

## A Day of Reckoning for Indian Judiciary

### SC initiates probe in Delhi High Court Judge case

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

After a day-long turns and twists on the media report of huge pile of cash found in the Delhi High Court Judge Justice Yashwant Varma's home by the fire brigade, the Supreme Court on Friday said misinformation and rumours were being spread over the incident. The top court which initiated an in-house inquiry on the matter said it is waiting for the report from Delhi High Court Chief Justice. Meanwhile Fire Services Chief Atul Garg said there was no cash found from Justice Varma's residence.



Justice Yashwant Varma PTI

As the controversies broke out, by afternoon, Justice Varma took leave from work. The Supreme Court in a statement in the evening said the proposal for Justice Varma's transfer to Allahabad High Court was independent and separate from in-house enquiry procedure. The top court said upon receiving information, the Delhi High Court Chief Justice commenced an in-house enquiry procedure collecting evidence and information.

The High Court Chief Justice DK Upadhyaya, who had commenced enquiry prior to March 20 collegium meeting, would submit a report to Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna today itself, said the top court. Following its examination, the court would proceed for "further and necessary" action, added the statement from Supreme Court.

Fire fighters found no cash during their operation to douse flames at the residence of Justice Varma, Delhi Fire Services Chief Atul Garg said. The control room received a call about a blaze at Varma's Lutyens Delhi residence at 11.35 pm on March 14 and two fire tenders were immediately

rushed to the spot, Garg told media. Fire tenders reached the spot at 11.43 pm. The fire was in a store room stocked with stationary and domestic articles, Garg said, adding that it took 15 minutes to control the flames. There were no casualties.

"Soon after dousing the flames, we informed Police about the fire incident. Thereafter, a team of fire department personnel left the spot. Our fire fighters did not find any cash during their fire fighting operation," the DFS chief said.

The Allahabad High Court Bar Association opposed the transfer Justice Varma and said they may go for an indefinite strike against making the Allahabad HC as "trashbin." In a resolution passed soon after the news of the judge's trans-

fer by a Supreme Court collegium was reported, the association said, "We were taken aback that the Supreme Court has transferred Justice Yashwant Varma back to Allahabad High Court."

The resolution, naming association president and senior advocate Anil Tiwari as the signatory, claims that the discovery of the "unaccounted money" from the judge's house was of "₹15 Crore". "Supreme Court has taken cognisance on the matter immediately and unanimously decide repatriate Justice Yashwant Varma to Allahabad High Court," it said. The statement added, "The decision of the collegium raises a serious question as to whether the Allahabad high Court is a trash bin?"

The matter was raised in the Rajya Sabha and Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar saying he will find a mechanism for holding a structured discussion on the issue. Raising the issue in the morning session, Congress MP Jairam Ramesh also sought the Chair's response on judicial accountability and reminded him about a pending notice regarding impeachment of a judge of the Allahabad High Court. "This morning, we have read about a shocking case of huge amounts of cash unearthed at the residence of a judge of the Delhi High Court," Ramesh said.

He also pointed out that earlier, 50 members of Parliament had submitted a notice to the chairman regarding certain remarks that were made by a judge of the Allahabad High Court. Ramesh said the Chairman himself has repeatedly spoken about the urgency for judicial accountability. The senior Congress member also sought to remind Dhankhar that he had directed the Leader of the House on this issue.

### Justice Varma accused in CBI FIR

J GOPIKRISHNAN ■ New Delhi

The controversial judge Justice Yashwant Varma was named as accused by CBI in February 2018 in case related to bank loan fraud by Simbhaoli Sugars Limited. For CBI, the FIR No: RCBD1/2018/E/0002 dated February 22, 2018 is a hot potato due to the name of Yashwant Varma as accused who had already become a Judge in Allahabad High Court in October 2014. The agency was registering FIR based on a complaint by Oriental Bank of Commerce filed on 2017, without knowing that Varma had already become a High Court judge, having impunity. The bank loan fraud case is an interesting one. Varma who was a lawyer with expertise in tax laws was also non-executive director of the big sugar company Simbhaoli Sugars Limited and during this period the company took a loan to give money to sugar farmers to buy their products. According to the Oriental Bank, which filed complaint to CBI named all the 10 directors of the sugar company for the bank loan fraud raging above ₹109 Crore.

Justice Varma was named as ninth accused in the FIR along with sugar company's managing director Gurmit Singh Mann, deputy managing director Gurpal Singh, CEO GSC Rao and CFO Sanjay Tapriya, executive directors Gursimran Kaur. The bank's complaint also named other five non-executive directors along with Varma, who during the bank loan period was also a practicing lawyer in 2012. In October 2014, Advocate Yashwant Varma became Allahabad HC judge. When the loan amount was not repaid and the irregularities in the disbursement to sugar farmers were found in later years, the bank filed complaint to CBI in November 2017 and within months in February 2018, the agency filed a 13 page FIR which also named Varma.

Continued on >> P8

### Union Minister calls out Allahabad HC rape ruling

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

Union Women and Child Development Minister Annapurna Devi on Friday said she "completely disagreed" with Allahabad High Court's ruling on what constituted rape or attempt to rape and urged the Supreme Court to intervene in the matter.

Her reaction came after the high court, in an order earlier this week, ruled that mere grabbing of breasts and snapping pyjama strings did not amount to rape or attempt to rape but fell under the ambit of assault or use of criminal force against any woman with the intent to disrobe or compel her to be naked.

"I am completely against this decision and the Supreme Court should take serious note of it. Such a ruling has no place in a civilised society," Devi, said outside Parliament. She also expressed concern over the broader implications of the judgment, warning that it could send the wrong message to society. "Somewhere, this will have a negative impact on society and we will discuss this matter further," she added. The case involved an 11-year-old girl in Uttar Pradesh's Kasganj, who was assaulted by two accused, identified as Pawan and Akash, in 2021. The accused grabbed her breasts, snapped her pyjama strings and attempted to drag her under a culvert. The assailants fled when passersby intervened.

Rajya Sabha MP Swati Maliwal also slammed the ruling as "shameful" and "absolutely wrong". She questioned the message such a ruling sent to society, particularly regarding crimes against children. "This is deeply shameful and absolutely wrong. What message do they want to give to society? That a young girl can be subjected to such horrific acts

and it still won't be considered rape?" she told reporters outside Parliament.

Maliwal also urged the Supreme Court to immediately intervene and take strict action against such judicial interpretations. "The Supreme Court should intervene in this matter without delay, and strict action must be taken," she said.

CPI general secretary D Raja has also slammed the judge's remarks on sexual violence as "appalling". "Grabbing breasts or snapping a pyjama string isn't attempt to rape? This trivialises sexual violence and shows the tight grip of patriarchy on our institutions. The law must prioritise survivors' trauma, not minimise it," he said in a social media post on Thursday.

**Q This is deeply shameful and absolutely wrong. What message do they want to give to society? That a young girl can be subjected to such horrific acts and it still won't be considered rape?**

— ANNAPURNA DEVI, UNION MINISTER

"People see the judiciary as the last hope and such conduct puts a question mark before the credibility of the judiciary. Shameful!" he added. Legal experts too deplored the observation of the Allahabad High Court on what constitutes a rape charge, calling for a restraint by judges and underlining the drop in public confidence in the judiciary due to such statements.

Senior advocate and Supreme Court Bar Association president Kapil Sibal took to social media saying, "God save this country with such judges adorning the Bench! The SC has been too soft in dealing with errant judges (sic)."

Continued on >> P8

### NDA dharma in Naidu's Andhra Pradesh

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ Chennai

Working to safeguard Lord Venkateswara Swamy's assets in the country and across the world, the Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu declared that people working in TTD should be Hindus. Same time he mentioned that non-Hindus currently working in the premises will be given opportunities elsewhere.

"People from other religions will not be there in the worship places of Christians and Muslims. Religious places of a particular religion will only have people belonging to that particular religion," Naidu said talking to media after he visited the temple and offered prayers with his family.

Naidu who is part of the NDA alliance also said that Lord Venkateswara Swamy temples will be built overseas where Hindus are in large numbers. The move to transfer non-Hindu staff from Tirupati

Temple is likely earn the wrath of the Congress. "We have resolved to build Venkateswara Temples in every State capital across India. To achieve this, we will send letters to all chief ministers. Additionally we will establish Venkateswara temples in regions worldwide where there is a significant Hindu population," said Naidu.

**Q People working in TTD should be Hindus. Same time he mentioned that non-Hindus currently working in the premises will be given opportunities elsewhere**

— N CHANDRABABU NAIDU, CHIEF MINISTER

Lord Venkateswara, another name of Vishnu, is rated as the richest Indian God as well as the second richest God in the world. It has assets to the tune of ₹2.5 Lakh Crore in various forms. There are

days when the temple hundi records offerings worth more than ₹2.5 Crore. The temple boasts of a university, hospital, many schools, veda patasalas and even a satellite TV channel (Sre Venkateswara Bhakti Channel) airing the live sevas and poojas. Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam, headed by an IAS officer appointed by the State Government administers the temple. Various Hindu organisations like VHP have been calling for the liberation of the temple from the shackles of the Government and handing over the administration to the devotees.

Vedic scholar Parappanangadi Unnikrishnan Panicker, who has held Deva Prasnam at Tirupati Venkateswara Temple twice in the past welcomed the move to establish such temples across the world. "The deity at Tirupati has special poojas as mandated by Agama sastrha. If this is replicated all over, the world will become a much better place to live," said Unnikrishnan Panicker.

### Home Minister tears into Opposition over north-south language war

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday attacked opposition parties in the Rajya Sabha for raking up the language row, saying they were doing so to gain political mileage and hide their corruption.

Shah also said after December 2025, he will do correspond with chief ministers, MPs and common people in their respective languages.

Making these assertions while replying to the debate in the Upper House on the working of the ministry of home affairs, he said there have been enough divisions in the nation in the name of language and it should not happen anymore as Hindi is not in competition with other languages but a friend of those. "Some parties are raking up the language issue for their own politics. They are doing it just to hide their corruption," he said.

The DMK-led Tamil Nadu government and the Centre have been at loggerheads over the implementation of the new National Education Policy and the three-language formula proposed under it.

Shah also said that after December, he will do all correspondence with chief ministers, MPs and common people in their respective languages.

Those who take shelter behind the language issue to hide their corruption, this is a strong reply to them. "There have been enough divisions in the nation in the name of language, and it should not happen anymore," he said, amid the escalat-



Home Minister Amit Shah speaks in the Rajya Sabha during the Budget session of Parliament PTI

ing row over the three-language formula implementation outlined in the National Education Policy.

The Home Minister said every Indian language is a treasure for the country. "Hindi is not in competition with any Indian language, it is only a friend of other languages," the senior BJP leader said.

Dismissing the allegation of Hindi imposition, he said every Indian language is a treasure for the country. Shah informed the House that a new department of Indian languages has been established under the 'Raajbhasha Vibhaag' (Department of Official Language) of the Home Ministry.

"I want to say this so that those who want to divide the country in the name of language do not get an agenda... The Modi government has established a department of Indian Languages which will work on spreading all Indian languages. Tamil, Telugu, Punjabi, Assamese... Every language has been included, and there will be apps for translation too," he said. The Home Minister said some people have accused the Union government of being against Southern languages. "How is that possible? I come from Gujarat, Nirmala (Sitharaman) ji is from Tamil Nadu," he said.

Continued on >> P8

**Sabse Pehle**  
Life Insurance

Premium stops.



Benefits go on.

