is established. Faced with the ongoing disruption, Speaker Padhy adjourned the House at 10:35 am until 12:00 pm.

During the break, the Congress members moved to the Gandhi statue within the Assembly complex, where they staged a dharna to fur-

ther highlight their demand. When the House reconvened at 12:00 pm to take up the Zero Hour business, the protests resumed. The Congress members once again rushed into the Well of the House, raised slogans and tried to disrupt proceedings. The Speaker, unable to proceed under such conditions, adjourned the House once more at 12:02 pm until 4:00 pm.

The disruption continued in the afternoon session as well. Eventually, the Congress members walked out of the House after their protests.

For over a week, the Congress members have been disrupting the business of the Assembly, staging protests both inside the House and near the Gandhi statue, over the rising atrocities against women.

Faculty crunch, administrative paralysis 8 of 17 public varsities in State lack NAAC accreditation

62% govt colleges, 67% aided colleges too face similar fate

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR
Eight of Odisha's total 17 public universities lack accreditation from the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), risking their eligibility for Central and State funds as the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 rollout nears.

This gap in the Assembly, highlighting concerns over institutional preparedness and resource access. NAAC accreditation is mandatory for universities to secure financial support and academic privileges under the NEP framework. With the policy emphasizing quality upgrades, unaccredited institutions face exclusion from grants, research opportunities, and infrastructure development. The State Higher Education department warned that NAAC scores will directly im-

impact universities' ability to meet NEP benchmarks, affecting student outcomes. The unaccredited list includes Shree Jagannath Sanskrit University, established in 1981, which operates with only 20 faculty members against 45 sanctioned posts and where chronic staff shortages have delayed exams and overburdened existing staff with administrative duties. Similarly Maa Manikeswari, Rajendra, Vikram Dev, Dharanidhar, MS Law, Odia, and two newer

universities, were upgraded to university status in the past five to seven years but lack basic accreditation. Odia University, which was launched two years ago, and recently established institutions like Maa Manikeswari face similar challenges, including inadequate teaching staff and operational bottlenecks. In contrast, Utkal, Berhampur, Ravenshaw, and Sambalpur universities renewed their NAAC grades recently, while Rama Devi and Odisha State Open University

secured first-time accreditation in 2023. The HE Minister noted that 62% of government colleges and 67% of aided colleges also lack NAAC certification, compounding systemic issues. Staff vacancies, poor infrastructure, and administrative delays plague newer universities, hindering their accreditation bids. The Higher Education Department is reportedly in plans to prioritise faculty recruitment and streamline processes to address these gaps

State to provide 1,50,000 jobs in 5 yrs

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR
As many as 812 new employees joined five government departments in a job mela here on Tuesday. Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi provided them with the appointments letters. The highest number of 442 employees joined the Ayush Directorate under the Health and Family Welfare Department, 65 soil conservation and 33 Assistant Horticulturalists joined the Agriculture Department, 48 Management Trainees in the Energy Department, 12 Junior Engineers and 14 Amins in the Water Resources Department and 189 junior



Mining Officers joined the Steel and Mines Department. Majhi said the government would provide government jobs to 65,000 persons in two years. Till now, 25,000 persons have been provided with government jobs in eight job fairs. The government has a target to provide 1,50,000 government jobs in five years. The Chief Minister urged the new recruits to work as servants of the people and be humble despite how high positions they might occupy.

State prepares for President's 2-day visit

RAJEEV RATHAN ■ BHUBANESWAR
A high-level preparatory meeting was held at the Lok Seva Bhawan to finalise arrangements for the two-day visit of President of India Droupadi Murmu to Odisha on March 24 and 25. The meeting, chaired by Chief Secretary Manoj Ahuja, focused on security, logistics and administrative coordination to ensure a smooth visit. As per the schedule, the President will arrive at the

Biju Patnaik International Airport here at 1:30 pm on March 24, travelling from Raipur, Chhattisgarh. She will then board a helicopter to Nayagarh district, where she will visit the historic Kantilo Nilamadhab Temple. After offering prayers there, she will proceed to Kalyani Peeth to attend the 30th Foundation Day of the Tribal Development Foundation, where she will be the chief guest. In the evening, the President will return to Bhubaneswar



and stay at the Raj Bhavan. On March 25 morning, she will leave for New Delhi. Senior officials present at the preparatory meeting included Additional Chief Secretary (Home) Satya Prakash Sahu, DGP Arun Kumar Sarangi and Nayagarh district Collector and SP. Special attention was given to road maintenance and security coordination, considering the presence of Governor Hari Babu Kambhampati and Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi during the celebrations.

To boost road connectivity 4 major river bridges of Rs 1,264 cr approved

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR
The Odisha Government has plans to construct four major bridges on the Mahanadi, Baitarani, Brahmani, and Kharasrota rivers to strengthen road connectivity in the State. A total of Rs 1,264 crore will be spent for the constructions, official sources said on Monday. According to the sources, the projects include a second bridge over the Baitarani river near Chandbali on Bhadrak-

Chandbali road at an estimated cost of Rs 319 crore, a second bridge over the Kharasrota river at Bharigada on Cuttack-Chandbali road at an estimated cost of Rs 284 crore, a second bridge over the Brahmani river at Patrapur on Cuttack-Chandbali road at an estimated cost of Rs 307 crore, and a major bridge over the Mahanadi to connect Jharsuguda and Bargarh districts on Pujaripali Ghat-Jarimul road at an estimated cost of Rs 354 crore.

The bridges are expected to play a significant role in improving road connectivity of the State. Besides, the Works Department has chalked out certain reform measures such as new technologies like milling, white topping, use of waste plastic in road construction, use of full depth reclamation (FDR) in the development of important State Highways and urban roads, proper maintenance of roads and bridges using modern technological

methods. Maintenance and rehabilitation of the roads and bridges will reportedly be done using condition assessment (Condition Survey) methods. "A new Odisha State Road Policy is also being formulated. Once it is finalised, the road and bridge construction and maintenance of various engineering works can be systematic and improved," a senior official of the department said.

AIIMS ED calls on Governor



PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR
AIIMS Bhubaneswar Executive Director Prof. (Dr) Ashutosh Biswas called on Governor of Odisha Dr Hari Babu Kambhampati at the Raj Bhavan on Wednesday. Dr Biswas briefed the Governor on several key developmental issues related to patient care at the AIIMS Bhubaneswar. He also discussed various ongoing initiatives and strategies to further improve the healthcare services at the institution. The Governor expressed his appreciation for the compre-

Nat'l talk at IIT BBS Experts discuss India's path to sustainable energy transition

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR
The Indian Energy Congress, in association with Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Bhubaneswar, and NIST University, Bhubaneswar, organised a two-day national seminar on "Energy Access and Security in Emerging Energy Transition" on March 17 and 18. The seminar, held at IIT Bhubaneswar, brought together leading experts from academia, industry, and government to discuss critical aspects of renewable energy, energy storage, and policy frameworks. Inaugurating the seminar, Director, IIT Bhubaneswar, Prof. Shreepad Karmalkar emphasized the need to translate theoretical discussions into tangible ben-



efits for society. He stressed upon the "Net Zero Energy" in the modern world and outlined the efforts of IIT Bhubaneswar towards achieving the ambitious goal. Citing the historical impact of semiconductor technology, he highlighted the shift toward real-world implementation of research to address energy management and sustainability. Director, IIT (ISM), Dhanbad, Prof. Sukumar Mishra stressed the importance of integrating traditional knowledge with modern technology like Artificial Intelligence for effective energy transition. Dr. Sukant Kumar Mohapatra, Founder Director of NIST University,

Brahmapur, highlighted the necessity of collaborative efforts to overcome challenges in the shift to renewable energy. Secretary General of the Indian Energy Congress, Prof. PK Parhi reiterated the organization's commitment to uniting energy researchers and addressing global energy challenges. Prof. SR Samantaray, Head

of the School of Electrical and Computer Science at IIT Bhubaneswar and Organising Chair of the Seminar, discussed the critical role of energy storage and electric vehicles in the evolving energy landscape. President, Indian Energy Congress Dr. Pravakar Swain also spoke on the occasion. Distinguished speakers Dr

MV Rao, Chairman, West Bengal Electricity Regulatory Commission, Mahesh Das from GRIDCO, Kedar Pandu, MD, OPGC, Prof. AK Tripathy, former DG, CPRI and PK Patnaik, Director OPTCL, shared insights on various aspects of energy access and transition. Besides several insightful talks by eminent academicians and practitioners in this field, the two-day seminar also witnessed impactful industry-academia deliberations. Two eminent international speakers from Germany, Prof. Xinliang Feng, Director, Max Planck Institute of Microstructure Physics, Germany and Prof. Thomas Heine, Technical University, Dresden, Germany also addressed the audiences and shared their experiences and insights.

HITTING THE BULL'S EYE SP and DM exposed by Badri Patra be nabbed without delay

The BJD lost all its electoral glory not because of corruption committed slyly, but only because of arrogance displayed by the frontline leaders. The BJD did pretty much well for the first fourteen years until Pyari Mohan Mohapatra ran the outfit with a whip. He had tamed nearly all the crooks in the fold and taught Naveen how to behave in public. Naveen's buddy AU Singh Deo, the party treasurer too was discarded. Street garbage-quality guys that Pyari had picked to mould as leaders backstabbed him during the crisis of 2012. Naveen dismissed Pyari forgetting completely the former made him a public hero. Bijay Mohapatra would have grabbed the reins for good if Pyari had not ousted him guilefully. History changed course after Pyari was shown the door unceremoniously. After Pyari was gone, Kalpataru Das turned big advisor and guide. He taught Naveen how to manage the party cunningly. Naveen was keen to have Pandian, his trusted



BISWARAJ PATNAIK

bureaucrat, to learn the skills of political management. Kalpataru died soon and Pandian took over the party despite being a serving bureaucrat. The 2014 and 2019 elections were won as the Pyari-organised grand-Naveen image had not faded yet. It is not untrue that between 2019 and 2024, a new coterie of hardcore sycophants and soothsayers had

emerged that drove Pandian crazy. The Covid pandemic can be considered the big culprit as during its reign across more than two years, the world got dishevelled so badly as to suck wisdom from many a head that mattered. Naveen withdrew to cosy corners of the interiors of his house and expected Pandian to run the show. The young, energetic bureaucrat was kind of forced to take over both the bureaucratic administration and political affairs. He became the principal decision maker for the BJD members who looked upon him as their supremo. Vested interests kept whirling around him saying he was the only unmatchable brain to lead the BJD to greater glory. Pandian in turn may have impressed upon Naveen that he could take up the burden as the circumstances were favourable. By this time, Naveen had virtually retired from active political life but kept imagining smugly that his name still spelt magic. Pandian went on a campaign spree like mad

and people did not get to see Naveen ever again in public. Rogues including a privately-inducted evil-minded Principal Secretary, fourth grade media managers and a crook of a filmmaker taught all suicidal tricks to Pandian convincing him that his leadership would bring the party an all-time record victory. These crooks stole crores of rupees from the party coffers to engineer make-believe survey reports that falsely indicated unprecedented victory with Pandian as the supreme leader while actually the earth beneath his feet had begun caving in from the day he was put as key campaigner engaging in unacceptable acts in excessive public glare. The rest is known history. The messiah image of Naveen got eroded so horrendously as to have him eventually vanquished. BJD was crushed to dust in all the Lok Sabha segments; and the Assembly would only accommodate 51 out of 147. The voters in Odisha discarded the BJD only because it had come under a handful of arro-

gant overconfident fellows who are still not convinced the big fall happened due to them. Thus, the BJP has come in place by sheer default. Mohan Majhi, the gentleman Chief Minister, is of course a beginner who is trying his best to deliver, but due to lack of skills and autonomy, he is groping in dark even now. The powerful high command up there in Delhi seems to be pulling the strings day in and day out. People feel sore even today that CM Majhi has not been able to fix the notorious son of former Governor Raghuraj Das. Majhi has also failed to pick six more ministers for his council as if no one fit enough is available among the legislators. The Ayushman Bharat health insurance scheme for all is not yet functional, for which many elderly citizens feel grossly cheated. Majhi is a highly adorable person, but a majority of the people have begun losing faith as he is not assertive on any critical front. So, despite so much of public anger

against many errant BJD fellows, a vast majority of thinking men and women have begun missing the Naveen administration which had transformed countless locations of Odisha to attract entrepreneurs, investors and tourists along with pilgrims, thereby boosting revenue growth. Majhi has to be as smart and as proactive to win the hearts of the masses at least in the first year of his rule. Fortunately for him, he has Prakash Mishra, a truly wise, gutsy advisor, beside him to keep him safe and sound on all fronts. Prakash can show him the right path of bureaucratic as well as political administration to ensure he is highly acceptable as Chief Minister. Lately, former minister Badri Patra has exploded with some disturbing truths about thugs having looted the State by conniving with the Keonjhar SP and DM who abused authority beyond limits to keep the daylight robbers safe so as to amass money themselves by becoming ghost partners. Badri has

named one kingpin called Raja Chakra who controlled all illegal mineral loading business operations by way of monopoly. He successfully kept robbing the local operators by intimidation techniques. The State lost revenue and the mafia along with the SP and DM fattened their personal coffers. Badri has categorically made clear that the then incumbent SP Mitrabhanu Mahapatra stood behind Raja Chakra and made immeasurable money as an ally to the criminal. DM Ashish Thakrey kept guard to provide magisterial protection. So, CM Majhi has to organise everything possible to have the criminal-minded IPS SP and IAS DM nabbed sooner than usual to regain public credibility. He has to remain clung to advisor Prakash Mishra, who knows the system inside-out and who will never misguide the boss as he is not unscrupulous or unethical on any count. Majhi is truly lucky to have critical support available.

