



Bar demands Justice Varma's Impeachment

BISWAJEET BANERJEE/PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Prayagraj/New Delhi

After two meetings, the Supreme Court Collegium on Monday recommended the repatriation of Delhi High Court Justice Yashwant Varma, who is facing a probe into the alleged discovery of huge stash of cash from his official residence in Delhi after a fire incident, to his parent Allahabad High Court.

Hours after the transfer recommendation to the Centre was made public in a resolution uploaded on the website of the top court, the president of the Allahabad High Court Bar Association (AHCBA) Anil Tiwari said the high court lawyers will go on an indefinite strike from Tuesday in protest against this move.

Justice Varma's proposed transfer could come into effect after the Centre accepts the recommendation, which came on a day when the Delhi High Court in a notice withdrew judicial work from Justice Varma "with immediate effect".

"The Supreme Court Collegium in its meetings held on March 20 and 24, 2025 has recommended the repatriation of Justice Yashwant Varma, Judge, High Court of Delhi, to the High Court of Judicature at Allahabad," said the resolution adopted by the Supreme Court.

Lawyers of Allahabad High Court Bar Association will stage an indefinite strike from March 25 onwards. The Allahabad High Court Bar Association has strongly opposed the transfer of Justice Varma back to the Allahabad High Court. In a general house meeting held on Monday, the association passed a resolution demanding impeachment proceedings against Justice Varma and calling for an investigation by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) and the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI). Allahabad Bar Association President Anil Tiwari stated

that Justice Varma is unfit to continue as a judge and that the association opposes his transfer to any court. He also demanded that all judgments delivered by Justice Varma during his tenure at both the Allahabad and Delhi High Courts be reconsidered.

Bar Association President Anil Tiwari further criticized the judicial system's response to the scandal. "If ₹15 Lakh is found at the residence of a common government employee, they are sent to jail. Justice Varma should resign. If he is posted here, we will not allow him to be welcomed. If necessary, we will also halt work."

The AHCBA last week voiced its opposition to any such move, saying the high court is not a "trash bin". In a series of resolutions, it also urged the CJI to allow investigating agencies to take

In another development, the Allahabad High Court Bar Association has strongly opposed the transfer of Justice Varma back to the Allahabad High Court

action against Justice Varma besides calling for impeachment proceedings against the judge. The lawyers also abstained from judicial work after the lunch break. The association further demanded a review of judgements delivered by the judge.

Meanwhile, Legal experts on Monday described as "preposterous", "premature" and "unjustified" the Allahabad High Court Bar Association's demand that all verdicts of Justice Yashwant Varma, embroiled in a cash-discovery controversy, be reviewed and steps taken for his impeachment. Senior advocate Gopal Sankaranarayanan said he does not agree with the bar association's demand as "it is

too premature for anything".

Commenting on the issue, senior advocate Shoeb Alam said, "The call by the bar association to review and annul every judgment passed by Justice Varma in his more-than-a-decade-long tenure is preposterous and not envisaged under any law."

Senior advocate Maninder Singh said public opinion or mere allegations cannot be the basis to scrutinise the verdicts delivered by judges and a judge should not be impeached on media reports.

On March 21, the Supreme Court said Delhi High Court Chief Justice DK Upadhyaya had initiated an in-house inquiry against Justice Varma and there was a separate proposal to transfer him. "There is misinformation and rumours are being spread with regard to the incident at the residence of Justice Yashwant Varma," the Supreme Court statement added.

Upon receiving the information, the apex court said Chief Justice Upadhyaya "commenced the in-house enquiry procedure, collecting evidence and information". Justice Upadhyaya was stated to have commenced the enquiry prior to a meeting of the apex court collegium on March 20. Justice Varma's proposed transfer could come into effect after the Centre accepts the recommendation.

The alleged cash discovery happened following a fire at Varma's Lutyens Delhi residence at around 11.35 pm on March 14, prompting the fire officials to rush to the spot and douse it. The Supreme Court collegium headed by CJI Sanjiv Khanna and the Delhi High Court subsequently issued a series of directives, including the withdrawal of judicial work from Justice Varma on Monday.

The CJI constituted an in-house committee to conduct an inquiry and asked Delhi HC Chief Justice DK Upadhyaya not to assign any judicial work to Justice Yashwant Varma.

BJP, Opposition lock horns on minorities

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi/Bengaluru

Protests by the BJP on Monday claiming that Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar suggested changing the Constitution to provide for religion-based reservation rocked both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha with Congress-led Opposition alleging that the ruling party is raising a "fake issue" to stall Parliament. Shivakumar, has, however, said that he never stated that the Constitution will be amended in any manner to give religion based reservation.

Opposition claimed that the ruling BJP wanted to prevent them from raising the issue of a large amount of cash found in a judge's residence with senior Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra claiming that the government seems to have made up its mind to not let the Lok Sabha (LS) function.

While Trinamool Congress floor leader Derek O'Brien claimed it was a "new low" in Parliament as MPs belonging to the ruling BJP and NDA disrupted Rajya Sabha.

In both the Houses, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijju raised the issue, claiming that NDA MPs are agitat-



Union Minister Kiren Rijju speaks in the Rajya Sabha during the Budget session of Parliament

ed as a person sitting on a Constitutional post has made a statement on changing the Constitution to facilitate reservation for Muslims, which is "unacceptable". The reference was to provide a four per cent quota to Muslims on contracts in Karnataka.

"How can the House watch in silence? Congress should clarify...the person should be sacked. You claim to give reservations to Muslims and resort to theatrics

of carrying a photograph of Babasaheb Ambedkar and a copy of the Constitution in your pocket," Rijju said.

BJP members were on their feet, apparently raising the issue of reservation for Muslims in government contracts, when the Lok Sabha convened at 11 am. Samajwadi Party members too rushed to the Well waving posters while trying to flag matters of atrocities against women in Uttar Pradesh.

MPs get a salary, perks booster dose

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

The Centre on Monday notified a 24 per cent hike in the salaries of Members of Parliament (MPs) with effect from April 1, 2025, on the basis of the Cost Inflation Index, taking their monthly salaries to ₹1.24 Lakh besides certain allowances and perks.

A notification issued by the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs also increased the daily allowances for sitting members and pension and additional pension for every year of service in excess of five years for former members.

The daily allowance too has been increased from ₹2,000 to ₹2,500, the noti-

fication said. MPs can draw daily allowances while attending Parliamentary sessions and meetings of parliamentary committees. The pension for former members of Parliament has been increased from ₹25,000 per month to ₹31,000 per month.

The additional pension for every year of service in excess of five years has been increased from ₹2,000 per month to ₹2,500 per month. In 2018, the then Finance Minister Arun Jaitley increased the salaries of Members of Parliament from ₹50,000 to ₹1 Lakh.

Jaitley had also put a mechanism for automatic revision of salaries and allowances every five years by indexing it to inflation, thus doing away with the

practice of MPs making recommendations for fixing their salaries.

A member of Parliament will now get ₹1.24 Lakh per month as salary, ₹87,000 per month as constituency allowance as against ₹70,000 earlier, ₹75,000 towards office expenses as against ₹60,000 earlier. The office expenses of ₹75,000 include ₹50,000 to hire the services of a computer literate person and ₹25,000 towards stationery items.

The MPs are also entitled to purchase durable furniture worth ₹1 Lakh and non-durable furniture of ₹25,000 once during their tenure. Earlier, these entitlements were capped at ₹80,000 for durable furniture and ₹20,000 for non-durable furniture.

NSG joins anti-terrorist operation in Kathua

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ Jammu

Elite commandos of the National Security Guard (NSG) on Monday joined the massive combing and search operations in the Sanyal village of Hiranagar in Kathua district after the security forces recovered a large quantity of material, including several magazines of M-4 carbine, packed food, energy bars and a bulletproof jacket.

The anti-terrorist operation, which was launched on Sunday evening after an alarm was raised by a couple to neutralise the terrorists, could not achieve any headway in the absence of any fresh engagement with the group of terrorists during the day.

Local reports claimed after the initial contact was made with the terrorists on Sunday evening the operation was halted during the Sunday night.

Meanwhile, the security forces on Monday rushed additional troops to intensify the search operations in the general area of Hiranagar to plug the escape routes. The security grid along the Jammu-Pathankot highway was also tightened and quick reaction teams of the Indian Army and Special Operations group of J and K police maintained area domination to prevent any strike.

Official sources claimed the local police authorities are also maintaining a tight vigil on the activities of the active over-ground

workers in the region to gather vital clues about the presence of the group of terrorists who may have managed to establish contact with their local handler to reach their safe hideout.

According to eyewitnesses, "On Sunday when these terrorists first came face to face with a farmer couple in the forested area of Sanyal village, they were seeking their help instead of targeting them". The brave middle-aged woman managed to escape to safety as one of the terrorists, who followed her, avoided targeting her, to ensure the security forces were not alerted in real-time thereby giving them enough time to flee the area without facing any roadblocks.

According to ground reports, the security forces Monday carried out air surveillance using helicopters and also deployed drones, and sniffer dogs to track down the footprints of terrorists. Senior army and police officers also remained stationed on ground zero to boost the morale of the security forces. DGP J and K Police Nalin Prabhat was also seen participating in the search operations along with the foot soldiers. According to a recent assessment made during the security review meetings, Kathua district has emerged as a major infiltrating route for Pakistan-based terrorists to reach the higher reaches of Udhampur, Doda, and Kishtwar districts and further to Kashmir, over the past year.

Kunal Kamra's remarks on Eknath Shinde trigger row

TN RAGHUNATHAN ■ Mumbai

Hours after the Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena workers vandalised a studio over his 'gaddar' jibe against Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, stand-up comedian Kunal Kamra on Monday refused to yield to Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis' demand for an apology, while the management of studio "the Habitat" tendered an apology and announced its decision to shut down the place over Kamra's comments.

On a day when the Opposition Shiv Sena (UBT) threw its weight behind the stand-up comedian saying that what he had said was "truth" and "not a satire", Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said that the "gaddar" jibe against his Deputy Eknath Shinde was in bad taste and demanded an apology from Kamra.

Talking to media persons at Vidhan Bhavan where the Budget session of the State Legislature is currently on, Fadnavis said, "There is freedom to do stand-up comedy, but he cannot speak whatever he wants. The people of Maharashtra have decided who the traitor is. Kunal Kamra should apologise. Legal action will be taken against him. This will not be tolerated. There is the right to comedy, but if it is being done to defame our Shinde purposely, it is not right".

Fadnavis, who is also the state Home Minister, said that Kamra had displayed the same red-coloured Constitution book



Shiv Sena (Shinde) workers vandalise the venue of comedian Kunal Kamra's show after his remarks on Maharashtra Dy CM Eknath Shinde in Khar area in Mumbai

often show by Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi. "Both of them have not read the Constitution," the Chief Minister said.

On his part, Kunal — against whom Shiv Sena legislator Murji Patel registered a complaint with the MIDC police station at Andheri police station under Sections 353(1) (b), 353(2) and 356(2) — told the police that he did not regret his "gaddar" (traitor) comments against Shinde.

Kamra, who is away from Mumbai at his home in Pondicherry, told the police over phone that he would tender an apology if directed to do so by the courts.

After the "gaddar" jibe at Shinde using a modified version of a Hindi song from

"Dil To Pagal Hai" — "...meri nazar se tum dekho to gaddar nazar wo aaye...haaye...," the studio "the Habitat" — a venue located at The Uniconnental hotel in Khar suburbs of Mumbai where Kunal had shot his stand-up comedy — was vandalised by the Shiv Sena Shiv Sena workers on Sunday night.

The police detained at least 11 Shinde Sena workers on Sunday night but were released immediately afterwards. Multiple FIRs have been registered against Kunal and also the Shiv Sena workers involved in the vandalism of a studio.

During his show, Kamal shared the video clip on the social networking platform X. Kunal Kamra alluded to Eknath

Shinde's 2022 rebellion, which led to the split of Shiv Sena into the Shinde faction and the Uddhav Thackeray faction.

Videos of the vandalism that went viral on social media showed a mob running rampant at the studio, damaging property and throwing chairs around.

The owners of the studio — Habitat Studio, which also hosted the episode of the 'India's Got Latent' show featuring influencer Ranveer Allahabadi — earlier distanced themselves from Kamra's comment, arguing they could not be held accountable for comments by performers.

Earlier today, the management of Mumbai's Habitat Studio said they had decided to shut the premises for now and that they are not responsible for the views of the artists. "We are shocked, worried and extremely broken by the recent acts of vandalism targeting us. Artists are solely responsible for their views and creative choices. We have never been involved in the content performed by any Artist, but the recent events have made us rethink about how we get blamed and targeted every time almost like we are a proxy for the performer." "We are shutting down till we figure out the best way to provide a platform for free expression without putting ourselves and our property in jeopardy. We invite all artists, audience and stakeholders to discuss and share their views freely and request your guidance so that we also respect the performers' rights," the studio said.

White paper to expose AAP's black deeds

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

The BJP ruled Delhi Government will present a 'white paper' on the tenure of the 10 years rule of the previous Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government in the national capital. As the five-day Budget session of the Delhi Assembly began on Monday with Chief Minister Rekha Gupta starting a new tradition of 'Kheer' ceremony for the first time in the Vidhan Sabha ahead of the Budget.

Leader of Opposition (LoP) and former Chief Minister Atishi criticised the BJP-led Delhi government for not presenting the Economic Survey ahead of the Budget. "Delhi's Budget cannot be formed by making 'Kheer', but on the figures of the economy," she said, taking a jibe at the BJP's "Kheer" ceremony that marked the start of the Budget Session.

Replying to the Rule under 280 in Delhi Assembly related to a query of Economic Survey of Delhi, the Chief Minister announced on Monday that her government will present a "white paper" on the tenure of the previous Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) regime in the national capital. She

In Parliament, an Economic Survey is always presented before the Budget. How can a Budget be prepared without an Economic Survey?

— ATISHI, LEADER OF OPPOSITION

also stated that the economic survey would be tabled soon as audits in various departments were still ongoing.

"A comprehensive survey of all sectors is underway and all Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) audit reports are coming to light. There should be no haste in presenting the Economic Survey without completing this process. This work will be completed soon," she assured during the session. Delhi Minister for Food & Supplies, Industry, Forest & Environment, Manjinder Singh Sirsa said, "They (AAP) have looted everything, and that's why a white paper should be presented over whatever they have done".

Atishi, also the MLA from Kalkaji, questioned the government's ability to prepare a budget without a detailed financial review. "In Parliament, an Economic

Survey is always presented before the Budget, providing key data on a state or country's financial health. This has been the practice in Delhi as well. How can a Budget be prepared without an Economic Survey? I have not seen this happen in the past ten years," she said at a press conference. The AAP leader dismissed the government's justification.

"The Chief Minister said the Economic Survey is delayed due to pending CAG reports, but there is no connection between the two. They are hiding the survey. Has the CM even read it?" she asked. Earlier, taking part in the 'Kheer' ceremony on Delhi Assembly premises, she said for the first time in the Delhi Assembly's history, such a ceremony was held ahead of the Budget presentation.

"Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the BJP is presenting the Delhi budget after 27 years. Just as Lord Ram returned to Ayodhya after 14 years of exile, we are returning after 27 years. To mark this occasion, we offered 'Kheer' to Lord Ram, symbolising the sweetness of Delhi's development," the CM added.

Nagpur riot accused Fahim house razed

TN RAGHUNATHAN ■ Mumbai

The "Bulldozer politics" made its foray into Maharashtra on Monday, as the civic officials on Monday used JCB machines to pull down the Nagpur-based house of Fahim Shamim Khan, a leader of the Minority Democratic Party (MDP) who has been booked for sedition in connection with the communal violence that rocked the orange city last week.

In a development that came two-days after Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis warned of "bulldozer action" against the accused persons in the Nagpur riots, the NMC officials — accompanied by three JCB machines of the Nagpur Municipal Corporation (NMC) — on Monday morning arrived at Sanjay Bagh Colony in Nagpur's Yashodhara Nagar area where they demolished the house of Fahim Khan, amid heavy security and drone surveillance.

The NMC resorted to "Bulldozer action" — which has over the recent years gained prominence in the Yogi Adityanath-ruled Uttar Pradesh — under the Maharashtra Regional and Town Planning) Act (MRTP), as the construc-

tion of the building was "unauthorised". Registered in the name of Khan's mother, the demolished plot was located on a plot of Nagpur Improvement Trust (Lease) and its lease ended in 2020.

"There was no sanction plan for the building. The entire construction was unauthorised. We took the action under the MRTP Act. We had served a notice to the owner of the house 24 hours prior to the action," NMC's Assistant Municipal Commissioner Harish Raut said.

A strong posse of police officers and personnel was present when the Nagpur Municipal Corporation officials carried out the "bulldozer" operation.

In addition to Khan's house, the NMC officials also demolished some illegal portions of a property belonging to another accused Yusuf Shaikh in the

It may be recalled that on March 19, Minority Democratic Party Leader Fahim Khan was arrested for his alleged role in the communal riots that erupted in Nagpur on March 17

Johripur area of Mahal in Nagpur. Two shops linked to the accused too were sealed during the operation.

It may be recalled that on March 19, Minority Democratic Party Leader Fahim Khan was arrested for his alleged role in the communal riots that erupted in Nagpur on the night of March 17.

Fahim Khan — said to be the mastermind behind the Nagpur riots who was later booked for sedition — is currently lodged in jail is among the over 100 persons, mostly Muslims arrested for the communal violence in Nagpur.

Thirty-eight-year-old Fahim Khan has been named as one of the key accused in an 18-page FIR registered in connection with the Nagpur violence. The police said that preliminary investigations and the video that surfaced after Monday's disturbances indicated that Khan's inflammatory speech incited the violence.

Among other things, the FIR stated that Khan led a group of "50 to 60" people that gathered outside the Ganeshpeth police station on Monday and submitted a memorandum against the Vishwa Hindu Parishad's protest to the police.



Construction works at district hospital spark health concern

MANSI BHAMBRI ■ Dehradun

Many patients raised concerns over the ongoing multiple construction works at the Deen Dayal Upadhyay district hospital as they are more susceptible to allergies and infections due to dust and other debris.

time she visits the hospital, she starts coughing because of the dust. The construction work is in the interests of the patients but the authorities should focus on one construction project at a time rather than multiple projects simultaneously.

Another patient, Ravi stated that those visiting the hospital are already battling illnesses, which leaves their immune systems weakened. He pointed out that ongoing construction could increase the risk of infections and allergies.

come dust at the hospital inside areas.

Many other patients have voiced similar concerns regarding simultaneous construction works and their attendees have echoed these worries as well.

The medical superintendent at the hospital Dr VS Chauhan said that dust from the construction work could lead to coughing and other health issues for patients, particularly those who are already allergic. However, he said that the hospital administration is taking measures to ensure that the facility is regularly cleaned on a shift basis to minimise the impact of dust on patients.

A patient Neelima Kanodia (name changed) said that she has been visiting the hospital's outpatient department frequently for check-ups over the past few months. She has noticed the ongoing construction work and the dust from the construction site has adversely affected patients like herself at the hospital. She said that every

Authorities prepare for summer drinking water challenges

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Dehradun

The Drinking Water secretary Shailesh Bagauli recently instructed officials to address drinking water issues anticipated during the summer months.

Bagauli stressed on the establishment of a control room in each district to manage drinking water availability, leakage and other related complaints. These control rooms will function as call centers, with an assistant engineer from Jal Sansthan or Peyjal Nigam appointed as the nodal officer.

With the upcoming Char Dham Yatra in mind, he directed that the regular cleaning of mobile stand posts, tanks and water ATMs along the Yatra route be carried out to ensure that pilgrims have access to

clean drinking water.

Secretary (Appraisal) at Jal Sansthan, Maneesh Semwal informed that the officials concerned across the State have been instructed to inspect problem areas every morning and evening during the drinking water supply period. Additionally, chlorine tests (OT tests) should be conducted regularly, and fortnightly reports submitted to headquarters.

Semwal added that directions were also given regarding the need for cleaning and disinfecting sources, reservoirs and chambers of drinking water schemes using bleaching powder or sodium hypochlorite solution. Super chlorination should be addressed as necessary and drinking water samples

must be checked daily, with joint inspections conducted in collaboration with the Health department, he said.

For areas where the maintenance of the drinking water system is contracted out, Semwal emphasised directions were given for the importance of meetings with contract plumbers to identify leaks and ensure a systematic approach to repairs through special campaigns. He said that they also issued directions regarding emergency drinking water supply, emphasising the need for effective management of departmental tankers. Moreover, he noted that special attention should be given to construction matters; water connections for building construction and commercial purposes should not be allowed during restricted periods and illegal use of water must be curtailed.

Perpetuum 2025: AIMS & MSM drive the future of management education

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Dehradun

The Master School of Management (MSM), in collaboration with the Association of Indian Management Schools (AIMS), hosted the 35th Annual Management Education Convention, Perpetuum 2025 - Aviral, Advitiya & Anant. The three-day convention featured ten high-impact panel discussions, engaging policy-makers, corporate heads, start-up founders, and brought together over 50 thought leaders from premier institutions, including IIM-A, IIM-B, IIM-I, IIM-U, ISB Hyderabad, IIT Roorkee, IMT Hyderabad, University of Southampton Delhi, University of Mumbai, OP Jindal Global University, Jaipuria Institute of Management, and the University of Delhi, reinforcing its reputation as a premier platform for academic-industry collaboration.



ation and business. AIMS president and MSM founder Sudhir Sharma introduced the theme Perpetuum, underscoring the need for continuous learning and policy-driven educational reforms. Pro-vice chancellor of Savitribai Phule Pune University & Treasurer of AIMS, Parag Kalkar stated, "Established in 1988, AIMS has played a pivotal role in advancing management education, with a network of over 640 member B-schools fostering innovation and leadership development."

A highlight was the Professor Ravi J Mattha National

Fellowship Award, conferred upon Harivansh Chaturvedi (IILM Lodi Road) for his contributions to management education. The valedictory session, led by Dr Subhanshu Acharya (CMD, NSIC), emphasised value-driven leadership.

Under the leadership of convention director RP Juyal, the event set a new benchmark for industry-academia collaboration, with actionable insights documented for policy integration. Co-convenor Mohit Sati, dean of admissions at MSM, reinforced the event's transformative role in shaping management education.

UPNL workers seek timeline for employee regularisation policy implementation

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Dehradun

The officiating president of the Uttarakhand Purva Sainik Kalyan Nigam Limited (UPNL) federation of employees, Mahesh Bhatt, stated that the State government should specify a timeline for the policy implementation regarding the regularisation of employees in Uttarakhand. He said this following an announcement by chief minister Pushkar Singh Dhami about a comprehensive policy intended for the regularisation of employees working under outsourcing and departmental contracts through UPNL in government departments. Notably, for many years, UPNL employees have been demanding the regularisation of their services. They have even approached the Uttarakhand High Court in the past and in 2018, the High Court issued a directive on "equal pay for equal work." Consequently, the State government appealed to the Supreme Court, challenging the order. However, the SC dismissed the appeal and directed the State government to ensure that such employees receive the same pay as their regular counterparts. The gov-

ernment later filed a special leave petition in the SC on the issue. Bhatt commented on Dhami's recent announcement, expressing appreciation as the federation president. However, he pointed out that the announcement lacks a designated timeframe for the policy's implementation. He said that while the government has announced a policy, it has not specified when it will take effect. He highlighted that they have been advocating for their demands since 2018, and as of 2025, no action has been taken on these demands. Bhatt recalled that when Dhami was an MLA, he had presented their demands to the chief secretary, but no action followed. He urged the government to declare a timeline for when the policy for UPNL workers will be developed and implemented; otherwise, it will be similar to past announcements that were never executed. He said that they plan to approach the CM in the next two to three days to discuss the announcement of a timeline for their policy.

CAU to commence Senior Challengers Multi-Day Women Trophy from today

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Dehradun

The Cricket Association of Uttarakhand (CAU) is set to organise the Senior Challengers Multi-Day Women Trophy, from March 25 to April 8. CAU secretary Mahim Verma said that this series aims to showcase the talent of women players, who have previously competed primarily in ODI and T20 formats. The event will be held at the Rajiv Gandhi International Cricket Stadium and Abhimanyu Cricket Academy in Dehradun, allowing women players to play with red balls, similar to their male counterparts. Verma added that

the CAU has to host the under-14 Raj Singh Durgapur Trophy for the first time as it has received accreditation from the BCCI. Six States—Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Rajasthan and Vidarbha—will compete for this trophy. Matches will be played at Doon Cricket Academy in Kuanwala and Ayush Cricket Academy in Chidderwala, starting from April 20, with the final scheduled between May 3 and 5. Trials for the Uttarakhand State team will be held on April 3, 4 and 5 for this trophy selection.

Honorary consul general of Grenada discusses setting up ultramodern medical city

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Dehradun

The honorary consul general of Grenada in India and the president of the Apex Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Kapil Chopra arranged a high level meeting in Delhi to discuss the development of an ultramodern medical city in Grenada. Chopra organised the meeting to explore opportunities in healthcare collaboration between India and Grenada. The meeting was presided over by Philip A Telesford, Minister for

ern facility aims to enhance medical services in Grenada while positioning the country as a key destination for medical tourism. Healthcare industry leaders and members of Apex Chamber of Commerce and Industry expressed keen interest and commitment to collaborating on the project, recognising its potential for mutual growth and advancement in global healthcare standards. The discussions focused on technology transfer, invest-

CHANGE OF NAME

I Neelam Jain D/o Subhash Chand Jain Ex-W/o Anurag Jain, A-512 Haridwar Uttarakhand got divorce from Ex-husband Court Decree-No.CG.No.18/14 Dt.22/05/2015. Further remarried with Ashish Agarwal S/O Vijay Kumar Agarwal, Marriage Regn. No. MR-UKUCC2550000000191 Dt.-20/02/2025, changed my daughter's name CHANCHAL JAIN @BHUMI JAIN to CHANCHAL AGARWAL aged-13-yrs. PD(1741)A

THE PIONEER CLASSIFIEDS PUBLIC NOTICE

I, SANGITA M/o No. 2817402F NK KADAM DARSHAN SURESHRAO, VIII & Post-Borgaon Manju, Teh & Distt. Akola, Maharashtra- 444102. I have changed my name from SANGITA to SANGITA SURESH KADAM inclusion of middle and last name as per my Aadhar No.354222550265 vide affidavit sworn before notary and Advo.Sanjeev Kumar, dated 24.03.2025. U.K.Gol

General public is informed that in some documents my name is as Zakir Husain Ansari and my father's name as Majaheer Hussain whereas in other documents my name is Zakir Hussain and my father's name is Haji Majahir Hussain. Both the names Zakir Husain Ansari and Zakir Hussain are of the same person and Majaheer Hussain and Haji Majahir Hussain are of the same person. In future my name and my father should be read and written as Zakir Hussain S/o Haji Majahir Hussain R/o Ward No. 77, Near Muskan Chowk, Majra Dehradun.