Life Cover with attractive returns

Policy Term	Premium Paying Term
16	10
21	15
25	16

**LIC's JEEVAN LABH**

A Par, Non-Linked, Life, Individual, Savings Plan

Plan No.: 736 UIN No.: 512N304V03

- Minimum Basic Sum Assured: ₹200,000/-
- Minimum Entry Age: 8 years
- Maximum Basic Sum Assured: No limit
- Maximum Entry Age: 50/54/59 years for policy term 25/21/16 years

For details, contact your Agent/Nearest LIC Branch or SMS YOUR CITY NAME to 5676474

Download LIC Mobile App Visit: www.licindia.in Call Centre Services (022) 6827 6827 Our WhatsApp No. 8976862090

Follow us LIC India Forever | IRDAI Regn No.: 512

The risk factors of the bonuses projected under the product are not guaranteed. Past performance does not constitute any indication of future bonuses and these products are subject to the overall performance of the insurer in terms of investments, management of expenses, mortality and lapses.

BEWARE OF SPURIOUS PHONE CALLS AND FICTITIOUS/ FRAUDULENT OFFERS. IRDAI or its officials do not involve in any activities of insurance business like selling insurance policies, announcing bonus or investment of premiums, refund of amounts. Policyholders or the prospects receiving such phone calls are requested to lodge a police complaint. For more details on risk factors, terms and conditions, please read sales brochure carefully before concluding a sale.

**LIC**  
भारतीय जीवन बीमा निगम  
LIFE INSURANCE CORPORATION OF INDIA  
Har Dil Aapke Saath



## B-PACS credit limit will be increased: CM

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Lucknow

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, at the 61st annual meeting of UP Cooperative Banks, announced an increase in the credit limit for multipurpose primary rural cooperative societies (Bahu-Uddeshiye Prathamik Gramin Cooperative Samiti) from Rs 10 lakh to Rs 15 lakh to provide more financial support to farmers.

He also announced the launch of cooperative banking in Balrampur district. The chief minister, speaking at Indira Gandhi Pratishthan on Friday, described cooperatives as the strong foundation of the state's economy. He said, "Cooperative banks are the backbone of the economic growth of farmers, young entrepreneurs, and MSMEs."

He urged cooperative banks to actively support young entrepreneurs. He highlighted that over 32,000 youths have already been linked to the Mukhyamantri Yuva Udyami Vikas Abhiyan and encouraged cooperative banks to help beneficiaries grow financially.

Expressing satisfaction over the progress of cooperative banks, Chief



Minister Yogi noted that in 2017, the credit-deposit (CD) ratio of Uttar Pradesh Cooperative Banks was 44 per cent, which has now increased to 61 per cent. "The net profit of these banks has reached Rs 100 crore, a result of the government's transparent policies and better management," he said.

Chief Minister Yogi criticised previous governments for turning cooperatives into centres of personal gain, which led

to hardships for farmers and the confiscation of 16 bank licences. However, he credited Prime Minister Narendra Modi for reviving the cooperative sector by establishing a dedicated ministry. "Today, 49 out of 50 cooperative banks are profitable," he stated. He also assured that fertiliser needs would be met through B-PACS and cooperatives while cracking down on black marketing to ensure farmers get

fertilisers at fair prices.

During the event, the chief minister distributed cheques to beneficiaries of the MYUVA and honoured top-performing officials from district cooperative banks. He also launched a magazine focused on preventing bank fraud to ensure safer and more transparent banking practices.

Chief Minister Yogi emphasised that the expansion and strengthening of cooperative banks would boost Uttar Pradesh's economy. "Small enterprises are the foundation of any economy, and cooperatives are the most effective way to strengthen them," he said.

He made an appeal to cooperative banks to adopt new technology to enhance transparency, saying, "The more transparency we have, the better our work will be." He also highlighted the need to extend cooperative banking services to farmers, youth, women, and the most underserved sections of society.

The meeting was attended by UP Parliamentary Affairs Minister Suresh Kumar Khanna, Minister of State for Cooperation (Independent Charge) JPS Rathore, senior officials, and representatives of cooperative banks.

## CCSIA revamps runway recarpeting timings

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Lucknow

To manage the surge in summer passenger traffic and enhance overall operational efficiency, Chaudhary Charan Singh International Airport (CCSIA) has adjusted its flight operation timings and revamped the schedule for the recarpeting of Runway 09/27 and the upgrade of the Airport Ground Lighting (AGL) from March 21 (Friday) onwards.

The recarpeting and AGL work will occur between 11 am and 5 pm till July 15. During this period, flights will operate before 11 am and after 5 pm. Due to the curtailed working hours until July 15, the airport will continue with the recarpeting and AGL work within 105 metres of the centreline between 11 am and 3 pm from July 16 to August 15, 2025. During this phase, both domestic and international flights will operate before 11 am and after 3 pm.

"CCSIA remains committed to providing the best-in-class travel experience, while upholding the highest standards of engineering and safety throughout the runway recarpeting

process. This project is part of our ongoing efforts to enhance infrastructure and services. Lucknow Airport continues to invest in projects that support regional growth and development. The successful completion of this project will strengthen the airport's position as a leading aviation hub and contribute to the economic development of the region," a CCSIA spokesperson said.

### PASSENGER PASSES AWAY

A male passenger aboard an Air India flight, who was feeling unwell during the journey, passed away after being taken to the hospital here. The flight, which arrived at CCSIA at 8:10 am on Friday from Delhi, had informed airport authorities about the passenger's condition.

A CCSIA spokesperson stated, "This morning, a male passenger who was unwell arrived at the airport in Lucknow. Our medical team responded promptly, providing first aid before transporting him to the hospital in an Advanced Life Support ambulance. We are saddened to learn that he later passed away."



### NOTICE

I have changed my son's name from Ansh Patel to Vihan Patel for all future purposes, Manoj Kumar S/o Late Ganga Charan R/o Village Kaseruva District Fatehpur

### NOTICE

My childhood name Saiba and the name Qibtia Fatima as mentioned in Aadhar Card both are my names. Now I should be known and identified by the name of Qibtia Fatima D/o Mohammad Zafran W/o Mohammad Zeeshan R/o Apartment No.401, Block C, Near Water Tank, Defence colony, Jajmau, Kanpur Nagar.

### NOTICE

My name is Sarthak Singh. Due to a clerical error, Sarthak Singh has been written as Kuldeep Singh in the Aadhar card. My correct name is Sarthak Singh s/o of Kuldeep Kumar Singh. Resident Khajipur, Ahraura Mirzapur

### NOTICE

It is informed to the general public that my son's name in the service book is Sudhir Kumar Pal and date of birth is 07 year which is wrong. The correct name is Sudhir Kumar and date of birth is 10/05/1998. Therefore, my son's details should be recorded correctly in the service book. Raj Kumar Pal son of Sukhlal Resident of Azad Nagar Rajamau Road Bishunpur Bachhawan District Raebareli.

### NOTICE

I, SUBRAMANYAN P, is Father of NAME, SREEJITH S, presently at I/134, Sree Nilayam Kalipara, Po- Kottekkad, Dist - Palakkad, State - Kerala, Pin - 678732, have changed my name from SUBRAMANYAN P to SUBRAMANIAN P, vide affidavit no IN-UP54623328806133X, dated 21/03/25, before notary H. O. Jhansi.

### NOTICE

I have changed my name from HAMIDA BANO to HAMIDA W/o ABDUL SATTAR R/o 126, Harris Ganj Rai Bazar Kanpur Nagar -04. In future I would be known by this name only

### आवश्यकता है

आवश्यकता है  
मदरसा जामिया निजामिया 243ए0 दायरा शाह अजमल प्रसन्नराज (उच्च अलिया) में एक स०अ० फौकानियों की आवश्यकता है। शैक्षिक योग्यता न्यूनतम 50 प्रतिशत अंकों सहित स्नातक तथा अलिम अथवा उर्दू सहित इन्टर का प्रमाण-पत्र आवश्यक है। वेतनमान 44900-142400 लेवल-7 एवं अन्य बने न्यूनतम आयु 20 वर्ष। इच्छुक अम्थी विज्ञापन की तिथि से 21 दिन के अन्दर अपना आवेदन पत्र समस्त शैक्षिक योग्यताओं के साथ प्रबन्धक मदरसा के पदनाम से मदरसा उपरोक्त पर भेजें/पहुँचायें।

### प्रबन्धक

मदरसा जामिया निजामिया 243ए0 दायरा शाह अजमल प्रसन्नराज

## Akhilesh takes a dig at Yogi govt

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Lucknow

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav took a dig at the Bharatiya Janata Party, suggesting the Uttar Pradesh government should create a new 'Threat Ministry' to accommodate its MLAs.

His remarks came in response to recent controversies involving a BJP MLA from Ghaziabad. "The honourable chief minister should also create a 'Threat Ministry' to accommodate BJP MLAs in Uttar Pradesh. He already has several qualified candidates from his party to become ministers in this ministry. However, if he wants, he can keep this ministry himself as no one else has more qualification and experience than him in this specific field," Yadav posted on X on Friday.

Yadav's statement came after BJP MLA Nand Kishor Gurjar allegedly had a scuffle with police in Ghaziabad over a Ram 'Katha

yatra. The MLA reportedly issued threats to the chief secretary and the commissioner after the scuffle.

In another post on X, Yadav criticised the suspension of IAS officer Abhishek Prakash, caught in a graft controversy, calling it a "drama" and alleging deeper corruption within the UP administration.

He suggested that the BJP revise its slogan to "Sab Mil Bant, Kare Bantadhar" (Everyone shares, everyone destroys). "This is the truth of 'ease of doing business' in Uttar Pradesh, where commissions are openly demanded in the name of industrial development. When the matter is exposed, a drama of suspension is staged," Yadav posted. "The last stop of this corruption is not the officer, but someone else," he pointed out.

The UP government on Thursday suspended 2006 batch IAS officer Abhishek Prakash under its zero-tolerance policy

against corruption.

Prakash, a former district magistrate of Lucknow and currently serving as CEO of Invest UP, is accused of demanding a five per cent commission from an entrepreneur seeking to set up a solar plant.

The entrepreneur reported the demand to Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, leading to an investigation by the Special Task Force which found the allegations credible and registered an FIR against Nikant Jain, the alleged middleman, at the Gombi Nagar police station before arresting Prakash. Following the investigation, Prakash was suspended and attached to the Revenue Board.

So far, action has been taken against 11 IAS officers in the state, with several of them reinstated after investigation. Under the terms of his suspension, Abhishek Prakash cannot leave the headquarters without prior permission.

## Ayodhya woman rape and murder: Police gun down prime accused

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Lucknow

The prime accused in the abduction and strangulation case involving a woman from Ayodhya was gunned down in a police encounter near Amrapali Park (Begum Lawn) here on Friday night. He was identified as Ajay Kumar.

Earlier, the police claimed that the woman was strangled to death by Ajay, an e-rickshaw driver and his accomplice, for resisting rape. The police arrested the brother of the prime accused, Ajay, in the alleged rape and strangulation case. The woman was travelling to her brother's house in Chinhat when she was attacked. The police had also announced a reward of Rs 1 lakh for information leading to the arrest of the absconding e-rickshaw driver, identified as Ajay from Dubagga. The police arrested Ajay's brother, Dinesh, also from Dubagga.

DCP (West) Vishwajeet Srivastava stated that Ajay and Dinesh, also an e-rickshaw driver, strangled the woman after she resisted a sexual assault by them. During interrogation, Dinesh

revealed that Ajay had picked up the woman from Alambagh bus stand, where she was looking for conveyance to reach her brother's house in Chinhat. The police recovered the woman's academic documents from Dinesh's possession, along with the e-rickshaw used in the crime. Ajay, who was reportedly a history-sheeter, abducted the woman on Tuesday night and took her to the Bhadwana area of Malihabad, about 35 km from Alambagh bus stand. There, she was raped and murdered in a garden.

According to the police, Ajay Kumar had 23 criminal cases registered against him.