In Subarnapur Class-IX boy thrashed by HM, severely injured

SRIKUMAR MAHANTA ■ SONEPUR

A latest incident of corporal punishment has come to light in Sonepur town where the headmaster of a residential school named Koshal High School at Pattabadi brutally thrashed a Class 9th boy. As a result, the victim was left seriously injured with scars all over his body. His hands and legs have swollen. The alleged inhuman torture by headmaster Parama Naik has spread outrage among locals, guardians and other students who demanded the teacher to be expelled.

The school authorities managed to suppress the matter but some photo clips of the incident went viral on social media. After getting information through social media, Child Welfare Committee and Child Help Line, Subarnapur visited the house of the victim and inquired the matter directly from the child and his parents and found that the assault by headmaster on the boy was true. The CWC also requested District Education Officer (DEO), Subarnapur to inquire into the matter and submit a report to the Col-

lector cum District Magistrate, Subarnapur. Sources said parents of the victim student are yet to lodge a complaint with police in this connection. It may be noted that Odisha has banned corporal punishment in schools in 2004 following strings of allegations of teachers beating up students. There are provisions of severe disciplinary action against the accused. When contacted, District Education Officer, Subarnapur, Minarani Mangal said that the matter has been inquired.

Women's Day observed at Paradip Port

PNS ■ PARADIP

The Paradip Port Authority (PPA) celebrated the International Women's Day, honouring the invaluable contributions of women across all departments and highlighting the port's commitment to gender equality and empowerment.



PPT Deputu Chairman Nilabhra Dasgupta attended the programme as chief guest and addressed the gathering emphasising the critical role women play in the port's operations and the overall wellbeing of the society. Capt AC Sahoo, Secretary & Coordinator, Working Women's Cell, PPA, Swarnamayee Tripathy, Sr Re-

search Fellow, ICSSR and gender expert, Tapasi Praharaj, social activist, were guests of honour. The theme of the event "For all women and girls: Rights, equality, empowerment" underscored the port's dedication to create a diverse and inclusive workplace where women can thrive.

Susmita Samal, Chairperson, Working Women Cell, PPA, gave the welcome speech and Supriti Barik, HA, offered a vote of thanks. The PPA Deputy Chairman also felicitated women officers and employees of PPA who have excelled in their respective fields in the current fiscal.

4 die, several hurt in 3 separate mishaps

PNS ■ BRAHMAPUR/KHORDHA

A person died and several others were injured when a bus lost control and overturned near Tara village under Nabarangpur police station in the early hours of Wednesday. Sources reported that the bus was traveling from Raigarh to Jeypore with 50 passengers on board. One of the rear tyres of the vehicle burst, leading to it veering off the road and overturning. "We were travelling when all of a sudden there was a loud sound and the bus started to sway sideways. Before the driver could regain control, the vehicle overturned. One person died and another lost his hand in the accident while other passengers sustained injuries," said a passenger. Following the crash, fire

services personnel and police arrived at the scene to carry out rescue operations, where they were aided by local residents. Till the last reports came in, efforts were underway to identify the deceased passenger. In another accident at Kaithakhandi Square in Digapahandi of Ganjam district, Kuresh Patra, the headmaster of Madhuban School, died on the spot when his motorbike had a head-on collision with a bus. In a separate accident near Pichukuli on the Khordha-Balangir road, a couple died when a car collided head-on with a bus. The duo was travelling from Bhubaneswar to Nayagarh when the accident took place. Efforts were on to ascertain their identities.

Kisan Mahapanchayat in B'garh Leaders corner govt over host of farm issues



Demand MSP guarantee Law among others

RAKESH JOSHI ■ BARGARH

Bargarh district witnessed a massive gathering of farmers on Monday as the State-Level Kisan Mahapanchayat was held at Sayan Playground, 7 km from here. Bharatiya Kisan Union president Rakesh Tikayat and other national farmer leaders took part in the meet. Organised by the Bargarh District Farmers' Organization, the event saw participation from various voluntary and social groups. The Mahapanchayat strongly opposed the

government's agricultural policies, alleging they favour corporations while leaving farmers in debt and poverty. The organisers accused the government of pushing farmers towards suicide by neglecting their financial needs while granting massive loans to big businesses. They highlighted how capitalist defaulters fleeing abroad with unpaid loans receive leniency, whereas debt burdened farmers face harsh penalties. Speakers criticized the lack of proper pricing, infrastructure, and market support for farm produce. They condemned the government's failure to ensure irrigation across all agricultural land, pointing

out that only four blocks of Bargarh district out of 12 are fully irrigated. Farmers also protested delays in crop insurance payments, high electricity costs, and exploitation by power distribution companies. The leaders addressing the meet demanded implementation of MSP guarantee law in the country. The Mahapanchayat called for fair procurement, better irrigation, and relief from mounting debts, emphasizing that repeated promises of free electricity remain unfulfilled. The gathering underscored the growing frustration among farmers, demanding immediate action to address their concerns.

3-day 11th Kalinga Lit Fest from Mar 21



400 writers, thinkers, idealists, realists, intellectuals to join

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The 11th Kalinga Literary Festival (KLF) is set to unfold from March 21 to 23, here. This festival promises an unparalleled celebration of ideas, languages, and cultures, bringing together over 400 writers, thinkers, idealists, realists, visionaries, intellectuals, avant-garde practitioners, the iconoclasts, thought leaders and visionaries from across the globe, representing over 25 languages. Governor Dr Hari Babu Kambhampati will join as chief guest. Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, Ambassador of Indonesia to India HE Ina Hagniningtyas Krisnamurthi., Culture Minister Suryabanshi Suraj, Padma Vibhushan Sudarshan Sahoo, Sahitya Akademi secretary K Sreenivasa Rao will join as guests of honour.

Central theme of the festival is "Literature and the world: Inclusion, Identity and Belonging". The event will be held in the three venues in the city such as Mayfair Lagoon, Guru Kelu Charan Mohapatra Odissi Research Centre and Utkal Mandap. Kalinga Literary Award will be given to legend-

ary Hindi writer Mamata Kalia, acclaimed translator and academic Prof Jatindra Kumar Nayak, Kalinga International Literary Award to Sanskrit scholar Dr Srinuruddhs Dash, Dr Mamata Mishra, Kalinga Literary Award (Youth) to poplar Nepali writer Buddhisingar. Ten writers from Nepal to join as speakers at the event. Nepalese Billionaire, Philanthropist, literary figure Dr. Binod Chaudhary will join the festival as guest of Honour and speaker. Popular Nepal writers, Journalist Buddhisingar, Basant Basant, writer Rohini Rana, Ranjana Niraula, translator Ken Subedhi, Pawan Thapa will join the festival as speakers.

Bus service between Tulashi Khetra, Sri Khetra sought

PNS ■ KENDRAPADA

The Utkalmani Yubak Sangha wrote a letter through email to the CM of Odisha, Chief Secretary, Transport Commissioner, district Collector and OSRTC authority to take initiatives for resuming bus service from Kendrapada's Tulashi Khetra to Puri's Sri Khetra. According to president of Utkalmani Yubak Sangha, Gouttam Behera, the Kendrapada-based Baladevjew Temple at Ichhapur is a significant religious site in next to Puri's Jagannath temple, which is globally renowned as the abode of Lord Jagannath. Both the places hold immense religious and cultural importance for devotees across

Odisha and beyond. Currently, the OSRTC provides bus services connecting several religious places in various districts, promoting spiritual tourism and facilitating ease of travel for pilgrims. But unfortunately, Kendrapada's Tulshi Khetra has been deprived of such a vital service, despite its significance, the letter cited. "A dedicated bus service from Tulashi Khetra to Sri Khetra would not only strengthen the cultural and spiritual bond between the two sacred destinations but also encourage tourism and boost the local economy. Moreover, it will be a great convenience for thousands of devotees, who face challenges in commuting between these two places," said Behera.

'Remove DD Univ OSD, probe bungling slur against him'



ABVP warns stir if demands not fulfilled within 7 days

RAJENDRA K SAHU ■ KEONJHAR

The ABVP demanded immediate removal of PK Mohanty, incumbent OSD of DD University, at a Press meet here on Sunday. Sources said that Mohanty, the founding OSD of DD University had joined the institution after the elevation of DD College to a university in the year 2023. After his joining, it was hoped that Mohanty will streamline the system in the university which will set as a benchmark to be followed in future. But contrary to the expectation, he worked in the opposite direction creating a disturbing atmosphere in the university. It is alleged that after his joining, though it was his primary duty to see how the university will get the affiliation of UGC, but due to the reason best known him, DD University is not affiliated to UGC till date. As a result, it is deprived of UGC grant while an apprehension is growing if the stu-

dents will get the certificate in the name of DD University. The specific allegations of ABVP is that instead of focusing on his primary duty of creating a healthy study atmosphere and development of the university, Mohanty is involved in many scams and illegal works like construction of building of Rs 28 lakh without any tender, illegal posting of guest faculties, giving promotion to juniors to higher posts and bypassing the senior faculties who were not supporting his illegal works. The ABVP activists demanded appointment of a full time Vice Chancellor by removing the OSD immediately and a through inquiry of the allegations against him. If demands are not met within 7 days, the ABVP threatened to launch stir. State joint secretary Subhra Sambit Nayak, department secretary Ajit Mahanta, town secretary Shaswar Tripathy and university campus secretary among others were present. It may be noted that previously, the Keonjhar Citizen Forum had expressed its concern over the working style of OSD Mohanty.

In Ganjam 3 including father, son killed in clash over sorcery

15 arrested; police force deployed

RAJEEV RATHAN ■ BRAHMAPUR

The brutal murder of the three persons at Kharipalli village under the Badagada police station in Ganjam district on Tuesday has sent shockwaves across the region. A father-son duo and another villager were hacked to death in a violent clash allegedly triggered by sorcery accusations. Police arrested 15 people on Wednesday in connection with the killings. The deceased were identified as Khadala Behera (60), his son Ratnakar Behera (30), and

Ramesh Behera (45). Khadala and Ratnakar had been socially boycotted for over three years after being accused of practising witchcraft. Despite this, they continued to live in the village, leading to ongoing tensions with the locals. On Tuesday night, a heated argument broke out between Khadala and Ratnakar Behera and some villagers over fetching water from a well. The verbal altercation quickly escalated into a violent confrontation, with both sides attacking each other using sharp weapons. During the clash, Khadala and Ratnakar reportedly in-

jured four villagers, further enraging the mob. In retaliation, the villagers chased the father and son down and hacked them to death. Witnesses claim that even after their deaths, the enraged attackers continued striking their bodies with weapons. Meanwhile, Ramesh Behera, one of the injured villagers, succumbed to his injuries at the Dharakote hospital while three others remain critical at the MKCG Medical College Hospital in Brahmapur. Following the killings, angry villagers set fire to Khadala Behera's house, but the fire was doused before spreading to nearby houses.

A joint police team led by Aska SDPO Santosh Kumar Jena, along with officers from Aska, Dharakote, Badagada and Patapur police stations, rushed to the village but faced strong resistance from locals, who blocked their entry into Kharipalli. Additional police forces were deployed to control the situation. The Aska SDPO said 15 people have been arrested so far and more detentions are expected as the investigation continues. Shockingly, some villagers expressed no remorse over the incident and said, "They killed our people, so we killed the father and son."