IN BRIEF

Selection for 2 sports scholarships slated on Apr 1

DEHRADUN: The selection of the candidates for scholarships under Mukhyamantri Udiyaman Khiladi Unnayan Yojana and Mukhyamantri Khiladi Protsahan Yojana will be held on April 1. While the first scholarship involves an amount of Rs 1,500 per month (from eight to 14 years) the second one involves an amount of Rs 2m000 per month (from 14 to 23 years). As per official sources, 150 boys and 150 girls will be selected for the first scholarship scheme while 100 boys and 100 girls will be selected for the second scheme.

Cong observes Indira Hridayesh's birth anniversary

HALDWANI: The Congress felicitated some party veterans to mark the 84th birth anniversary of its late leader Indira Hridayesh here on Monday. A Smriti Diwas programme was organised at Swaraj Ashram and several leaders recalled the leadership qualities and administrative acumen of the late leader. Addressing the programme, the Haldwani MLA and son of the late leader, Sumit Hridayesh said that they would go all-out to fulfil the unfulfilled dreams she had dreamt for development of Haldwani. Among the party veterans who were felicitated on the occasion were Harish Chandra Durgapal, NB Gunwant, Shobha Bisht, Deep Chandra Pathak and Kishan Dalakoti.



Health, Grenada, along with Kanesha Commodore, Foreign Service Officer, Grenada. The event was attended by prominent leaders from Delhi-NCRC's healthcare and pharmaceutical sectors, who engaged in detailed discussions on the Grenada government's ambitious plan to develop a state-of-the-art medical city. This ultra-mod-

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON (SEE SECTION 82 Cr.P.C.) Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused person(s) Sh. Manmeet Singh S/o Swaroop Singh R/o Vill.-Kartarpur Sumangla Bilaspur, Rudrapur, Uttarakhand-263153 has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in CT. No. 1584/20, U/s 138 NI Act, PS Tilak Nagar, New Delhi and it has been returned to a Warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said accused person(s) Sh. Manmeet Singh can not be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused person(s) Sh. Manmeet Singh has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused person(s) Sh. Manmeet Singh of CT. No. 1584/20, U/s 138 NI Act, PS Tilak Nagar, New Delhi is required to appear before this court to answer the said complaint on or before dated 30.04.2025 at 10:00 AM. By Order Sh. Shubham Gupta Metropolitan Magistrate, (NI Act) Room No. 04 Annex-1 Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi

भारत का राजपत्र The Gazette of India स.जी.-डी.एल.-अ.-20032025-261779 CG-DL-E-20032025-261779 नई दिल्ली, बुधवार, मार्च 19, 2025 / फाल्गुन 28, 1946 NEW DELHI, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 19, 2025/PHALGUNA 28, 1946 MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS NOTIFICATION New Delhi, the 19th March, 2025 S.O. 1294(E).—In exercise of powers conferred by sub-section (1) of section 3A of the National Highways Act, 1956 (48 of 1956) (hereinafter referred to as the said Act), the Central Government, after being satisfied that for the public purpose, the land, the brief description of which is given in the Schedule below, is required for building (widening/two lane with paved shoulder/four laning etc.), maintenance, management and operation of NH74 in the stretch of land from Km. 175 to Km. 252.200 in the district of UDHAM SINGH NAGAR in the state of UTTARAKHAND, hereby declares its intention to acquire such land. Any person interested in the said land may, within twenty-one days from the date of publication of this notification in the Official Gazette, object to the use of such land for the aforesaid purpose under sub-section (1) of section 3C of the said Act. Every such objection shall be made to the Competent Authority, namely, Special Land Acquisition Officer Udhampur Singh Nagar in writing and shall set out the grounds thereof and the Competent Authority shall give the objector an opportunity of being heard, either in person or by a legal practitioner, and may, after hearing all such objections and after making such further enquiry, if any, as the Competent Authority thinks necessary, by order, either allow or disallow the objections. Any order made by the Competent Authority under sub-section (2) of section 3C of the said Act shall be final. The land plans and other details of the land to be acquired under their notification are available and can be inspected by the interested person at the aforesaid office of the Competent Authority. SCHEDULE Brief Description of the land to be acquired with or without structures falling Kashipur-Sitarganj section of NH74 in the stretch of land from Km. 175 to Km. 252.200 in the district of UDHAM SINGH NAGAR in the state of UTTARAKHAND [F. No. NHA/PIU-Rudrapur/Ram-Kath/3a/2012/3A] SHAIKH AMINKHAN, Director District: UDHAM SINGH NAGAR https://egazette.gov.in Publication Date: 19/03/2025 https://egazette.gov.in/WriteReadData/2025/261779.pdf https://bhoomirashi.gov.in/auth/revamp/showfile.cshmt?TAB=bGFVGFh5ZWVhZ2ZpZGVz&fk=bm90aWZpY2F0aW9uX2lk&fid=NzE4NTQ=&EncHid=447547543 Note : The physical copy of this notification is also available at the office of CALA/PIU/RO and Landowners may also see the notification there.

पीएम श्री केंद्रीय विद्यालय, आयुध निर्माणी रायपुर, देहरादून PM SHRI KENDRIYA VIDYALAYA OFD RAIPUR DEHRADUN पत्रांक, एक पंजीकरण / कवि / ओ.ए.डी. / 2024-25 दिनांक / 24.03.2025 सेवा एवं सामान आपूर्ति हेतु फर्म / व्यवसाय / व्यवसाय संघ के पंजीकरण हेतु विज्ञापन (वित्तीय वर्ष 2025-26) वित्तीय वर्ष के लिए विद्यालय में निम्नांकित सेवा एवं सामान आपूर्ति के लिए सेवा एवं वस्तुकर (GST) में पंजीकरण प्रतिष्ठित फर्मों से फर्म के पंजीकरण हेतु आवेदन आमंत्रित किये जाते हैं।

क्र.सं	विवरण	क्र.सं	विवरण
1	Consumable/Non consumable Items of Sports.	10	Prizes & Gifts Items.
2	Furniture items as per specification & design.	11	School Canteen (Only firm registered in Food Safety & Standard Act-2006 of Uttarakhand may apply)
3	Civil work items for maintenance & repair, Petty Construction, white wash material and sanitary fitting etc.	12	Air Conditioner, Water cooler, Refrigerator supply & AMC
4	Computer cartridge, Antivirus & batteries for on line UPS etc.	13	Sanitation Items.
5	Printing Items etc.	14	Hiring of Dress Materials
6	Stationary items.	15	Complete sound & electrical set-up for special occasion
7	Tent Items, led Lights, Music Systems & LED Screen	16	Consumable/Non-consumable items of Science Lab
8	AMC computer, Networking & CCTV	17	Transport
9	Electric Fitting Article etc		

नोट: फर्म / व्यवसाय / व्यवसाय संघ के पंजीकरण हेतु आवेदन करने के लिए निर्धारित प्रपत्र विद्यालय की वेबसाइट <https://dehradunofv.kvs.ac.in> पर उपलब्ध है। भरे हुए आवेदन प्रपत्र फर्म के पंजीकरण / पैनकार्ड / आयकर / विगत तीन वर्षों की कारोबारी सामता संबंधी संश्लेषित दस्तावेज सहित कोलब डाक द्वारा ही प्रकाशित होने के 20 दिनों के अन्दर ही स्वीकार किये जायेंगे। प्राचार्य के पास सवाधिकार सुरक्षित है कि वे किसी भी शर्त को कम कर सकते हैं अथवा बढ़ा सकते हैं। विद्यालय में पंजीकरण करवाने वाली फर्म को निविदा आमंत्रित करने अथवा आपूर्ति आदेश जारी करने हेतु किसी प्रकार का अश्वसन न समझा जाये। प्राचार्य



Two killed after dumper crashes into three cars at Lachhiwala Toll Plaza

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Dehradun

Two people lost their lives on Monday morning when a dumper (UK 18 CA 6636) went out of control and crashed into three vehicles at Lachhiwala toll plaza on the Dehradun-Haridwar high-



way. The accident reportedly occurred due to brake failure, causing the dumper occupants of the vehicle, Ratanmani Uniyal, a resident of Indraprastha Enclave,

to collide with three cars before hitting a toll plaza pole, as per the officials. They informed that one of the cars (UK07 AF 2506) was severely crushed between the dumper and the pole. Both Raipur, Dehradun, and Pankaj Kumar, also from Dehradun, died on the spot. They were employed at the district court in Tehri and were on their way to work there when the accident occurred, as per the officials. The police, along with the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) recovered the bodies. The SDRF team, with support from the police, Fire Service and other units, used a mechanical excavator and crane to remove the dumper and extract the trapped vehicle. The officials said that after hours of effort, the bodies of the deceased were retrieved from the car and handed over to the police for further procedures. They informed that the dumper driver has been taken into custody. The officials claimed that the Rishikesh ARTO examined the vehicle's documents, including those related to the mining material it was transporting and found them in order. The families of the deceased were notified and further investigation into the incident is ongoing, they added.

Authorities identify issues, direct corrective steps after fatal mishap at Lachhiwala toll plaza

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Dehradun

Following the fatal accident at Lachhiwala toll plaza on Monday that claimed two lives, a joint inspection of the site was conducted by the senior officials from the Police, Transport department and National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) to assess the causes and discuss immediate measures to prevent future incidents. The regional transport officer (Enforcement) of Dehradun division, Shailesh Tiwari said that during the



inspection, officials identified key areas requiring improvement to enhance road safety. The officials concerned were directed to increase the number of rumble strips and speed breakers on both sides to control vehicle speed near the toll plaza as the lane markings address overspeeding, which has been a major factor in past accidents, the team suggested installing speed cameras near the toll plaza. Further actions will be taken to implement these measures as part of efforts to improve road safety at the toll plaza, he said.

Endeavouring to strike balance between ecology and economy: CM

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Dehradun

Chief minister Pushkar Singh Dhami has said that the State government has started a 'three-pillar and nine-point policy' to strike a balance between economy and ecology in Uttarakhand. This policy will prove to be an important step towards achieving the goal of sustainable development, he said. The CM was addressing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Achievers Awards ceremony held at his residence on Monday.

lence, we have to take the State forward with everyone's collective efforts," he said.

The CM said that the effect of correct policies have an incremental effect in the State treasury.

ed last year's SDG Awards and the SDG Index Uttarakhand 2023-2024. In the district-wise SDG ranking released by the Centre for Public Policy and Good Governance (CPPGG) for the year 2023-24, Nainital, Dehradun and Uttarkashi districts were ranked first,



He said that three years ago, the State was ranked 9th in the SDG India Index and now it is ranked first in the country. The CM said that the State has achieved significant achievements in areas like poverty alleviation, food security, drinking water and sanitation, sex ratio at birth, clean energy, urban development, financial inclusion and climate change. He said that the State government is working to strengthen these areas through schemes like chief minister women entrepreneurship promotion scheme, solar energy, smart city mission and CM urban livelihood scheme.

He said that in the last three years many efforts were made for simplifying policies and generating revenue. Dhami said that the revenue from mining has increased from Rs 400 crore to Rs 1,200 crore. Similarly, revenue generation in the state is also increasing rapidly in other sectors, he claimed.

second and third respectively. In the programme, the CM congratulated the people and institutions bestowed with the awards.

He said that the award winners are the real ambassadors of the State's development. MLAs Savita Kapoor and Durgeshwar Lal, chief secretary Radha Raturi, UNDP representative Angela Lusugi, former CS N Ravishankar, principal secretary R Meenakshi Sundaram, vice chairman of Rural Development and Migration Prevention Commission SS Negi, ACEO of CPPGG Manoj Pant and others were present in the programme.

MCD struggles to meet property tax target as major defaulters owe crores

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Dehradun

The Municipal Corporation of Dehradun (MCD) is facing a shortfall in property tax collection, having received only Rs 49 crore against its target of Rs 70 crore for the financial year ending this month. With just seven days left, officials are making all efforts to recover the dues from major defaulters, some of whom have accumulated substantial arrears over the past years. Among the biggest defaulters, Mahant Indresh Hospital tops the list with an outstanding property tax of Rs 12.26 crore pending since 2016, as per the officials. Other institutions that have yet to clear their dues include Maharana Pratap Sports College, which owes Rs 1.40 crore since 2019, the Transit Hostel in Race Course with Rs 73 lakh pending since 2017, the District Judge Office with Rs 82

MDDA seals Jamia Islamia madarsa in Sahaspur for unauthorised construction

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Dehradun

The Mussoorie Dehradun Development Authority (MDDA) sealed the Jamia Islamia madarsa in Sahaspur, Dehradun district on Monday due to its unauthorised construction. The action was taken after repeated notices and hearings failed to produce necessary approvals for the building, as per the officials. They said that the madarsa had been under scrutiny for the past several months for carrying out construction without the required clearance from the planning authority. They informed that the issue first came to light when a show cause notice was issued on April 20, 2023, under the Uttarakhand (UP Town Planning and Development Act, 1973) Amendment

Act, 2009. Officials delivered the notice on April 29, 2023, informing the madarsa management of the violation and summoning them for a hearing. Despite scheduled hearings on May 2 and May 16, 2023, no approved building plan or satisfactory response was reportedly submitted by them as per the officials. They further informed that a regional engineer's report on June 1, 2023, stated that a new mosque was being constructed alongside the existing madarsa, with additional columns raised on the second floor. In response, the authorities reportedly issued another notice on June 8, 2023, warning that the structure could be sealed. Several

Dr Sayana to focus on improving facilities in Srinagar medical college

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Dehradun

The newly appointed principal of the Government Medical College in Srinagar, Dr Ashutosh Sayana has said that his priority is to provide best facilities to the patients of the mountainous districts of Pauri, Chamoli, Tehri and Rudrapur in Srinagar. He told The Pioneer that increasing facilities in Srinagar medical college will result in reduction in referrals of patients of mountainous districts of Garhwal to Dehradun.

seats in the college from existing 32 to 100.

He added that the medical college will strive to undertake research in the diseases prevalent in the mountainous areas of the State. It is pertinent to mention here that the post of principal of

Government Medical College, Srinagar was vacant since February 4 this year when Dr CMS Rawat resigned from the post. The government has now appointed Dr Sayana on the post who also is the director of the Medical Education department of the State.

Dhami launches multi-crore development works in Udham Singh Nagar

Shop keys presented to 15 economically poor street vendors

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Rudrapur

Chief minister Pushkar Singh Dhami inaugurated seven development works costing Rs 1,021 lakh and laid the foundation for seven projects costing Rs 2,929 lakh at a programme in Rudrapur on Monday. Earlier, the CM participated in a roadshow and then addressed a gathering to mark his three years in office. In addition to launching the development works, Dhami also handed over keys to shops in the vending zone to 15 economically poor street vendors. To mark his three years in office, CM flagged off nine service publicity vehicles for the nine Vidhan Sabha constituencies in the Udham Singh Nagar district. These vehicles will publicise government schemes as services in each Vidhan Sabha constituency till March 30. Addressing the gathering on the occasion, Dhami said that considering the enthusiastic crowd present at the venue, it is evident that the State government has retained the trust of the people who had elected the BJP to office. "With Prime Minister Narendra Modi's guidance and his support during these three years, our government has worked on 'service, good governance and development'. We have focused on enhancing road connectivity from cities to remote villages on the one hand while also started helicopter services under the UDAN scheme for about a dozen locations in the



State. Similarly, we have worked consistently to enhance the infrastructure in education, health, drinking water, sports and all other major spheres. We have implemented more than 30 new policies in horticulture, tourism, AYUSH and food processing, among other sectors to speed up development in the State.

The State government has also facilitated pucca homes for lakhs of poor families, free ration, three cooking gas cylinders per year, increased the old age pension and enabled pension facility for both the husband and wife, among other decisions in public interest," the CM said. Apart from citing the various works done during the past three years, Dhami also spoke about the planned development in the district and across the State. The local MLA Shiv Arora and Rudrapur mayor Vikas Sharma listed various issues to the CM and

Govt planning to reinstate Rajni Bhandari to reward her husband: Congress

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Dehradun

The chief spokesperson of Uttarakhand Congress Garima Dasauni has alleged that the State government is planning to reinstate the ousted president of Chamoli district Panchayat Rajni Bhandari on the post of administrator of district Panchayat. Interacting with the media persons at the headquarters of the State Congress on Monday, the Congress leader said that it is interesting to note that when Rajendra Bhandari, the husband of Rajni Bhandari was in the Congress party, the successive BJP governments knocked at the doors of the courts against financial irregularities done by Bhandari as district Panchayat president. The government also initiated inquiries against her. She said that the same government which was vehemently oppos-

ing Rajni Bhandari became her biggest guardian after we husband joined the BJP. She said that after the government appointed district Panchayat presidents as administrators at the end of their tenure, the BJP leader and district Panchayat vice president of Chamoli, Laxman Singh Rawat sent letters to the departmental minister and secretary opposing appointment of Bhandari as administrator. Following the protest, the government removed Bhandari and appointed the Chamoli district magistrate as the administrator. Dasauni said that the entire episode has sullied the image of Rajendra Bhandari. She said that it is now learnt that the government is trying to reinstate Bhandari on the post of administrator through the court.

Knowledge of AI, data science & robotics vital for today's youth: Governor

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Dehradun

The governor lieutenant general (ret'd) Gurmit Singh said that knowledge of new technologies such as artificial Intelligence (AI), data science and robotics is necessary for the youth. He said that by adopting these technologies, new opportunities for jobs and industries are developing rapidly.

He was delivering convocation address at Swami Rama Himalayan University on Monday. He said that serving humanity is the duty of every human being. "Your education



said. The Higher Education secretary Ranjit Kumar Sinha, the chairman of the Swami Rama Himalayan University Vijay Dhasmana, vice chancellor Rajendra Dobhal, principals, faculty heads, students and parents attended the convocation.

UTTARAKHAND POWER CORPORATION LTD.
(A Govt. of Uttarakhand Undertaking)
Corporate Identity No.: UA40109UP2001SGC025867/2358
Victoria Cross Vijaya Gabar Singh Uja Bhawan, Kanwali Road, Dehradun-248001
Tel. No. 0135-2763672-75, tender website: www.uktenders.gov.in

E-TENDER NOTICE (SPECIFICATION NO. 09/EE(CM)/2024-25)
Uttarakhand Power Corporation Ltd. Dehradun invites e-tender of following work, as detailed below:-

S. No.	Name of the work	Tender Specification No.	Earnest Money (in Rs.)	Cost of Tender Document including GST (in Rs.)	Last Date & Time of Online request for Tender and submission of tender in online & offline mode	Due Date of opening of Technical bid	Due Date of opening of Financial bid
1	Horticulture and Landscaping work at V.C.V. Gabar Singh Uja Bhawan Dehradun	09/EE (CM)/ 2024-25	60000.00 In favour of Executive Engineer (HQ), UPCL, Dehradun	1180/- In favour of Executive Engineer (HQ), UPCL, Dehradun	07.04.2025 upto 17:00 hrs.	08.04.2025 at 11:30 hrs.	To be notified later

For further details, please visit website www.uktenders.gov.in or contact on 9410393084

No.: 142/EE(CM)/UPCL/A-2 SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER (HQ)
Dated: 24.03.2025

SAVE ELECTRICITY IN THE INTEREST OF THE NATION. Use LED Bulb. Save Electricity
(Toll Free No. 1912) Pay Electricity Bill Online 24x7 from www.upcl.org (For information on Electricity theft, informer may report to Toll Free No. 1800 180 4185/Fax No. 0135-2760911)

ADITYA BIRLA CAPITAL **ADITYA BIRLA FINANCE LIMITED**
Registered Office: Indian Rayon Compound, Veraval, Gujarat-362266.
Branch Office: 12th Floor, R Tech Park, Nirjon Complex, Nr. Hub Mall, Goregaon (E), Mumbai-400 063, MH.

POSSESSION NOTICE (SEE RULE 8 (1) OF THE SECURITY INTEREST (ENFORCEMENT) RULES, 2002)
Whereas the undersigned being the Authorized Officer of Aditya Birla Finance Limited (ABFL) under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (S&E of 2002) and in exercise of the powers conferred U/s 13 (12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a Demand Notice dated mentioned below U/s. 13(2) of the said Act calling upon you being the borrowers (Names & Addresses mentioned below) to repay the amount mentioned in the said notice and interest thereon within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The Borrowers mentioned herein below having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrowers mentioned herein below and to the public in general that the undersigned has Taken SYMBOLIC POSSESSION of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him / her under Section 13(4) of the said act read with Rule 8 the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002. The Borrowers mentioned here in below in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with said property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of Aditya Birla Finance Limited (ABFL) for an amount as mentioned herein under and interest thereon. The Borrower's attention is invited to the provisions of sub-Sec. 8 of Sec. 13 of the act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

S. No.	Name of the Borrower(s)	Demand Notice Date & Q/s. Amt.	Description of Immoveable Property (Properties Mortgaged)	Possession Date
1	Mr. Inderpreet Singh, S/o. Pratap Singh, M/s. Rajni Saini, W/o. Inderpreet Singh	DN Date: 09.01.2025 ₹ 55,01,096.18 as on 12.12.2024	All that Piece & Parcel of the Commercial Property Situated on Second Floor Forming Part of Property Bearing Municipal No. 054 (New No. 554/51) Govind Nagar, Racecourse, Dehradun Having Covered Area Measuring 32.8 Sq. Mtrs. (without Roof Rights) With Right to use the Passage of Ground Floor, which is bounded as under - East : Property of Shi Kalra, Side Measuring 31'5"; West : Property of Smt. Gagandeep Kaur and Common Stairs, Side Measuring 29'11"; North : Open Space Common Parking & Road, Side Measuring 11'6"; South : Property of Smt. Gagandeep Kaur, Side Measuring 11'6".	21.03.2025 (Symbolic Possession)

Place : Dehradun, Uttarakhand
Date : 21.03.2025
Authorised Officer, ADITYA BIRLA FINANCE LIMITED

Dhankhar lauds CJJ's over cash row

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

Vice President and Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar on Monday lauded Chief Justice of India (CJI) Sanjiv Khanna, saying he has initiated action in a "very impactful, transparent manner". This observation came in the wake of allegations of cash recovery from the residence of a high court judge.

Dhankhar also held a meeting with Leader of the House JP Nadda and Leader of Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge on judicial accountability in the wake of these allegations and said they decided to await the outcome of the CJI-appointed in-house inquiry panel before taking up the issue further.

The Vice President, who has been a vocal critic of the Supreme Court's October 2015 decision to quash the National Judicial Appointments Commission Act, said as suggested by the Leader of Opposition, he would soon convene a meeting of floor leaders of various parties in the Rajya Sabha on the issue as also of taking further the issue of NJAC Act.

Dhankhar said CJI Khanna showed "alertness" following the allegations of discovery of "four to five semi-burnt sacks" of Indian currency notes after a fire incident on March 14 at the residence of Delhi High Court judge Yashwant Varma by forming the panel to look into the matter, besides putting all material in the public domain.

He had earlier written to Nadda and Kharge for holding such a meeting for a



VP Jagdeep Dhankhar during the Budget session of Parliament in New Delhi

structured discussion in the Upper House of Parliament on the issue of judicial accountability and the NJAC Act.

The two leaders held closed-door consultations with Dhankhar in his chamber at 11.30 am.

The meeting was held in reference to the observations Dhankhar made in the House on March 21 while responding to the points raised by Congress leader Jairam Ramesh over the cash recovery row.

Dhankhar had referred to the mechanism for judicial appointments after the passage of the NJAC Act in 2014. The legislation was struck down by the Supreme Court later.

After the meeting, Dhankhar said he is

grateful to the Leader of the House and Leader of the Opposition, for a meaningful deliberation about the issue that is agitating the minds of the judiciary, parliamentarians and the public at large.

"It is for the first time since independence that a Chief Justice has in a transparent, accountable manner put all material available to him in the public domain and shared it without keeping anything with the Court.

"This is a step in the right direction. The Constitution of a committee by the Chief Justice of India and the alertness he has reflected are also a factor that needs consideration.

"Institutions like the Judiciary and the

Legislature serve their purpose best when their in-house mechanism is effective, fast and upholds public trust," the Rajya Sabha Chairman said.

"Since it is for the first time that the head of Judiciary, Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna, has initiated action in a very, very impactful, transparent manner, it will be worthwhile to await the outcome of the committee as that will enable us to have the entire material for our consideration," Dhankhar said after the meeting.

"A very thoughtful suggestion emanated from Kharge Ji that consistent with parliamentary practice, the issue needs to be deliberated with the floor leaders and, finding the suggestion in order and full approval also of all three of us, a meeting will accordingly be scheduled where I would extend an invitation to floor leaders in the Council of States to take a call on this," he said in the presence of both Kharge and Nadda.

"I have indicated firmly that these steps taken so far by the Chief Justice of India, Sanjiv Khanna, are unprecedented if we go by past performance, and no effort will be spared to make available in the public domain by way of an inquiry what could possibly be the requirement in such a challenging situation that is agitating the minds of members of the Judiciary, members of the Bar, Parliamentarians and public at large," he said.

The Chairman said he would schedule a meeting and send intimation as suggested by Kharge and Nadda in this direction to floor leaders of other parties for their views on the issue.

US trade official Lynch on five-day visit to India

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

Brendan Lynch, the assistant US trade representative for South and Central Asia will pay a five-day visit to India beginning Tuesday to discuss issues relating to trade and tariff between the two countries.

Lynch's visit comes days ahead of coming into force of reciprocal tariffs announced by US President Donald Trump.

The senior US trade official is expected to hold talks with Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal besides meeting a number of senior Indian officials, it is learnt.

The two sides are also expected to hold negotiations to firm a framework for a bilateral trade pact that would address issues relating to levies and market access.

"Assistant US Trade Representative for South and Central Asia Brendan Lynch, along with a team of US government officials, will be in India from March 25-29 for meetings with Indian interlocutors as part of ongoing bilateral trade discussions," a US official said.

"This visit reflects the United States' continued commitment to advancing a productive and balanced trade relationship with India.

"We value our ongoing engagement with the Government of India on trade and investment matters and look forward to continuing these discussions in a con-

structive, equitable, and forward-looking manner," the official said.

India on Friday said its negotiations with Washington are underway to firm a framework for a bilateral trade pact that would address issues relating to levies and market access.

India remains engaged with the US Administration at "various levels" to arrive at a mutually beneficial trade agreement, External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said.

Following talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Trump in Washington DC last month, the two sides announced to negotiate the first tranche of the BTA by the fall of 2025

The US president's tariff tussle has stoked fears of a global trade war with many countries already announcing counter-measures to deal with it.