The woman was returning home after taking an exam in Varanasi on Tuesday. She arrived at Alambagh bus stand around 1:30 am and took an auto for Chinhat. She had informed her sister-in-law over the phone that the e-rickshaw driver's behaviour seemed suspicious. Concerned, her sister-in-law kept calling her and also sent her location to her brother, who alerted the police.

During interrogation, Dinesh admitted that he and Ajay killed the woman when she resisted rape after they had robbed her.

## 4 more cases of fraud registered against Ansal API

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Lucknow

Four additional cases have been filed at the Sushant Golf City police station against the director of Ansal API, accused of cheating people under the guise of offering high-tech townships in the state capital. The directors and employees of the group allegedly defrauded four individuals of approximately Rs 57.47 lakh in exchange for promised plots.

Lieutenant Colonel Yatendra Singh, a resident of Shivpuri Gautam Buddha Marg in Lucknow, stated that he, along with his father Bharat Singh Yadav, booked a 173-square-yard plot in Ansal API in 2007, paying Rs 4.53 lakh to the company. However, they did not receive possession or registration of the plot.

Pramod Kumar Mishra, a resident of Oakwood Duplex in Sushant Golf City, reported that he booked a plot in March 2023 for Rs 32.98 lakh, receiving an allotment letter. Despite several meetings with the company, he has yet to receive the plot.

Sanjay Bhartiya, a resident of Palm Villa, had booked a 200-square-metre lot in Ansal API in 2021, depositing Rs 12.85 lakh in several installments. Even after the payment, he did not receive the plot. When he contacted the company, he was allegedly threatened and chased away from the office of MD Dheeraj Goyal. Mahesh Kumar Dixit, a resident of Galaxy Apartment on AP Sen Road in Hussainganj, claimed he had deposited Rs 6.14 lakh through an EMI scheme in 2010 for a plot. When he sought help from the police after not receiving the plot within the stipulated time, he was reportedly given the runaround.

According to the Sushant Golf City police, cases have been registered based on the complaints from the victims, and the investigation is ongoing.

## Kanha Upvan receives ISO certification

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Lucknow

Kanha Upvan Goushala, located in Nadarganj and operated by the Lucknow Municipal Corporation, has been awarded the ISO 9001:2015 certification by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO). This recognition followed a comprehensive inspection of the cowshed's management and operations, which followed an application submitted in February.

"Kanha Upvan Goushala has received this certificate for its quality management system. It is the first cowshed under the Lucknow Municipal Corporation to achieve ISO 9001:2015 certification. It currently houses over 10,000 cattle, providing them with protection,

nourishment, medical care, and management," an LMC official said.

Founded in 2012, Kanha Upvan was inspired by the former mayor and current Rajya Sabha MP, Dinesh Sharma.

"Thanks to the support of the state government and municipal corporation, Kanha Upvan has reached this significant milestone. The certification is valid for three years," the official added.

The Goushala strictly adheres to all regulations and directives issued by the Government of Uttar Pradesh for Goushalas. "This achievement is a result of the dedication of Mayor Sushma Kharkhar, Municipal Commissioner Underjeet Singh, Additional Municipal Commissioner Dr Arvind Kumar Rao, and Animal Welfare Officer Dr Archinav Verma," the official emphasised.

## PHDCCI's UP chapter holds interactive meet

Lucknow (PNS): The Uttar Pradesh state chapter of PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry organised an interactive meet at PHD House here on Friday to foster internal cohesion among PHDCCI industry members, explore the favourable investment environment in solar energy production and storage, encourage industry participation, and promote Uttar Pradesh as a global hub for electric mobility development and manufacturing. The forum was attended by over 50 participants, including Co-Chair of PHDCCI UP State Chapter Rajesh Nigam, its Chair, Retail State Sub-Committee Sanjeev Sarin, senior members Sanjeev Agarwal, Rajata Mehra, Raghav Agarwal, Phoolvi Agarwal and Avinash Gai along with the secretariat team. Rajesh Nigam emphasised the importance of business diversification for industry members. He urged members to present investment opportunities across various sectors and collaborate with the government to strengthen the industrial front of the state. He said their vision was to enhance the SGDP and improve the business growth and employment rate, with the objective of achieving a \$1 trillion economy. Phoolvi Agarwal, co-founder of HyOn Energy and director of Veetaday Industries Pvt Ltd, delivered the keynote address on leveraging ESG (environmental, social, and governance) for MSME growth, discussing sustainability practices, ESG compliance and green financing strategies in industry. Ptul Srivastava, regional director of PHDCCI UP state chapter, proposed the vote of thanks and expressed his appreciation for the members' cooperation with PHDCCI.

## Advancements in prosthetic eyes bring hope, confidence

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Lucknow

Modern medical science has made groundbreaking progress in the field of artificial eyes. For individuals who have lost an eye due to an accident, illness, or congenital condition, a well-crafted prosthetic eye not only restores their lost appearance but also instills renewed confidence and hope in their lives. A carefully crafted prosthetic eye enhances the facial aesthetics and supports the proper development of the eye's external structures. It plays a crucial role in boosting the individual's self-esteem and confidence.

According to Dr Apjeet Kaur, senior ophthalmologist at King George's Medical University, "A prosthetic eye is not just for aesthetic enhancement; it plays a key role in restoring self-confidence and social integration. With the right technique and care, it not only enhances appearance but also brings a renewed sense of excitement to life. It also helps alleviate any discrimination or discomfort in society."

The eye is made of polymethyl methacrylate, and measurements are taken during the process. It takes about an hour to get accurate measurements, and the preparation of the entire eye takes approximately three to four days.

"The patient is called back after one week. After that, follow-up appointments are scheduled every three months for the first year. It is important to note that the artificial eye does not restore vision," Dr Kaur explained.

Many patients who have received prosthetic eyes shared inspiring experiences.

Ramkumar Verma (name changed), 45, said, "After the accident, my self-confidence was completely shattered. But after receiving the prosthetic eye, it felt like I had regained my lost identity. I can now talk to people openly, without hesitation."

Nita Agarwal (name changed), the mother of a 2-year-old girl, said: "My daughter had to undergo surgery to remove her eye due to a cancer called retinoblastoma. The prosthetic eye has not only restored her appearance but also eliminated her fears. Now, she will face life with renewed hope."

## CEOs, Defence Estates officers to continue dedicated public service

Lucknow (PNS): A conference was held with all chief executive officers (CEOs) and Defence Estates officers of the Central Command under the chairmanship of GS Rajeswaran, Director General of Defence Estates, and the leadership of Bhavana Singh, Principal Director, Directorate of Defence Estates, Central Command. SH Khan, Principal Director of South Western Command in Jaipur, also participated in the programme.

Bhavana Singh shared that this year, service charges amounting to approximately Rs 157 crore were received from various departments of the Central and state governments in the Central Command. She encouraged all the CEOs and Defence Estates officers to continue their dedicated public service and strive for excellence in their work. It was shared that in the cantonments under the Central Command, 920 employees were granted IAS status, and pensions were approved for 658 employees last year. Free dialysis services were introduced in four cantonments, and hospitals with an Ayurvedic system of treatment were set up in 14 cantonments.

**PARADIP PORT AUTHORITY**  
Mechanized Coal Handling Plant

No. EMMACH/Tender/0120025/103  
Date: 19.03.2025

Compendium # to Tender Call Notice No. EMMACH/042025 for the work 'Design, Fabrication, Supply, Erection and Commissioning of one No. Stacker of 4000 TPH Capacity.'

The date of submission of bids and opening for the above tender call notice are hereby extended as follows:

1. Bid Submission end date - 02/04/2025, 17:15 hrs.  
2. Bid Opening date - 04/04/2025, 10:00 hrs.

All Other terms and Conditions of the Original tender remain unchanged.

The prescribed Tender Document is available in the website: <http://www.paradipport.gov.in> or in writing to:

Sd/-  
Executive Engineer (Mech.)  
PPAPR/102024-2025  
21/03/2025  
Paradip Port Authority.

**FORM No. 1**  
**DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL, LUCKNOW**  
(Area of Jurisdiction - Part of Uttar Pradesh)  
600 No. 529/2023/R.O. I

NOTICE UNDER RULE 2 OF SECOND SCHEDULE TO THE INCOME TAX ACT, 1961 READ WITH SECTION 29 OF THE RECOVERY OF DEBTS AND BANKRUPTCY ACT 1993.

**INDIAN BANK** .....**C.H. Bank**  
Vikas Bhawan Branch Barabanki (Branch Code 02155)

**Versus**

**M/s SHIVA ENTERPRISES & ORS** .....**Credit Debtors To.**

**1. M/s SHIVA ENTERPRISES**  
Through it's Proprietor- Siddharth Garg S/o Kamlesh Narain Shukla Registered Address: Shop No. 8 & 9, Singhla Residency, Bhuhara, Safedabad, Barabanki

**2. SIDDHARTH GARG S/o** Kamlesh Narain Shukla  
Proprietor of M/s SHIVA ENTERPRISES  
R/o 11, Presidency Enclave, Shipurki Colony, Picnic Spot Road, Faridnagar, Lucknow-226015.

**3. SANJAY SINGH SINGHLA S/o** Late Purushottam Das  
Proprietor of M/s SHIVA ENTERPRISES  
Nagar, Lucknow.

**4. MR. JAI PRAKASH KASHYAP S/o** Mr. Jagdish Prasad Kashyap R/o 532 Ka/156, Anka Pandey Tola, Aliganj, Lucknow -226020. ....**Certificated Debtors.**

**This is to notify that a sum of Rs. 60,26,929.00 (RUPEES SIXTY LACS TWENTY SIX THOUSAND NINE HUNDRED TWENTY NINE ONLY) together with pendente lite and future interest @11.00% per annum with monthly rest from the date of filing of the Original Application i.e.19.05.2020 till the loan is fully liquidated jointly & severally with its cost succeeds and is hereby allowed ex parte against you the addressees as per order dated 04/10/2022 passed by Hon'ble Tribunal in O.A. No. 379/2020, titled "INDIAN BANK Vs. M/s SHIVA ENTERPRISES & ORS".**

**You are hereby directed to pay the aforesaid mentioned amount within 15 days of receipt of this notice, failing which the recovery shall be made in accordance with the Recovery of Debts Due to Bank and Financial Institution Act, 1993.**

**You are hereby ordered to declare on Affidavit the particulars of assets on or before 03/07/2025.**

**You are hereby ordered to appear before the undersigned on 03/07/2025 at 11.00 A.M.**

**Details of cost:**

Application Fee	Rs. 63,000/-
Advocate's Fee	Not Claimed
Clerkage	Not Claimed
Publication Charges	Not Claimed
Expenses suit filing & others	Not Claimed

Given under my hand and seal on this 12th day of March, 2025.

**Recovery Officer-I**  
**Debts Recovery Tribunal**  
**Lucknow.**



# Ayodhya foundation of Sanatan dharma: Yogi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Ayodhya

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, on Friday, highlighted the remarkable rise in Ayodhya's spiritual prominence, stating that while only 2.34 lakh devotees visited the city in 2016-17, today over 16 crore people are arriving to have a glimpse of Lord Shri Ram.

"This reflects the growing glory and grandeur of Ayodhya," the chief minister said while speaking as the chief guest at the inauguration of the Timeless Ayodhya Literature Festival on Friday.

He began the event with a symbolic gesture - offering water to an Ashoka plant amidst Vedic chants. Applauding Narendra Modi, he noted that the prime minister has revived Indian traditions by seamlessly blending heritage with development, marking a new beginning for the nation.

Chief Minister Yogi was the first to be welcomed at the festival, held at the Maharaja Palace (Raj Sadan) in Ayodhya. He was greeted with traditional rituals and Vedic chants upon his arrival.

Addressing the gathering, the chief minister said, "Ayodhya is the foundation of Sanatan dharma. It is not just a city, but a source of inspiration for religion and literature."