In Koraput TPSODL shapes dreams of hundreds of millet farmers

PNS ■ BRAHMAPUR

Millet grains, lauded as a climate-resilient superfood, are gaining much popularity around the globe. Several state governments and private players have been actively participating in the promotion of millet-based foods and millet farming. To localize this ever-expanding global wave of millet production, TP Southern Odisha Distribution Limited (TPSODL) has been supporting the farmers in Koraput district. TPSODL's millet cultivation project has been implemented in Doraguda gram panchayat under Boipariguda block, targeting the empowerment of 500 small and marginal farmers. The company is working closely with many

women farmers, who belong to the tribal community of Doraguda GP, to boost their skills and enhance millet production. Currently, 250 acres of land are under millet cultivation through the organic farming method. In the coming years, handholding will continue with capacity building through training and the support of equipment for better returns to the farmers. One of the significant challenges for millet farmers lies in market linkages for their produce. To address this issue, farmers will be connected to the Farmer Producer Organization (FPO), enabling them to get a fair price and better market linkage. With the support of TPSODL, 110 farmers were registered to sell millet in the mandi organized by the government under the "Shree



Anna Abhiyan" programme. Kispari Challani, a millet farmer from Doraguda village, joyfully said, "TPSODL has supported us throughout the process of cultivation. They gave us quality seeds and essential training on millet harvest. It helps me increase the yield and become financially independent." Starting from seed treatment, land preparation, and pest management to nursery

raising and transplantation, TPSODL is providing practical training to these millet farmers in collaboration with agricultural experts. Farmer training was conducted by TPSODL at Bergaon on best practices in millet farming. Farmers' meetings were held in 15 villages. Last year, a session on improved agronomy, i.e., the System of Millet Intensification and line transplanting, was organized at ATMA, FIAC Con-

ference Hall in Boipariguda block headquarters. Additionally, seeds of finger millet were distributed among the farmers in village meetings. Each of them received one kilogram of seed for 0.5 acres of land. Organic manure, pot manure of 2,500 litters, and vermicompost of 2,500 kg were distributed among the farmers. Recognizing the need for crop protection measures, bio-pesticides (neem oil) were dis-

tributed to all the farmers, ensuring organic pest management. The farmers were encouraged to apply organic manures like farmyard manure and compost after weeding. Along with this, cycle weeders have been procured and distributed among the farmers for weed management. Machinery support has been given to the Millet Processing Unit, consisting of high-quality threshers, a destoner, and a pulverizer. Commenting on the initiative, CEO of TPSODL, Amit Kumar Garg said, "At TPSODL, we believe in the principle of giving back to society. In the field of community empowerment by supporting millet farmers of Koraput, TPSODL is not just investing in agriculture but also contributing towards the upliftment of rural women."

Railway tracks kept vacant for maintenance, says Vaishnaw

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

Railway tracks throughout the country are kept vacant for a few hours every day for maintenance keeping in mind the safety of train travel, Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said in the Lok Sabha on Wednesday. Vaishnaw said maintenance of railways is different from other infrastructure like highways. He said since the tracks and wheels are made of steel and the trains are travelling at a speed of 70 to 100 km per hour, the tracks often get damaged, resulting in creation of micro fractures.

"If we don't repair the micro fractures regularly, there is a possibility of increased rail fractures which may lead to train accidents. That is why globally, out of 24 hours in a day, a few hours are kept for maintaining the tracks," he said.

The minister said taking into accounts all these aspects, a "tough decision" had been taken in 2018 that in every section, the railway tracks would be kept vacant for at least three hours for maintenance. "This was the reason why some train stoppages were done away and some trains are being regulated."

This has nothing to do with the Covid pandemic," he said replying to a question that some stoppages were done away due to the pandemic. Vaishnaw said the decision was taken after IIT Bombay carried out a detailed study and the time table was made in a way that three hours are kept for maintenance. "Its result has also come. It was a good result. Once there were 2,500 rail fractures which has come down to less than 250 now due to proper maintenance of the tracks," he said without specifying the time period.

The minister also informed the house the fares of various trains and their classes are based on the facilities provided in them and various types of train services are offered for different types of passenger segments. He said this in a written reply to questions in Lok Sabha regarding the high fares of Vande Bharat trains.

Rakibul Hussain, a Congress member from Dhubri in Assam, wanted to know whether the government has considered reducing the fares of the Vande Bharat Express to make this premium train service more affordable for a larger section of the population, particularly for the lower-income groups. Responding to the question, Vaishnaw said the Indian Railways fixes the fares with due consideration of the cost of service, the value of service, expenses the passengers can bear, competition from other competing modes, socio-economic considerations and the likes.

According to the railway minister, Amrit Bharat trains have modern state-of-the-art technology, equipped with advanced features like semi-permanent couplers for jerk-free travel, horizontal sliding windows and mobile holders.

Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLAD), he said and went on to site how the cost of construction has risen in the last two decades, making the MPLAD funds inadequate to nurture constituencies.

He demanded that MPLAD fund amount be raised to ₹20 Crore, it be exempt from GST and a technical cell be created for estimates and quality inspection of work done. "If this is not possible, then MPLADs should be abolished," he said.

Dhankhar remarked that the constitution does not provide for a uniform mechanism for pay and perks of MPs and MLAs.

Some assemblies give members perks and salaries that are much more than what Members of Parliament (MPs) get.

"Even the pension variation for a former member of the assembly is on a scale of 1 to 10. In one state, one is getting one rupee, in the other state the pension will be 10 times," he said.

He said in the Constituent Assembly debates, one of the distinguished members, Sidhwa, reflecting on the power of Parliament to remove the judges, said, "It is very good to arrogate power without examining other elements."

But trust me, he reflected, the number of judges will grow, we will not be able to fructify even one."



Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar arrives to conduct proceedings in the House during the Budget session of Parliament in New Delhi on Wednesday

the House and the Leader of the Opposition," he said.

The country can grow only if money is available for capital expenditure, he said. Capital expenditure or capex is expenditure for creating assets such as infrastructure that yield long-term returns for the economy.

In contrast, freebies are revenue expenditures that do not contribute to the creation or acquisition of fixed assets.

"Electoral process is such that these have become electoral allurements and thereafter the governments that came in the saddle, found themselves very uncomfortable, so uncomfortable that they wanted to revisit their thoughts," he said. "There is an urgent need for a national policy so that all investments of the government in any form are used in a structured manner for the larger good."

If the leaders of both sides agree, there can be a discussion, he said adding this is a very serious issue.

The comments assume significance as many states faced challenges in funding electoral freebies, particularly due to the financial strain they place on state budgets. States like Punjab have faced financial constraints in meeting poll promises. Dhankhar then touched upon the issue of subsidies.

"Subsidies, if required in areas like the farm sector, should be direct. That is the practice in developed countries. I

checked with the US mechanism.

The US has 1/5th of farm households as our country but the average income of a US farm household is more than the general income of a US household, and that is because the subsidy to the farmer is direct, transparent, without intermediary," he said.

This issue can also be discussed subject to the two sides agreeing, he said.

Put nation first, remain united: Rajnath

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Wednesday here called upon the people to always put the nation first, remain united, discharge the duties with honesty, and move fearlessly towards achieving their goals.

These were the core principles of Major Bob Khathing, an extraordinary figure who made invaluable contributions to the North-East region and national security, he said.

The defence minister made these assertions while addressing the fifth edition of Major Bob Khathing Memorial Event jointly organised by the Indian Army, Assam Rifles and United Services Institution of India (USI) to honour the life and legacy of the legendary figure.

Paying glowing tributes to Major Bob Khathing, Rajnath Singh asserted that India has been fortunate that it is home to such prominent personalities for whom security, integrity and sovereignty of the nation is paramount.

He termed Major Khathing as a great son of India, who left an indelible mark in the history of the country through his bravery in the battlefield and skill in the field of diplomacy.

It is the responsibility of the people to adopt the ideals and principles of such great personalities, he said.

The defence minister commended Major Khathing's role in integrating, developing and rebuilding not only Tawang but the entire North-East region. "Major Bob Khathing made a significant contribution in strengthening national unity."

The work he carried out for the North-

East is similar to what Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel did at the national level," he said.

Rajnath Singh added that Major Bob Khathing efficiently carried out the integration of Tawang into India without firing a single bullet, and the Government, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, follows the principles of such revolutionaries.

The defence minister made assertions while addressing the fifth edition of Major Bob Khathing Memorial Event organised by the Indian Army, Assam Rifles and United Services Institution of India

The defence minister highlighted the administrative proficiency of Major Khathing, especially his contribution in the formation of Sashstra Seema Bal and Nagaland Armed Police and other such reforms. John Khathing, son of Major Bob Khathing, shared heartfelt reminiscences about his father's remarkable life and legacy, adding a personal dimension to the commemoration.

The event also featured vibrant cultural performances by troupes showcasing the rich and diverse heritage of North-East.

The defence minister had, in October 2024, virtually inaugurated Major Ralengnao 'Bob' Khathing 'Museum of Valour' in Tawang.

He was scheduled to visit Tawang, but could not due to bad weather. He carried out the inauguration from 4 Corps Headquarters in Tezpur, Assam.

Need to deliberate on freebies, says Dhankhar

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

Vice President and Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar on Wednesday opined that there should be a structured discussion on freebies and subsidies in the House as there is an urgent need for a national policy to help put all government investments to the larger good. Responding to the demand made by Samajwadi Party's Ram Gopal Yadav for increasing the funds, which Members of Parliament have at their disposal for developmental projects and schemes in their respective constituencies to ₹20 Crore a year from the current ₹5 Crore during the zero hour, Dhankhar said he would be open to a structured discussion on the issue if the government and the opposition agree.

Electoral freebies, such as free electricity and water, subsidised cooking gas, and cash handouts to certain groups like farmers and women, have often been criticised as something that may lead to unsustainable financial burdens on the government, distort public resources, and undermine long-term development goals.

"On placatory mechanisms, on appeasement, which is often known as freebies, this House needs to deliberate."

I will be open to a structured discussion after consulting the Leader of

Delimitation will penalise states that managed population and reward that haven't: DMK MP

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

DMK's Rajya Sabha member P Wilson on Wednesday said implementing delimitation of parliamentary constituencies at this point would unfairly penalise states which have successfully managed populations and reward those that have not.

Raising the issue during the Zero Hour in the Rajya Sabha, Wilson also made a demand for a holistic approach towards delimitation of constituencies for Lok Sabha and state assemblies.

He said delimitation was conducted after each census in 1952, 1962, and 1972 to ensure fair representation of all states.

Wilson said while some states embraced family planning policies, others ignored the issue allowing their populations to grow unchecked, and therefore to address this inequality, the 42nd constitutional amendment froze delimitation based on 1971 census data for 25 years, thereby safeguarding states that manage their population from losing political influence.

The freeze on population growth was extended through the 84th constitutional amendment following the recommendation of the national population policy in 2000, which expected stabilisation of population growth across all states by 2026, he said. "Data shows that the states like Tamil Nadu have a total fertility rate of 1.7 and Kerala TFR of 1.8 indicating that these states have successfully stabilise



DMK MPs stage a protest over the issue of delimitation of parliamentary constituencies during the Budget session of Parliament in New Delhi on Wednesday

their population. In contrast, Uttar Pradesh has a TFR of 2.4, Bihar has a TFR 3.0 which means that these states continue to experience exponential population growth," the DMK MP said. This suggests that the original reasoning for lifting the freeze in 2026 is no longer valid, he said.

"Implementing delimitation at this point would unfairly penalise states that have successfully managed by the populations while rewarding those that have not," he said, and added the consequence could be disasters for states like Tamil Nadu and others that have effectively controlled their population.

The DMK MP further said if Parliament strength is increased based on

2026 census, states like Rajasthan, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh are likely to gain more than 150 additional seats collectively. In contrast, southern states Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, and Telangana will gain only 35 seats collectively, Wilson said.

According to him, states that have effectively implemented the National Family Planning Policy will face penalties, which will result in a loss of political representation and bargaining power.

He further said that if the Constitution is not amended before 2026 to extend the freezing, the delimitation will kick in and automatically be done from 2026 onwards. He urged the prime minister to address the issue.

Budget allocation for health went up by 164 per cent in 2024, says Nadda

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

Union Health Minister JP Nadda on Wednesday said the government's expenditure on healthcare has reached 1.84 per cent of GDP and is steadily moving towards the target of 2.5 per cent. In his reply to a discussion in the Rajya Sabha on the working of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Nadda said in 2013-14, the allocation of funds for healthcare was around ₹38,000 Crore and at present, it has reached

Congress leaders should follow Tharoor: BJP

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

The BJP on Wednesday projected Congress leader Shashi Tharoor's praise of the government's handling of the Russia-Ukraine war as an endorsement of India's deft diplomacy under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership.