Following talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Trump in Washington DC last month, the two sides announced to negotiate the first tranche of the BTA by the fall of 2025.

In line with his "America First" policy, Trump earlier this month announced reciprocal tariffs on its partners and other nations that impose higher levies on imports from the US.

Rajput regiment's fifth battalion celebrates 200 years of service

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

The 5th Battalion of the Rajput Regiment that has participated in active operations, both before and after Independence and honoured with four consecutive citations in recent times for its exemplary dedication to the nation has turned 200.

Raised in 1825 in Kanpur (then Cawnpore), the 5th Battalion is among the few units of the Indian Army to achieve two centuries of continuous service.

A commemorative postal stamp was unveiled by former Army Chief General (Retired) VK Singh, currently the Governor of Mizoram, at a ceremony held at Delhi Cantonment on March 22 to mark the bicentenary of the battalion, a senior official said on Monday.

"Having participated in active operations, both before and after India's Independence, this illustrious battalion has also been honoured with four consecutive citations in recent times for its exemplary dedication to the nation," an Army official said.

As part of the bicentenary celebrations, numerous ceremonial and outreach activities were conducted along with the release of the special postal stamp and tribute paid by veterans at the war memorials in Jammu and Kashmir, the official said.

During the unveiling ceremony, General (Retired) Singh lauded the battalion's achievements and wished them continued success.

The event brought together veterans and serving officers among others, a testament to the battalion's enduring legacy and the camaraderie that underpins its formidable reputation, the official said.

In a solemn ceremony held later at the Cariappa Parade Ground, Lt General M K Katiyar, General Officer Commanding in Chief of the Western Command, presented new Colours to the 5th Battalion, he said. "These new Colours are a replica of those already held by the Battalion and symbolise the rich heritage and unbroken tradition of bravery that have defined 'Prachand Paanch' over the two centuries," the official said.

During the ceremony, Lt General Katiyar also interacted with the veterans of the battalion, acknowledging their immense contributions in shaping the unit into one of the most distinguished infantry formations in the Indian Army, he said.

Also been honoured with four consecutive citations in recent times for its exemplary dedication to the nation," an Army official said.

CBSE to allow calculators for class 12th accountancy exam

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) is examining a proposal to allow use of basic non-programmable calculators in class 12 accountancy exams to ease cognitive load associated with lengthy calculations, according to board officials.

A panel will be formed to formulate guidelines on their use to ensure uniformity, they added.

While CBSE allows students with special needs in both classes 10 and 12 to use calculators, the Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations (CISCE) allowed class 12 students to use calculators in 2021.

"The board's curriculum committee had proposed that basic, non-programmable calculators be allowed in class 12 accountancy examination, limited to functions necessary for typical financial calculations, such as addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, and percentage calculations," a senior board official said.

"A panel will be formed to provide clear guidelines regarding acceptable calculator models to ensure uniformity and prevent the use of advanced or pro-

grammable devices. The curriculum committee has also argued that allowing calculators will ease the cognitive load of lengthy calculations and help students by reducing their stress and improving exam performance. With the move, the board also aims to enhance analytical responses, align with international standards, and support the National Education Policy (NEP)'s focus on higher-order thinking skills.

Other key proposals being considered by the board include piloting an On-Screen Marking (OSM) system for small-volume subjects and implementing a new re-evaluation process in board exams.

"To reduce the time spent on sending answer books to evaluation centres physically, the examination committee of the board proposed implementing On-Screen Marking (OSM) which will entail scanning and uploading answer sheets for digital evaluation, ensuring a faster and more efficient evaluation process.

"The proposal of OSM may be rolled out on a pilot basis in a few subjects in the main examination in both Classes 10 and 12 science or mathematics supplementary examination and mathematics for revaluation from 2024-25 academic session," the official added.

India to carry out mega naval exercise with African nations next month

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

The Indian Navy will carry out a mega wargame with several African nations next month to expand its overall defence cooperation with the continent, in line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's new vision for engagement with the Global South.

Modi announced the vision MAHASAGAR or "Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions" for India's engagement with the Global South during his recent visit to Mauritius. Deputy Chief of Naval Staff Vice Admiral Tarun Sobti said here on Monday the Indian Navy and the Tanzania Peoples Defence Force will co-host the exercise, titled "AIKEYME" or Africa-India Key Maritime Engagement, off Dar-es-Salaam in Tanzania in mid-April and it is set to be inaugurated by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh.

India and Africa have been cooperating in tackling maritime security threats, such as piracy, illegal activities including trafficking, unregulated and unreported fishing, through sharing of information and surveillance. However, the

"AIKEYME" exercise is likely to significantly expand the ongoing cooperation. "A large-scale multilateral maritime engagement exercise with African countries, titled 'Africa India Key Maritime Engagement' or 'AIKEYME', which means unity in Sanskrit, is an initiative to enhance interoperability with African navies," Vice Admiral Sobti told reporters.

The Indian Navy also announced launch of another maiden initiative called Indian Ocean Ship (IOS) Sagar with an aim to boost cooperation with friendly countries in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR)

The deputy chief of naval staff said the exercise is planned over six days and will see the participation of Comoros, Djibouti, Eritrea, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Seychelles, and South Africa, in addition to the co-hosts. The harbour phase of the exercise would include table-top and command-post exercises on piracy and information

sharing, along with training on seamanship, he said. The sea phase comprises seamanship evolutions, search and rescue, visit board search and seizure, small-arms firing and helicopter operations, he added. The Indian Navy also announced the launch of another maiden initiative called Indian Ocean Ship (IOS) Sagar with an aim to boost cooperation with the friendly countries in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). Under the initiative, one Indian naval ship is being deployed to the southwest of the IOR with a combined crew from India and nine other nations — Comoros, Kenya, Madagascar, Maldives, Mauritius, Mozambique, Seychelles, Sri Lanka and South Africa.

The ship, INS Sunayna, is planned to be deployed for more than a month in April and would be undertaking port calls at Dar-es-Salaam, Nacala, Port Louis, Port Victoria and Male. It will also carry out joint surveillance of exclusive economic zones of Tanzania, Mozambique, Mauritius and Seychelles. The personnel from the other nations to be part of the crew of INS Sunayna would undergo a training capsule of two weeks at various naval professional schools in Kochi.

BJP slams SP MP's remark on Rana Sanga

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

The BJP on Monday criticised the Samajwadi Party (SP) over its Rajya Sabha MP Ramji Lal Suman's remarks on legendary Mewar King Rana Sanga and asked the Congress to clarify its position on the row over the legacy of Chhatrapati Shivaji and Mughal emperor Aurangzeb. Speaking in the Rajya Sabha on March 21, Suman had called Mewar ruler Rana Sanga a "traitor" and said Hindus are his descendants.

Addressing a press conference at the BJP headquarters, senior party leader and former Union minister Ravi Shankar Prasad questioned the "silence" of the Congress over a recent incident of violence in Nagpur over a demand for the removal of Aurangzeb's tomb in Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar in Maharashtra. He asked if the Congress, SP and Left parties have "given a veto to the Muslim radical clergy to have a veto on their politics".

"These days, discussions are happening on historical figures. While someone criticises the great and glorious king like Rana Sanga saying he betrayed the country, others are busy advocating Aurangzeb," Prasad said. This country

will consider Shivaji an inspiration, not Aurangzeb, he said.

"The BJP would like to straightaway ask (Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha) Rahul Gandhi and the Congress as to where they stand in the ongoing controversy with regard to the legacy of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and Aurangzeb," he said.

BJP MPs slammed the SP over Suman's remarks about Rana Sanga, saying it was "indecent and inappropriate" for the Rajya Sabha member to glorify the invaders instead of those who protected the country

Prasad alleged that efforts had been made to "hide" the achievements of Chhatrapati Shivaji when the Congress was in power. The senior BJP leader also asked the Congress to clarify its position as to whether the recent incident of violence in Nagpur was right or wrong.

"Who orchestrated the violence in Nagpur, what was their agenda and their links — all these things are coming to the fore now... the Congress has not said any-

thing about it so far," he noted.

It is a "very serious" matter as such kind of politics would "weaken" the country, he added. He said the ongoing row over "Aurangzeb vs Shivaji" is a question of India's heritage, tradition and culture but the Congress has adopted a "convenient silence" on the issue.

"The Congress must give a reply to this. We want to know. The country also wants to know. Your silence on this issue will not work," he added. BJP MPs slammed the SP over Suman's remarks about Rana Sanga, saying it was "indecent and inappropriate" for the Rajya Sabha member to glorify the invaders instead of those who protected the country.

"Rana Sanga has been the identity of Bharat. Throughout his life, he fought against Babar and other invaders."

"Glorifying an invader instead of the one who protected the country is quite indecent and inappropriate," BJP Rajya Sabha MP and former Uttar Pradesh deputy chief minister Dinesh Sharma said in the Parliament complex.

BJP MP Shashank Mani termed the SP MP's remarks as "condemnable" and people should salute great men like Rana Sanga instead of making such "inappropriate" comments.

Major action taken against encroachments in Gurugram

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

A joint team of the Gurugram Metropolitan Development Authority (GMDA) and Haryana Sheri Vikas Pradhikaran (HSVP) are aggressively working on removal of encroachment in the city. In a recent meeting it was decided that a drive shall be conducted against encroachment and all unauthorised entities and structures in sector 29 area. CEO GMDA, Shyamal Misra has also directed DTP GMDA to be strict in vigil and take string action against encroachment in all important areas of gurugram. He also directed to ensure that the park and its facilities are maintained for the benefit of the public.

Taking further action in this matter, DTP GMDA cum Nodal Officer for Encroachments in Gurugram, RS Bath along with HSVP officers reached the site along with the Enforcement Wing along with 50 police personnel, HSPV team, two JCBs were also deployed for towing illegally parked vehicles. Over 150 unauthorised shanatis adjoining Leisure Valley Park who were earlier directed to

vacate the land have been demolished.

Then team reached a Booth Market in sector 29 where shopkeepers were utilising the public place as their private area and had covered over 5 times the area of their allotted shop spaces. About 3 illegal shops and all public area has been cleared and 2 temporary structures used as cafe have been demolished. The encroachment has been jointly removed along with police force and Hspv team

Additionally, rampant illegal parking of buses which were parked on space allocated for visitor parking has also been removed. Even challans were issued to the buses and other heavy vehicles and even the garages developed within parking area has been demolished

Baath instructed all violators not to do encroachment again otherwise FIR will be lodged, "Sector 29 is amongst the central locations of Gurugram and the Leisure Valley Park is one of the important landmarks of the city. Comprehensive efforts of agencies will continue in same manner and I direct all offenders to stop such encroachment," Baath said.

Virtual shopping augmented to become reality at WAVES

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■ New Delhi

Online Shopping and e-commerce have become synonymous with the modern-day shopping experience but they come with their own set of concerns that an innovation is ready to address. The lack of first-hand product experience in online shopping often leaves customers dissatisfied, resulting in high volumes of product replacements and returns — a recurrent problem that the e-commerce industry has been facing for a long time. Three engineering students from Gujarat has joined hands to solve this problem with their innovative AR (Augmented Reality) solution.

Rajan Dhariyaparmar from Rajkot, Yash Kankoshiya from Surat, and Kaushal Dhragad from Bhavnagar, aim to make Augmented Reality simple and accessible

enough to be experienced without any other application using just your phone or laptop. All three are in the fourth year of BE Computer Engineering at LDRP Institute of Technology and Research.

Rooted in XR Creator Hackathon, Virtual Vortex used Augmented Reality to provide customers with first-hand product experience by providing them with elements like 3D Model Viewer which gives users the option to see and rotate their product of choice in 3D, AR Integration to provide the possibility of placing products in the real world to see, a QR Code Access by entering AR mode by scanning a QR code, without the need for any other application besides a website-ready NPM package that can easily integrate AR. The XR Creator Hackathon is an initiative by Wavelaps, in collaboration with the Ministry of Information and

Broadcasting under the WAVES program.

It was a much-needed national platform that celebrates innovators and gives them national-level recognition.

"Thanks to India's leading XR Communities BharatXR and XDG, teams like Virtual Vortex receive strong expert mentorship and guidance. This strengthens India's ability in XR technologies and is a big step towards making India a world innovation hub," said Rajan on his innovative idea. Virtual Vortex is now ready for the Grand Finale scheduled to be held from May 1 to 4, 2025, at the Jio World Convention Center, Mumbai, where the team will compete with other XR innovators from across the country.

Virtual Vortex has proven that when given access to the right platform and guidance, talent from the remotest corners rises to meet global standards and make



the nation proud. "My parents see the growing potential of the XR industry, especially with initiatives like this hackathon bringing it into the spotlight. While they may not fully grasp the technical side, they recognise its importance

and are proud that I'm part of such an innovative field. They believe that XR becoming a mainstream movement creates exciting opportunities for future and motivates me to contribute to its growth. Their encouragement strengthens my confidence to be part of this transformation," remarked Kaushal Dhragad on his feat which is scheduled to create waves in Mumbai WAVES summit.

When asked what larger picture do he see with this project, Yash Kankoshiya told the Pioneer that it will help transform education, healthcare, and retail through XR, making these services more accessible.

Poll panel to consult Attorney General ex-Delhi HC chief justice

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

Attorney General R Venkatramani, Telecom Disputes Settlement and Appellate Tribunal Chairman Justice DN Patel, former Delhi High Court chief justice, will express their views on Tuesday over simultaneous election bills before a parliamentary committee, sources said.

The LS is likely to extend the tenure of the committee, which was asked to submit its report on first a day of last week of the Parliament ongoing session scheduled to end on April 4, in a day or two as the panel headed by BJP MP PP Chaudhary will need more time to finish its work, they said. The panel is currently in the process of consulting legal experts.

CM Yogi Adityanath completes eight years in office

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ Lucknow

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has completed eight years in office, redefining governance through a blend of Hindutva ideology and people-centric policies. From being a firebrand monk-politician to becoming a two-time chief minister, his leadership has shaped the state's political and economic landscape, earning both admiration and criticism.

Born in Pauri Garhwal, Uttarakhand, Yogi Adityanath rose from a humble background to lead India's most populous state. As the head of Gorakshapeth, he combined religious authority with political influence, pushing Hindutva from the fringes to the mainstream of governance.

Political analyst RN Bajpayee noted, "Yogi Adityanath has successfully positioned Hindutva as a governance model, not just an ideological stance. His leadership has ensured that religious identity is now an integral part of political discourse."

Since becoming Chief Minister in 2017, Adityanath has consolidated the Bharatiya

Janata Party's (BJP) influence in Uttar Pradesh. His unexpected selection for the top post was initially met with skepticism, but he has since emerged as a dominant political figure. His re-election in 2022 reinforced his hold over the state, making him the first Chief Minister in nearly four decades to return to power for a second consecutive term.

In a political landscape where caste equations and identity politics often dictate electoral outcomes, Yogi has shifted the focus towards governance marked by religious nationalism, law and order, and economic progress. His slogan, "I never lose," has proven true both electorally and administratively, making him a formidable political force.

Adityanath's first term focused on transforming Uttar Pradesh's image, particularly in law and order. His administration launched an aggressive crackdown on crime, reinforcing a zero-tolerance policy against corruption and mafia elements. This shift, according to political observer Rajendra Kumar, was pivotal in reshaping the state's perception.



Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath during a press conference on the completion of eight years of the state government in Lucknow

His second term has emphasized reshaping Uttar Pradesh's identity on the national and global stage. Today, the state is no longer seen as crime-ridden or riot-prone but is recognized for its improved governance and economic growth. Several other states now look to implement the "UP model" of governance.

"Yogi Adityanath's governance has altered Uttar Pradesh's narrative," Kumar said. "From a state known for lawlessness and caste-based politics, it is now being projected as an emerging economic powerhouse."

Under his leadership, the state economy has surged from being the seventh-largest in India to the second-largest. Infrastructure projects like Noida's Film City, data parks, international airports in Ayodhya and Jewar, expressways, and the promotion of MSMEs through the One District One Product (ODOP) initiative have fueled this growth.

Beyond policy, Adityanath's governance has challenged political superstitions. Unlike previous chief ministers who avoided visiting Noida due to fears of los-

ing power, he has frequently traveled there, dismissing such beliefs. His austere lifestyle, in line with his identity as a monk, has also reinforced his public image as a disciplined and mission-driven leader.

The Road Ahead: National Role or State Politics?

As Uttar Pradesh prepares for the 2027 Assembly elections, speculation remains over Adityanath's future.

With growing national prominence, some political observers see him as a potential prime ministerial candidate in the coming years.

"His brand of politics has given Hindutva a governance model," Bajpayee said. "Whether he continues in state politics or moves to a larger national role, his influence on Indian politics is undeniable."

With a focus on governance and Hindutva, Yogi Adityanath has carved a unique political identity.

As Uttar Pradesh moves towards further economic growth, his leadership will remain a key talking point in the nation's evolving political landscape.

TMC sword hangs over undisciplined MLAs

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ Kolkata

The top Trinamool Congress leadership is angered and worried about its "disorderly" MLAs who had nearly brought the Government down "by a whisker" this Budget season that ended a couple of days ago.

According to the party sources despite a "whip" issued at the instance of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee about 50 to 100 MLAs absented from the State Assembly. This, on a day when a finance bill and an education bill were to be passed. "Thankfully the BJP leadership had walked out on a different issue ... or else had they demanded a vote on the Bill it would have been the worse day for the party in past 14-15 years of its rule," said a senior minister. "They had the audacity of even ignoring a whip issued at the instance of the Chief Minister," the leader said adding the party disciplinary committee was inquiring into the matter and "if need be strong action will be taken against them."

According to Chief Whip Nirmal Ghosh he had had issued a whip for all MLAs to attend the last two days of the Budget Session on March 19 and 20 because the Chief Minister personally wanted everyone to remain present in the House.

However "the leadership was dismayed by the fact that more than 50 MLAs ... and it could be even near hundred ... remained absent ... either they did not know the what Whip means or else they had some 'intentions' to embarrass the Chief Minister ... the disciplinary committee will find it out and deal with them accordingly," the leader said.

State Parliamentary Affairs Minister Sobhandeb Chattopadhyay has asked Ghosh to submit a report on the number of leaders who generally remain absent from the House and who skipped the Session on the specific days when they were asked to do so, the leader said. The TMC would not however provide the names of the MLAs who skipped the House on the given dates.

The inquiry will be complete by Wednesday and action will be taken by the end of this week senior leaders said adding, "our supreme leader Mamata Banerjee never encourages indiscipline ... particularly when some instructions come from the top ... the Government would have been hugely embarrassed had the BJP remained present on that day and had the bills been put to vote ... we would have to withdraw the bills," the minister said without hazing a guess whether according to rules the Government would itself have collapsed or the Opposition had

asked for the Chief Minister's resignation in the least in case of "non passage" of the bills.

Though the BJP leadership would not comment on "TMC's internal matters" some of its leaders said how a number of Trinamool legislators were in touch with the saffron outfit and did not rule out a link between their defiance of the whip and the factionalism that was plaguing the party.

Incidentally the development takes place at a time when there are rumors that there is a deep schism between TMC general secretary Abhishek Banerjee and the Chief Minister who is also his aunt.

Though the junior Banerjee earlier said that he would never ditch the Chief Minister even if he is beheaded, inside sources said there was a serious churning within the party between the old timers loyal to an aging Mamata Banerjee and the Gen N faithful to Abhishek.

When asked to comment on the issue the TMC minister said that the absence of the MLAs from the House should not be seen in the backdrop of factionalism as "there is no one in TMC who can win without the blessings of Mamata Banerjee ... and so there is no one in the party who will dare to defy her ... still we are not taking chances and the truth will soon be found out."

Home Minister Amit Shah visit to Bengal postponed

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Kolkata

The three-day Bengal visit of Union Home Minister Amit Shah later this month has been postponed, State BJP president Sukanto Majumdar has said. Shah was scheduled to visit Bengal between March 27 and 29 to take part in some organisational meetings.

Majumdar said that the visit was postponed as it coincided with Eid ul Fitr.

Shah was to visit Bengal at a time when there was a churning within the State unit regarding the election/selection of a new State president as Majumdar was likely to vacate his present post on account of his becoming a Union Minister.

There were plans to get a new State president before Shah's visit but no name has yet been finalized, inside sources said. "It is important that a new State president placed so as to discuss the strategic and organizational issues with a leader as high as Amit Shah ji ... we hope we get a new State president by when he comes on a new date," a BJP State committee leader said.

According to the party rules more than half of the district presidents have to be

elect before a State president's name is announced.

The Bengal BJP which has 42 organisational districts had recently elected 25 district presidents and as such there was no problem in getting a new State president. However inside sources said that the appointment of a new State president was being delayed as a number of names were doing the rounds for the post. While one faction wants Majumdar to continue in his post, a second group wants reappointment of former MP and senior leader Dilip Ghosh to be appointed in his place. Ghosh had been the party's State president from 2015 to 2021 between which the Bengal BJP witnessed maximum jump winning 18 parliamentary seats and 77 Assembly seats.

There are other names which are doing the rounds too. These include those of State Opposition Leader Suwendu Adhikari, former MP Locket Chatterjee, and former State president Rahul Sinha, sources said. Though Adhikari has gone on record saying that he was not in the race considering the one-man-one-post formula sources close to him said that he too was interested in becoming the State president.

Aircraft carrying Himachal deputy CM misses landing at Shimla's airport

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Shimla

An aircraft carrying over 30 passengers, including Himachal Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Mukesh Agnihotri and Director General of Police Atul Verma, from Delhi missed the landing spot at Jubbarhatti Airport Monday morning. According to eyewitnesses, the aircraft crossed the runway and hit the studs at the edge of the airstrip. No casualties were reported.

The flight had taken off from Delhi after routine checks and engineers are inspecting the aircraft to determine if there was a technical glitch, airport authorities said.

"The runway is small and we cannot deny this fact. As a layman, I can say that while landing, the plane did not touch the ground where it was supposed to and came to the end of the airstrip," Agnihotri told reporters. "Only the airport authority or the Directorate General of Civil Aviation can tell what happened, but I can say that there was a problem in landing," he said, adding, "We could see that the runway was ending."

Person with close links to Kerala CM sentenced to life imprisonment

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan suffered a major setback on Monday as a person close to him was sentenced to undergo life imprisonment along with seven others by a court in Thalassery in connection with the gruesome murder of a former CPI(M) worker in 2005.

Manoraj Narayanan, brother of P M Manoj, the powerful media advisor to Pinarayi Vijayan and seven others were directly and physically involved in the murder. Manoj and family are close to the chief minister and his family.

The victim Sooraj had left the CPI(M) on his own and was planning to join the BJP when the murderers struck. In the CPI(M) in Kerala, members are not permitted to quit the party. The party leadership usually expels or order the execution of the troublemaker. What stands out in this particular case is the link between Manoraj Narayanan, a district level leader of the CPI(M) and the CMO.

Allahabad HC declines quash case against man for intimate videos

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ Prayagraj

The Allahabad High Court has declined to quash criminal proceedings against a man accused of uploading an intimate video of himself and his wife on Facebook, emphasising that marriage does not grant a husband ownership over his wife or diminish her right to privacy and autonomy.

Justice Vinod Diwakar, while dismissing the petition to quash the charge sheet, remarked, "By uploading an intimate video on Facebook, the applicant (husband) has gravely breached the sanctity of the marital relationship. A husband is expected to honour the trust, faith, and confidence reposed in him by his wife, especially in the context of their intimate relationship."

The court further observed that sharing such content constitutes a violation of the confidentiality inherent in a marital bond.

"This breach of trust undermines the very foundation of marriage and is not protected by the marital bond," the order stated.

Stressing the wife's individuality and rights, the court added, "A wife is not an

extension of her husband but an individual with her own rights, desires, and agency. Respecting her bodily autonomy and privacy is not just a legal obligation but a moral imperative in fostering a truly equal relationship."

The case was registered in Mirzapur district against Pradumn Yadav under Section 67 of the Information Technology (IT) Act. His wife alleged that Yadav secretly recorded an intimate act without her consent, uploaded it on Facebook, and later shared it with her cousin and other villagers.

The husband's counsel argued that since the complainant is his legally wedded wife, the charges under Section 67 of the Information Technology Act were not applicable, adding that there was a possibility of reconciliation between the couple.

However, the Additional Government Advocate opposed the plea, asserting that legal marriage does not grant the husband the right to make or distribute an obscene video of his wife.

The court, siding with the prosecution, refused to quash the case, reinforcing the principle that privacy and consent remain paramount in a marital relationship.

Assam Assembly Deputy Speaker attacked

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Guwahati

The Assam Assembly on Monday witnessed an uproarious situation with the ruling party alleging that Deputy Speaker Numal Momin was attacked by Congress MLA Nurul Huda just outside the House, leading to adjournment.

The Congress legislators attended the Assam Assembly wearing black dresses to protest against ruling BJP MLA Rupiyoti Kurmi, who verbally abused opposition MLAs and tried to physically attack them inside the House last week.

Before the session started, the Congress legislators held a sit-in protest outside the Speaker's chamber in the Assembly building demanding action against Kurmi.

"I got a WhatsApp from Momin that he was attacked by Nurul Huda and he is now hospitalised. I request the Speaker to file a police case as it happened outside the House and then police will investigate it," Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said in between the Question Hour.

Moments before that, Momin was seen sitting inside the House and attended the session. He left the House after some time.

Speaker Biswajit Daimary said he has asked the officials to check the matter.



Deputy Speaker Dr Numal Momin seen in Assembly with a bandage in hand. He said after he was injured due to assault by opposition members, he had to consult a doctor and get treatment

Reacting to CM's allegations, Leader of the Opposition Debabrata Saikia demanded a House Committee to investigate the matter instead of giving a police case as it was reported to take place inside the Assembly building.

The opposition comprising Congress, AIUFD and CPI(M) went to the Well of the House and protested against Kurmi and ruling party's statement regarding the alleged attack on Momin.

Led by Sarma, the treasury benches too countered with shouting and said Momin, a tribal, was attacked by the opposition. "This will set a bad precedence that an indigenous tribal has been attacked inside the Assembly complex. This is going to be a big issue," the CM said.

Work to link Chhattisgarh's Naxal-hit people to mainstream in final stage: President

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Raipur

President Droupadi Murmu on Monday said the work to integrate people affected by Left Wing Extremism to the society's mainstream has reached the final stage in Chhattisgarh and expressed confidence that the state will soon get rid of the Naxal menace.

Addressing the Chhattisgarh legislative assembly as a part of its silver jubilee year celebration, Murmu said the House has set the highest standards of democratic traditions.

It has presented a unique example of excellent parliamentary conduct not only to the rest of India but also to all the democratic systems of the world, she said.