Reflecting on the composition of the Ramayana and Ramcharitmanas by Maharishi Valmiki and saint Tulsidas, he noted that Ayodhya has long been a centre for literature and culture.

Chief Minister Yogi further stated that Ayodhya is the spiritual heart of Sanatan dharma, adding that it was here that Lord Manu laid the foundation of human religion, and this sacred land became the karmabhoomi of Lord Shri Ram, an incarnation of Shri Hari Vishnu. The Ramayana, he noted, emerged as the world's first epic, offering new direction to literature.

## 'MYUVA to become foundation of self-reliant UP'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Ayodhya

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, on Friday, said that the Mukhyamantri Yuva Udyami Vikas Abhiyan (MYUVA) would play a crucial role in making the division self-reliant, forming a strong foundation for a self-reliant Uttar Pradesh and India.

The chief minister distributed loans worth Rs 47 crore to 1,148 young entrepreneurs from the Ayodhya division under MYUVA at an event held at Shri Ram Katha Park.

Addressing young entrepreneurs from the Ayodhya division, he said, "MYUVA will serve as a strong support for your economic self-reliance. This is an interest-free loan. If you repay the principal amount on time, the government will cover the interest."

He also inaugurated and inspected an exhibition showcasing startups by young entrepreneurs. He encouraged young entrepreneurs to grow their businesses with patience and dedication.

This initiative was announced in the February 2024 budget and officially launched on January 24, 2025, with the introduction of an online portal. The initial goal was to enroll one lakh youth within two months, but the response has been overwhelming, with over three lakh registrations so far. Of these, 1,27,000 applications have been screened and sent to banks, and 32,000 applicants have already received loan approvals.

The chief minister mentioned that in order to further expand the scheme, the government will organise special fairs in

Chief Minister Yogi added that just as Maharishi Valmiki immortalised the Ram Katha, every creation associated



Uttar Pradesh CM Yogi Adityanath during distribution of cheques to entrepreneurs of Ayodhya under the Chief Minister Youth Entrepreneur Development Campaign.

all districts on March 25, 26, and 27, where more young entrepreneurs will get the opportunity to benefit from the initiative. Praising the creativity of youth during a startup exhibition, Chief Minister Yogi noted, "Some are making chips, some are producing jaggery-based products, and others are sewing garments for deities. If you have the will to work, there

is no shortage of opportunities in the state." The chief minister highlighted how these religious gatherings have created new economic opportunities, linking faith with livelihoods. He pointed out that thousands of youth have found employment through homestays, e-rickshaws, taxis, boats, grocery stores, tea stalls, hotels, restaurants, and even selling tra-

ditional herbal toothbrushes (datun).

He praised the increasing participation of women in various fields, stating that there is no shortage of opportunities - what is needed is the right direction and training. He also encouraged the youth to pursue skill development and move forward with confidence in their respective fields.

and cherished in every household across India and in corners of the world.

Discussing the Ram Mandir movement, Chief Minister Yogi emphasised that Ayodhya deserves the respect it has

long been entitled to. He shared how, when the plan to celebrate Deepotsav in Ayodhya was introduced in 2017, some people raised doubts, but today millions of devotees participate in the celebration, making it a massive success.

Speaking on literature, the chief minister remarked that it reflects the values of society and plays a crucial role in preserving culture while guiding the community in the right direction. He acknowledged the disruption of traditional reading and writing habits in today's digital age but expressed confidence that events like the literature festival would help revive these practices.

Congratulating the team behind the Timeless Ayodhya Literature Festival, the chief minister stated that such programmes would inspire future generations and elevate Indian literature to new heights. He noted that the festival demonstrated that Ayodhya is not just a religious centre, but also a revered land of literature and culture.

The chief minister also shared a personal anecdote from his visit to Europe, where he had a conversation with a taxi driver from Punjab. Upon asking about his origin, the driver initially hesitated before revealing that he was from Pakistan. When the chief minister asked why he had identified himself as Indian first, the driver explained, "We feel safer saying we are Indian. If we say Pakistani, who knows what might happen." "This reflects a broader global respect for India, but also points to the disdain toward those who fostered terrorism," he added.

The chief minister concluded by noting that today people take pride in identifying as citizens of India, particularly those from Uttar Pradesh. The dignitaries present at the event included UP Cabinet Minister Surya Pratap Shahi, MSME Minister Rakesh Sachan and Ayodhya Literature Fest convener Yatindra Mishra.

## CM inaugurates soft drink bottling plant

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Lucknow/Ayodhya

During his visit to Ayodhya, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath inaugurated a soft drink bottling plant. Speaking at the event, he pointed out that Ayodhya is attracting devotees from across the country and the world and the large gathering of pilgrims in the holy city is not just a sign of faith but also a source of livelihood for many.

"This faith is laying the foundation for economic growth. Our cultural heritage is becoming a driver of prosperity. The Prayagraj Maha Kumbh gave us a glimpse of this potential, and we must enhance facilities further to create new employment opportunities," Chief Minister Yogi stated.

Before the event, the chief minister toured the plant, inspected its operations, and performed a ceremonial ritual before pressing the button to start the machines. The plant's operators provided him with details about its capacity, processes, and key functions. He also planted a tree within the plant premises and also offered prayers at a temple located on the site.

The chief minister congratulated Amrit Bottlers Pvt. Ltd. for its investment in the new bottling plant. He highlighted the company's growth, stating that what started as a small cold storage unit in 1983 has now evolved into a state-of-the-art facility, becoming a key supplier of soft drinks in North India.

"Development progresses in this way. When Mr Ladhani started this venture in 1983, he may not have imagined that Ayodhya would one day have an international airport," Chief Minister Yogi remarked. He further noted that today, the Maharishi Valmiki International Airport, four-lane highways, and robust air and road connectivity have transformed the city. He also revealed plans to develop an inland waterway from Ayodhya to Haldia via Sarayu and Ballia, which would further enhance trade and commerce in the region.

## ...offers prayers in Ayodhya, Balrampur

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Ayodhya/Balrampur

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, during his visit to Ayodhya on Friday, paid obeisance at the feet of Lord Ram and offered prayers at the revered Hanuman Garhi temple. He began his tour by seeking the blessings of Lord Hanuman and meeting prominent saints present there.

Earlier in the morning, after seeking the blessings of Maa Pataleshwari at Tulsipur in Balrampur and meeting local residents, the chief minister reached Ayodhya where he was warmly welcomed by local representatives and Bharatiya Janata Party leaders at the Ramkatha Park helipad.

From there, he proceeded directly to Hanuman Garhi, where he offered prayers at the temple of Sankat Mochan Lord Hanuman, praying for the welfare and prosperity of the state. While coming out of the temple, he greeted the gathered devotees. At Hanuman Garhi, the chief minister held discussions with several saints, enquiring about their well-being. He first met Mahant Premdas Maharaj Ji, followed by

The chief minister recalled his visit to Amethi last year, where he inaugurated a beverage and bottling plant by the Ladhani family. He emphasised that this major investment created thousands of jobs, and now a similar initiative is taking shape in Ayodhya. Describing Ayodhya as the capital of the Suryavansh dynasty, Chief Minister Yogi praised the double-engine government's efforts in developing the city under the guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He pointed out that Ayodhya has been transformed into India's first solar city, with the new bottling plant incorporating a 15 MW solar panel system to promote green energy. "This initiative will help reduce



Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath offers prayers at the Adishakti Maa Pateshwari Devi Shaktipeeth, in Balrampur.

interactions with other religious leaders. Chief Minister Yogi then proceeded to the Ram Janmabhoomi temple, where he bowed his head in reverence at the feet of Lord Ram and performed the prescribed rituals. He then conducted an on-site inspection of the ongoing temple construction work. Anil Mishra, a member of the Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust, briefed him on the progress of the construction. The chief minister also issued necessary directives to ensure the timely

completion of the project. During this, UP ministers Surya Pratap Shahi and Rakesh Sachan, Mayor Girish Pati Tripathi, MLAs Ved Prakash Gupta, Ramchandra Yadav, Abhay Singh, Chandrabhanu Paswan among others were present. Earlier on Friday morning, Chief Minister and Gorakshpeethadhiswar Yogi Adityanath, during his two-day visit to Balrampur, offered prayers at the sacred Maa Pateshwari Shakti Peeth temple in Tulsipur. His visit also included an inspection of the preparations for the upcoming Chaitra Navratri Mela. At the temple, he performed traditional rituals and prayed for the happiness, health, and prosperity of Uttar Pradesh. Following the prayers, he visited the temple's cowshed and fed jaggery to the cows. He also inspected the arrangements within the temple premises to ensure smooth management of religious activities. During his visit, Chief Minister Yogi was accompanied by Mahant Mithilesh Nath Yogi of the temple, Mahant Ravindra Das Ji of Kalibari temple, Gorakhpur, and other religious leaders.

necessity for the city to cater to the increasing number of visitors. Recalling the group's contribution during the consecration of Lord Ram's temple, Chief Minister Yogi appreciated their efforts in installing water coolers and water ATMs to provide clean drinking water to devotees. "The public wants better facilities, and good hotels are essential. The current crowd clearly indicates that if facilities are provided, more pilgrims will visit," he stated. The chief minister also encouraged the group saying "the faster you proceed with the hotel construction in Ayodhya and your proposed investment in Gorakhpur, the sooner the government will assist you in accessing the necessary facilities".

## Ghazipur rocked by double murder

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Lucknow

In a sensational broad daylight murder in Ghazipur, two youths were called from their homes and sprayed with bullets.

The incident took place near Maldahiya garden in Uchori village under Khanpur police station of the district on Friday noon. Villagers who rushed there after hearing the gunshot saw two youths lying dead in the garden. On receiving information of the double murder, cops from Saidpur and Khanpur police stations reached the spot. Three pistol shells were recovered from the scene of crime.

The police faced difficulties in taking the bodies into custody as the families of the victims and villagers stood in front of the ambulance, demanding that the district magistrate be called to the spot. The police somehow pacified the mob. At present, the reason for the double murder could not be ascertained.

According to reports, 18-year-old Aman Chauhan, son of Jai Prakash Chauhan, and 20-year-old Anurag Singh alias Dhoni, son of Sanjay Singh, both of Chilona Kala, were in the village on Friday morning when two youths arrived on separate motorcycles and took both the youths with them. After some time, people heard the sound of several rounds of firing in Maldahiya garden and rushed to the spot. When they reached there, they saw that the bodies of Aman and Anurag were lying in pools of blood. Both were shot in the head. The youths who brought them on their motorcycles had fled. The police were informed about the double murder and by the time the cops reached there, a huge crowd had gathered at the spot. Tillagers said that both the youths fled from the spot on a motorcycle towards Unchori market. The reason for the murder is not clear at the moment. Superintendent of Police Dr Iraj Raja said that an investigation was being made and

prima facie, it appeared to be a case of enmity.

Meanwhile, a 30-year-old man was beaten to death with sticks after an argument over his goat straying into a neighbour's land escalated in Ballia district, police said on Friday.

The incident took place on Thursday night in Singhpur village of Phephana area when Awadsh had a dispute with his neighbour Mandeep. Circle Officer Mohammad Usman said. During the dispute Awadsh was hit on the head with sticks, leaving him seriously injured. He was taken to the district hospital, where doctors pronounced him dead, the officer said. The CO said that the body was sent for post-mortem and a case was registered against Mandeep and his relative Sandeep.