Former Union minister and Lok Sabha MP Ravi Shankar Prasad described Tharoor's acknowledgement that he has been proved incorrect in his early criticism of the government for not speaking out against the Russian invasion of Ukraine as a case of "better late than never."

Prasad told reporters that the Modi

government takes decisions that are good for India. "The way Shashi Tharoor has accepted it, if other Congress leaders would also acknowledge it, then it will be good," he said.

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MP and national spokesperson Sudhanshu Trivedi said the government's diplomatic skills are clear to everyone who understands foreign affairs and noted that Modi had met the presidents of the two warring countries and drawn similar warmth from both of them. India has marked an epochal change in its diplomacy under Modi as it has gone from non-aligned to "all-aligned" in its approach, he said. "India is emerging as a friend of the world and this is what has been expressed by the

senior Congress leader," Trivedi said.

Tharoor said on Tuesday that the policy adopted by India following the outbreak of the conflict meant that the country has actually a prime minister who can hug both the presidents of Ukraine and Russia two weeks apart and be accepted in both places.

The former minister of state for external affairs said, "I am still wiping the egg off my face because I am one person in the parliamentary debate who actually criticised the Indian position at the time back in February 2022."

Tharoor justified his changed stand on Wednesday and said he voiced his opinion as an Indian and does not see politics in that.

Cabinet approves six-lane highway project

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved the construction of a 6-lane access-controlled greenfield high-speed National Highway to connect JNPA Port (Pagote) with Chowk (29.219 km) in Maharashtra at an investment of ₹4,500 Crore. The Cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi also approved enhancement of outlays to ₹6,190 Crore for two schemes aimed at increasing milk production. Information and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw informed that the Union Cabinet has approved the revised Rashtriya Gokul Mission (RGM) and National Program for Dairy Development (NPDD). Both the schemes, which seek to enhance milk production and raise farmers' income, will now have a total outlay of ₹6,190 Crore.

According to an official statement, the National Highway project will be developed on build, operate and transfer (BOT) mode at a total cost of ₹4,500.62 Crore. "The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, has approved the construction of 6-lane access controlled Greenfield High-Speed National Highway

starting from JNPA Port (Pagote) to Chowk (29.219 km) in Maharashtra," it said.

The development of road connecting infrastructure to major and minor ports in India is one of the main focus areas of integrated infrastructure planning under PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan principles, it added. "With the increasing container volume at JNPA port and the development of the Navi Mumbai International Airport, a need was identified for augmenting National highway connectivity in the region," the statement said. Currently, it takes 2-3 hours for vehicles to move from JNPA Port to the arterial Golden Quadrilateral (GQ) section of NH-48 and Mumbai-Pune Expressway due to heavy congestion in urban areas like Palaspe Phata, D-Point, Kalamboli junction, and Panvel.

After the operationalisation of Navi Mumbai Airport in 2025, the need for direct connectivity is expected to increase further. Accordingly, the statement said, this project is designed to address these connectivity requirements and to improve the logistic efficiency of connecting JNPA port and Navi Mumbai International Airport. The project align-

ment starts at JNPA port (NH 348) (Pagote village) and ends at Mumbai-Pune Highway (NH-48) while also linking Mumbai-Pune Expressway and Mumbai-Goa National Highway (NH-66). Two tunnels passing through Sahayadri are provided for ease of movement for commercial vehicles instead of a ghat section in hilly terrain, ensuring high speed and ease of movement for large container trucks.

The new 6-lane green field project corridor will lead to better port connectivity helping in safe and efficient freight movement. The project will open new avenues of growth, development and prosperity in developing regions in and around Mumbai and Pune. The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved setting up of a urea plant in Assam with an estimated cost of ₹10,601.4 Crore as part of its effort to reduce import of this key crop nutrient and make India self-sufficient.

Cabinet also approved the proposal for setting up of a new brownfield Ammonia-Urea Complex of 12.7 Lakh tonnes annual capacity of urea production within the existing premises of Brahmaputra Valley Fertilizer Corporation Ltd (BVFCL), Namrup Assam.



Union Minister Nitin Gadkari speaks in the Rajya Sabha during the Budget session of Parliament in New Delhi on Wednesday

Government to announce new toll policy, says Nitin Gadkari

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari on Wednesday said the government will soon announce a new policy for toll charges on national highways, offering a reasonable concession to the consumers.

Replying to queries in Rajya Sabha, the minister asserted that the government is spending a lot on building road infrastructure and therefore toll charges are necessary. "It is the policy of the department that when you want good road, you have to pay for it," Gadkari said.

In Assam, he said the government plans to make expenditure of ₹3 Lakh crore.

"We are making a lot of big roads, four lanes, six lanes. I am making a lot of bridges from the Brahmaputra. We are raising funds from the market. So without a toll, we cannot do it. But still, we are very considerable. We are only charg-

ing toll on four lanes, not on the two-lane paved shoulder." According to the rules of 2008, toll plaza on the same section of the national highway and in the same direction cannot be established within 60 kilometers.

"So actually, there are some exceptions. After completing this session, we are going to declare a new policy for the toll, where the problem will be resolved and we will give reasonable concession to the consumer, and there will be no debate on particularly about the toll," he said, adding that the problems would be resolved.

All user fee plazas on National Highways are established as per the provision of National Highways Fee (Determination of Rates and Collection) Rules, 2008 and the respective Concession Agreement.

Total toll collection in India touched ₹64,809.86 Crore in 2023-24, a 35 per cent rise over the previous year. The collection was ₹27,503 Crore in 2019-20.

Editor's
TAKE

The quicksand of communalism

Clashes have erupted over Aurangzeb's tomb, exposing the deep historical roots that gnaw away at the socio-cultural fabric of our nation

In India, the spectre of communalism rears its ugly head every once in a while, often serving as a convenient political tool for those ascending the stairway to power. Grievances left behind as relics of history in a country as religiously diverse as India are manipulated for political gains to fuel unrest and keep the communal cauldron burning. Maharashtra has often been the epicentre of such clashes, the recent one adding yet another bleak chapter to a deeply riven society. The past few days have witnessed a surge of violence as Hindu nationalist groups demanded the removal of Mughal emperor Aurangzeb's tomb, reigniting age-old conflicts. The ensuing agitation led to arson, stone-pelting, and clashes in Nagpur, forcing authorities to impose a curfew. However, to limit introspection on an issue so raw to the bone to Maharashtra alone would indeed be a fatal mistake, both for our political classes and the masses. The latest incident displays how historical narratives can be weaponised to serve regional political aspirations, and expose an already vulnerable society to centuries of wrongs committed in the name of religion.

Aurangzeb, the sixth Mughal emperor, remains a divisive figure in Indian history. His reign was marked not only by brutal territorial expansions but also by policies that amounted to a brazenly oppressive attitude toward his Hindu subjects. He imposed a crushing jizya tax on non-Muslims, dictated temple demolitions through royal firmans, and mercilessly butchered Maratha ruler Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj, silencing every voice raised against him and decapitating every hand that rebelled against his atrocities. Aurangzeb invoked the Mughal Empire's ulema to sentence Sambhaji to death for his apparent acts of atrocities on Muslims. In essence, the foreign invader, much like his British successors, wanted to leave behind a legacy that disinherited India's indigenous inhabitants. Admittedly, he employed Hindus in high administrative positions, patronised some temples, and engaged in diplomatic relations beyond religious boundaries. However, it is his relentless religious persecution of Hindus that fuels what is unfolding in Maharashtra today.

Here, it would be prudent to bear in mind that howsoever burdened by historical injustice one may be, violence by any community must be condemned and controlled. The recent violence in Maharashtra is to be seen as much in the present context as in the past. Hindu right-wing groups have long called for the removal of Aurangzeb's tomb, arguing it stands as a symbol of historical oppression. A contemporary Indian film, Chhaava, portraying the brutal torture of Sambhaji by Aurangzeb, is now being cited by some analysts as the reason behind the reignited anger against the Mughal emperor. However, this is too facetious a premise to debate upon a historical wound still dangerously raw. The truth is that the current controversy intensified after statements by politicians, particularly Samajwadi Party MLA Abu Azmi's remarks, on Aurangzeb's rule, which were seen as attempts to whitewash a bloodied history, an argument his party members were quick to distance themselves from. The question of the hour is how to put this monster to rest. Indeed, educating people about the nuances of history can prevent the glorification or demonisation of historical figures. But that is easier said than done. The problem is that nobody wants to read history, let alone understand it, yet everyone remains opinionated. Aurangzeb was neither evil nor benevolent – his autocratic reign and religious chauvinism must be studied in the context of his times, the fact that he was last in the line of a foreign dynasty that had ruled India for centuries with an iron hand. For one, political leaders and groups would do well to desist from exploiting historical grievances for limited gains. Strict action should be taken against those inciting communal hatred.

Leaderspeak

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India actually has a Prime Minister who can hug both the president of Ukraine and the president in Moscow two weeks apart and be accepted in both places. Therefore, India is in a position where it can make a difference to a lasting peace if it was so required, in ways that very few countries would be able to. India also benefits due to a number of factors including its distance from Europe. If it were necessary... there would be some willingness on the Indian side to consider sending peacekeepers.”
SHASHI THAROOR, CONGRESS LEADER

Weathering the storm of US trade winds

The global economy is at a crossroads as the US introduces a disruptive reciprocal tariff model, challenging the foundation of global trade. This shift threatens developing nations, including India, by undermining WTO principles

The world is facing an uncertain and challenging time. The reciprocal tariff model introduced by the new Trump administration's economic policies has disrupted the seamless flow of global trade and commerce. This poses a significant economic challenge for developing nations, as it undermines the World Trade Organization (WTO) model, which upholds the principle of higher tariffs imposed by developing nations on imports from developed nations to protect their domestic industries.

The immediate consequences include the crippling of these industries, creating an unequal playing field. Rising unemployment and a slowdown in export-driven growth appear inevitable. India is not immune to this trade war, where global cooperation is being overshadowed by forced trade negotiations favoring the stronger party. A new world order is taking shape, and India must navigate this landscape not cautiously, but courageously.

Between April 2024 and November 2024, India, the second-largest trading partner of the US, exported goods worth USD 52.89 Billion while importing USD 29.63 Billion, resulting in a trade surplus of USD 23.26 Billion in India's favor. This trade imbalance is at the heart of the issue. India's key exports include diamonds, medical appliances and accessories, jewelry, agricultural products, refined petroleum, rice, textiles and apparel, automotive components, chemicals and petrochemicals, and machinery. Meanwhile, India's imports from the US primarily consist of mineral fuels and oils, pearls, precious and semi-precious stones, nuclear reactors, boilers, machinery, electrical equipment, crude petroleum, petroleum products, electronic components, and gold.

A closer look at these product categories reveals that India has room to further expand its market share in these sectors by enhancing cost efficiencies and quality standards. In contrast, the US has limited options for increasing its exports to India, apart from pushing crude oil and defense products—both heavily supported by the US government. This is due to the cost and consumption limitations of US goods in the Indian market. Consequently, the US, in its bid to reduce the trade deficit, will likely attempt to penetrate new segments currently dominated by Indian domestic industries, such as automobiles.

This is not just a trade negotiation, it is a full-fledged trade war aimed at capturing market share with little regard for global cooperation or diplomatic considerations. The reciprocal tariff strategy is a veiled attempt to lower tariffs and open new markets for the US.



The true agenda is now apparent.

The concept of reciprocal tariffs, introduced under the Trump administration's "Fair and Reciprocal Plan," seeks to impose high import duties on trade partners in an effort to reduce trade deficits. The administration argues that exporting countries impose high tariffs on US products. However, this is not a product-to-product reciprocity but a nation-to-nation policy. The term "reciprocal" itself is misleading, as there is no defined framework governing its application. Instead, it grants the US government the flexibility to impose tariffs arbitrarily, leaving exporting countries guessing about their potential impact and forcing them to react after the tariffs are already in place. In a world marked by unequal wealth distribution, economic development, and technological progress, these tariffs are more punitive than reciprocal, disproportionately harming developing nations.

In international trade, the true meaning of reciprocal tariffs, as governed by the WTO, differs significantly from what the US administration is advocating. Under Article 22.4 of the WTO's Dispute Settlement Understanding, reciprocity serves as the basis for tariff retaliation when a country fails to comply with a WTO ruling. Additionally, Article XXVIII of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) establishes legal guidelines for recalibrating trade agreements and calculating compensation. What the US is currently pro-

moting deviates from these principles.