The president also appreciated that the 90-member state assembly has 19 women legislators and the number of female voters in the 2023 state elections was more than males.

All the MLAs should make efforts that the number of women members increases in the next assembly, Murmu said.

An increase in the number of women legislators will be in line with the spirit of "Nari Shakti Vandan Adhinyam", she said.

"The task of integrating people affected by Left Wing Extremism into the main-

stream of the society has reached its final and decisive stage. I have been told that people of the Naxal-affected areas of Chhattisgarh want to move ahead on the path of development," she said.

"I am confident that you (the state) all will soon succeed in your efforts to completely free Chhattisgarh from extremism and add a golden chapter to the history of the state," she added.

There are 19 women MLAs in this House. In the 2023 assembly elections, the number of women voters was more than that of men. Thus, this House has received special support from the mothers, sisters and daughters of Chhattisgarh, Droupadi Murmu said.

"I request the women MLAs to always be ready to promote all the sisters working in every field of life. When all women promote other women working in various fields of the state, then men will also pay attention and the path will be paved for the development of women, whether she is a teacher, officer, social worker or entrepreneur, scientist or artist, labourer or farmer," President said.

"Our sisters make their place in the outside world by struggling hard while fulfilling their day-to-day domestic responsibilities. When all the sisters empower each



President Droupadi Murmu with Chhattisgarh Governor Ramen Deka and Assembly Speaker Raman Singh during the silver jubilee function of the state Assembly in Raipur

other, our society will become even stronger and sensitive. In this House, all the MLAs, especially the women members, should try to increase the number of women members in the next assembly," she added.

Late politician Mini Mata, who reflected the essence of Chhattisgarh, has a very respectable place in the parliamentary tradition of India, Murmu noted.

During the tenure of the first Lok Sabha, she was the first woman public represen-

tative from Chhattisgarh region to go to Parliament and was a Lok Sabha MP for five consecutive terms.

Mini Mata, who herself came from a deprived class, worked continuously for the welfare and uplift of the people, she said.

Hailing the Chhattisgarh legislative assembly, Murmu said it has made an extraordinary rule of the automatic suspension of members who enter the well during the House proceedings and has followed it. Murmu also expressed happiness that in the 25 years of the Chhattisgarh assembly (since the formation of the state in 2000), marshals have never been used in the House.

So far, the Chhattisgarh Vidhan Sabha has passed 565 bills, many of which are inspired by the goals of 'Antyodaya' and inclusive development, she said.

The president also appealed to policymakers of the state to ensure environmental conservation while moving ahead on the path of development.

There are ample opportunities for development in sectors like cement, mineral industry, steel, aluminium and power generation in Chhattisgarh, she said.

"This beautiful state is rich in lush green forests, waterfalls, and other natural boons. Your state has to move ahead on the path

of modern development and at the same time ensure the protection of the environment," she said.

All policy makers of the state have the responsibility to establish a balance between development and nature, Murmu said. "It is also your responsibility to connect all sections of the society with the journey of modern development," she added. Murmu said Baba Guru Ghasidas' (medieval-era social reformer) message of "Manke-Manke Ek Saman", which means all humans are equal, is there to guide all MLAs in the state, Murmu said.

The assembly members have to fulfil the resolution of social reforms that he had taken about 250 years ago for equality of the deprived sections, backward classes and women and build a better Chhattisgarh based on equality and social harmony, she said. "I am confident that the legislative assembly of Chhattisgarh will continue to provide proper direction to the overall progress of the state," Murmu said.

Governor Ramen Deka and assembly speaker Raman Singh also addressed the MLAs.

Earlier, Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai and Leader of Opposition Charan Das Mahant welcomed President Murmu to the House and expressed gratitude to her.

Editor's TAKE

Need for judicial accountability

The erosion of judicial integrity weakens the very foundation of democracy

The judiciary is often regarded as the last bastion of justice, fairness, and accountability. However, recent reports of large sums of unaccounted cash allegedly found in the residence of a judge in the Delhi High Court have once again raised serious concerns about corruption within the judicial system. Despite numerous allegations of corruption, impeachment proceedings against a Supreme Court or High Court judge have been initiated only four times in India's history. This raises pressing questions about the effectiveness of the current mechanisms in place to tackle judicial corruption and the urgent need for reform.

Our judicial system provides two primary mechanisms to deal with allegations of corruption against Supreme Court and High Court judges. The first is an in-house procedure established by the Supreme Court in 1999. Under this mechanism, complaints against judges are examined internally by the Chief Justice of India or the concerned High Court Chief Justice. If the allegations are deemed serious, a three-member committee comprising senior judges conducts an inquiry. However, this process is informal, lacks transparency, and rarely results in significant disciplinary action beyond an advisory to resign or a withdrawal of judicial work.

The second mechanism is impeachment by Parliament, a process enshrined in the Indian Constitution. However, the high threshold required—support from a two-thirds majority in both houses—makes impeachment an impractical tool. It is indeed a tedious process which hardly ever result in impeachment.

It is intriguing why corrupt judges remain unpunished. Several factors contribute to the de facto impunity enjoyed by judges. The in-house procedure lacks transparency, as inquiry reports remain confidential. The public and legal community remain unaware of actions taken against corrupt judges. But the biggest reason why judges go unpunished for their misdeeds is contempt laws. India's strict contempt of court laws make it difficult to openly discuss or investigate corruption allegations against judges. This suppresses public scrutiny and independent journalistic investigations. Besides, unlike other government institutions, the judiciary largely regulates itself, leading to a conflict of interest. An independent body to oversee judicial conduct is absent. Impeachment, the only constitutional method for removal, is highly politicised and seldom pursued, making it an ineffective deterrent.

To restore public trust and ensure accountability within the judiciary, the transparency in the system is the first condition. The in-house procedure must be made more transparent. Inquiry reports should be made public, and disciplinary actions against judges must be disclosed to prevent a culture of secrecy.

Contempt laws must be relaxed to allow greater public discourse and media scrutiny of judicial corruption. Establishing an autonomous commission to investigate judicial corruption, comprising retired judges, legal experts, and public representatives, would ensure impartiality and reduce conflicts of interest. The current impeachment mechanism is ineffective due to its high procedural threshold. Judges should be required to publicly disclose their assets and financial dealings periodically, similar to elected officials. This can serve as a deterrent.

The judiciary serves as the bedrock of democracy, and any erosion of its integrity weakens the very foundation of justice.

A system or institution is only as strong as the individuals who uphold it. If those in positions of power falter, there must be a robust and fool-proof mechanism to safeguard the sanctity of the judiciary and restore public trust.

Leaderspeak

“



I have been a legislator for 36 years and I am well aware of my responsibilities. I possess basic common sense and would never propose altering the Constitution. My remarks have been taken out of context. They are misquoting me. I merely pointed out that several changes occur over time due to judicial rulings. Nowhere, did I suggest that we intend to modify the Constitution. We are a national party, we know what the Constitution is.

”

DK SHIVAKUMAR, DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER OF KARNATAKA

Reviving the Yamuna

The newly elected Delhi government has placed the sustainable revitalisation of the Yamuna River at the forefront of its environmental agenda



The recently elected Delhi government has prioritised the sustainable cleaning and revitalisation of the Yamuna River in its environmentally friendly development plan. In line with this vision, the central government aims to convert the Yamuna into an exemplary river, establishing a standard for analogous restoration initiatives in other urban areas. Although efforts to reduce pollution from industrial effluents, drainage systems, and waste management are essential, the lasting effectiveness of this mission will significantly depend on scientific afforestation along the riverbanks.

The effort to beautify the banks of the Yamuna is an essential move towards revitalising the river's previous splendour. By combining sustainable tree planting with pollution management strategies, Delhi's authorities seek to establish a healthier, more robust river system that can act as an example for urban river restoration throughout the nation.

A crucial part of this strategy involves the organised planting of indigenous tree varieties and herbal plants. Creating herbal gardens in key locations throughout the river basin could greatly improve the ecological well-being of the Yamuna. This type of vegetation acts as a natural filter, capturing pollutants such as chemicals, fertilisers, and sediments before they enter the river, thus enhancing water quality. Furthermore, these plants offer essential habitats for birds, insects, and animals, promoting biodiversity and reinforcing the local ecosystem. Apart from ecological advantages, planting trees along the riverbanks is essential for stabilising soil and averting erosion, thereby lowering the chances of land degradation and flooding. The deeply established vegetation helps in groundwater replenishment by enabling rainwater to seep into the soil instead of being wasted as surface runoff.

Creating herbal gardens cum corridors that include medicinal plants, as well as indigenous trees and flora, close to the Yamuna River presents a unique opportunity with extensive advantages. In addition to improving the river's ecological well-being, this project presents considerable economic opportunities by providing medicinal herbs to the Ayurvedic and pharmaceutical sectors. The growing of these plants supports the Delhi government's larger initiatives to restore the Yamuna, tackle water pollution, and encourage sustainable water resource management.

As the demand for medicinal plants increases, species including Indian Barberrry (Daruhaldi), Licorice (Mulethi), Bael, Isabgol, Atis, Guggul, Amla, Senna, Brahmi, Jatamansi, Madhunashini, Kalmegh, Shatavari, Ashwagandha, Chirayata, Katuki,

Shankhpushpi, Ashoka, Giloy, Kokum, and Safed Musli are especially valued in Ayurvedic medicine. Throughout India, farmers growing these crops-like Shankhpushpi, Atis, Kuth, Kutki, Kapikachhu, and Karanjahave experienced notable rises in their earnings, aiding the growth of the Ayurvedic agricultural industry.

Several riverside plant species can further support this effort, including Latjeera, Moringa (Sahjan), Holy Basil (Tulsi), Khokli (Hulhul), Billy Goat Weed (Gandhi Buti), Garundi, Slender Amaranth (Chaulai), Apple of Sodom (Aak), Coco Grass (Nagarmotha), Egyptian Crowfoot (Murag), and Marvel Grass (Chimni). These plants not only contribute to ecological balance but also offer medicinal properties. For example, Latjeera is traditionally used to treat malaria, dysentery, asthma, hypertension, and diabetes, while Moringa is renowned for its high nutritional value and water purification abilities. Similarly, Tulsi plays a vital role in traditional Indian medicine, recognised for its immunity-boosting properties. Other suitable species for afforestation along the Yamuna include Mangium Babool, which thrives in alluvial soils, Peppermint, known for aiding digestion, Tamarind, which adapts well to various soil types and Senna, valued for its medicinal applications. Additionally, Chamomile is widely used for its calming effects, while Lemongrass, Shatavari, and Chebulic Myrobalan (Harad) offer both ecological and health benefits.

Beyond their medicinal value, these plants serve as natural water purifiers by filtering pollutants and improving water quality. They absorb harmful gases, mitigate noise pollution, reduce heat, and capture dust, making them effective air and water purifiers.

The cultivation of medicinal plants also supports biodiversity by creating habitats for diverse species, strengthening ecological balance.

Importantly, this initiative offers significant economic prospects for local communities. The growing, handling, and selling of medicinal plants can create a reliable source of revenue, encouraging business initiatives and enhancing the local economy.

Additionally, conserving these plants aids in protecting traditional knowledge systems, guaranteeing that indigenous wisdom is transmitted across generations. Promoting herbal medicine can lessen dependence on synthetic drugs, fostering a transition to natural and sustainable healthcare methods. Thus by employing a comprehensive strategy that combines ecological restoration, economic development, and the safeguarding of traditional knowledge, the rejuvenation of the Yamuna River can act as a blueprint for sus-

tainable management of urban rivers throughout India. A thoughtfully designed program aimed at nurturing and maintaining medicinal plants by the Yamuna River can act as an effective means for ecological restoration and economic growth. By encouraging areas rich in biodiversity, this initiative could draw visitors interested in traditional healing methods, thus boosting eco-tourism and strengthening economic sustainability.

For the project to achieve meaningful success, an inclusive strategy that actively involves the local farming community is crucial. Farmers cultivating in the Yamuna floodplain must be recognised as key stakeholders, serving as ecological guardians in the river restoration initiative. Instead of seeing their involvement as a hurdle, these farmers ought to be viewed as essential collaborators in this distinctive urban medicinal planting initiative. Globally, countries like Singapore and South Korea have effectively rejuvenated urban riverbanks while integrating sustainable agricultural practices involving local farmers, already engaged in cultivating vegetables and other crops in the region. India can draw from these examples by adopting a balanced approach that maintains agriculture while enhancing the health of the Yamuna.

(The writer is a former Executive Director, National Institute of Disaster Management and DG-AYUSH, Health Department, Bihar Government. Views expressed are personal)



SATENDRA SINGH

Keeping up with the Joneses

Opinion



SHARMILA VAIDYA

Keeping up with the Joneses is an old phrase that refers to the constant pressure of "keeping up" with the social status and wealth of one's friends and neighbours.

Research shows that this phrase originated with the Jones family, a wealthy and prominent New Yorker who began building elegant and grand mansions. In response, other New Yorkers tried to outdo them by constructing even more elaborate homes in the Hudson Valley.

In 1853, Elizabeth S. Jones built Wyndcliffe, a 24-room ornate mansion designed in the style of a Scottish castle. Soon, other wealthy families started building extravagant estates to showcase their wealth. This competition gave rise to the phrase "keeping up with the Joneses."

Interestingly, the sentiment behind this phrase has persisted even to this day. I have observed similar scenarios within my circle of friends. I remember, Anita and Sheila had been best friends for years. When Anita bought a beautiful three-bedroom house in an upscale neighbourhood, she couldn't wait to show her house to Sheila. "This place is amazing!" remarked Sheila as she admired the high ceilings and designer kitchen. It must have cost a fortune!

Anita beamed. "It was a bit pricey, but totally worth it.

The neighborhood is great, and the schools are top notch."

That evening Sheila went home feeling restless and envious of her friend. She and her husband had been considering upgrading their townhouse. Within three weeks, they found a house that was much bigger and grander than their friend's, located in a very upscale neighbourhood. However, they ended up spending more than they had budgeted. While they achieved their goal of finding a more impressive home, the financial strain left them constantly stressed.

It took me by surprise, when I read in the Forbes magazine that the average size of a home has tripled in the past 50 years, even with the family size consistently getting smaller. In addition, one in 10 Americans have to rent a storage unit, because they can't fit all of their stuff inside their giant homes.

Here is another scenario I observed. David, one of our friends, was ecstatic when he bought a luxury car. However, his excitement was short lived, when a friend arrived in a Mercedes - a more expensive car and a true status symbol. Suddenly, the pride David once felt began to fade. The same car he had proudly shown off to his neighbours and friends no longer seemed impressive. Before long, he stopped parking it outside his garage, as what once brought him joy now felt overshadowed.

There are many similar instances that we observe daily.

We take immense pleasure in portraying our best moments in life to the world, be it an expensive vacation, designer clothes, the latest gadgets or our busy social calendar. We are constantly trying to flaunt our perfect lifestyle to the world, especially on social media. Social media is one of the most powerful sources of displaying our choicest moments, which puts us in constant pressure and competition with each other. But why do we behave this way?

One can argue that it's just human behaviour, influenced by peer pressure, consumerism, commercialisation, social media-or all of the above. However, there should be an understanding that this facade can make us feel inadequate, burdened with financial stress with mounting debt and emotional stress in the form of anxiety and depression. It is like two parallel lines endlessly chasing each other, never quite meeting. Does it ever end? Maybe—when we stop measuring our worth against others and start defining fulfillment on our terms.

Instead of chasing status symbols, we should focus on what genuinely brings happiness—strong relationships, meaningful experiences, and financial stability. Breaking free from this cycle requires shifting our perspective, redefining success, and embracing gratitude. After all, wealth is not about what we own but about how fulfilled we feel.

The moment we stop comparing and start living for ourselves, we finally win the race that never truly existed.

(The writer is Houston based educator and author. Views expressed are personal)

Letters to the Editor

Regulating the coaching centres

Madam—It is a appreciable step of Rajasthan government to enact "The Rajasthan Coaching Centres (Control and Regulation) Bill" which aims at regulating Coaching Centres to curb the menace of student suicides which we find in the media frequently. Due to the toxic environment of coaching centres and particularly at Rajasthan's Kota which has become the country's education hub and it has been playing havoc with the young minds.

The Speaker Om Parksh Birla is member of Parliament from Kota is also trying to find the ways how the best can be done in this direction. Kota, home to the coaching market worth ₹5000 Crore, has become a killing field where dreams die at the altar of unreasonable expectations fuelled by parental and peer pressure. Here it is worth mentioning that parents expectations play a major part in this unholy happenings and it is expected from the parents that they should be aware about the actual capabilities of their sons or daughters. A sense of numbness has set in with several cases of student suicides being reported every year for over a decade now. At least six students are reported to have died by suicide in the town since the start of this year. The Bill mandates that coaching centres with over 50 students must register and meet specific standards to qualify for registration, in a bid to ensure greater accountability.

YASH PAL RALHAN | JALANDHAR

Carnage in Gaza continues

Madam—Refer to, "Israel strikes again, kill 26 Palestinians in Gaza" (March 24). The Gaza crisis is a stark illustration of the global order's failures, revealing Western double standards and the impotence of international institutions. The conflict transcends the Israeli-Palestinian dynamic, exposing a systemic breakdown in upholding international law and human rights. The disproportionate response and the international community's inability to hold Israel accountable highlight a disturbing trend.

Powerful nations, particularly in the West, often prioritise geopolitical interests over universal principles, leading to accusations of hypocrisy and eroding the credibility of international norms. The silence or muted criticism from these actors emboldens perpetrators and deepens the sense of injustice among those affected. International institutions like the UN, designed to prevent such conflicts, appear powerless. Security Council resolutions are vetoed, and humanitarian aid is often insufficient or obstructed. This impotence fosters a sense of disillusionment, particularly in the global South, where Western-led governance models are increasingly viewed with skepticism. The selective application of international law further fuels this perception, creating a breeding ground for resentment and instability.

AMARJEET KUMAR | HAZARIBAGH

Government sets the goal to eradicate TB

Madam—Tuberculosis (TB) is not merely a physical ailment, it is a mirror reflecting societal inequalities, economic hardships, and human insensitivity. This disease primarily spreads among those trapped in the vicious cycle of poverty, malnutrition, and unsanitary living conditions. Indian society has long perceived it as a curse, yet the reality remains that it can afflict anyone, regardless of their social or economic background.

The Government of India has set an ambitious goal of eradicating TB by 2025, five years ahead of the global target of 2030. Recent data indicates a 17.7 per cent decline in TB cases between 2015 and 2023, with a 21.4 per cent reduction in mortality rates. While this progress is encouraging, the stark reality remains that over 2.7 Million new cases emerged in 2023 alone, underscoring the deep-rooted nature of the disease. Under the "Nikshay Poshan Yojana," TB patients receive a monthly allowance of ₹500 as nutritional support, but this amount falls short of meeting their dietary needs. Furthermore, the rise in drug-resistant TB (MDR-TB) cases is making treatment increasingly complex and prolonged.

The fight against TB extends beyond the medical domain; it must also be waged in the realm of social awareness. This disease does not merely inflict physical suffering, it also subjects patients to societal exclusion and mental distress.

SACHIN TRIPATHI | SATNA

KUDOS TO THE PIONEER FOR ITS BRAND NEW LOOK

I am a long-time reader of the Pioneer and I just wanted to take a moment to appreciate the incredible transformation the newspaper has undergone. A year ago, there wasn't even a dedicated Vivacity page and now, the entire features section has evolved into something truly special. It's amazing to see a newspaper giving such dedicated space to books, art, culture and fashion, very few do that. The way the Pioneer is showcasing fashion even in today's edition is absolutely refreshing.

I'm writing this email specifically because of Agenda (Sunday, March 23). The interview with Saurabh Shukla, conducted by Sakshi Priya, was one of the best I've ever read. It didn't sound like another promotional piece, it felt raw, personal. The way it was structured, the choice of photographs and the overall presentation, everything was just perfect. As a reader, it feels immersive, like I am



actually part of the interview while reading it. Thank you for delivering such exceptional content. Also, I have to mention how much I appreciate the food section; it's such a great addition! Thank you for making the Pioneer such an engaging and meaningful read. It's a pleasure to pick up the paper every day.

AMIT DAS | KOLKATA

Reviving India's Sacred Groves

The historical, ecological, and socio-cultural importance of Sacred Groves cannot be overstated. There is an urgent need for a holistic conservation strategy to protect them, writes BKP SINHA and ARVIND JHA

FIRST Column



exploitation. This protection has allowed them to flourish as pristine ecosystems, providing sanctuaries for a rich diversity of plant and animal life. They serve as vital water recharge zones, maintaining groundwater levels and supporting agricultural activities in surrounding areas. Unlike artificial gene banks, which require significant energy, incur high costs and remain vulnerable to both natural and human-made disasters, these ecological havens offer a more sustainable and self-sustaining alternative for conserving genetic diversity.

Beyond their environmental significance, these sacred spaces hold immense cultural and spiritual value for local communities. They often serve as sacred sites for worship, places for social gatherings, and centres for traditional healing practices. They are also closely tied to local stories, myths, and rituals, which help bring people together and strengthen their bond with nature.

In today's hurried lives, we often find ourselves disconnected from the natural world. These sanctuaries provide a much-needed retreat, offering a peaceful setting to pause, reflect, and release the stresses of daily life. Surrounded by greenery and the calming sounds of nature, they help us find inner balance and tranquillity, reminding us of our deep connection to the natural world and the life around us.

Despite their immense value, only around 14,000 Sacred Groves have been officially documented. Experts, however, estimate that the actual number

could be as high as 100,000 to 150,000, underscoring the urgent need for comprehensive identification and conservation efforts to protect these invaluable ecological and cultural treasures.

The gradual loss of traditional beliefs and cultural practices that once safeguarded these spaces has left them increasingly vulnerable. Modern development projects, changes in land use, and agricultural expansion are encroaching on their boundaries, leading to deforestation and soil degradation. The spread of invasive species and the decline of village grazing lands (Gairans) further exacerbate the strain on these fragile ecosystems. Unfortunately, current conservation strategies often fail to address the underlying causes of degradation, as they remain disconnected from the lived realities of local communities. The politicisation of conservation, where short-term gains outweigh long-term sustainability, weakens the effectiveness of protection measures. Most importantly, the marginalisation of traditional custodians, the very people who have safeguarded these groves for centuries, deprives these ecosystems of their most effective protectors. Weak enforcement of legal frameworks also exposes these ancient landscapes to unchecked exploitation and degradation.

These treasured landscapes now stand at a critical crossroads, demanding immediate action for their survival. The Supreme Court's decision to classify Sacred Groves as "forests" and "community reserves" is a significant step, but effective

conservation requires a multi-pronged approach.

This should begin with thorough demarcation and surveys, both on the ground and through satellite imagery, to clearly define the boundaries of Sacred Groves and prevent further encroachment. Equally important are socio-economic surveys to understand the needs and dependencies of local communities for developing sustainable management plans that balance ecological protection with human welfare.

Biodiversity assessments are essential for identifying endemic or endangered species and prioritising conservation efforts in those areas. Similarly, studying ecosystem services—such as nutrient cycling, pollination, seed dispersal, and natural pest management—is essential for maintaining ecological balance, supporting agriculture, and combating climate change. These services, though often overlooked, are fundamental to both environmental health and human livelihoods.

A comprehensive economic valuation of Sacred Groves, encompassing both direct and indirect benefits, is crucial for illustrating their true worth. This valuation should include the cost of lost ecosystem services, the potential for sustainable economic activities, and the long-term economic implications of environmental degradation. By quantifying these economic factors, policymakers and communities can better understand the tangible benefits of investing in the conservation of these vital ecosystems. This economic lens provides a powerful argument for inte-

grating Sacred Grove protection into broader economic development strategies, demonstrating that environmental conservation and economic prosperity are not mutually exclusive, but rather, interdependent.

To preserve these ancient ecosystems for future generations, fostering a sense of ownership among local communities is essential. This sense of responsibility can be nurtured through active community engagement, particularly by involving women, who play a crucial role in sustainable conservation. Restoring degraded groves by removing invasive species, addressing encroachments, and establishing local monitoring systems can effectively secure their long-term protection.

However, to implement these strategies effectively, it is essential to streamline the roles of village-level committees to eliminate redundancy and enhance coordination. Selecting appropriate legal and institutional frameworks tailored to each grove's specific needs—such as utilising the Wildlife Protection Act for groves near wildlife areas or the Forest Rights Act for forest-dwelling communities—ensures more effective management. In non-forested regions, empowering Gram Sabhas or integrating Joint Forest Management programs can provide sustainable conservation solutions. These tailored approaches align conservation efforts with the unique circumstances of each Sacred Grove.

The Supreme Court has directed the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change to formulate a comprehensive policy for the nationwide governance and management of Sacred Groves. This policy must account for the intricate relationship between various legal frameworks, such as the Village Panchayat Acts, the Wildlife Protection Act, the Forest Rights Act, the Panchayat (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act, and the Biological Diversity Act, to establish a robust protective framework. Ensuring that all Sacred Groves are officially classified as 'forests' under the Supreme Court's time-bound process (Writ Petition (Civil) No 1164/2023) is also vital for their protection.

Safeguarding these ecological and cultural treasures requires the unwavering commitment of all stakeholders—communities, policymakers, and conservationists alike. The urgency to act cannot be overstated, as their decline threatens not only ecological balance but also the cultural ethos that binds communities together. Empowering local communities and integrating their traditional ecological knowledge into conservation strategies are essential for ensuring the long-term preservation of these invaluable sites. Ultimately, the enduring legacy of Sacred Groves underscores how conservation and culture can coexist harmoniously, fostering a sustainable relationship between humanity and nature.

(The writers are former principal chief conservators of forests, UP and Maharashtra. Views expressed are personal)

Rising crimes against the elderly: A growing concern for senior citizens

The recent murder of an elderly couple in Northwest Delhi on Tuesday morning has, besides shaking the conscience of society, raised serious concerns about ensuring the security of elderly people in this country.

Tuesday's is not a single incident, rather incidents of crime against elderly persons frequently occur throughout the country, especially in bigger towns and metros.

The crimes against senior citizens in India have been continuously rising over the years. The NCRB Data from states is quite disappointing and shows that crimes against elderly people are increasing day by day. This makes it necessary to understand and address the causes that lead to crimes against the elderly and also to find ways to deal with this problem.

Past data reveals that a variety of crimes such as theft, robbery, cheating, forgery, and even murders frequently occur with elderly persons in India. At present, the biggest threat to elderly people is the commission of cybercrimes such as fraud and cheating with them by cyber fraudsters.

In India, particularly, those seniors are more susceptible to crimes who live in isolation from family and society, lack friends, and lack access to communication and transportation facilities etc. A lot of elderly people are gullible, forget things easily, and might feel ashamed to acknowledge they were harmed.