In Mathura, a 52-year-old man was allegedly killed by his daughter's brother-in-law and mother-in-law when he visited their house to collect insurance paper after his son-in-law's death, police said on Friday. The accused were arrested and produced in court before being sent to district jail. Chandrapal had gone to the house of his daughter's in-laws in Chhata on Thursday, about a month after her husband, Lokesh, died by suicide. He sought her husband's insurance documents when an argument broke out, Station House Officer Vinod Babu Mishra said. Before his daughter could hand over the papers, her brother-in-law, Sunil, and mother-in-law, Kamlesh Kumari, allegedly confronted Chandrapal and verbally abused him, the officer said. "When Chandrapal protested against their behaviour, the two attacked him with a banka (sharp fodder-cutting tool) and kept hitting him until he collapsed bleeding," he said. Chandrapal was taken to a hospital, where he died during treatment. A case was registered based on a complaint lodged by Chandrapal's daughter and the accused were arrested.

## Goa Govt acquires land in Ayodhya

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Lucknow/Panaji

The Goa government announced the acquisition of a plot of land in the holy city of Ayodhya for the construction of Goa Ram Nivas, a dedicated space for the devotees of Ram Lalla, particularly from the state of Goa.

The Goa government expressed heartfelt gratitude to UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, the UP Awasth Vikas Parishad, and the Uttar Pradesh Government for their unwavering support in facilitating this historic initiative. This initiative is in line with the ongoing development of the Ram temple in Ayodhya.

The Goa Ram Nivas will provide a place of stay for devotees of Goa visiting Ayodhya, offering them a peaceful environment to fulfill their spiritual journey. In keeping with the spirit of Vikas Bhi, Virasat Bhi, the Goa Ram Nivas project not only supports the spiritual well-being of devotees but also reinforces the cultural and spiritual connections between Parshuram Bhoomi Goa and Ram Janmabhoomi Ayodhya.

## Increased sports activities lead to higher attendance in schools

### Lakhimpur Kheri leads by example

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Lucknow/Lakhimpur Kheri

Lakhimpur Kheri has set an inspiring example by successfully implementing Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's Mission Maidan, proving that the expansion of sports facilities in schools directly impacts student attendance and overall development.

Under this initiative, the district has developed high-quality playgrounds in 1,000 council schools, enabling children to enhance their physical and mental well-being. The positive effects of Mission Maidan are clearly visible, as Lakhimpur Kheri's Nipun

Assessment Rank has jumped from 72nd to 26th place. Moreover, student attendance has witnessed a remarkable 12 per cent increase, rising from 57.24 per cent last year to 69.40 per cent at present. District Magistrate Durga Shakti Nagpal stated that Mission Maidan was launched to help children develop confidence, discipline, and teamwork. As part of this initiative, playgrounds for Kho-kho, kabaddi, volleyball, and badminton have been set up in 765 schools, while 205 schools now have facilities for hockey, football, cricket, and athletics.

He further mentioned that in order to further promote sports, 30 schools have introduced rooftop indoor gaming zones, where students can play chess, carrom, mind games, symmetry games, and table tennis. Additionally, all council school students in

Lakhimpur Kheri now begin their day with a 30-minute sports activity. This not only enhances their physical and mental well-being but also improves their concentration and learning abilities. Notably, the success of this initiative has been supported by MGNREGA and local resources, providing employment to rural workers and boosting economic empowerment. This effort has proven that when the administration, community, and government work together, even the most challenging goals can be achieved. Mission Maidan is more than just a sports programme, it is a powerful platform for fostering essential life skills among children. It has opened new doors for those who previously lacked access to sports facilities, making Lakhimpur Kheri's initiative a model of inspiration for the entire state.

S. N.		Name & Address of the Borrower (s)/Guarantor (s)/ Proprietor /Mortgagors	Description of the Immovable Property	Dt. of Demand Notice Dt. of Possession Outstanding Amount
Branch : Vibhav Khand Branch				
1.	Mrs. Shilpa Dixit w/o Sri Yogesh Dixit (Borrower & Mortgagor)	Plot No 2/160 Awasth Vikas Colony Bareilly More Yojana Sankhya 03, Tehsil Sadar Dist-Shahjahanpur of area 288.00 Sq.mtr. situated at Plot No. 2/160 Awasth Vikas Colony Bareilly More Yojana Sankhya 03, Tehsil Sadar Dist-Shahjahanpur, sale deed registered in the office of registrar Sadar Shahjahanpur, Book No.1,Zild No.12740 Page No.181 to 218 Serial No.13827 on 20.09.2019 Tehsil & District Shahjahanpur in the name of Smt. Shilpa Dixit w/o Sri Yogesh Dixit (CERSAI Asset ID 200009932962 & Security ID: 400009951434) Bounded by:- North: 24 Mtr Wide Road, South: Open Plot No 2/150, East: Plot No 2/161, West: Plot No 2/159	15.10.2024 20.03.2025 Rs. 79,44,333.00 as on 29.10.2024 with further interest, costs, other charges and expenses thereon from 29.10.2024.	
Date : 22.03.2025 Place: Lucknow Authorised Officer Indian Bank				



# Ayush minister: BJP only party in which workers are respected

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Varanasi

Uttar Pradesh Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Ayush Dr Dayashankar Mishra 'Dayalu' said the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has always respected its grassroots workers as it is the only party in which workers are recognised. He was speaking at the felicitation ceremony organised at the camp office of newly-elected BJP city chief Pradeep Agrahari in Rajan Shahi Colony on Sigra-Mahmoorganj Road here on Thursday evening.

The minister said that by giving the responsibility of the post of city president to a grassroots worker like Pradeep Agrahari, the top leadership has shown that BJP is the only party in which workers are respected. He said that the party had got a huge victory in the last tenure of Pradeep Agrahari and expressed his full faith that a historic victory will be achieved again in the upcoming assembly elections to be held in 2027.

Speaking on this occasion, Agrahari said that he was overwhelmed by the honour given to him by the AYUSH minister and he will try his best to live up to the trust that the party has shown on an ordinary worker like him with full honesty and loyalty. He said that his effort will be to take every worker along and take the party to new heights. He appealed to the workers to work hard from now on so that the party gets a historic victory in the assembly elections in 2027.

The programme was conducted by Dinesh Kumar Singh 'Dinu' and the vote



Uttar Pradesh Minister Dr Dayashankar Mishra 'Dayalu' felicitating newly-elected city chief of BJP in Varanasi

of thanks was proposed by Santosh Saini. Prominent among those present were Shivsharan Pathak, Rakesh Sharma, Dr Harendra Rai, Jagdish Tripathi, Madhukar Chitransh, Dr Hari Keshari, Rajat Jaiswal, Dr Hardatt Shukla, Gaurav Rathi, Sanjay Mishra, Jitendra Kushwaha, Ashutosh Pal, Sindhu Sonkar, Ajay, Ashok Seth, Aman Sonkar, Jai Vishwakarma, Saurabh Rai, Shruti

review passenger facilities, goods traffic management, the ongoing works under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme (ABSS) etc.

He was accompanied by Senior Divisional Commercial Manager (SDCM) Sheikh Rehman, Assistant Divisional Engineer (Mau West) Sunil Pandey, Chief Commercial Inspector of Deoria Mithlesh Kumar along with station staff and senior supervisors. The PCCM inspected the passenger facility development works going on at Azamgarh railway station, platforms, entry and exit gates, passenger waiting room, crew management system, guard / loco pilot running room, parking, improvement work of station building, works done for crowd management in station circulating area and gave guidelines to the concerned for proper management. He also saw the construction work going on at Azamgarh station under ABSS and directed the officers concerned to complete all the work within the time limit with full quality.

During his inspection, Jaiswal thoroughly inspected the Sahyog counter, enquiry counter, unreserved and reserved ticket counter, reservation centre, passenger waiting room, circulating area, lift, pedestrian overbridge, platform and goods siding built for the convenience of passengers at the station. He explored the possibilities of full rake placement in goods siding line and gave instructions to the concerned. He also inspected the passenger reservation centre, UTS and PRS counters installed in the reservation centre building and instructed to increase the facilities for passengers in getting tickets.

# '90% Nepalese believe in Vedic Sanatan system'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Varanasi

Senior Nepalese scholar Acharya Jayant of Nepal Sanskrit University said that 90 per cent people of Nepal believe in Vedic Sanatan system and give a lot of importance to Panchang. He was delivering a lecture on the second day of the three-day International Jyotish Conference being organised by the Department of Jyotish at Faculty of Sanskrit Vidya Dharma Vigyan (SVDV) in Banaras Hindu University (BHU) here on Friday. The day's programme began with Vedic Mangalacharan. Acharya Jayant further said that the majority of Nepalis observe fasts and festivals according to Panchang. As the keynote speaker, Prof Krishna Kumar Pandey of Kavikuruguru Kalidas Sanskrit University, Nagpur, said that mathematics is a subject of observation and we can prepare Panchang with the help of mathematical derivation. "It is appropriate to consider the eclipse as Dristh Siddha. Matching should be done considering the character of the bride and the groom," he said.

In the presidential address, Prof Bharat Bhushan Mishra said the time has come that all astrologers should come together and take a decision to protect Sanatan and religion and inform the government about that decision so that along with religious virtue, protection of tradition is also possible. Senior scholar Damodar Bansal also threw light on the importance of Panchang. Dr Homesh Parashar of Sri Lal Bahadur Shastri National Sanskrit University said, "Marriage is a religious system in which there is a tradition of getting married by matching the horoscope. If we consider Ashtakoot at the time of marriage,

then a happy married life is spent. If 16 out of 36 qualities are found, then it is considered inferior, 16 to 20 is considered medium and above 20 qualities are considered excellent", he said. Dr Lokeshwar Sharma of Himachal Adarsh Sanskrit Mahavidyalaya said that the one who gives knowledge of Tithi, Day, Yoga, Nakshatra, Karan is called Panchang. Pt Bhagirath Joshi from Neemuch (Rajasthan) said in matching, first of all, age, nature, qualities should be considered. Acharya Khinraj Sharma said the importance of Muhurta is because according to astrology, it determines the right time to start any auspicious work, which leads to success in the work and protection from obstacles. Dr Ambuj Trivedi, who came from Gaya (Bihar) said that the Panchang determines the time, the main reason for the difference in the Panchang is the difference of place and time. Acharya Pt Dinesh Sharma of Indore (Madhya Pradesh) mentioned the misconceptions prevalent in the Panchang. Ramesh Semwal from Haridwar said that astrology is the science of subtle analysis. Pt Lekhranj Sharma gave a live demonstration of the scientific nature of astrology.

## DRM distributes awards

Divisional Railway Manager (DRM) of Varanasi Division, North Eastern Railway (NER), Vineet Kumar Srivastava distributed awards to 33 railway employees for doing excellent work in the field of Rajbhasha (official language) at a function held at Bharatendu Auditorium Room (DRM office) here on Thursday. He also chaired the meeting of Divisional Rajbhasha Implementation Committee, technical seminar and release of e-magazine at the same venue.

# Benefits of 'ONOE' emphasised

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Kanpur

Two-day national seminar on 'One Nation One Election' (ONOE) organised by the Atal Bihari School of Legal Studies, CSJM University, was inaugurated on Friday. The event was conducted in the Senayak Tatyia Tope Senate Hall. The event, sponsored by the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), New Delhi, brings together dignitaries, policymakers, legal experts and academicians to deliberate on the challenges and prospects of a unified electoral system in India.

The inaugural session featured academicians, legal experts and policymakers who discussed the potential advantages of synchronising elections for the Lok Sabha and state legislative assemblies.

Director, ABVSL Dr Panikaj Dwivedi, welcomed the guests and explained the outline of the seminar. He told about all the six sessions that included four sessions reserved for the paper presentations made by students and research scholars from various universities. He emphasised on how the narratives that are going about 'One Nation One Election', will be discussed in the seminar and how the end results will influence the society.

Registrar Dr Anil Kumar Yadav said our nation will only progress when everyone votes and only then can we achieve the dream of Viksit Bharat. He also said One Nation One Election will ensure that the government is functioning properly.