As global trade policies continue to be shaped by dominant economies, the US's reciprocal tariff strategy is expected to cause significant disruptions until countermeasures emerge to stabilise the situation. However, the key question remains: Will this retaliatory tariff policy achieve its intended goal for the US? The likelihood is low. A closer analysis reveals that the US trade-to-GDP ratio stands at just 26.9 per cent, compared to 38.4 per cent for China, 46.8 per cent for Japan, and 50 per cent for India. Moreover, US import intensity is nearly three times

higher than its export intensity. The real issue behind the US trade deficit is not high foreign tariffs but the poor performance of US merchandise trade, which accounts for only 8.3 per cent of global exports. In contrast, the US enjoys a USD 200 Billion trade surplus in the services sector, making it the global leader in both imports and exports of services. The primary constraints on US merchandise exports stem from supply-side limitations and a failure to achieve economies of scale, not unfair tariff structures. Given the strong global demand for US service exports, why should

the US merchandise trade struggle to compete?

With a population of 1.4 Billion, India must support its citizens through various welfare programs funded by budgetary allocations. These expenditures rely heavily on trade and commerce, with export-driven industries playing a crucial role. India's ability to produce low-cost goods sustains its economy and provides employment to millions. Protecting these industries is imperative.

Allowing an influx of US products into new market segments could disrupt domestic industries in the short term and erode supply chains in the long run if US manufacturers fail to achieve economies of scale in affordable segments. While India can afford to reduce its diamond exports to the US, it cannot risk destabilising its domestic industries.

It is time for India to adhere strictly to WTO guidelines and advocate for a globally accepted trade policy to counter coercive trade deficit measures. A production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme to boost domestic industries, along with stronger ties with alternative trading partners, can help mitigate the impact of reciprocal tariffs. India must remain vigilant; this phase is temporary, but its long-term economic stability depends on strategic resilience.

(The writer is an investment banker. Views expressed are personal)



MRIGANKA M BHOWMICK

A new India: A journey through the decades

SECOND Opinion



SANJAY CHANDRA

I was recently invited to participate in a panel discussion during which the young moderator posed a query — what did I think of a New India? This was an interesting subject that made me reflect.

Like most around me, I too had been engrossed in leading a routine life till about a decade back. I would also often crib about a stagnant life. It was as I turned 60 that I started indulging in self-reflections about the way my life had evolved each decade since birth.

The first decade saw our family living a more frugal life. We acquired a radio set six years after my birth and a refrigerator two years later. Even though the voltage fluctuated and light was often dim at night, we had electricity at home. Our homes had fans.

The second decade witnessed a carefree me, not much stressed about what I would do after school or college. The government had invested in the creation of innumerable public sector undertakings. There were enough jobs. We also graduated to having desert coolers at home.

The mid-third decade saw me buckling down to the onerous professional responsibilities and simultaneously getting used to married life and raising a family. Though, to be fair, it was my wife who was at home to bring up

our two daughters. I spent more time in the railway control rooms to ensure smooth running of trains. My young age and diligence made me dream about one of the topmost positions in the railways sometime towards the end of my career. My promotions ensured that I had an air-conditioned cabin in office and I was able to travel in the upper first class air-conditioned coach for office tours. But we were still happy with fans and desert coolers at home.

The beginning of the fourth decade saw me travelling for a 12-week official training to Japan. This was my first overseas trip. The money that I saved from the allowance ensured that I was able to take my family for a holiday to Goa by flights. We stayed in resorts, inexpensive, but better than the official guest houses that I had been exposed to so far. I went for my next overseas official trip to Europe. I also opted to move to Delhi in a railway public sector undertaking. It was towards the end of this decade that I came into my own professionally. I travelled extensively within India and outside for work.

I could save enough to buy one second-hand air conditioner. We slept in the single room, but it felt heavenly in the sweltering summers of north India. A home loan from the department on easier terms also ensured that we could afford to buy a decent sized house in an upcoming small-town locality.

The beginning of the 21st century was also the start of my fifth decade. The government had hiked salaries though successive pay commissions. We no longer lived hand to mouth. We could spend lavishly by our middle-class standards and still be left with a saving. We could afford decent education for our daughters. We could encourage them to fly and pursue their dreams. I could afford to buy air-conditioners for all the rooms in our house. I could take my family on annual vacation by flights and stay in hotels or resorts. Professionally too, government's continued investments in infrastructure saw me busier than ever as we won contracts after contracts.

The end of this decade saw me quitting the government to join the private sector. This too was a new experience. The salary I took home far exceeded the wildest imagination and gave me financial security. I happily shifted to my own apartment in a condominium complex. I could afford more gadgets at home. I had the financial safety net to quit working and indulge in creative passions through writing. Life has changed, and continues to get better, for many people, be it the middle-class or the daily service providers. We do not realise it from one day to the next. If we look back each decade, or in slices of five years, or even from year to year, it has been a new India. It is more than a slogan. It is a continuous process. And, this is how it will be — for us and the next generations.

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

Letters to the Editor

Silver prices goes over the top

Madam — Silver, once known as the "poor man's gold", is slipping out of the reach of the very people who cherished it the most. With prices soaring to ₹1,04,000 per kilogram, what was once an affordable metal for savings, traditions, and investment has now become a luxury. The middle-class Indian, who once celebrated festivals by buying silver coins, now finds it nearly impossible to do so. The tradition of gifting silver jewellery and utensils at weddings is weakening, and households that once prided themselves on their silverware are now struggling to keep up.

The metal that symbolised security and tradition is fast becoming a privilege of the wealthy. The rise in silver prices is not an accident, it is a direct result of global economic shifts and market manipulations.

The strengthening of the US dollar, increased industrial demand, and government policies are driving prices upward. Silver is no longer just a household commodity - it has become a critical component in industries such as electronics, solar energy, and medical devices. The increasing demand from these sectors has led to large-scale hoarding by big investors, leaving the common man out of the equation.

The Indian government, instead of providing relief, has raised import duties, further pushing silver beyond the reach of ordinary citizens.

Education is a shambles

Madam — The article 'Transforming education' (March 19) presents good points to ponder over. Every change brought in education has added to the process of commodifying education instead of improving the quality of learning process. The very fact that the government is pushed to the corner of introducing an internship scheme incentivising the youth, who are already holding a certificate or diploma or degree, to be trained again and the industries offering the training depicts the status of education that prevails in the country.

Frantic efforts are on to give an ideological quote to education instead of inculcating the scientific temper as directed by the constitution.

Government is shirking its responsibility of providing meaningful education and left it to the private players for whom education is a mere commodity to mint profits than a process of learning. It does not equip them with at least skills to be employable. We have only institutions to produce students who carry marks for their memorising ability and nothing more. The government is happy with growing number of the unemployed as it helps the employers to pay less and extract more labour. The callousness of the government could be better understood from offering the title of University of excellence while inaugurating the university itself.

Nagpur riots: A symptom of deeper issues

Madam — This is in response to the news report titled "Riots sets Nagpur ablaze" (March 19). Perhaps Nagpur forms the latest specimen reflecting the "spirit" and "unity" of "Rising India". On the one hand environment will get shattered on the zealous shout of "vikas", on the other the society would be continuously dragged towards the past (history/epic/mythology) spanning several centuries with stories getting webbed one after another in the name of Ram Krishna Babur Aurangzeb and who not! And wherever their exist even an iota of fact, hatred gets raised without going into the social context of the concerned period (16th-17th century) and also ignoring the ultimate reality that history cannot be rewinded!

What about the Maratha Bargis who used to ransack villages after villages in Bengal in the 18th century killing innocent helpless unarmed persons and looting resources! Do the "nationalists", seething in "anger" in Maharashtra and baying for the interred bones of the "outsider" Mughal emperor (passing away more than 300 years ago), have any answer to such plunder of Bengal and Bengal by the "insider" Maratha Bargis!

It will be better if the sleeping dogs are allowed to lie, else lot of skeletons are bound to tumble out from the cupboard of "nationalists" hailing from "proud" Hindutva vintage!

BAIL, NOT JAIL: SUPREME COURT MOOTS FOR REASONABLE JUSTICE

Supreme Court (SC) had again exposed its anguish on denial of bail in 'not very serious cases' despite the completion of probe and further said a democratic country must not function like a police state where law enforcement agencies exercised arbitrary powers to detain individuals without genuine necessity and such type of actions of the police should be brought to the notice of public so that they may be discouraged to follow such undemocratic attitude which downgrade the democratic values of the country.

The SC further said "do not burden top court "bail matters in cases triable by magistrates are being brought before us because people are not getting bail when they should and moreover "It is shocking that the Supreme Court is adjudicating bail pleas in cases that should be disposed of at the trial court level and the system is being burdened unnecessarily "the Supreme Court also noted that two decades ago, bail pleas in smaller cases

rarely reached high courts, let alone the SC.

And it is unfortunate that bail matters in cases triable by magistrates are being brought before the Supreme Court and we are sorry to say that litigants are approaching the highest court whereas such cases should have been easily disposed of at the lower level and also said that granting bail to a cheating case accused who remained in custody for more than two years and it shows that natural justice is being denied to an accused.

Here in this case both the trial court and the Gujarat High Court had rejected his bail plea, despite the fact that the chargesheet had already been filed after completion of the probe.

The top court has been repeatedly asking trial courts and high courts to be liberal in granting bail, particularly in not so serious cases.

YASH PAL RALHAN | JALANDHAR

Mid-level officers: The backbone of India's defence

India's evolving security landscape demands proactive empowerment of mid-level tactical communication and engineering officers. These officers are the operational backbone and technological brain of India's modern military, translating national defence strategies into battlefield readiness

FIRST
Column

India's defence capability and strategic dominance in modern warfare are not solely dependent on high-ranking commanders or frontline soldiers. A critical yet often underappreciated element lies in the mid-level officers, tactical communication specialists, and engineering officers who serve as the vital link between strategic planning and operational execution. Their expertise ensures that India's military maintains technological superiority, robust battlefield communication, and seamless multi-domain operations. This analysis delves into their indispensable contributions across the Army, Navy, and Air Force, emphasising their roles in engineering innovation, cyber and electronic warfare (EW), and actionable policy measures needed to strengthen and empower them.

Mid-level officers—including majors, colonels, wing commanders, group captains, commanders, and technical or engineering specialists—are the core leadership managing battlefield dynamics. They oversee unit command, tactical communications, and the integration of cutting-edge technologies into operations. Despite being pivotal in India's AI-driven, network-centric warfare structure, their contributions are often overshadowed by senior leadership. Recognising and institutionalising their roles is vital to ensuring success in modern combat.

Indian Army

The Corps of Signals, led by mid-level officers, enables real-time, encrypted communication, battlefield networking, and electronic warfare capabilities. Their responsibilities include securing tactical communication during high-intensity and joint operations, integrating EW and cybersecurity measures, and managing communication networks within Integrated Battle Groups (IBGs). The organisational structure comprises signal companies led by majors and signal regiments commanded by Colonels, with specialised trades such as Operator Radio and Line (ORL) and Technician Electronics and Systems (TES).

Engineering officers play a crucial role in combat engineering, rapid construction of strategic infrastructure, and executing counter-mobility tactics. They deploy AI-based Battlefield Surveillance Systems (BSS) and robotics to enhance warfare efficiency. A notable example is the India-China standoff (2020-21), where Signals Officers maintained encrypted communications in high-altitude conflict zones while engineering officers constructed operational infrastructure like bridges and logistics hubs under extreme conditions.

Indian Air Force

The communication engineers of the Indian Air Force (IAF) are integral to maintaining a state-of-the-art, in-house communication network. These skilled



professionals ensure seamless, secure, and resilient connectivity by leveraging advanced technologies such as Software-Defined Networking (SDN) and 5G. Their expertise supports real-time situational awareness, mission-critical data exchange, and robust cybersecurity, enabling uninterrupted operations in high-intensity scenarios. By continuously adapting to evolving technologies and threats, IAF communication engineers strengthen air defence operations, enhance operational readiness, and uphold national security while setting new standards in military-grade communication technology.

Mid-level IAF communication officers ensure uninterrupted and secure communication for air defence and combat operations. They manage Air Defence Control Units (including S-400, Akash, and SPYDER systems), UAV and satellite networks, and cyber defences for air assets.