The criminals use data such as a victim's social security number, bank account details, PAN number, and driver's license number to finish a transaction or obtain additional personal information about them.

Security of elderly persons, though, should remain a primary concern, but, is often ignored. Compared to younger people, the vulnerability and susceptibility of elderly people to the commission of crime is obvious due to various reasons.

An increasing lack of physical and mental strength and easily believing people are among a few of the factors that make the elderly vulnerable to crime. Moreover, given the increasing number of nuclear families, with children living away from their parents, elderly people, especially, in urban households, are compelled to live alone which puts them at risk further.

The circumstances making older people live alone make them more vulnerable. The World Population Ageing Report from the United Nations estimates that 90 Million older people live alone globally.

Seniors who live alone in large homes are particularly vulnerable to physical crimes and become a target for financial scammers.

According to data from HelpeIndia, there are approximately at least 112 Million people over the age of 60 in India, and forty per cent

of them live alone. As a result, they are easy targets for criminal activity and are more likely to experience severe effects from abuse.

One of the main causes of elderly people's vulnerability is their lack of involvement in the community. Participating in social activities makes people feel safer than isolating themselves from others. Elders, who are unable to communicate with others and live alone, also remain apprehensive about their security and live under constant fear and anxiety.

In India, the joint and undivided family system played a significant role in the maintenance of traditional culture and also provided various types of security to family members. Older people were given better roles, prestige and privileges in such a family structure that ensured their overall security naturally.

However, the emergence of new forces in the administrative, ideological, and economic domains meant that India's cultural life inevitably underwent a transition. In the last century, the fundamental idea of a joint family has undergone considerable change because of the development of cities and industries leading to

nuclear families causing severe effects on senior citizen's security among other things. The adverse effect of this phenomenon though visible generally all over, seems more pervasive in bigger cities like Delhi and Mumbai, in particular.

As per the available data, Delhi is the most dangerous city in India's metro areas. However, to address this issue, the city has developed a fairly comprehensive and formal action plan for protecting and offering security to its senior citizens.

The Senior Citizen Security Cell was founded in June 2004, at the Police headquarters. Its principal objective is to supervise, advise, and coordinate with the local police in matters about senior citizen security and safety.

The cell has established Senior Citizens Toll-Free Helplines and registered senior citizens who live alone with the police to exercise extra caution. Verification of domestic help, drivers, servants, and tenants is done through special drives and mobilization of NGO members to offer lonely citizens emotional help. Even the Delhi High Court issued an order requiring schoolchildren to assist in providing support to the elderly in their community.

The task of arranging and supervising the

interactions between the kids and senior citizens fell to the Delhi Police. They made requests to arrange for volunteer groups of students to visit the elderly person who the police had identified as vulnerable.

This initiative provides emotional aid to the elderly and serves as a link between the senior community and law enforcement.

Despite the above measures, Delhi still witnesses the occurrence of crimes against elderly people, but the Delhi model has certainly shown the path in this regard and it is advisable that other states also adopt the Delhi-like model for ensuring senior citizens' security on a priority. Besides, given the consistent rise in crimes against senior citizens, there is a need for people in general to be educated about ageism and ageist attitudes. Moreover, given the challenges elderly people encounter as a result of their infirmities special crime control measures are required for their safety and security. Therefore, the states must establish policies, health, and social services, as well as a distinct criminal justice system to address as well as counteract this threat urgently.

The increasing crimes against senior citizens in India call for immediate and sustained intervention. While efforts like Delhi's Senior Citizen Security Cell have shown promise, much more needs to be done nationwide.

Other states should adopt similar models, ensuring a proactive approach to senior safety, including police registration, background checks for household staff, and community support initiatives.

Beyond law enforcement, society must play a greater role in safeguarding the elderly. Families should maintain stronger connections with their senior members, and communities should foster inclusivity to prevent isolation.

Raising awareness about cyber fraud, financial scams, and physical crimes targeting seniors is crucial, along with encouraging them to report incidents without fear or hesitation.

The government must also enhance social and healthcare policies tailored to senior citizens, ensuring better access to support systems.

A distinct criminal justice framework focused on elderly protection, coupled with stringent legal measures, can help curb such crimes. Ultimately, the safety of senior citizens is not just a law enforcement issue but a societal responsibility.

By strengthening familial bonds, community participation, and governmental initiatives, we can create a safer environment for our elderly, ensuring they live with dignity, security, and peace.

(The writer is associate professor Faculty of Law University of Delhi. Views expressed are personal)

Our innate desire to be controller

We all wish to be. And we fail miserably because control cannot be in our hands.

Lord Krishna explains, "The place of action and the doer and many different kinds of instruments and many different efforts and the fifth in this connection is the providence only." (The Bhagavad-Geeta 18.14)

The Lord further states, "Whatever action is begun by a man by body, speech and mind, these five are the causes of them." (18.15) Are not we always doing something with our bodies, speech and minds? Speech and mind have been separately mentioned because what we say makes a huge difference in our lives. It is not like any other sense. For example, there is an accident, in which both parties are at fault. In case they both apologise, the matter is amicably settled. Otherwise, a fight breaks out, if they become abusive. Similarly, what we do with our minds is subtle, not gross as is the case with other senses. Therefore, our minds occupy a special position in our lives.

What are these five causes? The place of action is determined by the circumstances. For example, are we in a hot place like Delhi in summer or a cold place like Toronto in winter? One is living in a nuclear family with a newly born or in a joint family, when there is a new arrival. In short, circumstances, make a huge difference and we have no control over them. The second cause is: who is doing it. One of us will be. But are we in control of ourselves? The answer sadly is no. Our natures control us and we are helpless about it. Returning to the same example, how will drivers react depends on their natures.

Naturally prone to get angry will fight and peaceful persons will settle the matter.

The third cause is the instruments employed. If someone has a superior cellphone, he will be able to perform better than one who is without one or has an outdated one. The fourth cause is the efforts made. Are we in control of these? No, our health, etc will determine how we will be able to perform. The last one is not in our hands, because what happens depends on our past 'karmaphalas'—acts done in the past. Success or failure will be on our account of them only, not much due to our present acts.

Then, are we in control? Not by a long shot. Only God is, or can be. Let us see the role of God from the angle of five causes. The circumstances, no matter what they are, are in control of God. After all, God is the Creator, which includes all possible types of circumstances. The doer, which is a soul, is in control of God also due to the karmaphalas done earlier by a soul, though a soul has free will. In any case, a soul has no real independence as such; it must be part of the Creation. All the implements, whatever they may be, originate from God only, he is the source of all. The efforts made are also controlled by God because God controls whatever we are

allowed to do. And the providence is part of God's justice system.

Having learnt that God is the controller and we are completely under His control, we should take advantage of this knowledge. We should take God's shelter as instructed by God. "In all respects take shelter of Me only. By My mercy you will achieve supreme peace and the eternal abode." (18.62) Additionally, we will qualify for opulence of six kinds, ie beauty, fame, knowledge, power, renunciation and wealth. From the Bhagavad-Geeta we learn, "Where there is the Yogeshvara Sri Krishna and where there is the archer Arjuna, there will be opulence, victory, wealth and definite principles. (18.78) Let us not deny that we are attracted towards them. We will also achieve victory or success in our endeavours. (18.78) Our acts will be according to the highest principles, which will qualify us for higher and more gains.

Unfortunately, we do not, at least most of us. Why? This is not such a mystery. Our egos don't allow us to think beyond ourselves. I may have failed countless times, but this time I will succeed in my plans, one thinks. What about all those, who failed before me? I am different; I am more intelligent. But the wise pay attention to God's instruction, "You have a right only in action, not ever in predetermining its fruits of action; your attaching to inaction also should not be there." (2.47) "Because compared to the

buddhi-yoga, which is acting without attachment to the fruits of action, material action is much inferior. Therefore, desire to take shelter in the buddhi-yoga. Those who try to predetermine the fruits are pitiable. (2.49) Because they will fail and the consequences will be lots of frustration, depression, etc. All we get is due to our past karma and nothing more. All our attempts to control are doomed to fail. God controls everything. How else can the creation last for billions of years? What is my experience in trying to control situations, results, etc? I will admit that like everyone else I try to control myself instinctively. The result is lots of anxiety and depression because they are in not my control. Yes, I have learnt that I cannot control, but the realisation is still far away. For example, someone is not well in the family. I do everything possible to see that this person recovers soon, including sincerely praying to God. Do I become peaceful then, assured that I am limited in what I can do? No, I don't. I feel bad that God, being omnipotent, does not act sooner. Or why have I been subjected to this misery having taken shelter from God? I do realise that past 'karmaphalas' will manifest. God's role comes subsequently. Then also God will decide when to act and how. I cannot control that. I am learning.

(The writer is a spiritual teacher. Views expressed are personal)

Thailand's PM faces no-confidence vote

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Bangkok

Thailand's Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra on Monday faced a no-confidence motion in Parliament as the Opposition alleged she was being unduly influenced by her father, a former prime minister, and is mismanaging the country. Paetongtarn, who took office last year, is expected to survive her first no-confidence vote on Wednesday with the backing of her ruling coalition that makes up the majority of the House of Representatives. The head of the Opposition in Parliament, Natthaphong Ruengpanyawut, said Paetongtarn had failed to address

many of the country's chronic problems including the slumping economy, air pollution, crimes and corruption.

He said her administration was serving the interests of her family and her father, former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, a popular but highly controversial political figure.

Paetongtarn heads the Pheu Thai Party, the latest in a string of populist parties affiliated with Thaksin, who was ousted in a 2006 military coup, fled into exile and recently returned to Thailand.

Thaksin has been at the heart of nearly two decades of deep political divisions pitting a mostly poor, rural majority that supported him against royalists, the military and their urban backers, who accuse



(Left)Thailand's Deputy PM Phumtham Wechayachai and (right) PM Paetongtarn Shinawatra greet lawmakers before a no-confidence debate in Bangkok

him of threatening their status and that of the revered monarchy.

Natthaphong is the leader of the People's Party, a resurrection of the progressive, reformist Move Forward Party, which took the most seats in the general election in 2023 but failed to take power due to strong opposition from the conservative establishment, and was ordered dissolved.

Natthaphong said the formation of the ruling coalition, which saw Pheu Thai partner with its former conservative rivals, was part of the political bargain to bring Thaksin home. Paetongtarn was also accused by Prawit Wongsuwan, head of the Palang Pracharath Party, Pheu Thai's former coalition partner, of falsely declaring her assets, which she denied.

Turkiye detains journalists amid Erdogan rival protests

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Istanbul

Turkish authorities detained several journalists from their homes, a media workers' union reported on Monday, in what it said was a crackdown amid escalating protests triggered by the imprisonment of the mayor of Istanbul and top rival to President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

On Sunday, a court formally arrested Mayor Ekrem Imamoglu and ordered him jailed pending a trial on corruption charges.

His detention on Wednesday sparked the largest wave of street demonstrations in Turkiye in more than a decade, deepening concerns over democracy and the rule of law.

In an apparent escalation of the government's response to the growing protests, the Disk-Basin-Is union said at least eight reporters and photojournalists were detained in what it said was an "attack on press freedoms and the people's right to learn the truth."

"You cannot hide the truth by silencing journalists!" the union wrote on the social media platform X, calling for their immediate release.

A total of 1,133 people have been detained since March 19, when the mayor was arrested at his home, Interior Minister Ali Yerlikaya said.

As many as 123 police officers were injured in the protests, he said adding that dangerous materials such as acid, firebombs and knives were seized.

"Some circles have been exploiting the right to assemble and demonstrate, attempting to disrupt public order, incite street unrest, and attack our police," Yerlikaya said on his social media account. The minister said some of the detained were identified as having ties to groups listed as terrorist organisations. Others had previous criminal records, Yerlikaya said, urging the public to avoid falling for "provocations."

The mayor's imprisonment is widely regarded as a political move to remove a major challenger to Erdogan from the next presidential race, currently scheduled for 2028. Government officials strongly reject the accusations and insist that Turkiye's courts operate independently. Imamoglu was jailed on suspicion of running a criminal organisation, accepting bribes, extortion, illegally recording personal data and bid-rigging, accusations he has denied. A request for him to be imprisoned on terror-related charges was rejected although he still faces prosecution.

The Interior Ministry later announced that Imamoglu had been suspended from duty as a "temporary measure". The municipality had previously appointed an acting mayor from its governing council.

The politician was taken to Silivri prison, west of Istanbul, as more than 1.7 Million members of his Opposition Republican People's Party, or CHP, held a primary election, endorsing him as its presidential candidate. Millions of non-members also cast votes in a "solidarity ballot", the party said.

Alongside Imamoglu, 47 other people were also jailed pending trial, including a key aide and two district mayors from Istanbul, one of whom was replaced with a government appointee.

Concerns about espionage rise as Donald Trump, Elon Musk fire federal workers

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Washington

As President Donald Trump and billionaire Elon Musk work to overhaul the federal government, they are forcing out thousands of workers with insider knowledge and connections who now need a job.

For Russia, China and other adversaries, the upheaval in Washington as Musk's Department of Government Efficiency guts government agencies presents an unprecedented opportunity to recruit informants, national security and intelligence experts say.

Every former federal worker with knowledge of or access to sensitive information or systems could be a target. When thousands of them leave their jobs at the same time, that creates a lot of targets, as well as a counterespionage challenge for the United States. "This information is highly valuable, and it shouldn't be surprising that Russia and China and other organisations, criminal syndicates for instance would be aggressively recruiting government employees," said Theresa Payton, a former White House chief information officer under President George W Bush, who now runs her own cyber security firm.

Many agencies oversee crucial data

Each year an average of more than 100,000 federal workers leave their jobs. Some retire, others move to the private sector. This year, in three months, the number is already many times higher.

It is not just intelligence officers who present potential security risks. Many departments and agencies oversee vast amounts of data that include personal information on Americans as well as sensitive information about national security and government operations. Exiting employees could also give away helpful security secrets that would allow someone to penetrate government databases or physical offices.

The Office of the US Trade Representative, for instance, maintains information on trade negotiations that could help an adversary undercut the United States. Federal records house data on clandestine intelligence operations and agents. Pentagon databases contain reams of sensitive information on US military capabilities. The Department of Energy oversees many of the nation's most closely guarded nuclear secrets.



US President Donald Trump

"This happens even in good times, someone in the intelligence community who for personal financial or other reasons walks into an embassy to sell America out, but DOGE is taking it to a whole new level," said John Schindler, a former counterintelligence official.

"Someone is going to go rogue," he said. "It's just a question of how bad it will be." Only a tiny fraction of the many millions of Americans who have worked for the federal government have ever been accused of espionage. The overwhelming number is conscientious patriots who would never sell out their country, Payton said.

Background checks, employee training and exit interviews are all designed to prevent informants or moles and to remind departing federal employees of their duty to preserve national secrets even after leaving federal service.

Even one person can do serious damage

It takes only one or two misguided or disgruntled workers to cause a national security crisis. Former FBI agent Robert Hanssen and former CIA officer Aldrich Ames, who both spied for Russia, show just how damaging a single informant can be.

Hanssen divulged sweeping information about American intelligence-gathering, including details that authorities said were partly responsible for the outing of

US informants in Russia who were later executed for working on America's behalf.

The odds that one angry former employee reaches out to a foreign power go up as many federal employees find themselves without a job, experts said. What's not in doubt is that foreign adversaries are looking for any former employees they can flip. They're hunting for that one informant who could deliver a big advantage for their nation. "It's a numbers game," said Schindler. Frank Montoya Junior, a retired senior FBI official and former top US government counterintelligence executive, said he was less concerned about well-trained intelligence community employees betraying their oaths and selling out to American adversaries. But he noted the many workers in other realms of government, who could be targeted by Russia or China. "When it comes to the theft of intellectual property, when it comes to the theft of sensitive technology, when it comes to access to power grids or to financial systems, an IRS guy or a Social Service guy who's really upset about what DOGE is doing, they actually are the bigger risk," Montoya said. Once military and intelligence officials were the primary targets of foreign spies looking to turn an informant. But now, thanks to the massive amount of information held at many agencies, and the competitive edge it could give China or Russia, that's no longer the case.

US exclave grappling with Trump's trade war with Canada

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Point Roberts

In the northwest corner of Washington State lies a quirky United States (US) exclave so dependent on Canada's goodwill that the strain of President Donald Trump's tariff war is inescapable, in the sole grocery store, at any of the three eateries, and for the many residents who never voted for him.

Locals and visitors alike in Point Roberts, Washington, are increasingly worried about how this unusual waterfront border town that has embodied the two countries' interdependency can survive the hostility brewing on both sides.

"This was really devastating," said Tamra Hansen, a longtime Point Roberts resident and business owner whose eyes welled with tears as she described her two restaurants on the brink. "If we don't get the support from the Canadians, this town will die."

Known as a geographic oddity since the boundary with Canada was drawn in 1846, this detached five-square-mile community called an exclave because it's completely separated from mainland America, is surrounded by water on three sides. Its only land connection is to Canada and it takes one border crossing and about 25 miles north by car to get to downtown Vancouver, BC, or two border crossings and about 25 miles through Canada to re-enter the United States along Boundary Bay.

The beaches, marina, golf course and hiking trails have long made Point Roberts a cherished getaway destination, but today locals say business has never been worse. Canadian visitors are staying away and some American residents say they've even been harassed over their nationality.

Point Roberts Fire Chief Christopher Carleton said Point Roberts is one of the last remaining untouched natural gems of the United States, but the tight-knit community with no stop lights is now under threat by politicians who know nothing about their way of life.

"We need to take care of one another and have grace for one another and not allow people who don't even know we exist to disrupt the relationships we currently have," said Carleton, whose fire fighters mostly live across the border.

Tensions between the US and Canada have spiked to a level not seen before in modern times thanks to Trump's on-again, off-again threat over the past two months to place taxes on a long list of goods going across the border. In

response, Canada has promised retaliatory tariffs.

For a country that has famously prided itself on being nice, polite and loyal allies, Canadians aren't hiding their disgust for Trump's polarising rhetoric, especially taking offense with the US president's claim that Canada could be the "51st state."

Mark Nykolaichuk said he refuses to go to the mainland US but describes Point Roberts as a unique exception because the border here has never felt like an actual divide for Canadians like him who grew up visiting.

Most of the property owners here are from Canada, and many of the 1,000 year-round residents have dual citizenship. Once a booming fishing town, the leading industry now, according to US Census data, is retail, primarily driven

Known as a geographic oddity since the boundary with Canada was drawn in 1846, this detached community is called an exclave because it is completely separated from mainland America

from tourism because of the number of vacation properties. The unincorporated Whatcom County community is now mostly home to retirees, though this year there are seven students nicknamed "The Borderites" at the lone public school.

Nykolaichuk, who lives in the Vancouver, BC area, said he hopes he can help keep the Point Roberts International Marketplace open by shopping there, given that management reports business is down 20 per cent to 30 per cent. He depends on Point Roberts' only grocery store to be able to cook at his vacation home because US customs doesn't permit raw meat to enter its borders, for example, so he must buy it in town.

"Nobody wants to see this place shut down," Nykolaichuk said. "If this place goes, where are the US citizens going to eat? Where are they going to get their food from?" Many in Point Roberts do not blame the Canadians for their disdain over Trump's perceived sovereignty threat. Instead, there's a deep sadness for both sides.

"We have always gotten along and it's just nonsensical because now the US is going to suffer too," said Hansen, who is a dual citizen.

Israel struck Gaza's largest hospital: Ministry

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Deir Al-Balah

Israel's military struck the largest hospital in southern Gaza on Sunday night, killing two people, wounding others and causing a large fire, the territory's Health Ministry said.

The strike hit the surgical building of Nasser Hospital in the city of Khan Younis, the ministry said, days after the facility was overwhelmed with dead and wounded when Israel resumed the war in Gaza last week with a surprise wave of airstrikes.

Those killed in Sunday night's strike included a 16-year-old boy who underwent surgery two days ago, according to the Health Ministry. Also killed was Ismail Barhoum, a member of Hamas' political bureau, who was being treated at the hospital, Hamas said in a statement.

Israel's military confirmed the strike on the hospital, saying it hit a Hamas militant operating there. Israel blames civilian deaths on Hamas because it operates in densely populated areas.

Like other medical facilities around Gaza, Nasser Hospital has been damaged by Israeli raids and strikes throughout the war. More than 50,000 Palestinians have now been killed in the war, the Health Ministry said earlier Sunday.

The military claimed to have "eliminated" dozens of militants since Israel ended a ceasefire Tuesday with strikes that killed hundreds of people on one of the deadliest days in the 17-month war. Israel's unrest over Gaza and political issues grew Sunday, with anger at Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu as his government voted to express no confidence in the attorney general, seen by many as a check on the power of his coalition.

"I am worried for the future of this country. And I think it has to stop. We have to change direction," said Avital Halperin, one

of hundreds of protesters outside Netanyahu's office. Police said three were arrested.

Displacement under fire

Israel's military ordered thousands of Palestinians to leave the heavily destroyed Tel al-Sultan neighborhood in the southern city of Rafah. They walked to Muwasi, a sprawling area of squalid tent camps. The war has forced most of Gaza's population of over two Million to flee within the territory, often multiple times.

"It's displacement under fire," said Mustafa Gaber, a journalist who left with his family. He said tank and drone fire echoed nearby.

"The shells are falling among us and the bullets are (flying) above us," said Amal Nassar, also displaced. "The elderly have been thrown into the streets. An old woman was telling her son, Go and leave me to die. Where will we go?"

The strike hit the surgical building of Nasser Hospital in the city of Khan Younis, days after the facility was overwhelmed with dead and wounded

"Enough is enough. We are exhausted," said a fleeing Ayda Abu Shaer, as smoke rose in the distance.

The Palestinian Red Crescent emergency service said it lost contact with a 10-member team responding to the strikes in Rafah. Spokesperson Nebal Farsakh said some were wounded.

Israel's military said it had fired on advancing "suspicious vehicles" and later discovered some were ambulances and fire trucks.

In Gaza City, an explosion hit next to a tent camp where people had been told to evacuate. "My husband is blind and started running barefoot, and my children were running," said witness Nidaa Hassuna.

Strikes kill Hamas leader

Hamas said Salah Bardawil, a well-known member of its political bureau, was killed in a strike in Muwasi that also killed his wife. Israel's military confirmed it.

Hospitals in southern Gaza said they received a further 24 bodies from strikes overnight, including several women and children. Gaza's Health Ministry said 50,021 Palestinians have been killed in the war, including 673 people since Israel's bombardment on Tuesday shattered the ceasefire. Dr Munir al-Boursh, the ministry's general director, said the dead include 15,613 children, with 872 of them under one year old. The ministry does not distinguish between civilians and combatants in its count but says women and children make up over half the dead. Israel says it has killed around 20,000 fighters, without providing evidence.

Ceasefire in tatters

The ceasefire that took hold in January paused more than a year of fighting ignited by Hamas' October 7, 2023, attack into Israel, in which militants killed some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and took 251 hostage. Most captives have been released in ceasefire agreements or other deals.

In the latest ceasefire's first phase, 25 Israeli hostages and the bodies of eight others were released in exchange for nearly 2,000 Palestinian prisoners. Israeli forces allowed hundreds of thousands of people to return home.

There was a surge in humanitarian aid until Israel cut off all supplies to Gaza earlier this month to pressure Hamas to change the ceasefire agreement.

HC restores Imran Khan's meetings with visitors

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Islamabad

High Court (HC) here in Pakistan on Monday restored bi-weekly meetings of incarcerated former Prime Minister Imran Khan with his visitors.

The three-member Islamabad High Court bench, which heard at least 26 petitions related to the visitation rights and jail conditions of Khan, 72, ordered authorities to arrange Khan's two meetings on two different days of the week but stopped the visitors from making political statements.

Khan's counsel, Zaheer Abbas, said it was agreed that Khan would be allowed two days of meetings a week, Tuesday with his family and lawyers, and Thursday with friends.

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Secretary General Barrister Salman Akram Raja said Thursday's meeting was not being held.

Advocate Naveed Malik, representing the Adiala Jail authorities, where Khan has been incarcerated since August 2023, said the meetings were held twice a week until December. However, the situation changed after the PTI founder and his wife, Bushra Bibi, were convicted in a corruption case in January. Malik also informed the court the two meetings were held on Tuesday instead of two days for security reasons.

He also pointed out that those who meet Khan make political statements outside the jail in violation of the rules.



Isar aerospace launch vehicle 'Spectrum' rolls out on Andoya island in Norway

European startup to launch rocket on first test flight

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Oslo

A private European aerospace company is set to make the first test flight of its orbital launch vehicle from Norway on Monday.

The launch window for its Spectrum rocket from the island of Andoya in northern Norway is 12:30 pm to 3:30 pm local time, said Isar Aerospace, which is headquartered in Munich.

The launch is subject to weather, safety and range infrastructure. The company said it also could conduct the test flight later in the week.

The 28-metre-(91-foot) spectrum is a two-stage launch vehicle designed for small and medium-sized satellites.

The company largely rules out the possibility of the rocket reaching orbit on its first complete flight, saying it would con-

sider a 30-second flight a success.

Isar Aerospace aims to collect as much data and experience as possible on the first integrated test of all the systems on its in-house-developed launch vehicle. The startup, which says it has raised more than 400 Million Euros (\$435 Million) in capital, hopes to build up to 40 launch vehicles per year in the future in a plant outside of Munich.

The launch vehicles are all to be used for putting satellites into orbit.

Isar Aerospace is separate from the European Space Agency (ESA) which is funded by its 23 member states.

The European Space Agency has been launching rockets and satellites into orbit for years, but mainly from French Guiana, an overseas department of France in South America and from Cape Canaveral in Florida.

Ceasefire: US holds separate talks with Russia, Ukraine

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Dubai

The United States (US) negotiators worked on a proposed partial ceasefire in Ukraine on Monday, meeting with representatives from Russia a day after holding separate talks with the Ukrainian team. Each side has accused the other of undermining efforts to reach a pause in the three-year-old war.

Kyiv and Moscow agreed in principle Wednesday to a limited ceasefire after US President Donald Trump spoke with the countries' leaders, but the parties have offered different views of what targets would be off-limits to attack.

While the White House said "energy and infrastructure" would be covered, the Kremlin declared that the agreement referred more narrowly to "energy infrastructure".

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has said he would also like to see railways and ports protected. Talks Monday are expected to address some of those differences, as well as a potential pause in attacks in the Black Sea to ensure the safety of commercial shipping.

US and Russian representatives met in the morning in the Saudi capital, Russia's state Tass and RIA-Novosti news agencies reported. The US and Ukrainian teams met Sunday in Riyadh.