Special guest Arun Pathak, MLC, said, "Many people have sacrificed their life and played an important role for where we are standing right now." He said that "One Nation One Election" will ensure that more official work is done and not just rallies and discussions related to elections. It will ensure that there are no longer breaks of seven-11 months in the government when they are preparing for elections and also amidst the voting process. Vice-Chancellor of Rajiv Gandhi National University of Law, Punjab, Dr Jai S Singh, posed a question: "Why can't we have One Nation One Election?" He explained his statement and said that nations like America, Germany and Europe all have the policy of 'ONOE' so it will not be much harder for us to have them. These elections will be far more cost-efficient in comparison to the elections that

we have in our country. He also explained the mentality of 'Aaya Ram- Gaya Ram', that right now our political leaders drift where they see power and don't truly work for the country and its citizens. He commented that it is not hard, as before 1966 we had ONOE, even the first elections of 1951 were held through this only. He further quoted the former chief election commissioner TN Seshan that 'power depend upon personality'. He explained that it does not matter how much influence and backing you have but how truthful and honest are you towards your country and nation. At the end he said that with ONOE will ensure that leaders and parties don't only focus on winning the elections but working for the country.

The chief guest Ashwini Upadhyay, senior advocate of Supreme Court and also known as the PIL Man of India, talked about the various perspectives for One Nation One Election. He also emphasised on the benefits of having ONOE. He addressed the historical context of simultaneous elections in India, noting that such a system was practiced until 1967. Disruptions due to premature dissolutions of certain state assemblies and the Lok Sabha led to the current pattern of staggered elections.

Pro-V-C Prof Sudhir Kumar Awasthi, thanked the guests for their insightful speeches and addresses and explained why ONOE is important and why it should be implemented. He said that this will ensure equality among all. All in all the discussions emphasised the need for comprehensive electoral reforms, including potential constitutional amendments and consensus-building among political stakeholders, to facilitate the implementation of 'ONOE'. The seminar serves as a platform for generating insights and recommendations to inform future policy decisions on this significant electoral reform. The vote of thanks was proposed by Prof Samiuddin from ABVSL.

Two sessions for paper presentation were also held, where 10 participants presented their papers from universities and institutions like BBD University (Lucknow), ABVSL (CSJMU Kanpur), VSSD PG College (Kanpur), SJ Mahavidyalaya Ramaipur, affiliated to CSJMU etc. They presented their views and opinions on 'ONOE'.

# MoU to foster academia-industry partnerships

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Varanasi

The Department of Dairy Science and Food Technology (DSFT), Institute of Agricultural Sciences (IAS), Banaras Hindu University (BHU) witnessed a momentous occasion on Thursday as an important Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between BHU and Tata Consumer Products Limited (TCPL). The MoU was signed by Global Head of R&D, TCPL, Vikas Gupta and BHU Registrar Prof Arun Kumar Singh. The function was also attended by Director of an IAS-BHU Prof UP Singh and Head, Department of Dairy Science and Food Technology (DSFT), BHU, Prof Anil K Chauhan.

The Tata Research Fellowship Programme is designed to support scholars who are committed to developing innovative solutions in the fields of food processing and sustainability. It is a prestigious programme that encourages interdisciplinary research and fosters cutting-edge developments in food technology and allied fields. Ishita Nag, a research scholar from DSFT-BHU was selected for this coveted fellowship after successfully clearing two rounds of rigorous interviews and evaluations. The selection process was highly competitive with 15 meritorious students participating in the assessment. The fellowship will provide financial assistance to the selected candidate for a period of three years or until the completion of their PhD programme. This recog-

nition underlines Ishita Nag's exceptional academic credentials, dedication to research and commitment to a dv a n c i n g knowledge in the field of dairy and food technology. BHU registrar congratulated the department and Ishita Nag on this remarkable accomplishment. He reiterated that the university has always been a pioneer in promoting research excellence and emphasised that collaborations like these enhance the university's global academic standing.

"This MoU is not just a document; it is

a commitment to innovation, knowledge-sharing, and scientific excellence. The selection of our scholar under this prestigious fellowship strengthens our resolve to continue fostering research that benefits society at large," he remarked.

IAS-BHU director emphasised the significance of this achievement. He said,

"This prestigious recognition is a testament to the rigorous research culture and high academic standards at BHU. It not only brings pride to our institution but also serves as an inspiration for budding researchers to excel in their respective domains. This fellowship reinforces the crucial role of research in addressing contemporary challenges in food science and agricultural advancements."

Head of the DSFT-BHU said, "The rapidly evolving landscape of agriculture and food technology demands interdisciplinary collaboration and a problem-solving approach which aims to bridge the gap between scientific discovery and practical application for the society. We are confident that this recognition will propel her towards making valuable contributions to the field and we extend our best wishes for her future endeavours."

Vikas Gupta of TCPL expressed optimism about the impact of this collaboration. He stated, "TCPL is committed to supporting young and promising researchers who have the potential to revolutionise the food industry through innovative research. This MoU with BHU signifies our dedication to fostering academia-industry partnerships, which are critical for translating research into real-world applications. The Tata Research Fellowship Programme ensures continuous mentorship and annual reviews, keeping researchers on track with their objectives and encouraging them to make meaningful contributions in their respective fields. With its emphasis on translational research, the fellowship equips scholars with necessary resources and guidance to transform their academic pursuits into impactful solutions."



# Advanced security measures implemented at underground Kanpur Metro stations

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Kanpur

Advanced security arrangements have been implemented at all five underground stations of Kanpur Metro — Chunniganj, Naveen Market, Bada Chauraha, Nayaganj and Kanpur Central. These measures align with the security standards of the Priority Corridor (IIT - Motijheel).

To ensure passenger safety, state-of-the-art security devices have been installed at these stations, including: X-ray Baggage Inspection Systems (XBIS), Door Frame Metal Detectors (DFMD) and Handheld Scanners. Additionally, security guards have been deployed at all stations. The security responsibility within the Kanpur

Metro premises is jointly handled by the Uttar Pradesh Special Security Force (UPSSF) and a private security company.



with video analytics technology have been installed at all metro stations. These intelligent cameras can detect unattended objects and notify security personnel in

real time. Infrared technology-enabled CCTV cameras ensure clear footage at night and in low-light conditions.

Types of CCTV cameras installed: Dome cameras — provide wide-angle footage for full station monitoring, box cameras — used for surveillance inside stations and metro trains, pan-tilt-zoom (PTZ) cameras — These advanced cameras rotate 360 degrees and zoom in remotely for enhanced security.

The real-time footage from these cameras is broadcast directly to the control rooms at all stations, the operation control centre and the central security room at the metro depot. An average of 40-45 CCTV cameras have been installed at each underground station, while around 12

cameras are installed in each metro train.

Managing Director (MD) of Uttar Pradesh Metro Rail Corporation Limited (UPMRC) Sushil Kumar, emphasised, "Safety has been prioritised in the construction of metro stations. The CCTV surveillance system has been installed in such a way that there are no dark spots."

For the safety and convenience of female passengers, female security personnel and female housekeeping staff have been deployed at stations. To enhance visibility and security, transparent glass has been used in the construction of lifts, station control rooms and ticket counters. The concerns of all stations have been designed to ensure that no end remains unseen by passengers.

# CSJMU's notable achievement

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Kanpur

The CSJM University (CSJMU) has achieved a remarkable distinction by securing top positions at both the state and national levels in the NGPE-2025 examination. Under the leadership of Vice-Chancellor Professor Vinay Kumar Pathak, students from the School of Basic Sciences and affiliated colleges at Chhatrapati Shahuji Maharaj University, participated successfully in the NGPE 2025 examination, with many qualifying for the test. Aditya Kashyap, a student from the B Sc Hons Physics programme in the School of Basic Sciences attained the highest rank at the state level while Nishkarsh Kumar from PPN College achieved the top position nationally. These outstanding students will receive direct admission into postgraduate courses at the SN Bose National Centre for Basic Sciences, a prestigious institution located in West Bengal. Additionally, students from the BSc. Hons. programmes in Physics, Chemistry, and Mathematics also qualified for the IIT-JAM 2025 examination, granting them admission opportunities at various IITs. The National Graduate Physics Examination took place on January 19. To prepare students

for the NGPE examination and IIT JAM-2025, a problem-solving session was conducted by Padma Shri Professor Verma two times in September 2024 and January 2025, at the School of Basic Sciences, CSJMU.

## CSAUA&T develops new varieties of wheat

The Chandra Shekhar Azad University of Agriculture and Technology (CSAUA&T) has developed new varieties of wheat which are more heat tolerant. These species do not shrink grains up to 43 degree temperature and do not adversely affect yields. Hailstorms also have no effect. The yield per hectare has been found to be 35 to 60 quintals. Temperature tolerant varieties give a yield of 55 to 60 quintals per hectare. Vice-Chancellor Prof Anand Kumar Singh said, "The rising temperature is threatening to lower wheat yields. The grains in the wheat are weakening and shrinking, but the wheat crop is flourishing in the fields of the CSAUA&T and fields of Krishi Vigyan Kendra. These are such new varieties of wheat that are able to withstand more heat. The grains of these species do not shrink up to 43 degree temperature and do not adversely affect the yield. Hailstorms also have no effect. The yield per hectare has also been found to be 35 to 60 quintals."

# Hindi mainly collection of dialects: V-C

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Prayagraj

In the closing session of the two-day national seminar on the contribution of Bhojpuri, Awadhi, Braj and Bundelkhandi languages in the development of Hindi, organised under the joint aegis of Sahitya Akademi at Uttar Pradesh Rajarshi Tandon Open University (UPRTOU) on Friday, chief guest, Professor Munna Tiwari, Head of Hindi department of Bundelkhand University, said Bundelkhandi language has an important contribution in saving the autonomy, independence and identity of Hindi. Bundeli literature provides enthusiasm and energy. It contains descriptions of war and thought-provoking poems. These dialects have struggled a lot for autonomy and independence of Hindi. Professor Tiwari said there is a need to bring unknown creators of Bundeli and other dialects to light. For this, the present scholars of Hindi will have to become Ramchandra Shukla.

Presiding over the function, Vice-Chancellor (V-C) Professor Satyakam said that Hindi is mainly a collection of dialects. Every language has its own iden-

tity. They should be protected. By reading languages like Awadhi, Bhojpuri as well as Maithili, Angika, Magahi etc., we can understand our culture and civilisation in a better way. There are many words and addresses that enrich Hindi. Whatever Hindi has adopted, it has taken it from dialects. He encouraged researchers to do fundamental work. Language has an important role in nation building, he said. Sahitya Akademi representative Ajay Sharma said that regional languages have contributed significantly in giving Hindi an excellent place in society and literature. Sahitya Akademi is constantly working for the development of Hindi and regional languages. He said the lectures delivered in various sessions of the two-day national seminar will be published in the form of a book. On this occasion, he presented Sahitya Akademi's published work on Awadhi and Bhojpuri to Vice-Chancellor Professor Satyakam.

Professor Rampal Gangwar said that the ability to take all languages along is inherent in Braj Bhasha. Braj Bhasha has a long series of poems inspired by tenderness as well as love and affection which added to the development of Hindi.

In the closing session, Dr Anandanand Tripathi welcomed the guests and Anupam presented the report of the seminar. The seminar was conducted by Dr Trivikram Tiwari and the vote of thanks was proposed by Professor Satyapal Tiwari.

## Boy's body found

The body of a missing 11-year-old boy, Sahib of Kosafra Khurd village under Koraoon police station area was found floating in a pond Friday. On the information of the villagers, the police reached the spot, took out the body from the pond and sent it for post-mortem examination. An investigation is being conducted to find out how the boy drowned in the pond. Station House Officer (SHO) Praveen Kumar Gautam said that the real reason behind the incident will be known only after the postmortem report comes.

Meanwhile a 16-year-old boy allegedly killed his 60-year-old father in Sehra village under Kaundhiara police station on Thursday night and then surrendered to the police. He attacked his father with an iron rod several times and when his father died he reached the police station. He was to be drunk during the incident.