IAF engineers specialising in Aeronautical, Electronics, and Mechanical fields oversee aircraft readiness, system maintenance, and the integration of missile systems, radars, and EW platforms. Their expertise has been crucial in indigenous system development, such as the LCA Tejas and AMCA. During the Balakot Airstrike (2019), Communication Officers ensured real-time,

THE COMMUNICATION ENGINEERS OF THE INDIAN AIR FORCE (IAF) ARE INTEGRAL TO MAINTAINING A STATE-OF-THE-ART, IN-HOUSE COMMUNICATION NETWORK. THESE SKILLED PROFESSIONALS ENSURE SEAMLESS, SECURE, AND RESILIENT CONNECTIVITY BY LEVERAGING ADVANCED TECHNOLOGIES SUCH AS SOFTWARE-DEFINED NETWORKING (SDN) AND 5G

encrypted communication for operational secrecy, while engineers guaranteed the operational

readiness of Mirage-2000 aircraft, including EW systems and radar evasion measures.

IAF vs Chinese PLAAF mid-level officers

A comparison between India's IAF and China's PLAAF reveals key operational differences. Indian mid-level officers, including Squadron Leaders and Wing Commanders, are empowered for independent decision-making and multi-platform management. In contrast, Chinese officers operate under a centralised command model, limiting battlefield initiative. Reports from RAND Corporation and the Pentagon (2020-22) highlight that PLAAF officers face systemic challenges in joint operations and adaptive warfare. In contrast, Indian officers, seasoned through real combat experiences, lead the integration of advanced indigenous and Western technologies, whereas PLAAF officers primarily operate evolving domestic platforms with less proven combat capability.

Indian Navy

Naval communication officers manage secure ship-to-ship and ship-to-shore communication, Blue Water Communication Systems (BWCS) for long-range coordination, and encrypted submarine and stealth platform communications.

Naval engineers oversee the maintenance and readiness of warships, submarines, and aircraft

carriers. They also integrate sophisticated weapons such as BrahMos missiles and torpedoes while managing stealth and radar-evading systems. A case in point is the anti-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden, where communication officers coordinated multi-national, encrypted communication while engineers maintained operational readiness of naval platforms throughout extended deployments.

Mid-level officers play a pivotal role in coordinating tri-service communication and operational integration, ensuring seamless joint missions across land, air, and sea. Mid-level officers are at the frontline of cyber and EW defence.

Communication officers ensure robust cybersecurity frameworks, while engineers lead the design and operation of AI-based EW platforms and cyber-resilient technologies. These officers spearhead the induction and field application of indigenous defence systems like BrahMos, Akash, and AI-driven surveillance. They work closely with DRDO, BEL, and private defence innovators to enhance technological self-reliance.

Empowering India's defence backbone

To strengthen mid-level officers, the government should implement AI, Cyber, EW, and space warfare training, conduct integrated tactical communication-engineering exercises, and facilitate global exposure through collaborations with allies like the US, France, and Israel.

National awards should be introduced to recognise excellence in tactical communications and engineering. Defence technology fellowships should be launched for innovation leaders in these domains. Mid-level officers should have representation in defence technology boards and policy-making bodies to ensure that operational insights shape defence strategies. Promotions should be fast-tracked for excellence in emerging tech domains like EW, AI, and Cyber.

Additionally, foreign exchange programs and specialised leadership incentives should be introduced. Collaboration with DRDO, clean startups, and established industries should be strengthened. Mid-level officers should play an active role in innovation ecosystems like iDEX to foster indigenous technological advancements.

Conclusion

India's evolving security landscape demands proactive empowerment of mid-level Tactical Communication and Engineering Officers. These officers are the operational backbone and technological brain of India's modern military, translating national defence strategies into battlefield readiness.

(The writer is an eminent expert in counter-terrorism and national security and a defence advisor to several Middle Eastern and West Asian countries. Views expressed are personal)



NISHAKANT OJHA

India's green growth: Balancing carbon sequestration with development

As the world grapples with the escalating impacts of climate change, tree plantation and carbon sequestration have emerged as indispensable tools in promoting environmental sustainability.

For India, an emerging global economy with a significant reliance on carbon-intensive industries, transitioning to greener practices is not just an option—it is an imperative.

India's current forest and tree cover stands at 25.17 per cent, falling significantly short of the 33 per cent target set by the National Forest Policy of 1988. Bridging this gap is essential to counter the effects of deforestation, urban expansion, and surging greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Tree plantations serve as natural carbon sinks, capturing and storing atmospheric carbon dioxide, which is crucial in mitigating the impacts of global warming.

Recent initiatives, including the National Agroforestry Policy of 2014 and the Trees Outside Forests in India (TOFI) program, have sought to encourage private landowners, farmers, and industries to actively participate in plantation activities.

These efforts aim to reduce dependency on natural forests, address ecological degradation, and create employment opportunities in rural areas. By integrating agroforestry with tree-based enterprises, India can ensure that environmental restoration goes hand in hand with sustainable livelihoods.

Global pressure on Indian industries

Indian industries are increasingly feeling the heat of stringent global carbon footprint regulations. The European Union's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), set to take effect in 2026, will impose tariffs on carbon-intensive imports such as steel, cement, and chemicals. In 2023, trade between India and the EU reached ₹124 Billion, making the potential impact of these tariffs on Indian exports substantial.

To adapt, industries are looking toward carbon-offset projects, including large-scale tree plantations, as a viable solution. Investments in such initiatives not only help companies align with international sustainability benchmarks but also provide opportunities to secure carbon credits under globally recognised schemes like the Verified Carbon Standard (VCS) or the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM). These credits can offset industrial emissions, enabling businesses to comply with international regulations while maintaining their competitiveness.

Economic and social advantages

Beyond their environmental benefits, tree plantations significantly contribute to

economic and social development. Agroforestry, in particular, creates opportunities for farmers and marginalised communities by offering income from multipurpose tree species that yield both ecological and economic returns. This dual approach addresses rural poverty while promoting environmental restoration.

Active community participation in plantation projects enhances their success and sustainability. Involving local stakeholders fosters a sense of ownership and ensures long-term viability. Training and capacity-building initiatives further empower communities with the knowledge and skills required to manage these projects effectively.

While tree plantations offer a promising path forward, several challenges remain. The rising cost of carbon credits poses a significant financial obstacle for industries. For instance, in 2023, carbon credit prices under the European Union Emissions Trading System (EU ETS) averaged ₹83 per tonne of carbon dioxide, with projections suggesting a rise to ₹238 per tonne by 2050. For Indian businesses, investing in tree plantations presents a more cost-effective alternative to purchasing expensive credits from international markets.

India also needs a robust and transparent carbon trading policy to engage in global carbon markets effectively. Under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement, countries can trade carbon credits to meet their emission reduction goals. Establishing credible policies and governance mechanisms is critical for India to attract international investments and solidify its position in these markets.

Toward sustainable development

Strategic partnerships and innovative project designs offer a way to tackle the dual challenges of environmental degradation and industrial sustainability.

Collaborations between industries, government agencies, and local communities can lead to scalable plantation models that integrate agroforestry, address climate change, and enhance rural livelihoods.

As India strives to achieve its net-zero emissions target by 2050, tree plantation and carbon sequestration will play pivotal roles in bridging the gap between policy objectives and on-ground realities. These initiatives align economic growth with environmental stewardship, offering a roadmap for a greener future.

Tree plantations are no longer an optional

solution but a necessity in combating climate change. They provide a scalable and impactful strategy to reduce carbon footprints while improving rural livelihoods. With tightening global regulations and the rising costs of inaction, Indian industries must embrace sustainable practices and invest in carbon offset projects.

By prioritising tree plantation and carbon sequestration, India can balance its industrial growth with ecological preservation, paving the way for a sustainable future that benefits both the economy and the environment. Integrating these initiatives into national policies and industry strategies will ensure that India remains a key player in the global fight against climate change.

Conclusion

India stands at a crucial juncture where economic growth and environmental responsibility must go hand in hand.

Tree plantations and carbon sequestration offer a viable path to achieving sustainability while ensuring industrial competitiveness in a carbon-conscious global market. The nation's commitment to expanding forest cover, promoting agroforestry, and engaging in carbon trading mechanisms will determine its success in mitigating climate change and meeting international sustainability benchmarks.

Strategic investments in large-scale afforestation projects and partnerships between industries, policymakers, and local communities are essential for achieving meaningful progress. These initiatives not only enhance carbon capture but also create economic opportunities, particularly for rural populations.

By integrating tree-based enterprises into national development strategies, India can harness the economic potential of sustainability while addressing pressing ecological concerns. As global climate regulations become increasingly stringent, Indian industries must proactively invest in carbon offset initiatives, including afforestation and reforestation programs.

Establishing a transparent and efficient carbon trading policy will further strengthen India's position in international markets.

The road ahead requires a multi-faceted approach that aligns industrial growth with environmental stewardship. By prioritising tree plantation and carbon sequestration, India can strike a balance between economic development and ecological preservation, ensuring a sustainable and resilient future for generations to come.

(The writer is chairman Foundation for Organisational Research and Education (FORE) and FORE School of Management and former Chairman and Managing Director, MMTCL Ltd. Views expressed are personal)

The confidence crisis holding back a talented team

The South African cricket team, is blessed with expansive talent and are successful champions in the various formats of the game. However, for impenetrable reasons they are unable to deliver something startling during the ICC tournaments.

Why does this happen? Marcus Garvey, a Jamaican entrepreneur and politician wrote, "If you have no confidence in self, you are twice defeated in the race of life."

Many years ago, in the Meiji era lived a wrestler known as the Great Waves, who possessed the uncanny ability to defeat even his teacher. However, in official tournaments, he was vanquished by opponents much inferior, which sullied his estimable reputation following every bout. There appeared to be a psychological problem.

To circumvent this unenviable state, he approached a Zen Master. The Master directed his new tutee to meditate in a Buddhist temple that night, which was located on the seashore and guided him to focus only on his breath and swallow even the greatest of waves that would arise from the depths of the sea. As night fell, there were high tides in the sea and the waves assumed gargantuan proportions and subsumed everything in its trajectory. Even the reclining Buddha was not spared and was inundated by the spectre that followed the path of the tidal waves. The waves had run amok, obliterating every object in the way.

But Great Waves, following the instructions of the Master, focused his attention on his breath and meditated passionately and with total concentration.

The next morning the Zen Master was a witness to both the destruction as well as the poise maintained by his stolid student. He merely said, "Upon conquering your wavering mind, be confident of sustained success in all the wrestling engagements and bouts."

To be confident, individuals, entrepreneurs, corporates, spiritual seekers, political leaders and parties, sportspersons and teams all need to metamorphose their thinking patterns from, "It is not possible," to a mental state of confidence that "It is very much within the realm of possibility."

The bedrock of success follows a pattern which is based on optimism, self-belief and self-motivation, leading to confidence. Talent and endurance alone are not adequate to ensure confidence and unalloyed success. It is quite possible that these could be mere flashes in the pan. It is exigent upon an individual or an organisation to harness the trait of self-belief and self-confidence.

Paradoxically, while hard work alone does not boost confidence levels, it is impinging upon an individual not to resort to shortcuts, as deep within it leads to an inferiority complex and the person would not be technically sound to adapt or to take up chal-

lenges.

The 3 Cs — Confidence, Credence and Conviction in a leader develops the personality to enhance latent potential, and to view muddled-up situations holistically.

Negative emotions like guilt, skepticism, being over critical of self and colleagues, self-pity, shame, lack of humility, idolising individuals without any concrete results, extreme laziness, a depressed state of mind, team members not trusting one another or excessive pride act as impediments in the progress of an individual or an organisation, consequently reducing the levels of confidence and achievement.

Buddha's prescription for such indolent individuals is to meditate on the purification of the mind, meditate on the impermanent nature of existence, meditate on the vast emptiness that surrounds us and simultaneously vow to develop self-esteem.

It is universally agreed by sages, philosophers and psychologists that life is full of vicissitudes and filled with challenges. Optimism and self-confidence can be developed by practising breathing techniques like Sudarshan Kriya, practising pranayama, meditating and observing the self.

Conclusion

The South African cricket team's struggles in ICC tournaments may not stem from a lack of talent but from the absence of unwavering confidence. Just as Great Waves, the wrestler, needed to conquer his mind before achieving victory, teams and individuals must cultivate a deep-seated belief in their abilities. Confidence is not merely a byproduct of skill or endurance but a mental state shaped by optimism, self-motivation, and conviction. The 3 Cs—Confidence, Credence, and Conviction—enable leaders, athletes, and organisations to navigate challenges with clarity. Negative emotions like self-doubt, excessive pride, and lack of trust within a team can erode confidence, stalling success. Buddha's wisdom encourages individuals to purify the mind, embrace impermanence, and cultivate self-esteem.