Serhiy Leshchenko, an adviser to the Ukrainian presidency, said the delegation remained in Riyadh on Monday and expected to meet again with the Americans.

Grigory Karasin, head of the foreign affairs committee in the Russian parliament's upper house and a participant in Monday's talks, told the Interfax news



Firefighters put out the fire following a Russian attack near Kyiv, Ukraine

agency the negotiations were going on in a "creative way" and that the US and Russian delegations "understand each other's views". Meanwhile, both Russia and Ukraine continued to launch attacks across their borders.

The Russian Defence Ministry said Monday a Ukrainian drone attacked an oil pumping station in southern Russia that serves a pipeline carrying Kazakhstan's Caspian Sea oil to the Russian port of Novorossiisk for export. It said the drone

was downed before it could reach the pumping station.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said on Monday the Russian military has been fulfilling President Vladimir Putin's order to halt attacks on energy facilities for 30 days.

He has accused Ukraine of derailing the partial ceasefire with attacks on Russia's energy facilities, including a gas metering station in Sudzha in Russia's Kursk region. Ukraine's military General Staff reject-

ed Moscow's accusations and blamed the Russian military for shelling the station, a claim Peskov called "absurd".

Zelenskyy said Sunday evening that "since March 11, a proposal for an unconditional ceasefire has been on the table, and these attacks could have already stopped. But it is Russia that continues all this".

He added that Ukraine's partners, "the US, Europe, and others around the world" should increase pressure on Russia "to stop this terror".

Zelenskyy has emphasised that Ukraine is open to Trump's proposal of a full, 30-day ceasefire.

Putin has made a complete ceasefire conditional on a halt of arms supplies to Kyiv and a suspension of Ukraine's military mobilisation demands rejected by Kyiv and its Western allies.

Speaking on "Fox News Sunday", Trump's special envoy Steve Witkoff said he expected "some real progress" at talks and that a pause in hostilities by both countries in the Black Sea would "naturally gravitate into a full-on shooting ceasefire".

China rules out supplying peacekeeping forces

Asked about reports speculating that China might send peacekeepers to Ukraine to enforce any peace deal, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Guo Jiakun responded Monday with an unequivocal no.

"Let me stress that the report is completely false. China's position on the Ukraine crisis is clear and consistent," Guo said at a briefing.

China has provided Russia with trade earnings from oil and other natural resources, along with diplomatic backing, but has not given any weapons or sent any personnel. China is, however, on close terms with North Korea, which has sent troops to fight alongside the Russian army.

Ukrainian railways hit by cyberattack

A "massive targeted cyberattack" hit Ukrainian state railway operator Ukrzaliznytsia on Sunday, the company

wrote on Telegram, adding that it was working to restore its systems on Monday.

The company said the attack did not affect train movements or schedules but disrupted its online booking system.

"The railway continues to operate despite physical attacks on the infrastructure, and even the most vile cyber attacks cannot stop it," the company wrote.

Meanwhile, Ukraine's Special Operations Forces claimed Monday it destroyed four military helicopters in Russia's Belgorod region with the use of US-supplied HIMARS rocket systems.

It published drone footage on its Telegram page of what it said was the attack.

The strikes occurred at a concealed "jumping-off point" for Russian aircraft used in surprise attacks on Ukrainian forces, the group said.

Russian troops, meanwhile, fired 99 attack and decoy drones into Ukraine overnight, according to Ukraine's air force, of which 57 were shot down and 36 were lost from radar, according to Ukraine's air force.

In the Kyiv region, one man was injured by shrapnel as a Russian drone struck a residential area, according to the acting head of the Kyiv region, Mykola Kalashnyk, writing on Telegram.

In the Kharkiv region, a Russian drone struck a residential building in the village of Velyka Babka, injuring a 25-year-old man and a pregnant woman. Both were hospitalised, said regional head Oleh Syniehubov.

In Zaporizhzhia, Russian drones damaged several houses overnight with one elderly woman slightly injured, regional head Ivan Fedorov wrote on Telegram.

South Korean PM reinstated as acting President after impeachment overturned

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Seoul

South Korea's Constitutional Court overturned the impeachment of Prime Minister Han Duck-soo, reinstating the nation's number two official as acting leader Monday while not yet ruling on the separate impeachment of President Yoon Suk Yeol over his shocking imposition of martial law late in December.

Many observers said the 7-1 ruling in Han's case did not signal much about the upcoming verdict on Yoon, as Han wasn't a key figure in imposing martial law. But the ruling could still embolden Yoon's staunch supporters and ramp up their political offensive on the Opposition.

Speaking with reporters following his reinstatement, Han thanked the court for what he called "a wise decision" and promised to focus on tackling "urgent matters", including a fast-changing global trade environment, in an apparent reference to the Trump administration's aggressive tariffs policy. He also called for national unity, saying: "There's no left or right, what matters is the advancement of our nation."

South Korea has been thrown into huge political turmoil, since Yoon, a conservative, declared martial law on December 3 and sent hundreds of troops to the liberal-controlled National Assembly and other places in Seoul. Yoon's decree lasted only six hours as enough lawmakers managed to enter an assembly hall and voted it down quickly.

The impeachment arguments

The Assembly impeached Yoon on December 14, alleging he violated the constitution and other laws by suppressing assembly activities and trying to detain politicians. Yoon's impeachment made Han acting president until he was impeached in late December.

The unprecedented, successive impeachments that suspended the country's top two officials intensified domestic division and deepened worries about the country's diplomatic and economic activities.

Han, who attempted to reassure diplomatic partners and stabilise markets during his time as acting president, was accused in the impeachment motion of abetting Yoon's martial law declaration and obstructing efforts to restore the Constitutional Court's full membership and investigate Yoon's alleged rebellion.

The nine-member court at the time had three vacancies, but ousting Yoon would require support from at least six justices. After Han was suspended, his successor as acting president, Choi Sang-mok, appointed two new justices but left the ninth seat vacant.

Seven of the Constitutional Court's eight justices ruled to overturn or dismiss Han's

impeachment. They ruled the accusations against him weren't against the law or weren't serious enough to remove him from office or his impeachment motion didn't even meet a required quorum when it passed through the Assembly.

One justice upheld Han's impeachment. The Democratic Party expressed regret over the court's decision to reinstate Han and urged it to dismiss Yoon's case quickly. Yoon's office welcomed Monday's ruling, saying it shows again the opposition's abuse of impeachment motions were "reckless, malicious political offense."

What's next?

Observers earlier had predicted the Constitutional Court would rule on Yoon's case in mid-March, but it hasn't done so, sparking varied speculation on possible reasons.

"Today's verdict will give hope to Yoon's supporters for a similar fate and hope for Yoon's opponents for his ouster," said Duyeon Kim, a senior analyst at the Center for a New American Security in Washington. "But it's too soon to predict the court's verdict on Yoon because the specific details of both cases and allegations are different."

Kim said the reinstatement of Han, a career bureaucrat, will bring more stability to South Korea compared to when his powers as acting president were suspended. Massive rival rallies backing Yoon or denouncing Yoon have divided the streets of Seoul and other major cities in South Korea.

Earlier surveys showed that a majority of South Koreans were critical of Yoon's martial law enactment, but those supporting or sympathising with Yoon have later gained strength.

Yoon argues that his martial law introduction was a desperate attempt to bring attention to the "wickedness" of the main liberal opposition Democratic Party which obstructed his agenda and filed many impeachment motions against senior officials.

Yoon critics counter he likely tried to use military rule to frustrate possible special investigations into scandals involving him and his wife. Senior military and police officers sent to the Assembly have said that Yoon ordered them to drag out lawmakers to prevent a floor vote to overturn his decree. Yoon says the troops' deployment was designed to maintain order.

If the court upholds Yoon's impeachment, South Korea must hold a presidential election to choose his successor. If it rules for him, Yoon will regain his presidential powers.

Yoon has separately been charged with rebellion in connection with his martial law decree, a charge that carries the death penalty or a life sentence if he is convicted.

China denies Duterte sought asylum before ICC arrest

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Beijing

China on Monday said it had not received any application for asylum from Philippines' former president Rodrigo Duterte, regarded as a close ally of Beijing, who was arrested after his visit to Hong Kong. Duterte was arrested on March 11 at Manila's main airport and deported to The Hague for trial by the International Criminal Court (ICC) over the allegations of serious human rights violations, including sanctioning the killings of drug dealers as part of his war against drugs. Asked about reports from the Philippines that Duterte sought asy-

lum in China before his arrest, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Guo Jiakun told a media briefing here that the Chinese government had never received any so-called asylum application from Duterte or his family. "Let me point out in particular that Duterte's visit to Hong Kong was a private vacation trip. We have never received the so-called application for asylum to the Chinese government from former president Rodrigo Duterte or his family," Guo said. "We hope people from the media can be careful about the so-called 'information from sources,' either unfounded or ill-motivated, and do not easily believe what they hear," he said.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to the General Public that Smt. Shashi Mehta W/o. Sh. Nareesh Chander is the owner of Entire Third Floor with Roof/Terrace Rights Built on Land area Measuring 44.40 Sq. Yds. (approx.) Part of Property Bearing No. 212 Situated at Village Dhakka in the Lal Dora of 1908-1909, Delhi-110009, executed by Smt. Rajy Bala, same to be finance by SMFG India Home Finance Company Ltd., General public hereby informed that if anybody has any charge/interest in the said property or any kind of dispute kindly inform the undersigned in writing on the below mentioned address within 07 days of the present. **Rahul Raj Patil, Advocate S.G. Associates (Law Firm) FF 18, Lotus Road Pusa, Vaidika Khand, Indirapuram, Delhi-201301. E-mail: sgassociates@gmail.com, Ph: 7011127364, 01204443069**

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public is hereby informed that I, Mrs. Sunita Wadhawan, widow of Late Shri Ashwani Wadhawan, Rio B-27 Farmers Society, Plot No. 8, Sec-13, Rohini, New Delhi-85, has severed all concerns & relationship with my son Akhil Wadhawan and daughter-in-law Komal Sikri, due to their irresponsible and malicious behavior with me and my family and society at large from today onwards So I, henceforth, severs, debars, disowns and dis-inherits the above said son and daughter-in-law mentioned above, for all intents and purposes from inheriting all or any of the properties, movable and immovable, liquidated, cash, jewelry and bank accounts owned by me.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given on behalf of VIMAL KUMAR who is purchasing the UPPER GROUND FLOOR (LHS FRONT SIDE), WITHOUT ROOF RIGHTS, OUT OF PROPERTY BEARING NO. 17A, AREA MEASURING 50 SQ. YDS., OUT OF KHASRA NO. 2020, SITUATED IN THE AREA OF VILLAGE MATIALA, DELHI STATE DELHI COLONY KNOWN AS JAIN COLONY, PART-III, UTTAM NAGAR, NEW DELHI from Mrs. Kawajit Kaur who had owned the subject property vide Sale Deed dated 30.11.2023 bearing Document No. 2023/25103105, Book No. 1, Volume No.952, pages 25-48, dated 30.11.2023. SRO-IIB Jankapuri from Mr. Ram Bhajan, earlier Mr. Ram Bhajan owned the subject property vide Registration Deed duly registered as Document No. 24494 in Addl. Book No. 1, Volume No. 952 on pages 156 to 159 on dated 20.09.2023 with the office of Sub-Registrar-IIB, Jankapuri, that the aforementioned Original Requisition Deed duly registered as Document No. 24494 has been lost/misplaced, now VIMAL KUMAR intend to purchase and mortgage the same against the financial assistance from ADITYA BIRLA HOUSING FINANCE LIMITED. To comply the requirements of BANK/NBFC, we give this public notice that if any person(s) having any objection regarding ownership and/or creating mortgage of the said property (s) are hereby requested to intimate in writing to the undersigned about his objections within 7 days from today, failing which it shall be presumed that the said property is free from all type of Encumbrances, liens etc. **Lucem Legal LLP Plot No.136, (Basement) Uday Park, New Delhi-110049 Contact # 911-40046316**

THE PIONEER CLASSIFIEDS

LOST & FOUND

It is notified that the Sale Deed, registered as Document No. 6032, in Book No. I, Volume No. 2198, on Pages 43 to 58, dated 06.10.2022, has been lost. If found, please contact Mrs Swapan Das, I-1780, Chittaranjan Park, New Delhi Police LR No [2608839/2025]. Mobile No. 9810042868

PD(1734)A
I, Santosh Gaur W/o Ram Prakash Gaur, R/o B-12, Sector-19, Noida Gautam Buddha Nagar, U.P.-201301 have lost my State Bank of India Share Certificate Folio No-01985331, Finder Please may contact-9910340050.

PD(1735)C

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Rajesh Kumar S/o Sh. Rai Singh R/o Dasoli Upparri (98), V.P.O. Dhasoli Tehsil Jawali, Kangra, Himachal Pradesh-176021, presently at House No.130, Main Market, Goan Garhi, Delhi-110065, have changed my name from Rajesh Kumar to Rajesh Kumar @ Rakesh Kumar for all future purposes.

PD(1736)C
I, Deepak Kumar Rathore S/o Late Sohan Lal R/o Flat No.1104, Omaxe Palm Green, Tower-BPA, Sector-MU, Greater Noida, Gautam Budh Nagar, U.P.-201310, have changed my name from Deepak Rathore to Deepak Kumar Rathore for all purposes.

PD(1740)C

PUBLIC NOTICE

To be known to all the I, Nareesh Kumar son of Shri Kedar Nath resident of Flat No.38-C, Delhi Nivas CGHS Ltd., plot No.30/2, Sector-13, Rohini, Delhi-110085, owner of Society Built Up Area Flat Bearing No.39-C, on Second Floor, situated in the layout plan of Delhi Nivas Co-Operative Group Housing Society Limited, Plot No.30/2, Sector-13, Rohini, Delhi-110085, on has been lost Allotment Letter of above said Flat, and I have logged an FIR (LR No.2695563/2025), in the police station crime Branch Delhi, on dated 10/06/2023. Any person claiming any right, interest, having any objection of found original documents may write/contact with the above named person at above address/phone No.9312836594, within 15 days from the date of Publication of this notice.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public is hereby informed that I, Mrs. Sunita Wadhawan, widow of Late Shri Ashwani Wadhawan, Rio B-27 Farmers Society, Plot No. 8, Sec-13, Rohini, New Delhi-85, has severed all concerns & relationship with my son Akhil Wadhawan and daughter-in-law Komal Sikri, due to their irresponsible and malicious behavior with me and my family and society at large from today onwards So I, henceforth, severs, debars, disowns and dis-inherits the above said son and daughter-in-law mentioned above, for all intents and purposes from inheriting all or any of the properties, movable and immovable, liquidated, cash, jewelry and bank accounts owned by me.

PROVISION OF TRACK CIRCUITS AT ALIPURDUAR DIVISION

E-Tender Notice No. S&T/APDJ/27 Dated: 20-03-2025. E-Tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following works: E-Tender No. AP-ST-27-2024-25. Name of work: Alipurduar Division: Provision of Track Circuits using MSDAC due to water logging at New Coochbehar yards. Tender Value: ₹ 47,07,84,378/- Earnest Money: ₹ 5,53,900/- Last Date & Time of submission of Tender: 15:00 hrs. of 16-04-2025 & opening at 16-04-2025 after closing of E-Tender. The complete information with the tender documents of above e-tender will be available in website www.ireps.gov.in

DRM (S&T), Alipurduar Division

NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
"Serving Customers With A Smile"

TRACK, P-WAY, BUILDING, YARD IMPROVEMENT WORKS ETC.

Tender Notice No.: KIR/Engg./13 of 2025; Dated: 18-03-2025; E-Tender are invited by the undersigned for the following work; Tender No. 1: Brief Description of Work : Katihar Division - Provision of Track Machine Siding and Facilities-10 nos. (P. Way works and formation works). Tender Value: ₹ 6,24,62,429.08/-; Earnest Money: ₹ 4,62,300/-; Tender No. 2: Brief Description of Work : Katihar Division - Provision of Track Machine Siding and facilities 10 nos. under the jurisdiction of Sr. DEN/III/Katihar. Tender Value: ₹ 14,14,57,770.07/-; Earnest Money: ₹ 8,57,300/-; Tender No. 3: Brief Description of Work : NG TTR 1 in 8.5 between Sukna to Darjeeling section under the jurisdiction of Sr.DEN/III/Katihar. (Total = 53 sets). Tender Value: ₹ 1,43,47,286.13/-; Earnest Money: ₹ 2,21,700/-; Tender No. 4: Brief Description of Work : Elimination of LC EB-21 by merging with EB-22 under the jurisdiction of Sr. DEN/II/Katihar. Tender Value: ₹ 4,99,03,798.80/-; Earnest Money: ₹ 3,99,500/-; Tender No. 5: Brief Description of Item : Yard Improvement-Kumedpur yard (Shifting of cross over for yard improvement). Tender Value: ₹ 74,67,165.44/-; Earnest Money: ₹ 1,49,400/-; Date & time of closing of above all tenders at 15:00 hrs. on 16-04-2025 and opening at 15:30 hrs. on 16-04-2025. For complete information with the tender document of above e-tender will be available upto 15:00 hours on 16-04-2025 in website www.ireps.gov.in

DRM (W), Katihar

NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
"Serving Customers With A Smile"

PUBLIC NOTICE

To be known to all the I, Nareesh Kumar son of Shri Kedar Nath resident of Flat No.38-C, Delhi Nivas CGHS Ltd., plot No.30/2, Sector-13, Rohini, Delhi-110085, owner of Society Built Up Area Flat Bearing No.39-C, on Second Floor, situated in the layout plan of Delhi Nivas Co-Operative Group Housing Society Limited, Plot No.30/2, Sector-13, Rohini, Delhi-110085, on has been lost Allotment Letter of above said Flat, and I have logged an FIR (LR No.2695563/2025), in the police station crime Branch Delhi, on dated 10/06/2023. Any person claiming any right, interest, having any objection of found original documents may write/contact with the above named person at above address/phone No.9312836594, within 15 days from the date of Publication of this notice.

RAISING OF MEDIUM LEVEL PLATFORM TO HIGH LEVEL IN KATHIHAR DIVISION

Tender Notice No. : KIR/Engg./14 of 2025; Dated: 19-03-2025; E-Tender are invited by the undersigned for the following work; Tender No. 1: Brief Description of Work : Raising of medium level Platform No. 1 & 2 to High level and extension by 110m (PF-1) and 125m (PF-2) at Khurial Railway station of Katihar Division. Tender Value: ₹ 9,18,05,809.73/-; Bid Security : ₹ 6,09,000/-; Date & time of closing of tender at 15:00 hrs. and opening at 15:30 hrs. on 16-04-2025. For complete information with the tender document of above e-tender will be available upto 15:00 hrs. on 16-04-2025 in website www.ireps.gov.in

DRM (W), Katihar

NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
"Serving Customers With A Smile"

PROTECTION OF RAILWAY EMBANKMENT

E-Tender Notice No. LMG/Engg/17 of 2025 Dated: 18-03-2025. E-Tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following works: Brief Description of Item: Protection of railway embankment by strengthening of toe of formation on river bank, slope protection by different technique, provision of retaining wall at toe on open/deep foundation, Construction of secant pile, river diversion works, construction of catch water drains, Provision of Soil Nail/Anchors, provision of perforated PVC drains and other related ancillary works at KM-56/9-57/2, KM 60/3-6,10/4-4 & 67/6, KM 77/1-6 & 79/3-6, Br. no.-164 at KM 80/7-9 and Br. no. 202 & 204 at 94/7-9/5 and other nearby locations in between section Langting to Maibang and Maibang to New Halong of Lumding Badarpur Hill Section under the jurisdiction of Sr. DEN/III/Lumding (Two packet system). Tender Value: ₹ 104,97,50,486.61/- Earnest Money: ₹ 53,98,800/- Date & Time of closing of Tender: 15:00 hrs. of 21-04-2025 & opening at 15:00 hrs. of 22-04-2025. The complete information with the tender documents of above e-tender will be available upto 15:00 hrs. of 21-04-2025 in website www.ireps.gov.in

DRM (W), Lumding

NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
"Serving Customers With A Smile"

ENGINEERING WORKS

E-TENDER NOTICE NO. 13 of 2025; Date: 20-03-2025. E-tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following works: Tender No.: DENGHY-13-2025. Name of work & Location: Reconditioning of worn out 1 in 12 and 1 in 8.5 crossing body and switches under jurisdiction of ADE/NT/Guwahati. Tender Value: ₹ 77,08,945/-; Earnest Money: ₹ 1,54,200/-; Tender No.: DENGHY-14-2025. Name of work & Location: At New Guwahati- Up gradation of Railway Institute and community hall. Tender Value: ₹ 1,40,73,139.60; Earnest Money: ₹ 2,20,400/-; Tender No.: DENGHY-15-2025. Name of work & Location: Provision of Ballast Retaining wall along side the track to prevent rolling down of ballast & provision of Toe Wall under the jurisdiction of DEN/Guwahati (1200 Rm) (Between Km 6/3-7/5). Tender Value: ₹ 3,78,46,656.20; Earnest Money: ₹ 39,200/-; Tender No.: DENGHY-17-2025. Name of work & Location: (A) At Guwahati- Repairs to SSE/P Way Godown, Stacking Shed, Approach Road and other ancillary works. (B) At New Guwahati: Construction of 03 (three) nos. Godowns for SSE/P Way/New Guwahati including construction and repairing of boundary wall of office complex. Tender Value: ₹ 3,36,70,501.29; Earnest Money: ₹ 3,36,700/-; Tender No.: DENGHY-19-2025. Name of work & Location: (A) At Pandu- Renovation of Railway Institute and community hall under the jurisdiction of ADE/III/Maligaon. (B) Renovation of Electrical office, BRI office, SSE/WE East/Pandu office and SSE/WE/West/Pandu office at Pandu under the jurisdiction of ADE/III/Maligaon. (C) Upgradation of 2 nos of health unit at Pandu East and Pandu West under the jurisdiction of ADE/III/Maligaon. (D) At Pandu-Provision of boundary wall in the jurisdiction of SSE/WE/AST & WEST to prevent encroachment. Tender Value: ₹ 7,36,56,618.33; Earnest Money: ₹ 5,18,300.00 E-tenders will be closed at 13:00 hrs. on 10-04-2025 and will be opened at 13:00 hrs. on 10-04-2025. For details please visit www.ireps.gov.in

Divisional Engineer/Guwahati, Maligaon

NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
"Serving Customers with a smile"

मध्य प्रदेश पुलिस आवास एवं अधोसंरचना विकास निगम
कार्यालय परियोजना यंत्री, संभाग क्र.-1, भद्रभद्रा रोड, भोपाल
क्र./425, 426/तथा/प.यं./2025 दिनांक : 21.03.2025
प्रेस विज्ञप्ति
इस कार्यालय द्वारा पिपरई विकासखण्ड मुंगवाली जिला अशोकनगर में 50 सीटर बालक छात्रावास एवं 50 सीटर बालिका छात्रावास भवन का निर्माण कार्य एवं संजय स्टेडियम गुना में पूर्व से निर्मित बास्केटबॉल कोर्ट का मरम्मत कार्य हेतु ऑनलाइन निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है। निविदा क्रमांक 2025 MPPHC 411136_1, 2025 MPPHC 411175_1 दिनांक 07.04.2025 समय अपरान्ह 17:00 बजे तक खरीदी जा सकती है। विस्तृत निविदा सूचना एवं अन्य विवरण Portal : www.mptenders.gov.in पर देखे जा सकते हैं।
म.प्र. माध्यम/119351/2025 परियोजना यंत्री

GOVERNMENT OF HARYANA TENDER NOTICE						
Sr. No.	NAME OF BOARD/CORP./AUTH	NAME OF WORK/NOTICE TENDER	OPENING DATE CLOSING DATE (TIME)	AMOUNT / END (APPROX.) IN RUPEES	WEBSITE OF THE BOARD CORP./AUTH	NODAL OFFICER/CONTACT DETAILS/EMAIL
1	CHAUDHARY BANSHI LAL UNIVERSITY, BHIANWAL	ELECTROCHEMICAL WORKSTATION, BHIANWAL	21.03.2025 11.04.2025	13.00 LACS	www.cbu.ac.in	9312767962 chemstry@cbu.ac.in

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION KINDLY VISIT : www.haryanaprocmurement.gov.in or www.etenders.hry.nic.in RO 33222-1-27-7

Category of Vehicle	At Indira Gandhi International Airport Road Toll Plaza		At KM. 42 Toll Plaza Kherki Daula	
	Fee for Single Journey	Fee for Monthly Pass valid for 40 trips/30 days	Fee for Single Journey	Fee for Monthly Pass valid for 40 trips/30 days
Car/JEEP/Van or Light Motor Vehicle	25	(Personal) - 500 (Commercial) - 600	85	(Personal) - 950 (Commercial) - 1255
Light Commercial Vehicle	40	990	125	1850
Mini Bus	40	990	125	1850
Bus (Two Axle)	75	1985	255	3770
Truck (Two Axle)	75	1985	255	3770
Multi Axle Vehicle	75	1985	255	3770

BUILDING A NATION, NOT JUST ROADS

Acer India announces one day menstrual leave per month

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

Acer India has introduced a menstrual leave policy that would give female employees one additional day of paid leave per month, as the tech firm joined a growing roster of companies that are looking to foster a more supportive workplace and champion gender-inclusivity.

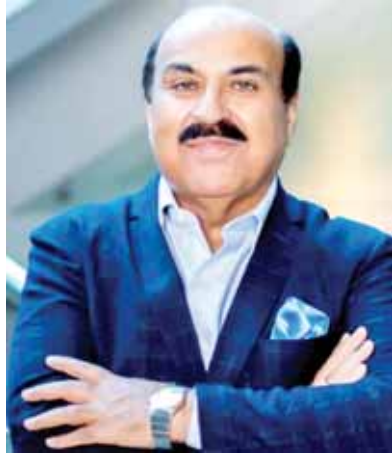
In a statement, the company said its latest move would enable female staff to prioritise their menstrual health without impacting their regular leave entitlements.

"Acer India has introduced 'Matrika', a menstrual leave policy to foster a more inclusive and supportive workplace... Under this policy, female employees will

be entitled to one additional day of paid leave each month..." Acer India said.

According to the company, the move aligns with Acer India's broader vision of creating a workplace that champions gender inclusivity, health, and holistic employee support. "A workplace that truly supports its people goes beyond policies-it fosters understanding, respect, and real change. With the 'Matrika' menstrual leave policy, we are taking a step toward normalising conversations around women's health and well-being," Harish Kohli, President and Managing Director of Acer India said.

The company further said that as more organisations recognise the importance of menstrual leave, 'Matrika' sets Acer India apart as a forward-thinking



Harish Kohli, Acer India president and MD

employer that prioritises gender equality and employee-centric initiatives.