# Unique confluence of culture, tradition

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Kanpur

During the Ganga Mela organised at historic Sarsaiya Ghat, the Kanpur Journalist Club's camp witnessed a unique confluence of culture, tradition and harmony. On this auspicious occasion, all societal boundaries—caste, religion, age and lineage—dissolved as people embraced each other and exchanged Holi greetings. After 4 pm the ghat became lively and within half an hour, a large crowd of men, women and children had gathered. The air was filled with colours and fragrance of gual. At the Kanpur Journalist Club's camp, General Secretary Abhay Tripathi welcomed everyone with a tilak of gual. The camp saw a steady stream of political, social, and media personalities throughout the event.

Prominent guests included MP Ramesh Awasthi, former MP Satyadev Pachauri, Mayor Pramila Pandey, MLA Mahesh Trivedi, MLC Salil Vishnoi, MLA Neelima Katiyar, MLA Surendra Maitthani, MLA Amitabh Bajpai, MLA Mohd. Hasan Rumi, MLA Naseem Solanki, MLC Arun Pathak, MLA Saroj Kuril, Kanpur Nagar Congress president Pawan Gupta and others.



# Dhankar calls discussion on judge cash controversy

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

The matter pertaining to alleged recovery of cash from the residence of a sitting judge of the Delhi High Court was raised in the Rajya Sabha on Friday, with Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar saying he will find a mechanism for holding a structured discussion on the issue.

Raising the issue in the morning session, Congress MP Jairam Ramesh also sought the Chair's response on judicial accountability and reminded him about a pending notice regarding impeachment of a judge of the Allahabad High Court. "This morning, we have read about a shocking case of huge amounts of cash unearthed at the residence of a judge of the Delhi High Court," Ramesh said. He also pointed out that earlier, 50 members of Parliament had submitted a notice to the chairman regarding certain remarks that were made by a judge of the Allahabad High Court. Ramesh said the chairman himself has repeatedly spoken about the urgency for judicial accountability. The senior Congress member also sought to remind Dhankhar that he had directed the Leader of the House on this issue.

"I request that you please make some observations on this and give necessary directions to the government to come up with a proposal for increasing judicial



Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar conducts proceedings of the House during the Budget session of Parliament in New Delhi

accountability," he added. On the issue related to alleged recovery of the cash, Dhankhar said what "bothers" him is that the incident happened but did not come to light immediately.

He said if such an incident was related to a politician, a bureaucrat or an industrialist, the person concerned would have become a "target" immediately. "And, therefore, systemic response, which is transparent, accountable, effective, I am sure will be on the way" he said.

The chairman further said he will get in touch with the Leader of the House and

Leader of the Opposition and find a mechanism for a structured discussion during course of the session. On the impeachment matter, the chairman said he had received a representation from 55 members of the Rajya Sabha.

Dhankhar further informed the members that he has taken all necessary steps to get verification from the signatories to the representation.

"Most members responded positively, helping me perform my duty," he said, and appealed to the remaining members to respond to the e-mails sent to them.

# Gabbard's visit reinforces US-India ties: US official

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

US Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard's meetings in India focused on bilateral cooperation in areas of intelligence-sharing, defence, counter-terrorism, and transnational threats, an American official said.

Gabbard's visit to New Delhi highlighted the decades strong US-India relationship that is bolstered by the leadership of and friendship between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Donald Trump, a spokesperson at the office of Director of National Intelligence (DNI) said.

She arrived in the national capital early Sunday on a two-and-a-half-day trip in the first high-level visit to India by a top official of the US President Donald Trump administration.

Tulsi Gabbard held separate meetings with Prime Minister Modi, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and NSA Ajit Doval.

"In India, the Director of National Intelligence held several bilateral engagements, including with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi," the spokesperson said.

"DNI Tulsi Gabbard's meetings in India focused on intelligence-sharing, defence, counterterrorism, and transnational threats," the official added.

Gabbard also delivered a speech at the Raisina Dialogue, focusing on Trump's

efforts on bringing peace to various conflict-ridden regions.

"President Donald Trump remains unwavering in his commitment to achieving peace through a strategy rooted in realism and pragmatism," she said.

"Securing peace through strength requires strong leadership with a clear-eyed and realistic understanding of global challenges and opportunities, a commitment to fostering cultural and economic ties that reduce the likelihood of

**US Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard's meetings in India focused on bilateral cooperation**

an escalation to conflict, and a dedication to reinforcing mutual interests," she added.

In his meeting with Gabbard, Defence Minister Singh conveyed to her India's concerns over activities of Khalistani separatist group Sikhs for Justice (SFJ) on American soil and urged her to declare it as a designated terrorist entity, Indian government sources said after the talks.

Rajnath Singh also apprised Tulsi Gabbard about SFJ's alleged links with Pakistani spy agency Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) as well as its "collaboration" with Babbar Khalsa militant group, and pressed for action against it, they said.

# Compassion, harmony cornerstones of civilisation, says Murmu

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

President Droupadi Murmu on Friday emphasised that compassion, inclusivity and harmony are cornerstones of the Indian civilisation, asserting that a nation's true progress is defined by its dedication to uplifting the marginalised. Speaking at Purple Fest 2025, a cultural event organised by the Social Justice Ministry at the Rashtrapati Bhawan here with the aim to empower PwDs, she reaffirmed India's constitutional values of social justice, dignity and equality.

A country or society is not known for what it does for the privileged but for its sensitivity towards the marginalised," the President said. She said compassion, inclusivity and harmony are intrinsic to the Indian civilisation. The President highlighted the govt's commitment to empowering PwDs through various initiatives, including the 'Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan', which focuses on both physical, digital accessibility expressed satisfaction that initiatives in skill development and entrepreneurship are equipping disabled to become equal stakeholders in India's economy.

# BJP slams Karnataka's four per cent Muslim quota

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

The BJP on Friday accused the Congress of pursuing "contract jihad" in Karnataka after the state assembly passed a bill that allows for 4 per cent reservation for Muslims in government contracts, slamming it as an infringement on the rights of OBCs, SCs and STs.

BJP spokesperson Sambit Patra claimed that Congress leader Rahul Gandhi pushed the state government's decision, alleging he was using the crutches of Muslim quota to advance his politics as he knows that he will not be otherwise able to deliver.

Rahul Gandhi is politically unfit for sound political decision and that is why he is resorting to appeasement politics, Patra said, using rhyming Urdu lines to throw several barbs at him. "Alamgir Rahul-Zeb", he said in a play on Mughal king Aurangzeb, is nursing ambition to become "jahanpanah".

The Congress government's decision in Karnataka is only a beginning and will create divide in the country, the BJP spokesperson said, adding the opposition party can give even 100 per cent quota to the minority community in pursuit of its appeasement politics. He told reporters, "This is height of appeasement politics."

He said the Siddaramaiah-led government has been taking a host of measures aimed at Muslims. It followed "land jihad" through Waqf properties and "economic jihad" by offering huge package to development of the Waqf, he said, adding "anti-national jihad" was witnessed when pro-Pak slogans were raised in the state assembly, he added.

"It is contract jihad now," he said, adding the Congress had also allied the political wing of the banned radical Islamic organisation PFI and later given

legal reprieve to many person accused of stoking social unrest.

Patra noted that the state government has proposed salary to imams, financial aid to Muslims for weddings, rebate in fee for Muslims students, and ₹1,000 Crore for the development of Muslim colonies among several decisions aimed at the minority community. The four per cent quota for Muslims contracts is from the reservation bracket meant for the Other Backward Classes, he said, calling for a united front among the OBCs, SCs and STs against this development.

**BJP accused Congress of pursuing "contract jihad" in Karnataka after the state passed a bill that allows for four per cent reservation for Muslims in government contracts**

The BJP leader claimed that it is such an appeasement politics which had led to the country's division in 1947. He reiterated that the state government's decision is unconstitutional, and the BJP will take appropriate measures to counter it. State BJP leaders have said that they will legally challenge it.

Asked about questions raised by some opposition parties on the fitness of Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, who looked distracted and tried to chat with someone while the national song was being played in the latest of his gaffes, Patra said it will not be appropriate for him to comment on any leader's health. One can talk about political fitness and everyone known who is the most politically unfit leader, he said, in a swipe at Rahul Gandhi.

# One held in SDPI money laundering case

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

The Enforcement Directorate has arrested a man from Coimbatore in Tamil Nadu following fresh round of searches in a money laundering case against the SDPI, the political front of the banned Popular Front of India (PFI), official sources said Friday.

Wahidur Rahman Jainullabudeen was taken into custody under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) from Mettupalayam in Coimbatore district on Thursday, the sources said.

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) made the arrest after conducting searches at the house of Jainullabudeen, who was brought to Delhi on Thursday night, and is expected to be produced before a special PMLA court on Friday, they said. The federal probe agency carried out the first round of searches in the case on March 6 after it arrested M K Faizy, the national president of SDPI, from the Delhi airport on March 3.

The ED claimed before a court while seeking 55-year-old Faizy's custody that there existed an "organic" relation between the two outfits and that the Popular Front of India was carrying out its criminal activities through the political party (SDPI).

The Centre banned the Popular Front of India in September 2022, calling it an unlawful association which allegedly indulged in terrorist activities. Multi-agency searches by the ED, National Investigation Agency (NIA) and various state police forces preceded the Popular Front of India ban. Founded in 2009, the SDPI is registered as a political party with the ECI.

# No one can carry out blasts now: Shah

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

No one can now dare carry out blasts and escape, unlike in the past, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said on Friday and asserted that the country was safe under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership.

Noting that blasts occurred frequently in the past, Shah also attacked previous governments for not taking action against terrorists, citing the 2008 Mumbai terror attack.

The government has zero tolerance policy towards terrorism, Shah said as he also asserted that Naxalism will end in India by March 2026. Amit Shah said this while replying to a discussion in the Upper House on the workings of the Union Home Ministry.

"There was a time when bomb blasts were routine. I want to tell the people of the country that, for the last 10 years, the series of bomb blasts have stopped. No one can now dare carry out bomb blasts. The country is safe under Narendra Modi. We are committed to uprooting terrorism," he said in the Rajya Sabha.

Referring to the 2008 Mumbai terror attack, he said terrorists earlier easily entered the country, attacked hotels and railway stations, and escaped. "But no action was taken," the home minister said.

There is peace in Kashmir, the majority of terrorists in the northeast have surrendered, and the country is moving forward under the leadership of Modi, he added. "With strong political willpower and strong management of Modi ji, the country is safe now. The opposition should not be worried. We will keep you (opposition) as well as the country safe," Shah said.

The home minister did not speak on the violence in Manipur, saying he would deliberate on the issue in detail when imposition of President's Rule in the



Union Home Minister Amit Shah speaks in the Rajya Sabha during the Budget session of Parliament in New Delhi

northeastern state would come up for discussion. He said the government fulfilled the dream of the architects of the Constitution by abrogating Article 370.

"Article 370 was the basis of separatism in Kashmir. But I also thank the architects of the Constitution, they made the provision temporary, and the way to abrogate it was also included in the Article," Shah said. "But due to vote bank politics and stubbornness, Article 370 continued. On August 5, 2019, Article 370 was totally abrogated."

The dream of the architects of our Constitution, was that there can't be two heads, two constitutions and two flags in the country," he said. Shah said the issue of terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir, left-wing extremism, and insurgency in Northeast were among the biggest challenges for India. "Around 92,000 citizens were killed in four decades.

No organised effort was done to deal

with these, and the Modi government did it," he said. Shah also said the number of deaths of civilians and security personnel in terror incidents has drastically come down, while there has been zero incidents of stone pelting in the Kashmir valley.

"There has been a 70 per cent reduction in deaths due to terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir during Modi govt; terror incidents too fell sharply," he said.