For the South African team to break their ICC tournament jinx, they must transform their mindset from doubt to certainty, from hesitation to resilience. Meditation, breathing techniques, and self-awareness can help instill the mental fortitude needed to thrive under pressure. True champions are not just skilled but also possess unshakable confidence. With the right psychological approach, South Africa can harness its immense potential and turn promise into triumph on the world stage.

(The writer is the CEO of Chhattisgarh East Railway Ltd. and Chhattisgarh East West Railway Ltd. He is a faculty of the Art of Living. Views expressed are personal)



RAVI VALLURI

Italian coast guard recovers 6 bodies after migrant shipwreck in Mediterranean

Milan (PTI): The Italian Coast Guard recovered six bodies and was searching for up to 40 migrants missing after a rubber dinghy that departed from Tunisia sank in the central Mediterranean, the UN refugee agency said on Wednesday. Another 10 people, including four women, were rescued Tuesday and brought to Italy's southernmost island of Lampedusa. The Red Cross said they were in good condition and were receiving psychological care. Aircraft from the European border agency Frontex, the Italian coast guard and others were assisting in the search due to difficult sea conditions, the coast guard said. Survivors said some 56 people were in the dinghy when it departed from the Tunisian port of Sfax on Monday, UNHCR said. The boat started to deflate a few hours later. The people on board were from Cameroon, Ivory Coast, Guinea and Mali, the UNHCR said. The UN Missing Migrant Project puts the number of the dead and missing in the perilous central Mediterranean at over 24,506 from 2014 to 2024, many of them lost at sea. The project says the number may be greater as many deaths go unrecorded. So far this year, 8,963 migrants have arrived in Italy, according to Interior Ministry figures updated Wednesday, a 4 per cent increase over the same period last year. Italian Premier Giorgia Meloni's centre-right government has pushed for economic agreements with northern African countries aimed at preventing departures. Speaking to lawmakers this week, Meloni credited the deals with a nearly 60 per cent drop in migrant arrivals in Italy last year to 66,317 from 157,651 in 2023. She said 1,695 people were dead or missing at sea in 2024, compared with 2,526 a year earlier. "What do those numbers mean? They tell us that reducing the departures, and curbing the traffickers' business, is the only way to reduce the number of migrants who lose their lives trying to reach Italy and Europe", she said.

JFK assassination files released, sending history buffs hunting for new clues

Dallas (PTI): More than 63,000 pages of records related to the 1963 assassination of President John F. Kennedy were released following an order by President Donald Trump, many without the redactions that had confounded historians for years and helped fuel conspiracy theories. The US National Archives and Records Administration posted to its website on Tuesday roughly 2,200 files containing the documents. The vast majority of the National Archives' collection of over 6 million pages of records, photographs, motion pictures, sound recordings and artifacts related to the assassination have previously been released. Larry J. Sabato, director of the University of Virginia Centre for Politics and author of "The Kennedy Half-Century", said it will take time to fully review the records.

VERY SHORT TENDER NOTICE: IIM Ranchi invites tender from eligible bidders to 'Engage an Event Management Company for Convocation 2025'. The last date for submission of the sealed bid is up to 03.00 PM on 26.03.2025. For More details, please refer to our website: www.iimranchi.ac.in

PUBLIC NOTICE: Known to all that my client Sh. Ved Prakash Sharma owner of the PLOT No. 35, AREA 60 SQ. YDS. KHASRA No. 109/8, VILLAGE PALAM, BHARAT VIHAR, BLOCK-A, RAJAPUR, NEW DELHI and Sh. Ved Prakash Sharma purchase property from Manju Lata Sharma vide Notarized GPA, ATS and will dated 10.06.2011. Now Sh. Ved Prakash Sharma wants to sell aforesaid property then he may contact and handover the same and apprise his claim to undersigned within 15 days of this publication.

PUBLIC NOTICE: Notice is hereby given that the property described below is being transferred to Mr. Anil Dhandia, S/o Late Shri. Gyan Chand Dhandia, as per the last will and testament of Late Shri. Gyan Chand Dhandia, who passed away on 29/11/2018. Property Details: * Property Address : R1-DF/021, Block-1, M3M Urbana, Pin code: 122072

THE DELHI GOLF CLUB: Dr. Zakir Hussain Road, New Delhi-110003. Quotations are invited for 'Purchase & Installation of PDR Mats'. Detailed RFP can be downloaded from DGC website https://delhigolfclub.org/tendernotice/

HARYANA SHEHRI VIKAS PRADHIKARAN PUBLIC NOTICE: Online applications in prescribed application form are invited from the land owners whose lands were acquired in the past to develop the Sectors in Estates under Panchkula Zone namely i.e. Kaithal in Sector 18, 19 and 21. The outsteees are requested to apply along with application money Rs. 50,000/- for the concerned Sector. The claims of outsteees will be decided in terms of policy dated 11.08.2016 and 08.05.2018.

PUBLIC NOTICE: Known to all that my client Smt. Jaswanti owner of the PROPERTY NO. 40 & 41, AREA 25 SQ. YDS., KHASRA No. 64/6/2, VILLAGE HASTIAL, K-1 EXTN., MOHAN GARDEN, UTTAM NAGAR, NEW DELHI-110059 and Smt. Jaswanti purchase property from J.K. Pandey vide Notarized GPA, ATS and will dated 06.03.2013. Now Smt. Jaswanti wants to sell aforesaid property. And it is informed that any deal with said documents by any person except my said client and said institution regarding said property shall be deemed as null and void.

PUBLIC NOTICE: Known to all that my client Smt. Savita Joshi owner of the PLOT No. 61, AREA 90 SQ. YDS., KHASRA No. 266/267 Kamr; 280, VILLAGE NAWADA, BHAGWATI GARDEN EXTN. UTTAM NAGAR, NEW DELHI-110059 and Smt. Savita Joshi purchase property from Smt. Chanchal Rani vide GPA, ATS and will dated 09.03.2006. Now Smt. Savita Joshi wants to sell aforesaid property. And it is informed that any deal with said documents by any person except my said client and said institution regarding said property shall be deemed as null and void.

E-Tender Notice for Internet Bandwidth: GURU NANAK DEV UNIVERSITY, AMRITSAR. Short Term E-Tenders are invited for the purchase of 1 GBPS (1:1) Internet Bandwidth. Naturally Ventilated Poly-House, Archery Equipments, Victor 2D Fluorometer (DELFA Xpress) and Fully Automated Hemoglobin System II

Re: Industrial Property bearing Plot No. 247, measuring 2000 sq. yds., alongwith Construction made thereon, measuring 9500 sq. ft. which comprises an Industrial Shed, situated at Sector-24, Industrial Estate Faridabad, Tehsil Ballabgarh, District Faridabad (Haryana), hereinafter referred to as "said property".

CHHATRAPATI SAMBHAJINAGAR MUNICIPAL CORPORATION, CHHATRAPATI SAMBHAJINAGAR. E-Tender Notice 2024-2025. Tender Notice: E-Tender in B-I form for the following work invited by Municipal Administrator, Municipal Corporation, Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar (Phone No. 0240-233536-40) from Government Registered Contractors / Companies / Firms of Appropriate Category.

Table with 3 columns: Sr. No., Name of Work, Tender Amount Rs. 1. Construction of Concrete Road At Gut No. 38, Vinayak Nagar, Ikhada in Zone-10, 84,57,107/-

JM Financial Asset Reconstruction Company Limited. Corporate Identity Number : U67190MH2007PLC74287. Registered Office Address : 7th Floor, Energy, Appasaheb Marathe Marg, Prabhadevi, Mumbai 400025. T: +91 22 6630 3031. F: +911 22 6630 3223 | www.Jmfinancialarc.com

DEMAND NOTICE: Under Section 13(2) of the Securitisation And Reconstruction of Financial Assets And Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002, read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest Enforcement Rules, 2002. The Piramal Capital and Housing Private Ltd. have assigned a pool of Loan (including below mentioned Loans) together with underlying security interest created therefor along with all the rights, title and interest thereon under Section 5 (1) (b) of the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (SARFAESI Act) vide an assignment agreement dated March 29, 2023 (The Assignment Agreement), in favour of JM Financial (JM) (herein referred as Assignee). The Assignee, under the Authority of JM assigned, Under Securitisation And Reconstruction of Financial Assets And Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (the said Act), in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) of the said Act read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest Enforcement Rules, 2002, the Authorised Officer has issued Demand Notices under Section 13(2) of the said Act, calling upon the following Borrowers (the "Borrowers"), to repay the amounts mentioned in the respective Demand Notices issued to them that are also given below. In connection with above, Notice is hereby given, once again, to the said Borrower(s) to pay to JM, within 60 days from the publication of this Notice, the amounts indicated herein below, together with further interest as detailed in the said Demand Notice(s), from the date(s) mentioned below till the date of payment and/or realization, payable under the loan agreement read with other documents/writings, if any, executed by the said Borrower(s). As security for due repayment of the loan, the following assets have been mortgaged to JM by the said Borrower(s) respectively.

Table with 4 columns: Name of the Borrower(s)/ Amount with NPA date, Demand Notice Date and Amount with NPA date, Description of secured asset (immovable property). (LC No. 0960002168 of Delhi - Pitampura Branch) Harsh Agrawal (Borrower) Yodendra Kumar Aggarwal (Co Borrower) 24-01-2025 ₹ 2911841.4 / ₹ Twenty Nine lakh Eleven Thousand Eight Hundred Forty One Only and For/Paise/NPA (10-03-2021) Flat No. C-117, 11th Floor, Tower C, Meadows Vista, Ghaziabad Ghaziabad Ghaziabad Uttar Pradesh - 201011

Baba Farid University of Health Sciences. Sadiq Road, Faridkot -151203 Ph. 01639-256232, 256236. E-tenders are invited for the procurement of following items for Guru Gobind Singh Medical College and Hospital upto 02-04-2025. 1. Hysteroscope 2. Diagnostic Middle Ear Analyser 3. Computerized Speech Laboratory with Speech Machine 4. Digital Stroboscope and fess Machine 5. Laserometer 6. Gel Doc System 7. Sign the rate contract of Radiopharmaceuticals for Nuclear Medicine 8. Biosafety Cabinet 9. Source purchase/decayed in nuclear medicine department. 10. Radiant Heat Warmer.

विशेष शाखा पुलिस मुख्यालय मध्यप्रदेश भोपाल. क्रमांक - विशा.स्टो./2025-25 (101), दिनांक - 18.03.2025. निविदा सूचना का शुद्धि पत्र (Corrigendum). विशेष शाखा पुलिस मुख्यालय को निविदा सूचना क्रमांक SB/Store/2025-25 (03), Bhopal Dated 01.01.2025 द्वारा Up Gradation of Data Center के क्रय हेतु ई-निविदा सूचना जारी की गई है। उपरोक्त आमंत्रित निविदा के माध्यम से क्रय किये जाने वाले उपकरण की समय-समयों में आंशिक संशोधन के संबंध में शुद्धि पत्र (Corrigendum) जारी किया गया है जो website https://mptenders.gov.in/nicgpc/app पर तथा विभाग की वेबसाईट www.mppolice.gov.in पर उपलब्ध है।

M.P. BUILDING DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (An Agency of Govt. of M.P. Public Works Department) 16-A, CEDMAP Building, Arera Hills, Bhopal (MP)-462011, Telephone : 0755- 4853297, 0755- 4853295. E-mail : eincompbdc@mp.gov.in, dgmhmpbdc@gmail.com. NIT No. : 1646/GM/MPBDC/CW/25/NIT-65 Bhopal, Dated : 18.03.2025