Earlier this month, in a first for a major corporate house, Larsen and Toubro, the engineering, procurement and construction major had announced a one-day paid menstrual leave for women employees, a move set to benefit about 5,000 women employees at the company.

Companies like Swiggy and Zomato have made announcements on menstrual leaves in the past, but Larsen and Toubro's move marked an instance of a major business house announcing such an initiative to ensure better work-life balance for its female employees.

Four states, Bihar, Odisha, Sikkim and Kerala, have made provisions for menstrual leaves for their employees.

India's tech startups clinch \$2.5 billion funding in Q1 2025

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

India's tech startups raised \$2.5 billion in the first quarter of 2025, marking a 13.64 per cent increase over the previous quarter and an 8.7 per cent rise from the year-ago period, a feat that secured its spot as the third most-funded country globally after the US and UK, according to a report by market intelligence platform Tracxn.

The report highlighted that auto tech, enterprise applications and retail were the top-performing sectors in Q1 2025.

Other notable takeaways from the report were the increase in funding for late-stage startups both sequentially and year-on-year basis, even as seed-stage startups as early-stage ventures saw total funding drop on both counts.

"In Q1 2025, India's tech startups raised \$2.5 billion, marking a 13.64 per cent increase from the previous quarter and an 8.7 per cent rise from the same period last year, making it the third most-funded country globally ahead of Malta and Germany and behind the US and UK," according to the report.

The Geo Quarterly India Tech report offered insights into India's technology ecosystem, trends and developments in the first quarter of 2025.

Late-stage ventures raked in total funding of \$1.8 Billion in Q1 2025, an increase of 38.46 per cent compared to Q4 2024, and an increase of 114.54 per cent when seen in the context of Q1 2024.

Seed Stage startups saw total funding of \$157 million in Q1 2025, a drop of 23.79 per cent compared to Q4 2024, and 55.77 per cent lower as compared to Q1 2024. Early-stage startups, on the other hand, saw a total funding of \$528 million in Q1 2025, a drop of 23.7 per cent compared to Q4 2024, and a drop of 52 per cent compared to Q1 2024.

"While the funding environment remains dynamic, India's startup ecosystem continues to demonstrate adaptability and growth," Neha Singh, Co-Founder of Tracxn said.

Sectors such as Auto Tech, Enterprise Applications, and Retail are attracting investor interest, and the rise in acquisitions signals a maturing market, Singh said.

"Innovation and entrepreneurship remain at the core of this ecosystem, positioning India for long-term success," according to her.

Auto Tech received funding of \$1.1 billion, which was significantly higher than levels seen in Q4 2024 and Q1 2024.

Enterprise Applications received \$650.7 million, a growth of 21.94 per cent over the previous sequential quarter and a drop of 8.12 per cent compared to Q1 2024.

Retail clinched \$481.5 Million in funding, a 21.6 per cent increase from the last quarter and a drop of 2.3 per cent over Q1 2024.

Late-stage ventures raked in total funding of \$1.8 Billion in Q1 2025, an increase of 38.46 per cent compared to Q4 2024, and an increase of 114.54 per cent when seen in the context of Q1 2024

Six companies went for IPO in Q1 2025, the report said adding Nukleus, Maxvolt Energy, Volercars, and Harshil Agrotech were among the companies that went public.

There were no unicorns created in Q1 2025 as against two created in Q1 2024.

A total of 38 acquisitions took place this quarter, marking a 15.15 per cent increase from the previous quarter and a 40.74 per cent rise over Q1 2024.

"The largest deal was Magma General's USD 516 million acquisition by DS Group and Patanjali Ayurved, making it the highest-valued acquisition of Q1 2025, surpassing Minimalist's \$350 million acquisition by HUL," the report said.

Delhi-based tech firms accounted for 40 per cent of all funding seen by tech companies across India, followed by Bengaluru (21.64 per cent).

Accel, Blume Ventures and Peak XV Partners were the overall all-time top investors for Q1 2025. Venture Catalysts, Unicorn India Ventures and YourNest were the top seed-stage investors, while Avatar Ventures and Sofina were the top late-stage.

Tata AutoComp acquires IAC Sweden to enhance global footprint

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

Tata AutoComp Systems Ltd on Monday said it will acquire International Automotive Components Group Sweden AB (IAC Sweden), in a bid to strengthen its presence in Europe's automotive sector.

This proposed acquisition reinforces Tata AutoComp's presence in Sweden and enhances the company's relationships with key European Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) in both the passenger vehicle and commercial vehicle segments, further expanding its global footprint, the company said in a statement.

The company, however, did not disclose any financial details.

IAC Sweden has a turnover of approximately \$800 million and is a well established manufacturer of interior systems and components to the automotive industry, it added.

The transaction is subject to European regulatory approvals, the company said. "This acquisition aligns with our long-term vision of expanding in global markets and strengthening our relationships with European OEMs," Tata AutoComp Systems Vice Chairman Arvind Goel said.

With this acquisition, Tata Autocomp said, it will consolidate its position as one of India's largest automotive component manufacturers and strengthen its presence in Europe's automotive sector.

"IAC Sweden has a strong legacy of delivering high-quality interior solutions, and we look forward to working together to drive innovation and excellence in the automotive industry. This move reinforces our commitment to driving sustainable, high-quality, and customer-centric automotive solutions across geographies," Goel said.

The acquisition of IAC Sweden will present strong synergy opportunities, allowing Tata AutoComp to leverage advanced manufacturing capabilities, cutting-edge technology, and well-established customer relationships in the premium automotive space, the company said.

Amazon to not charge referral fee from sellers on products under ₹300

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

E-commerce major Amazon India on Monday announced zero referral fees on over 1.2 crore products on its platform that are priced below ₹300. The move is aimed at supporting small businesses and boosting the growth of sellers on Amazon, a company statement said.

Referral fees are a commission that sellers pay to Amazon for each product sold. "By eliminating referral fees on crores of products and reducing shipping costs, we're making it more lucrative for sellers to sell on Amazon.in. This initiative supports seller growth on Amazon by enabling them to offer a wider selection and present more competitive offers to customers, particularly on everyday low-value items," Amit Nanda, Director, Selling Partner Services, Amazon India, said.

"As we gain efficiencies in our oper-

ations, we ensure those benefits reach our sellers and customers," Nanda said.

The zero referral fees would be applicable across 135 product categories like apparel, shoes, fashion jewellery, grocery, home décor and furnishings, beauty, toys, kitchen products, automotive, and pet products among others.

Amazon has also introduced a new flat rate for sellers using external fulfilment services like Easy Ship and Seller Flex. The national shipping rates now start at ₹65, reduced from ₹77, according to the statement.

The zero referral fees would be applicable across 135 product categories like apparel, shoes, fashion jewellery, grocery, home décor and furnishings, beauty, toys, kitchen products, automotive

Flat rate shipping is a pricing model where a fixed cost is charged for shipping packages, regardless of their weight, size, or distance within defined limits.

While Easy Ship is a fulfilment channel where Amazon collects packages from a seller's location and delivers them to customers, as part of Seller Flex, Amazon manages a portion of the seller's warehouse as an Amazon fulfilment centre. Additionally, Amazon has lowered handling fees for lightweight items under 1 kg by up to Rs 17, which reduces the fees sellers pay.

"Sellers shipping more than one product unit at a time stand to see up to 90 per cent+ savings in selling fees on the second unit. These changes will enable sellers to offer a wider selection, competitive offers and grow their business. The revised fees come into effect from April 7, 2025," the company said.

Amazon has over 1.6 Million sellers on its marketplace.

Sensex jumps 1,078 points on FII inflows, gains in banks; takes winning run to sixth day

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Mumbai

Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty surged more than 1 per cent on Monday amid fresh foreign fund inflows and buying in banking and oil & gas shares.

The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 1,078.87 points or 1.40 per cent to settle at over six-week high of 77,984.38. During the day, it zoomed 1,201.72 points or 1.56 per cent to 78,107.23.

The NSE Nifty surged by 307.95 points or 1.32 per cent to 23,658.35. Intraday, the benchmark zoomed 358.35 points or 1.53 per cent to 23,708.75.

A positive trend in the US and European markets powered the rally in domestic equities, experts said.

From the Sensex pack, NTPC, Kotak Mahindra Bank, State Bank of India, Tech Mahindra, Power Grid, Bajaj Finserv, Axis Bank, HCL Tech, Reliance



Industries and Bajaj Finance were the biggest gainers.

Titan, IndusInd Bank, Zomato, Mahindra & Mahindra, Bharti Airtel, Nestle and Infosys were the laggards.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) bought equities worth ₹7,470.36 Crore on Friday, according to exchange data.

"Short covering ahead of monthly F&O expiry later this week fuelled the rally as the Sensex breached the psychological 78k mark intra-day on across-the-board buying.

"Renewed optimism by foreign investors coupled with strong US and European market cues further bolstered the sentiment," Prashanth Tapse, Senior VP (Research), Mehta Equities Ltd, said.

In Asian markets, Shanghai and Hong Kong settled higher while Seoul and Tokyo ended lower. European markets were trading in positive territory. US markets ended in green on Friday.

India, US to focus on increasing market access: MoS Finance

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

India and the US would focus on increasing market access, reducing tariff and non-tariff barriers, and enhancing supply chain integration, Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary said on Monday.

In a written reply in the Lok Sabha, Chaudhary said India continues to engage with the US to achieve enhancement and broadening of bilateral trade ties in a mutually beneficial and fair manner.

"Both countries plan to negotiate a mutually beneficial, multi-sector Bilateral Trade Agreement. Both countries would focus on increasing market access, reducing tariff and non-tariff barriers, and enhancing supply chain integration," Pankaj Chaudhary said.

India and the US are negotiating a bilateral trade agreement with an aim to double trade to \$500 Billion by 2030.

Export duty removal on onion to aid farmers'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

The government's decision to withdraw 20 per cent customs duty on onion exports effective April 1 will boost farmers' income, Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said on Monday.

"There will be no duty on onion export so that onion grown by our farmers with hard work reaches the global markets, and they can get better price and remunerative price," Chouhan said in a video statement.

The minister said the export duty was earlier fixed at 40 per cent, but was

reduced to 20 per cent when onion prices started falling and farmers began getting lower returns.

"Now, the government has decided that 20 per cent export duty should also be removed completely," he added.

According to a notification issued last week by the Finance Ministry, the export duty withdrawal will come into effect from April 1. Chouhan said the Narendra Modi government is "farmer-friendly" and ensuring remunerative prices for farmers is its "priority and commitment".

The export duty removal aims to protect domestic farmers from steep fall in onion prices.

NHAI, Amrita Hospital launch emergency training programme

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) and Amrita Hospital, Faridabad, have launched the Sar Salamat to Ghar Salamat campaign to enhance highway emergency response. This initiative, launched on World Head Injury Awareness Day, will train thousands of ambulance personnel and Haryana Police Patrol officers in trauma care.

As part of the program, over 50 ambulance workers received hands-on training at Amrita Hospital on March 23 under Dr. Gaurav Kakkar. The initiative aims to reduce road fatalities, nearly 50% of which can be averted with immediate medical attention. Training sessions will be held quarterly.

Ajay Tamta, Minister of State, MoRTH, emphasized the government's commitment to halving road accident deaths. Mohammad Safi, NHAI, highlighted the need for skilled responders. Swami Vijayamritananda Puri reiterated Amrita Hospital's dedication to trauma care. This initiative supports India's goal of reducing road injuries by 50 per cent by 2030.

Amrita Hospital aims to expand this initiative, aligning with India's goal of reducing road fatalities by 50% by 2030 under the Stockholm Declaration.

This campaign is set to be a nationwide model for highway emergency response training.

Rupee recovers its 2025 losses; jumps 31 paise to close at 85.67 against US dollar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Mumbai

Rising for the seventh straight session, the rupee appreciated 31 paise to close at 85.67 (provisional) against the US dollar on Monday, wiping off all its losses in 2025, supported by a positive trend in domestic equity markets and fresh foreign capital inflows.

Besides, lower global crude price levels and continuing weakness in the greenback also bolstered sentiments, traders said. However, lurking risks — ranging from liquidity constraints to reciprocal tariff implementations — continue to pose challenges for the local unit, they added.

At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 85.93, then touched an intraday high of 85.49 and a low of 86.01 against the greenback. The unit ended the session at 85.67 (provisional), registering a gain of 31 paise from its previous closing level. On Friday, the rupee appreciated 38 paise to close at 85.98 against the US dollar.

This is the seventh straight session of gain for the rupee, during which it has added 154 paise.

The local unit has recovered all its losses for 2025. On December 31, 2024, the rupee closed at 85.64 against the greenback.

"The Indian rupee recouped yearly losses as foreign banks and exporters sold the dollars ahead of the financial year-end

adjustment, while state-level banks remained aside from buying amid the RBI's USD/INR swap," Dilip Parmar, Research Analyst, HDFC Securities, said.

Parmar further noted that the sentiments turned positive ahead of the US representative visiting India ahead of April 2, reciprocal tariff implementations. Moreover, the foreign funds buying in

basket of six currencies, was trading 0.09 per cent lower at 103.99.

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, rose 0.54 per cent to \$72.55 per barrel in futures trade.

In the domestic equity market, the 30-share BSE Sensex surged 1078.87 points, or 1.40 per cent, to settle at 77,984.38, while the Nifty advanced 307.95 points, or 1.32 per cent, to close at 23,658.35 points.

Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) purchased equities worth ₹7,470.36 Crore on a net basis on Friday, according to exchange data.

Meanwhile, the country's forex reserves increased by \$305 Million to \$654.271 Billion during the week ended March 14, the RBI said on Friday.

In the previous reporting week, the overall reserves rose by \$15.267 Billion to \$653.966 Billion and registered the sharpest weekly rise in two years.

The spike in foreign reserves was partly attributed to the \$10 Billion forex swap done by the Reserve Bank of India.

The Indian equity market has witnessed a moderation in FPIs' selling pressure with the outflows narrowing to ₹1,794 crore (\$194 Million) last week, buoyed by easing global concerns and growing optimism around a potential de-escalation in the Russia-Ukraine conflict.



CRA to scrutinise claims by investment service providers

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

Markets regulator Sebi has said that risk-return metrics of services offered by investment advisers, research analysts and algo trading providers will be scrutinised by a credit rating agency, a move aimed at checking claims of high returns. Under the new norms, the credit rating agency (CRA) will act as 'Past Risk and Return Verification Agency' with a recognized stock exchange serving as 'Past Risk and Return Verification Agency' data centre.

"The activity of a Past Risk and Return Verification Agency ... May be carried out by a credit rating agency, with the approval of the Board (Sebi), on such

terms and conditions as may be specified by the Board," the regulator said in three separate notifications dated March 20. The agency will carry out the verification of risk-return metrics for Investment Advisors (IAs), Research Analysts (RAs) and Algorithmic Trading, and those persons permitted by Sebi to offer these services. The markets regulator said that any claim in the form of verified risk or return metrics will be made in the manner specified by it.

In case an intermediary fails to adhere to the verification requirements Sebi may take appropriate action. The move would enhance the transparency and accuracy of financial performance metrics disclosed by intermediaries.

New Zealand qualifies for World Cup

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Auckland

New Zealand will play at the 2026 World Cup after beating New Caledonia 3-0 on Monday in the final of the Oceania confederation qualifying series.

The New Zealand "All Whites" reached the World Cup for the third time after qualifying in Spain in 1982 and South Africa in 2010. They join hosts Canada, the United States and Mexico and Japan, which last week became the first team to qualify for the 48-team tournament.

New Caledonia still has a chance to qualify through a six-team inter-continental playoff involving teams from the Asian, African, North and Central American and South American confederations.

New Zealand had a setback when its captain, Nottingham Forest striker Chris Wood, was forced from the field with a hip injury in the 53rd minute with the score still 0-0.

Wood is the focus of the New Zealand attack, scoring three headed goals in New Zealand's 7-0 semifinal win over Fiji on Friday.

Up stepped an unlikely star in Wood's absence. In the 62nd Michael Boxall, the 36-year-old center back from Minnesota United, scored his first goal in 55 international appearances to finally break the deadlock. Boxall met Francis de Vries' cor-



ner at the far post and headed it home.

Four minutes later the 17-year international veteran Kosta Barbarouses, who replaced Wood, ran onto Tim Payne's pass and chipped the ball over Nyikeine to make it 2-0.

Finally, Denmark-based Elijah Just scored from Barbarouses' assist in the 80th to clinch New Zealand's place at the World Cup.

"When the goal went in I think I was a bit more relieved than anything," Boxall said. "Fair play to New Caledonia, they made it pretty hard work for us."

"Everyone's reaction when the ball finally went into the back of the net was incredible."

New Caledonia shocked pundits when it held New Zealand scoreless at halftime, mostly through the extraordinary efforts of goalkeeper Rocky Nyikeine. New Zealand threatened at set pieces from which they looked for Wood, who has scored 18 goals in the English Premier League this season.

Wood missed with a header in the 18th minute and had a low shot saved by Nyikeine in the 31st.

Oceania is the smallest of FIFA's six confederations, made up of 11 full member nations, mostly small island states from South Pacific.

After Australia moved to the Asian Football Confederation from Oceania following the 2006 World Cup, New Zealand, ranked No. 89 and with a population of 5.2 million, became the largest and highest-ranked nation in the confederation. New Caledonia, with a population of 280,000, is ranked 152.

This edition for the first time the Oceania qualifying series winner was granted direct entry to the World Cup, without having to face an inter-continental playoff. That bonus came with the expansion of the tournament to 48.

In 1982 New Zealand played 15 matches and traveled 55,000 miles in its qualifying campaign. In 2010, it qualified after a two-game series with Bahrain.

New Caledonia's "Les Cagous", most of whom are amateurs, had to overcome political unrest in their homeland to qualify for the Oceania finals. Violent protests against voting reforms claimed the lives of 13 people in the French-speaking island nation and disrupted the New Caledonia team's qualifying campaign.

"I love the way my team played, the attitude on the field. Unfortunately the result was not on our side," New Caledonia manager Johann Sidaner said.

India face tricky Bangladesh in Asian Cup qualifiers

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Shillong

A 3-0 thrashing of Maldives in their first international match of the year will certainly boost their confidence, but India will be wary of a tricky Bangladesh in their 2027 AFC Asian Cup qualifying round match here on Tuesday.

India notched a commanding win over lower-ranked Maldives here on March 19, which marked the first win under the charge of Manolo Marquez. The win was also significant as the talismanic Sunil Chhetri led the team with a superb goal in his international return, his 95th in India Jersey.

Bangladesh have been familiar but tricky rivals for India and historically it has not been easy outings whenever the two sides faced each other. India though are currently ranked much higher in the FIFA chart — 126th as against 185th on Bangladesh.

The last match between the two sides had ended in a 1-1 draw in the 2021 SAFF Championships in Maldives with Chhetri scoring India's goal. Chhetri had also scored India's both goals in the 2-0 win over their eastern neighbours in a 2022 FIFA World Cup qualifying round match. Bangladesh will fancy their chances as they have come with English Premier League (EPL) player Hamza Choudhury, who is currently playing for Sheffield United on loan from Leicester City. But India head coach Marquez is not unduly worried about Hamza and said his side will win on Tuesday if they play according to his plan.

"Hamza, obviously, is a good player who was playing in Premier League. It's good for not just Bangladesh but Asian football that such players are playing for national team. His teammates will be very motivated to play with him," Marquez said at the pre-match press conference.

"We always expect the best version of our opponents. Our approach to every game is similar, whoever the opponents are -- Maldives, Bangladesh, Hong Kong or Singapore. You need to know the good and bad about them. But we can't change our style of play. We know if we play a good game, we will win tomorrow," said Marquez.

Tuesday's match holds importance for India as any slip-up could be disastrous in their bid to make it to the 2027 AFC Asian Cup. The team could have made it to the main tournament in the second round qualifying campaign last year but failed to do so after losing two crucial matches that led to the sacking of then head coach Igor Stimac.

India are placed in Group C of the 2027 Asian Cup qualifying third round along with Bangladesh, Hong Kong and Singapore, and only the top team after six home and away matches qualifies for the continental showpiece.

With the margin for error in each match very low, Marquez labelled the qualifiers as 'six finals'.

"The first game is always important. It's a short competition, only the top team qualifies for the tournament," said the Spaniard.

"There are six games and we need to finish first. We want to get the maximum points possible to qualify for Saudi Arabia (2027 AFC Asian Cup host country).

Commenting on Chhetri finding the target on his international return, Marquez said, "Sunil is a legend in Indian football and the top-scorer of the season. We had problems scoring in my first few games, but not in creating chances though. I think he's a great addition for us."

Sunil is a legend in Indian football and the top-scorer of the season. We had problems scoring in my first few games, but not in creating chances though

— MANOLO MARQUEZ, HEAD COACH

"Bangladesh have very good players. They've had the same coach (Javier Cabrera) for the last three years with the same philosophy. Most of the players are the same since they played against Maldives last November. Continuity is important.

Key India defender Sandesh Jhingan, who accompanied Marquez at the press conference, said, "We're always expecting him (Chhetri) to score goals. He's got 95 of them. We're happy to have him back. With the quality he has, he's a threat to every team, not just Bangladesh."

"One thing we know is that whenever India play Bangladesh, we expect a match full of high intensity, passion and adrenaline, be it in football or any sport. We're focussed on getting our result. If you're well prepared, you can beat any team, and if not, any team can beat you. We go into every game with a positive attitude," the 31-year-old said.

Bangladesh head coach Javier Cabrera, a Spaniard like Marquez, said, "It's going to be an exciting game. We are very motivated. The team has been training and working hard for 24 days already."

"We are confident, stronger than ever, and expect a tight game. Hopefully, we will make things very difficult for India."

Billie Jean King Cup Asia-Oceania Group-1 tournament to be held in Pune

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Pune

The Billie Jean King Cup Asia-Oceania Group-1 tournament featuring six teams including India will be held here at the Balewadi Sports Complex from April 8-12. The other teams in the competition will be New Zealand, Chinese Taipei, Hong Kong, Korea and Thailand. The competition will feature a round-robin format with all ties consisting of three matches, two singles followed by doubles clashes.

The teams will be vying for two qualification spots available from the region. "After the success of Mumbai Open WTA and the Maha Open ATP Challenger, the MSLTA, in association with AITA and PMDTA, is thrilled to get another event of the highest level," MSLA secretary Sundar Iyer was quoted as saying in a release. The Indian women's team will be led by Ankita Raina and will comprise of Sahaja Yamalappalli, Shrivalli Bhamidipaty, and Vaidehi Chaudhari, who are all ranked between 300 and 358.

"The addition of experienced doubles specialist Prarthana Thombare (ranked 137 in doubles), who recently finished as the runners-up at the WTA Mumbai Open, gives captain Vishal Uppal plenty of strategic options going into the tournament," the release added.

New Zealand's Lulu Sun, currently ranked 44th in the world, headlines the competition and will be supported by her teammates Monique Barry and Aishi Das. Thailand boasts of singles players in Mananchaya Sawangkaew (111) and Lanlana Tararudee (173), along with the well-rounded squad featuring Thasaporn Naklo, Patcharin Cheapchandej and experienced doubles specialist Peangtarn Plipuech. The Chinese Taipei will be led by Joanna Garland (ranked 212), and also have Ya-Hsuan Lee, Yi-Tsen Cho, Fang-An Lin, and Fang Hsien Wu in their ranks.

The Korean team will feature Sohyun Park (ranked 310) alongside teammates Dayeon Back, Eunhye Lee, Boyoung Jeong, and Kim Dabin.

Asian Championships: Time for Antim, Deepak Punia to press restart button

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ AMMAN

After a forgettable 2024 season, the senior Asian Championships, beginning here Tuesday, will provide an opportunity to Antim Panghal and Deepak Punia to make a fresh beginning while other Indian wrestlers will have a chance to carve out their own identity at the international level.

Embroiled in bitter selection trials between 2022-23, young Antim lost track when it mattered the most as she made a heartbreaking exit from the Paris Olympics. Not that she was a medal favourite but a strong showing was expected, given the talent she possesses.

However, the two-time U20 world champion ended up being a pale shadow of herself in the 53kg.

Much would be expected from the U23 world champion Reetika Hooda (76kg) and U17 world champion Mansi Lather, who came through the 68kg selection tri-

als, and Manisha Bhanwala (62kg).

The 2019 World Championships silver medallist Deepak Punia, who missed a medal at Tokyo Olympics by a whisker, could not even qualify for the Games.

He has been struggling for form of late. Someone who excelled at the junior level but could not repeat the success at the senior level, Deepak would aim to shrug off the past disappointments.

He will present his challenge in the 92kg category and not in his usual 86kg weight class. A sure-shot medal would have been Paris Games bronze medallist Aman Sehrawat but since he is still in rehabilitation, the U23 world champion Chirag will present India's challenge in 57kg category that often produces fast-paced bouts Udit (61kg) and world U20 medallist Sujeet Kalkal (65kg) are the other promising prospects in the Indian squad.

In the last few years India's Greco Roman wrestlers have improved a lot. In the absence of national camp and com-

petitions, not much can be predicted but it won't be a surprise if one of two end up with surprise performances.

There are several new faces in the Greco Roman women's squad and will be watched keenly.

Indian squads

Men's freestyle: Chirag (57kg), Udit (61kg), Sujit Kalkal (65kg), Vishal Kaliraman (70g), Jaideep (74kg), Chandermohan (79kg), Mukul Dahya (86kg), Deepak Punia (92kg), Jojinty Kumar (97kg) and Dinesh (125kg).

Women's: Ankush (50kg), Antim Panghal (53kg), Nishu (55kg), Neha Sharma (57kg), Muskan (59kg), Manisha Bhanwala (62kg), Monika (65kg), Mansi Lathar (68kg), Jyoti Bermal (72kg) and Reetika Hooda (76kg). Greco Roman: Nitin (55kg), Sumit (60kg), Umesh (63kg), Neeraj (67kg), Kuldeep (72kg), Sagar (77kg), Rahul (82kg), Sunil (87kg), Nitesh (97kg) and Prem (130kg).

IOC President celebrated on return home to Zimbabwe

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Harare

Newly elected International Olympic Committee President Kirsty Coventry arrived in her home country of Zimbabwe to a hero's welcome as her victory is celebrated as a national milestone.

The southern African country has faced years of isolation and sanctions by the United States and other Western nations.

The 41-year-old Coventry, who is also Zimbabwe's sports minister, was the only female candidate in the IOC presidency race and became the first woman and first African to be elected head of the global Olympic movement. She beat six other candidates in the vote in Greece on Thursday, including the head of world track and field, the head of international cycling and a member of Jordan's royal family.