NOTICE INVITING TENDER: Madhya Pradesh Building Development Corporation invites online tender for the following construction works :- 1. Construction and Upgradation work at Awadesh Pratap Singh University, Rewa, M.P - 01 Work - PAC : Rs. 1139.75 Lacs 2. Construction of Composite Tehsil Office Building Maheshwar Dist. Khargone M.P.-01 Work- PAC : Rs. 627.47 Lacs 3. Construction of Composite Tehsil Office Building Pichhore Dist. Gwalior M.P.-01 Work - PAC: Rs. 808.37 Lacs 4. Construction, Renovation and Allied works at Jiwaji University, Gwalior M.P.-01 Work - PAC : Rs. 3481.23 Lacs 5. Composite Tehsil Office Building at City Center at Dist. Gwalior M.P.- 01 Work - PAC : Rs. 633.82 Lacs 6. Construction Renovation and Allied works at Barkatullah University Bhopal M.P.-01 Work - PAC: Rs. 4220.71 Lacs 7. Construction Renovation and Allied works at Vikram University Ujjain M.P. - 01 Work - PAC : Rs. 3895.86 Lacs 8. Construction works at Govt. Collge Badanagar Ujjain M.P.- 01 Work - PAC: Rs. 263.30 Lacs 9. Construction and other associated works at Govt. Arts College Niwas & Construction of 50 Seated Boys and Girls Hostel at Govt. Higher Secondary School Hathitara Dist. Mandla M.P.-02 Work- PAC : Rs. 647.65 Lacs 10. Construction and Renovation work at Govt. College Jaysingnagar, Construction and Renovation work at Pandit Ramkishore Shukla Smriti Govt. Arts and Commerce College Beohari & Construction of 50 Seated Boys and Girls Hostel at Govt. Higher Secondary School Chhatwasi Dist. Shahdol M.P.-03 Work - PAC : Rs. 851.64 Lacs 11. Various works of Higher Education Department at Anjad & Barwani Dist. Barwani M.P.-02 Work-PAC: Rs. 440.28 Lacs 12. Various Construction and allied works in old college building Campus in Veer Balidani Khajuya Nayak Government PG College Sendhwa M.P.-01 Work - PAC: Rs. 267.00 Lacs 13. Various works of Higher Education Department at Jaitwara & Satna Dist. Satna M.P.-02 Work -PAC: Rs. 870.16 Lacs 14. Construction, renovation and allied service works at Govt. College Bhaidehi, Betul M.P.-01 Work-PAC : Rs. 222.11 Lacs 15. Construction and Renovation works at Govt. Science College, Pandhurna Seoni M.P.-01 Work-PAC : Rs. 307.80 Lacs 16. Construction and extension works at Maharaja Bhoj Govt. PG College, Dhar M.P.-01 Work - PAC: Rs. 271.83 Lacs 17. Construction and Renovation work at Govt. Chandra Vijay College, Dindori, Mandla M.P.-01Work-PAC:Rs.233.82 Lacs 18. Construction, renovation & allied works at Govt. Degree College Timami, Harda M.P.-01 Work - PAC : Rs 247.55 Lacs 19. Renovation works at Govt. P.G. College Jhabua M.P.-01 Work - PAC : Rs 239.85 Lacs 20. Construction/ Renovation and upgradation works at Netaji Subhashchandra Bose Govt. College Biowara, Rajgarh M.P. - 01 Work - PAC : Rs 251.12 Lacs 21. Construction, renovation and upgradation and allied works at Sanjay Gandhi Smriti Govt. Autonomous Post Graduate College Sidhi M.P.-01 Work - PAC: Rs 263.83 Lacs 22. Construction of Composite Tehsil Office Building at Malharang Dist. Mandur M.P. -01 Work -PAC: Rs. 633.68 Lacs 23. Construction of Composite Tehsil Office Building at Parasria Dist. Chhindwara M.P.-01 Work -PAC: Rs. 634.34 Lacs 24. Construction of 50 Bedded Ayush Hospital Shujalpur, & Construction of Auditorium & allied works at Govt. PG College Shujalpur, Dist. Shajapur, M.P. - 02 Work PAC- 3302.85 Lacs 25. Upgradation of New Classrooms in Existing Building and Renovation of Girls Hostel at Jawaharlal Nehru Smriti Govt. P.G. College Shujalpur, Dist. Shajapur, M.P.-01 Work PAC- 216.26 Lacs 26. Construction of 50 Bedded Ayush Hospital at Sheopur, M.P. - 01 Work PAC- 1081.00 Lacs 27. Construction of Ayurveda College and Hospital at Shahdol- 01 Work PAC- 6163.15 Lacs 28. Construction of Ayurveda College and Hospital at Sagar, M.P.- 01 Work PAC- 5057.60 Lacs 29. Construction of Ayurveda College and Hospital at Narmadapuram, M.P.- 01 Work PAC- 4885.30 Lacs 30. Construction of Ayurveda College and Hospital at Morena, M.P. - 01 Work PAC- 5065.00 Lacs 31. Construction of Ayurveda College and Hospital at Balaghat, M.P. - 01 Work PAC- 5049.00 Lacs 32. Interior and Partition Work of Additional Area at 11th Floor MPBDC Office in CEDMAP Building at 16-A, Arera Hills, Bhopal, M.P.- 01 Work - PAC : Rs 48.33 Lacs 33. Structural Strengthening of Dilapidated RCC Structure, Waterproofing & Repair works on Third Floor (South-West) of CEDMAP Building at 16-A, Arera Hills, Bhopal, M.P. (2nd Call)- 01 Work - PAC: Rs. 17.20 Lacs Detailed NIT and tender documents can be viewed, downloaded and purchased online upto 02.04.2025 at 18:00 hrs. to 21.04.2025 at 15:30 hrs. (for Sl. No. 1 to 27), 08.04.2025 at 18:00 hrs. to 29.04.2025 at 15:30 hrs. (for Sl. No. 28 to 31) And 28.03.2025 at 18:00 hrs. to 12/04/2025 at 15:30 hrs. (for Sl. No. 32 to 33) from website www.mptenders.gov.in PAC can very at the time of uploading of tender document. Any amendment/corrigendum "if any" will be published on website only, will not be published on newspapers. ENGINEER-IN-CHIEF M.P. Madhyam/119294/2025

NORTHERN RAILWAY. Sub: Pre bid meeting for procurement of Elevators. Tender No. 12255003 due on 14.04.2025 for procurement of "Elevators" has been floated by Northern Railway, Baroda House, New Delhi. India. The Pre Bid meeting is schedule for dated 27.03.2025 at 11:30 Hrs. at Conference Hall, 2nd Floor, Stores Department, Baroda House, New Delhi. India. Please make it convenient to attend the same. 866/2025 No.: 12255003/Elevator/P-12 Dated: 17.03.2025

THE PIONEER CLASSIFIEDS. CHANGE OF NAME. I, JC-734091N Sub Santosh Kumar Jha, R/o- Shanti Nagar Ward No.- 20, Katihar, Bihar- 854105, have changed my son's name from Satyam to Satyam Jha, vide affidavit dated 19/03/2025 before Notary Public Delhi. PD(1702)C I, No.22051444N Sep Kushwah Sonu Maniram R/o- 332/1672 G.H.B Bapunagar Ahmedabad, Gujarat- 380024, have changed my daughter's name from Priya to Priya Sonu Kushwah, vide affidavit dated 18/03/2025 before Notary Public Delhi. PD(1703)C I, No.14833680H Hav/Mt Sudhakar R, R/o- 1/88, Mettu Street, Vill- Thalanur, PO- Arcot, Taluk- Walaja, Dist- Vellore, TN- 632503, have changed my name from S Arulsundari to Arulsundari B, vide affidavit dated 19/03/2025 before Notary Public Delhi. PD(1707)C I, S Arulsundari, W/o- No.14833680H Hav/Mt Sudhakar R, R/o- 1/88, Mettu Street, Vill- Thalanur, PO- Arcot, Taluk- Walaja, Dist- Vellore, TN- 632503, have changed my name from S Arulsundari to Arulsundari B, vide affidavit dated 19/03/2025 before Notary Public Delhi. PD(1708)C My two names are Vinita and Rajnita. Both names belong to a woman. In the future, I want to be known and recognized by the name Vinita. Vinita, Daughter of Baleshwar Tyagi, Wife of Vinay Kumar, Resident of House No. 51, Village Nasirpur, District Ghaziabad. PD(1709)C I, GAURAV VASHISTHA, S/O SHAKTI SHARMA, R/O D-166/5, 3rd Floor, Sector-50, Noida, Gautam Budh Nagar, Uttar Pradesh-201301, have changed my name to GAURAV VASHISHT for all future purposes. PD(1710)A I, B Nagulama, M/O- No.14832737A NK/MT Baddala Konda Reddy, R/O- Vill- Kondakinda Palli, Post- Vagalla, Mandal- K V Palli, Dist- Annamayya, A.P.- 517213, have changed my name from B Nagulama to B Nagulamma, vide affidavit dated 19/03/2025 before Notary Public Delhi. PD(1705)C

MI to approach IPL 2025 with togetherness: Hardik

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Mumbai

Mumbai Indians (MI) captain Hardik Pandya on Wednesday said now that the contentious Impact Player rule has been extended by three years, a cricketer has to be a pure all-rounder to find place in the starting eleven.



Mumbai Indians captain Hardik Pandya during a press conference ahead of the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2025, in Mumbai

the matter. "It has given a different set of challenges. So we have to adapt and get better. My only concern at that time was that sometimes you have a pure all-rounder and they have a specific role to play but the other all-rounders are taken out of the game because you can get a genuine bowler or batter, that is something we have to see in the long term," reckoned the Sri Lankan great.

months, his focus will be to help youngsters excel. "My life has been about ups and downs. I have enjoyed the learning. It has taught me about sport as well as life over the years. It is a fresh year. Lot of things have changed. Every year there is .0 added. Hardik 3.0, if you want to call that, there will be passion, grit and challenges which I love.

Suryakumar Yadav to captain Mumbai Indians in IPL opener

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Mumbai

Suryakumar Yadav will captain Mumbai Indians (MI) in their opening IPL match against Chennai Super Kings on Sunday as regular skipper Hardik Pandya will be forced to sit out due to a one-match suspension for over-rate offences committed by the team last season.

Assam boxers, including Lovlina, being stopped from competing in Nationals, says BFI President

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

Boxing Federation of India President Ajay Singh on Wednesday alleged that Assam boxers, including Olympic bronze-winner Lovlina Borgohain, are being stopped from participating in the National Championships by suspended BFI secretary general Hemanta Kalita, who refuted the charge.

baseless and the dispute was over the dates of the tournament. "This is all being done to malign me. I have done no such thing. Since the beginning, state units were unhappy with the dates of the women's nationals. Several states had written to BFI as well," Kalita told PTI.



Openly gay soccer player still faces online death threats

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Adelaide

The first openly gay man to play in Australia's domestic soccer league says he's still subject to death threats four years after going public about his sexuality. Josh Cavallo, who plays for Adelaide United in the A-League, told the FIFPro Footballers Unfiltered podcast that "in a world of football, being a gay ... Player is a very toxic place."

Broadcasting Corp. On Wednesday that he still has positive experiences of meeting people who tell him they've been encouraged and inspired by his advocacy. In his "everyday life," he said, people had approached him and "know who I am and speak to me and say how I guided them and how I give them the courage to come out at school."

We will get to see glimpses of Dhoni's brilliance in IPL 2025: Uthappa

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Bengaluru

The cricket fans may get to see glimpses of MS Dhoni's brilliance in the upcoming IPL season as the former skipper may bat at Number 7 or Number 8 in the batting order and it will allow him to extract maximum results out of minimum deliveries, reckons former India batter Robin Uthappa.

because I have a feeling that he might bat at number 7 or number 8. Very much like last year, and we will see him bat between 12 and 20 balls through the season," said Uthappa. So, will Dhoni walk away after?

Good season for Kohli, Rohit Veteran batters Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma too will return to the T20 format for the first time after winning last year's T20 World Cup 2024. Uthappa felt that both Kohli and Rohit will have fantastic season. "I don't think they'll have even an

iota of issues to come out there and smash the living daylight out of bowlers. Virat has really come through in good form. He's familiar with conditions in Bangalore that he's always going to thrive there," he said. "In the recent past, Rohit hasn't lived up to his potential as the incredibly dynamic batter that he is in the IPL. But it looks like everything is going his way at this point in time. So, I wouldn't put it past him to have one of his best seasons in the IPL," he added.

Players' association files antitrust suit against tennis organisers

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Miami Gardens

Calling the groups in charge of professional tennis a "cartel," the co-founded by Novak Djokovic filed an antitrust lawsuit against the women's and men's tours, the International Tennis Federation and the sport's integrity agency in federal court in New York.



"It's going to require a restructuring," Quinn said. The WTA Tour and ATP Tour issued separate statements Tuesday saying they would "vigorously" defend themselves.

lish a meaningful role in tennis, making its decision to pursue legal action at this juncture unsurprising." The International Tennis Integrity Agency — which investigates and adjudicates doping and corruption — said it noted the PTPA's action but did not offer any direct reaction to the case itself.

PANCHAYAT SAMITI BARIPADA TENDER CALL NOTICE BDO, Baripada invites sealed tender on behalf of Govt. of Odisha for the following work in conformity with the DTN. Bid Identification No. 23-2024-25/ BDO, BARIPADA

VIKRAM DEV UNIVERSITY JEYPORE, DIST: KORAPUT, ODISHA-764001 No. 706 /VDU/25 ADVERTISEMENT A Walk-in-interview will be held at 10.30 AM on 28.03.2025 in the Administrative block of this University for engagement of faculties in