"It's not just my success, it is our success. We broke down barriers," Coventry

Men have dominated sport for so long, I am thrilled that one of our own is now at the very top where she can tackle the issues affecting women in sports

— ABIGAIL MADERA, BOXING REFEREE

said in Zimbabwe on Sunday.

Dancers in animal fur kilts and head gear made from bird feathers stomped the ground as part of a traditional African folklore dance to the sound of trumpets and drums to welcome Coventry home as she arrived at an airport in the capital, Harare.

Dozens of others, including female cricketers, young karatekas and children in school uniform cheered loudly.

"Men have dominated sport for so long, I am thrilled that one of our own is now at the very top where she can tackle the issues affecting women in sports," said Abigail Madera, a female boxing referee.

B Sumeeth Reddy announces retirement

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

India's doubles specialist B Sumeeth Reddy, a member of the 2022 Commonwealth Games mixed team silver medal-winning squad, has announced his retirement as an active badminton player to focus entirely on coaching. The 33-year-old from Hyderabad, who formed the men's doubles pair with Manu Attri and also played mixed doubles with several shuttlers, including his wife N Sikki Reddy, made the announcement through social media on Sunday.

"RETIRED AND PROUD. Embracing the next chapter with gratitude and excitement. I thank my family, friends and well wishers for all the support," Sumeeth wrote in an Instagram post.

Sumeeth and Manu, who achieved the highest world ranking of 17, won the 2016 South Asian Games gold medal, qualified for the Rio Olympics, and were also part of the men's team at the Asia Team Championships in Hyderabad.

He represented India at the 2014 and 2018 Asian Games and won the 2015

Mexico City Grand Prix and 2016 Canada Open, along with finishing as runner-up at the US Open and Dutch Open in 2015.

Along with Ashwini Ponnappa, Sumeeth also finished second at the 2017 Syed Modi International.

"I have always pushed my limits and wanted to achieve things that I could not do in my career... But currently, even though at World Rank 25, I have started to believe that the best phase of my career is already behind me. Also, despite a few other circumstances, I have stepped down from my professional playing career," he said. "Believe me, there will be a time in your career when you will have to stop playing professional sport, and on that day you should be able to step aside with no regrets, knowing that you have given your 110 per cent to become the best version of yourself," he wrote.

"Lastly I thank each and every well-wisher who has been part of my playing career. Looking to be part of more inspiring stories by guiding and motivating young players," Sumeeth had his share of setbacks, including a spinal bone degeneration problem which forced the doctors

to advise him to quit badminton as there were fears of a lower body paralysis.

"... The common advice that everyone gave is to stop professional sports and pursue an alternative career, as there was a concern of lower body paralysis. At this point, I was 20, left with no job and an uncertain body which needed wall support to walk," he recalled.

"Due to the pain, my back would collapse while standing or walking. The solution was to bare the pain, continue with rehab and hope for the best. With Sir Gopi's advice, I shifted to doubles."

"With the help of the cosmos and, with God's grace, I won my first National Championships in 2012. Ya I then get to play the International events. The shocking pain would carry with me for the next few years. As my back would suddenly have no strength to hold my upper body, during those years."

Reddy, who opened his own badminton academy, the Sikki Sumeeth Badminton Academy in Hyderabad in 2021, is also part of India's coaching panel and has been trusted with the responsibility of the women's doubles players.

Spain, France need penalty shootouts to reach in Nations League semifinals

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Paris

Defending champion Spain and France needed penalty shootouts to reach the Nations League semifinals, where they were joined by Germany and Portugal.

Spain was pegged back three times by the Netherlands in a 3-3 draw after extra time in the second leg for a 5-5 aggregate score. Barcelona midfielder Pedri scored the decisive penalty kick after Spain goalkeeper Unai Simon had saved Donyell Malen's effort as the shootout finished 5-4. France won the shootout by the same score against Croatia after leading 2-0 after 90 minutes to level the tie overall and force extra time, which saw no more goals scored. Dayot Upamecano scored the decisive spot kick after goalkeeper Mike Maignan brilliantly saved from Josip Stanisic.

Germany scored three first-half goals against Italy but then held on grimly for a 3-3 draw to win 5-4 on aggregate. Giacomo Raspadori's penalty deep into second-half stoppage time of the second leg had put Italy within one goal of forcing extra time in Dortmund.

Portugal beat Denmark 5-2 after extra time in Lisbon after losing the first leg 1-0. Francisco Trincao scored twice for Portugal late on, with Cristiano Ronaldo missing an early penalty.



The semifinals begin on June 4 with Germany playing Portugal in Munich, followed on June 5 with France vs. Spain in Stuttgart. The final is on June 8.

Mbappe's drought continues

Kylian Mbappé's seventh game without a goal for France is his longest drought for the national team and he remains stuck on 48 goals.

Michael Olise got France back into the tie when he curled in a 52nd-minute free kick for his first international goal,

then set up Ousmane Dembélé 10 minutes from time to make it 2-2 on aggregate.

Mbappé missed a good chance in extra time but held his nerve to score France's first penalty in the shootout at the Stade de France.

Resilient Dutch push Spanish all the way Mikel Oyarzabal's early penalty put Spain ahead in Valencia but Memphis Depay equalized from the spot in the 54th minute. Oyarzabal grabbed his second goal midway through the second half fol-

lowing a counterattack but defender Ian Maatsen's left-footed strike sent the game into extra time.

Barcelona star Lamine Yamal put the Spanish ahead again in the 103rd minute with a neat finish, but midfielder Xavi Simons equalized as the Dutch took Spain to penalties.

Germany stylish, then sloppy

Joshua Kimmich netted from the penalty spot after 30 minutes for Germany and Bayern Munich teammate Jamal Musiala added the second goal six minutes later in unusual circumstances.

Italy goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma had just made a fine save from a header. As he was remonstrating with his defense, Kimmich played a short corner to Musiala and he clipped the ball into the net with Donnarumma stranded. Striker Tim Kleindienst put the Germans 3-0 up and Moise Kean pulled two second-half goals back for Italy before late drama.

Ronaldo's soft penalty not costly

Ronaldo is the all-time top scorer in men's soccer, but he saw his tame sixth-minute spot-kick saved by Kasper Schmeichel, who guessed the right way and gathered easily.

Portugal took the lead close to halftime when defender Joachim Andersen cum-

sily headed into his own net from a corner. Rasmus Kristensen headed in the right way for the equalizer in the 56th, getting his first Denmark goal in the process.

Ronaldo made it international goal No. 136 when he squeezed the ball in from close range but Christian Eriksen equalized for 2-2 moments later when he turned in a cross, only for Trincao to put the game into extra time and then score again. Goncalo Ramos added the fifth goal. Denmark won the first leg 1-0.

Maldini's first start

Daniel Maldini started his first match for Italy, 23 years after his father Paolo Maldini's last game for the national team. Cesare Maldini, Daniel's grandfather, also played for Italy.

Greece and Turkey cruise, Lukaku saves Belgium

Veteran striker Romelu Lukaku scored two late goals as Belgium beat Ukraine 3-0 to stay in League A after losing the first leg 3-1.

Greece was promoted to League A after overturning a 1-0 deficit with a resounding 3-0 win in Scotland, with 17-year-old midfielder Konstantinos Kareltsas among the scorers. Hakan Calhanoglu's penalty sent Turkey on the way to a 3-0 victory in Hungary and a 6-1 aggregate victory to gain promotion to League A.

China facing reality check in World Cup qualifying

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Hangzhou

Branko Ivankovic's China lineup faces another reality check in World Cup qualifying, with the national team risking falling further behind the global ambitions it promoted a decade ago. China hosts Australia at Hangzhou in Asian qualifying on Tuesday with its hopes of a direct entry to the 2026 World Cup hanging precariously on the outcome. A loss will end those hopes, leaving China with another, more tense route through a fourth-round of Asian qualifying.

A decade ago, as the Chinese Super League was spending hundreds of millions of dollars on big-name foreign players, the national soccer federation released a plan laying out a route to a status of international powerhouse by 2050 and one of the best teams in Asia by 2030. As clubs faced financial problems, the foreign stars departed and the league started to struggle. In terms of continental strength, there's still a long way to go.

I have to adapt and 'stay relevant': MS Dhoni

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Chennai

Rejecting speculation that he is the back-room decision-maker in Chennai Super Kings despite handing over captaincy to Ruturaj Gaikwad, the talismanic Mahendra Singh Dhoni said he is instead focussed on reinventing himself and his strokes to "stay relevant" in the IPL.

Speaking to "JioStar" after CSK's four-wicket win over Mumbai Indians in their lung-opener on Sunday night here, Dhoni spoke about the team dynamics under Gaikwad, his own form and also the regional commentary being done in the ongoing league.

"...Batsmen are now willing to take risks. They believe that with proper cricketing shots, they can play big strokes, and at the same time, they are improvising with their shot selection... Whether it's a reverse scoop against a fast bowler, a sweep, or a reverse sweep against a pacer.

"I am no different, I have to adapt as well. This is what is required of me for where I am batting. You have to try and stay relevant," Dhoni said.



"The way we played T20 in 2008 and the way we played IPL last year, it's very different. Earlier, there was a lot of turn in the wickets. Wickets were two-paced.

Now, India's wickets have become much better; they are more batter-friendly," he explained.

The 43-year-old, under whom CSK

won five IPL titles, handed over the leadership to Gaikwad at the beginning of the 2024 season. He said although he discusses things with Gaikwad, he refrains from persuading him to follow his advice.

"Ruturaj has been part of us for quite some time. His temperament is very good, he's very calm, very composed. So those were the reasons we considered him for leadership.

"Before the start of the tournament, I also told him, 'If I give you advice, it doesn't mean you have to follow it. I will try to stay away as much as possible.' During the season, a lot of people speculated that I was making the decisions in the background," Dhoni recalled.

"But the fact is, he was making 99 per cent of the decisions. The most important calls — bowling changes, field placements — were all his. I was just helping him out. He did a brilliant job of handling the players," he added.

Another player with whom Dhoni shares a close bond is Royal Challengers Bengaluru star and national batting mainstay Virat Kohli. The veteran said their relationship has grown into a strong friendship over the years.

"It was always an honest exchange of ideas — whether a certain approach was right or if an adjustment could have been made. Initially, it was more of a relationship between a captain and a young player, but over time, as we kept interacting, we became friends," he said.

"Even today, we share that bond, though there's always a line of respect between a senior and a junior. Now that neither of us is captain, we get more time to talk before matches," he added.

The Jharkhand cricketer was quite pleased with the IPL broadcasters' decision to have regional commentary for the immensely popular league.

"...Listening to commentary gives you an outsider's perspective. It sparks new ideas like 'why don't we try this approach?'. Which can then be evaluated based on intelligence and data to see if it fits within the team's strategy," he said.

"I haven't heard a lot of regional commentary, but I know that Bihari (Bhojpuri) commentary is highly energetic. It reminds me of old-school radio commentary, where the commentators were very involved. I find that very interesting," he added.

Tamim Iqbal undergoes angioplasty after heart attack

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

Former Bangladesh captain Tamim Iqbal on Monday underwent angioplasty after suffering a heart attack during a Dhaka Premier Division Cricket League match in Dhaka.

According to a report in ESPNcricinfo, the incident occurred in the first innings of the 50-over-a-side contest between Mohammedan Sporting Club and Shinepukur Cricket Club when the 36-year-old Iqbal felt pain in his chest.

Tamim, who was leading Mohammedan, fielded for just one over before being rushed to a nearby hospital.

"Initially, a helicopter was arranged for Tamim's movement to the hospital, but he could not be flown from the BKSP ground in Savar. He was later taken to the Fazilatunnesa Hospital," the report quoted match referee Debabrata Paul as saying.

The treating doctors later issued an official medical bulletin.

"He returned to us in a critical condition. We can call it a heart attack, and we subsequently did an angiogram and angioplasty to remove the blockage. The medical procedure has gone smoothly. He is currently under observation.

"The swift coordination between the medical staff at BKSP and the hospital ensured Tamim was treated quickly," the bulletin read.

The Bangladesh Cricket Board had cancelled a scheduled board meeting this afternoon after the development. BCB president Faruque Ahmed is at the hospital, along with other members.

Iqbal had announced his retirement from international cricket for the second time in January this year. Earlier, in July 2023, he had made a similar announcement during an emotional press conference but reversed his decision within 24 hours following an intervention from then Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

Iqbal, who last featured for the national team in 2023, has played 70 Tests and 243 ODIs, scoring 5,134 runs and 8,357 runs respectively for Bangladesh. He has also accumulated 1,758 runs in 78 T20Is.

Matthew Hayden praises Mahendra Singh Dhoni

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Chennai

Mahendra Singh Dhoni's lightning-quick reflexes behind the stumps to get rid of Suryakumar Yadav during an IPL match here have left former Australian opener Matthew Hayden gushing about the former Indian captain's abilities, despite not being in his prime. Dhoni, 43, is nearing the end of his career, having hung up his international boots five years ago and playing just as a player for the Chennai Super Kings after leading the team to five IPL titles.

However, Dhoni showcased his brilliance once again on Sunday when he whipped off the bails in an instant off Noor Ahmad's delivery, sending Suryakumar back to the pavilion. "He (Dhoni) was on fire," Hayden, the former Australia batter and Dhoni's team-mate at CSK till 2010, said on ESPNcricinfo's T20 Time Out.

"I mean Noor Ahmad was firing down the leg side and it was just a movement across the ball. They're difficult when you're sitting there sort of partially obscured by the batsman.

"Then the stumping was just superb, just such quick timing, great hands, good vision. He's still got it." The stumping of Suryakumar (29) was a crucial moment in the game as CSK broke a 51-run stand and eventually restricted Mumbai Indians to 155/9. CSK chased down the target with four wickets in hand and five balls to spare at Chepauk. "The stumping from MSD (MS Dhoni) was out of the world," said Noor during the post-match presentation.

"It feels great to have someone like Mahi Bhai behind the stumps, it is a great support for me." As per Star Sports, the stumping was executed in just 0.12 seconds.

Piyush Chawla, former India and CSK spinner, believes Dhoni must have practiced with Noor during pre-season camp to perfect the stumping.

"It does happen, it is a challenge if you have not kept against somebody," he said.

"But I'm sure in the camp, he must have kept a lot of balls because if he's keeping for somebody new, he especially takes that person to the stumps and says, you bowl a few balls. (It has) not (happened) with me because I have bowled against him so many times and bowled to him in the nets also. But whenever somebody new comes, especially a wristspinner, he just makes sure he's keeping 10-12 balls so that he gets used to the wrist position."

Rachin Ravindra credits spin depth for win over MI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Chennai

Chennai Super Kings hero Rachin Ravindra credited the team's spinners, led by the "world-class" Ravichandran Ashwin, for their comprehensive win over Mumbai Indians, saying the depth in spin gives them the right balance, covering any off-days from individual bowlers.

While Ashwin delivered a tidy 1/31, it was Afghanistan's Noor Ahmad who stole the limelight with a brilliant 4 for 18, helping restrict MI to 155-9.

"Ash (Ashwin) is a world-class performer. I played a bit against him, he brings a lot of experience, he brings a lot of his cricket knowledge, the way he speaks about spin bowling, the tips he gives," Ravindra said at the post-match press conference after CSK's four-wicket win.

"He reads the game, he is a great thinker of the game. It's an honour to

share the field with lot of these guys, greats of Indian game, guys I have grown up watching," he said.

"We have got a good spin depth, the balance of the team is nice. If someone is not having a great day the sixth bowler comes in."

Chasing 156, Ravindra remained unbeaten on 65 off 45 balls and shared 67 runs for the second wicket with skipper Ruturaj Gaikwad (53 off 26) to lay the foundation for the win on Sunday night.

"It's always an honour to open for CSK, the history of it and you look back at the heroes like the Hussey's, the Watson's, the McCullum's. These guys have done so well. So it's great to be in this role but I will take game by game. It's a long tournament so..." Ravindra said.

CSK lost a few wickets in the middle to be reduced to 116/5 but Ravindra and Jadeja (17) then steadied the ship to take them to 152 for 6.

Lavishing praise on his skipper

Gaikwad and Jadeja, Ravindra said: "Rutu is an amazing player, the way he showed his class out there, scoring and hitting beautiful shots he did. It was fractionally a tricky wicket but I think it was a good wicket in general.

Jaddu's experience speaks for itself. He is a classy all-rounder and the way he finished lot of games in the past, his calmness is great and his clarity

— RACHIN RAVINDRA, CSK PLAYER

"Mumbai bowled quite well. The dew wasn't a factor but the way he played showed his skill and class and made my job a bit easier," he said.

"Jaddu's experience speaks for itself. He is a classy all-rounder and the way he finished lot of games in the past, his calmness is great and his clarity. He knows his team well, he knows the conditions well and sharing the crease with

him was amazing."

The Chepauk crowd had hoped for the legendary Mahendra Singh Dhoni to finish the game, but it was Ravindra who sealed the win with a six off Kiwi teammate Mitchell Santner to take CSK home.

"It's difficult to soak in the moment, you are simply focussed on winning the game for the team but it's hard to ignore when Dhoni comes in, the noise and whistles. It was cool to share the crease with him for the first time," he said.

"He is a legend of the game, people love him here and so it was special. All the crowd was hoping I give him one and he finished the game but it was about finishing the job. Dhoni has finished so many games for CSK and I think there is plenty more to come."

Ravindra was also full of praise for young MI left-arm wrist spinner Vignesh Puthur, who had fine figures of 3/32 in his debut IPL match.

Iyer to lean on captaincy credentials

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Ahmedabad

Skipper Shreyas Iyer will lean on his captaincy credentials as he looks to turn around the fortunes of perennial underperformers Punjab Kings in this IPL, opening the season with a clash against Gujarat Titans here on Tuesday.

Iyer enjoyed huge success leading Kolkata Knight Riders to the IPL title last year, four years after guiding Delhi Capitals to the 2020 IPL final, and now faces the challenge of ending Punjab's 18-year-long wait for their maiden IPL title.

The Punjab team reached the semi-finals in 2018 and made it to the final once in 2014, but despite numerous squad changes and leadership shifts, they have failed to break into the top 5 in the last four editions, even after rebranding to Punjab Kings from Kings XI Punjab.

However, with Iyer at the helm, Punjab has a captain with proven leadership credentials. He will also reunite with coach Ricky Ponting at Punjab, providing the ideal platform to make a fresh start.

On the other hand, Shubman Gill, who is the vice-captain of India's ODI team, endured a tough season as GT

captain, with the team finishing in 8th spot in 2024 after a title win and runner-up finishes in 2022 and 2023 under Hardik Pandya.

Both Gill and Iyer are in great form, having played crucial roles in India's Champions Trophy-winning campaign in Dubai earlier this month.

Iyer finished as India's top run-scorer in the Champions Trophy with 243 runs in five games, while Gill also

Iyer finished as India's top run-scorer in the Champions Trophy with 243 runs in five games, while Gill also struck a century in the opening match against Bangladesh

struck a century in the opening match against Bangladesh and contributed significantly to India's triumph.

As for team dynamics, GT's batting strength will rely on a solid start from Gill and England's wicketkeeper-batter Jos Buttler, who will be looking to bounce back from recent poor form.

The middle-order will be in the hands of West Indian Sherfane Rutherford, Sai Sudharsan, and Masood Shahrukh Khan, with all-rounders

Rashid Khan, Rahul Tewatia, Glenn Phillips, Washington Sundar, and Mahipal Lomror expected to contribute.

On the bowling front, Mohammed Siraj will look to make a big impact and return to the national reckoning after missing out of the Champions Trophy, while Kagiso Rabada, Prasidh Krishna, South African Gerald Coetzee, and veteran Ishant Sharma will provide added firepower to GT's pace attack.

GT's spin department will be led by Rashid Khan with left-arm spinner Sai Kishore providing valuable support.

Punjab Kings, on the other hand, will depend on skipper Iyer, Josh Inglis, Prabhsimran Singh, Marcus Stoinis, and Glenn Maxwell for their batting. The Punjab outfit also boasts a strong line-up of all-rounders in Aizatullah Omarzai, Stoinis, Marco Jansen, Shahank Singh, and Musheer Khan.

The pace bowling department will be led by Arshdeep Singh, who will be itching to get back in action after not getting a game in the Champions trophy.

He will have Lockie Ferguson, Kuldeep Sen, and Yash Thakur in the pace unit, while leg-spinner Yuzvendra Chahal and left-arm spinner Harpreet Brar will hope for a successful season.



MI spinner Puthur makes instant impact on IPL stage

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Mumbai

A pat on the shoulders and a few words of appreciation from legendary MS Dhoni would go a long way for the unheralded Mumbai Indians' 24-year-old spinner Vignesh Puthur, who announced himself on the big stage of IPL with a three-wicket haul on debut.

It wasn't just his skills that made the world take notice of the Chinaman bowler from Kerala, his doggedness and self-belief were equally compelling.

Unsurprisingly, Mumbai Indians began yet another IPL with a defeat but the loss on Sunday had a silver lining with Puthur making his presence felt against a storied side like the Chennai Super Kings.

Puthur's three-wicket burst included prized scalps of Ruturaj Gaikwad (53), Shivam Dube (9) and Deepak Hooda (3), who all failed to clear the ropes off the wily 24-year-old.

"(It is) never easy — (the) first game against CSK — it's a big game. But purely the way he responded, hats off to him," former India and current MI bowling coach Paras Mhambrey told the media after the match on Sunday night.

"He was able to hold his nerves and handle pressure superbly, (he) really got us in the game. Very happy about his performance," he added.

MI have unearthed talent like Jasprit Bumrah and Hardik Pandya from the far-reaches in the past and Puthur only serves a reminder of their robust scouting system.

"Amazing, MI is known for that — giving youngsters opportunities, the scouts do this for 10 months and he (Vignesh) is a product of that," said MI's stand-in skipper and India T20I captain Suryakumar Yadav after the match.

Son of auto driver and student of English literature

From Mallapuram in Kerala, Puthur, who is currently pursuing MA in English Literature PTM Govt College Perinthalmanna in the Calicut University,

is a son of an autorickshaw driver while his mother is a housewife.

He hasn't yet played First-Class cricket apart from a brief stint in the Kerala Cricket League and in the Tamil Nadu Premier League, but Puthur's talent was enough for MI to bring him on board.

The nurturing began immediately after Puthur joined the camp. From interacting with the coaches to accessing the training facilities as well as working with analytics and data, his cricket journey took flight and Puthur soaked it all in.

"We never expected him to play in the first match itself. We are so happy. We never even thought he will get an IPL contract. Now, a lot of people are calling us to congratulate, and hopefully he will live up to everybody's expectations," said Sunil Kumar, his father.

Puthur's mother Bindu was equally delighted. "He had called up last evening saying there was a chance for me to play tonight. We were watching every ball last night, and this was his performance. He called us around 12.30 am last night after the match and then again he called after an hour. "He was so happy. I have never seen him so happy. We also could not sleep because of happiness."

Puthur's childhood coach Vijayan, who has worked with renowned Mumbai coach Vasu Paranjpe said, "Lot of time (is) in front of him. Hopefully he will climb a lot more heights. A very disciplined kid, and he worked hard on his a tough craft like left-arm wrist spin."

When asked about the potential that MI saw in the left-arm spinner, Mhambrey said. "The idea at MI is always seeing the potential more than anything else, and when we saw him for one of our trials, we saw the potential in him rather than looking into how much cricket he has played in the past."

Puthur attended MI's selection trials in November ahead of the mega auction and after he was picked for a base price of ₹30 lakh, he was sent to be around the MI Cape Town team which won the SA20 tournament.

Mexico wins CONCACAF Nations League tournament

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Inglewood (US)

Raúl Jiménez scored his second goal on a penalty kick in the second minute of second-half stoppage time, and Mexico beat Panama 2-1 to win the CONCACAF Nations League tournament for the first time.

Jiménez, the 33-year-old Fulham striker, dominated the week at SoFi Stadium with all four of Mexico's goals in El Tri's two matches.

After he scored on a header in the eighth minute against Panama on Sunday night, he used a stutter-step approach before perfectly striking a penalty awarded when defender José Córdoba touched the ball with his inexplicably outstretched arm while chasing after it in the 90th minute. "It's fantastic to come back after what I've been through," Jiménez said.

"I'm really happy. This is just a great example that you never have to lose faith, and continue. You know what you're capable to do." This remarkable tournament is only the latest chapter in the comeback story of Jiménez, who incurred a serious head injury while playing for Wolves in November 2020. After fracturing his skull in a collision with Arsenal's David Luiz, he survived a life-threatening brain bleed and returned to competition nine months later.

The US had won the first three editions of this tournament, which brings together the nations of North and Central



America and the Caribbean. But with Jiménez in dominant form and veteran coach Javier Aguirre tweaking his formation to emphasize aggression, Mexico stepped up to claim another trophy in the stadium where it won the 2023 CONCACAF Gold Cup, both times in front of vociferously pro-Mexico crowds.

"We are enjoying our game," Jiménez said. "We are really happy. We knew since we arrived, since the (quarterfinals) against Honduras when we won our pass to the final four, we knew this game was going to be difficult, but we knew we had the quality. We know each other. We know how we can play better than the other

teams, and that's the key."

Adalberto Carrasquilla scored on a penalty in first-half injury time for underdog Panama, which staged a dramatic 1-0 upset of the host US on Thursday night to reach the final.

The championship match was briefly suspended with 10 minutes left in regulation after a large portion of the raucous crowd of 68,212 repeatedly shouted the homophobic Spanish slur that is commonly used at Mexican matches both foreign and domestic despite several governing bodies' attempts to eradicate it. The players took a water break while anti-slur messages appeared on the scoreboard and

over the public address system.

Misbehavior aside, Mexico feels right at home in the Los Angeles Rams' palatial stadium — or anywhere in Southern California, where El Tri is invariably treated as the home team. Mexico also beat Panama here two years ago in the Gold Cup on Santi Giménez's late goal.

Jiménez played up front alongside Giménez in the Nations League semifinals and finals, with coach Javier Aguirre using an aggressive alignment to create offense. It worked splendidly thanks to Jiménez, who needed only a few minutes to get Mexico on top in the final.

"It was crazy," Giménez said.

"We didn't train it, but we're soccer players, and we know how to play in every formation. It's an honour for me to play with Raúl, and it was a good result because we understand each other. I was more like a No. 10, but still was very good to play with him."

After Roberto Alvarado put a long, beautiful cross into the box, Jiménez outmaneuvered a defender and bounced in a header that set off a raucous celebration at SoFi. Panama dominated possession and generated more shot attempts in the first half, and it finally paid off when video review determined center back Johan Vásquez committed a foul in the Mexico penalty area shortly before halftime. Carrasquilla barely got his shot above goalkeeper Luis Malagón's trailing legs to tie it.