Shah also said grassroots level democracy has been established in Jammu and Kashmir by successfully holding elections in urban and rural local bodies.

"Around 40,000 government jobs provided during 2019-24 in Jammu and Kashmir, 1.51 Lakh self employment created, skilling clubs operational," he said. The Home Minister also accused previous governments of not taking action against Naxalism. "By March 21, 2026, Naxalism will end in this country," Amit Shah said.

# Yoga gets Intelligence with Artificial perfect pose

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■ New Delhi

As the world embraces yoga as a path to fitness and mental well-being, a new innovation is poised to address a growing concern, incorrect postures leading to pain and injuries.

As a recent survey highlighted that nearly 36 percent of yoga practitioners face discomfort due to improper alignment during their sessions, a timely solution has stepped in as PosePerfect, an Artificial Intelligence (AI)-powered yoga pose correction system that has been developed by a passionate team of young innovators. Born out of the XR (Extended Reality) Creator Hackathon, PosePerfect uses a blend of Extended Reality (XR), Artificial Intelligence (AI), and 3D Visualisation to offer real-time feedback and guided corrections during yoga practice.

With the help of PoseNet and animated 3D avatars created using Blender, the system tracks the practitioner's movements and suggests corrections on-screen, making yoga practice not just safer, but smarter. The aim is to help users of all skill levels improve posture, avoid injuries, and achieve better results.

The team behind this innovation, Shama Kiran (Team Lead), along with Deepti Karani, Diya Thalanki, and Kriti Bhardwaj, believes that technology can play a vital role in enhancing traditional wellness practices. Their goal is to make yoga more accessible and effective, especially for those practicing without a trained instructor. The XR Creator Hackathon, a national platform that celebrates the power of immersive technology, is an initiative by Wavelaps in collaboration with the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting



under the WAVES program. It has provided teams like PosePerfect with mentorship, technical guidance, and access to cutting-edge tools, thanks to strong support from India's leading XR communities, BharatXR and XDG.

Now, all eyes are on the Grand Finale, scheduled from May 1 to 4, 2025, at the Jio World Convention Centre, Mumbai, where PosePerfect will showcase its prototype alongside other top XR innovations from across the country.

World Audio Visual & Entertainment Summit, known by the acronym WAVES will be a key forum for promoting discussions, collaboration, and innovation in the media and entertainment industry. The

event will bring together industry leaders, stakeholders, and innovators to discuss prospects, challenges, promote trade to India, and influence the sector's future. According to the Information and Broadcasting Ministry, WAVES is a groundbreaking event designed to propel India's media, entertainment industry to even greater heights. "India is a major consumer and creator within the global entertainment landscape.

WAVES provides a platform to showcase this vibrant industry and its immense potential. It promotes knowledge exchange, dialogue, and collaboration between Indian and global stakeholders. This cross-pollination of ideas will fuel inno-

vation and diversity within the media entertainment world.

It is to connect participants with new markets, diversifies revenue streams, and paves the way for a stable and sustainable growth trajectory for the Indian entertainment and media sector," said a senior official at Ministry of I and B. As India carves a space for itself in the global XR landscape, PosePerfect stands out as an inspiring example of how technology can elevate age-old practices. On a query as what impact shall the project bring to society, in India, and the world, Shama Kiran said the project aims to bridge the gap between traditional wellness practices and modern technology.

# ADMM-Plus concludes

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

With the 14th meeting of ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus Experts Working Group on Counter-Terrorism (EWG on CT) concluding here, India and Malaysia announced work plan for the activities under their co-chairmanship of the forum for the cycle 2024-2027.

The forum announced the conduct of table-top exercise in Malaysia in 2026 and a field training exercise in India in 2027, the Defence Ministry said in a statement here on Friday.

The 14th meeting of ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus) Experts Working Group on Counter-Terrorism was held in New Delhi from March 19-20.

"Delegations from ASEAN Secretariat, ASEAN countries (Lao PDR, Malaysia, Indonesia, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia, Philippines and Vietnam), ADMM-Plus member states (China, USA, Russia, Australia, Japan and Republic of Korea) participated in the meeting," it said.

During 14th ADMM-Plus EWG on CT, the co-chairs, India and Malaysia, conveyed work plan for the activities planned for the cycle 2024-2027.

The discussions focused on evolving a robust and comprehensive strategy to tackle the evolving threat of terrorism and extremism.

"The meeting was aimed to share the on-ground experience of the defence forces of ASEAN countries and its dialogue partners. The meeting laid a foundation for the activities, exercises, meetings, workshops planned for the current

cycle," it said. Earlier, Myanmar and Russia, co-chairs for EWG on CT during the previous cycle for 2021-2024, handed over the co-chairmanship to India and Malaysia for the present cycle (2024-2027), the ministry said. India is hosting the maiden EWG meeting for the current cycle.

In the inaugural session, Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh had delivered the keynote address and interacted with participating head of delegations.

He said terrorism remains a dynamic and evolving challenge with threats increasingly transcending borders. Singh

**The discussions in the meeting focused on evolving a robust and comprehensive strategy to tackle the evolving threat of terrorism and extremism**

had highlighted India's efforts towards countering terrorism in the region, including adoption of Delhi Declaration during India's chairmanship of Counter-Terrorism committee of the UNSC in 2022, the ministry said.

Senior officials from the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), the Defence Ministry and the Indian Army's Counter-Terrorism division participated in the event.

The heads of delegations of the participating countries and Association of Southeast Asian Nations Secretariat also presented their views on adopting best practices for countering terrorism in the region, the statement said.



Editor's TAKE

## Countdown to reciprocal tariffs

India braces for the impact of Trump's tariffs, set to take effect on April 2

As April 2 approaches, India braces for the implementation of US President Donald Trump's reciprocal tariffs, a move poised to reshape the economic landscape between the two nations. These tariffs aim to equalise the duties imposed by countries on US exports, targeting nations with higher tariffs on American goods.

President Trump has criticised countries like India for imposing substantial tariffs on US products. He made it clear recently when he said that he believed they (India and others) are probably going to be lowering those tariffs substantially, but on April 2, and that he would be charging them the same tariffs they charge US. The reciprocal tariffs are designed to pressure countries into reducing their tariffs to match those of the United States.

The introduction of these tariffs could have several implications for India. Firstly it is going to affect India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in a big way. Analysts predict a potential reduction in India's GDP growth by 5 to 10 basis points from the current estimate of 6.6 per cent. The key industries such as gems and jewelry, pharmaceuticals, and automobiles, which have significant export volumes to the US, may face increased duties, affecting their competitiveness and profitability. Moreover, the Indian steel sector is particularly vulnerable. With the US imposing a 25 per cent tariff on steel imports and if India lowers its steel import duties there are genuine concerns about cheaper Chinese steel flooding the Indian market and damaging the Indian steel industries.

Indian government is yet to figure out how to reciprocate as the Trump's deadline is just ten days away. The best bet is diplomatic negotiations but at the moment the US President is adamant on going ahead with his plans to wage the trade war on nations who do not comply with his dictums. Indian officials have been in talks with their US counterparts to negotiate and potentially mitigate the impact of the tariffs. India has proactively reduced tariffs on certain US goods, such as motorcycles and bourbon whiskey, to address US concerns and foster goodwill. However, lowering the import duties across the sectors would be disastrous for Indian industry.

The best bet in this scenario, as other countries are also exploring and experimenting is to find alternative markets and increase South South Cooperation (SSC). Efforts are underway to explore alternative markets for Indian exports to reduce dependence on the US and mitigate potential revenue losses. But the problem is far grave as the ripple effects of the tariffs extend beyond direct trade. Increased US tariffs could lead to uncertainty, affecting foreign direct investment inflows as investors may adopt a cautious approach.

Trade tensions can lead to volatility in currency markets, impacting the Indian rupee's value against major currencies. Higher tariffs on imported goods could lead to increased prices for consumers, affecting purchasing power and overall consumption. As the deadline approaches, India's preparedness and strategic responses will be crucial in navigating the challenges posed by the US reciprocal tariffs.

India has a strong economic foundation, and while the impact of these tariffs may be challenging, the country is well-positioned to weather this unprecedented situation.

Moreover, as other affected nations like China and Canada devise strategies to mitigate the impact, India can draw valuable lessons from their responses to navigate the evolving trade scenario.

## AI is transforming healthcare

From AI-driven diagnostic software aiding rural healthcare centers to machine-learning models enhancing radiology and pathology, technology is automating tasks once solely performed by doctors

Medical practice is based on protocols that help doctors diagnose conditions. A protocol is an algorithm and it appears that machines might be gaining an advantage in diagnosing conditions efficiently and quickly. It is increasingly being recognised that a digitally connected healthcare ecosystem can improve treatment outcomes, especially in large parts of rural India where the lack of specialists often comes in the way of timely diagnosis and medication. Software, developed by doctors and technicians at AIIMS Delhi, is a significant initiative in this respect.

The software can extend specialised diabetes consultation to primary healthcare centres (PHCs) in rural areas. Studies have suggested that India's diabetes burden, already the second highest in the world, is under-reported because half the patients, even in urban areas, are not even aware of their condition. The AIIMS software is one step towards addressing these deficits. It requires the local level healthcare professional to feed in patient data on risk factors like blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugar. It then uses AI to process the information to suggest the treatment or further consultation, as the case may be. All this, however, does not attenuate the significance of the attending physician. The doctor will be required to adapt the software's advice. The digital intervention's potency, therefore, is dependent on the quality of analogue care.

The country's healthcare system requires accessible PHCs run by quality professionals, empowered by digital resources. With this statement, I will talk about the shape of jobs in the field of medicine in this era of AI and GenAI. The advent of AI is posing serious concerns about jobs in future. Some people will become more productive and some roles will be replaced. I have a different take on this.

I hypothesise that AI is automating tasks, not jobs. Let us take the example of a Radiologist—he reads X-rays, sees patients, maintains machines, and mentors younger doctors. Computers analyse X-rays and other medical diagnostics more efficiently and accurately than human experts. The task of reading X-rays can be done by AI, but not the other parts of a radiologist's job. So I suggest that while identifying areas that will be impacted by AI, we need to break down a job into tasks.

We have to accept that most jobs will likely have at least some of their tasks affected by LLMs. Pathologists are receiving scanned slides of biopsies accompanied by critical data. Then the pathologist only has to focus on the



more complex issues to generate a diagnosis. The positive side of this is that speed and accuracy will increase. The downside is that if pathologists are no longer required to evaluate the basic histology elements themselves, the skill to do so will gradually be lost and ultimately they will become dependent on machines, the output of which they will not be able to even corroborate. In this context, there is a need to redefine the job profiles, and we will have to give opportunity to health workers to develop new skill sets relevant to shifting economies and labour markets. Emerging market realities call for major changes to the medical college curriculum. The advent of AI threatens to alter not only how subjects are taught but also what is taught. A recent survey reveals that 60 per cent of medical students are already using AI. However, they need to appreciate that all information given by AI is not accurate; AI and GenAI also suffer from the GIGO rule (Garbage In Garbage Out). Doctors also need to be taught where and how they should use AI and GenAI tools and apps.

There is an urgent need to revamp the medical educational architecture of our country, integrating it with modern technologies and national priorities. Software like the one developed by AIIMS can become more potent if synced with the electronic repository of the National Health Programme for Diseases. Data portability is in line with the Digital Health Mission's objective of facilitating seamless interaction between medical experts.

A second caveat: Given the asymmetrical

relationship between patients and health service providers, the system should be insulated against data confidentiality breaches. Data is crucial for AI to evolve. Machine learning is the field that trains computers through analysis of large quantities of data. There is plenty of data available in our country. This data is being acquired by seducing the public to part with it voluntarily, people are tantalised with online carrots and free to use apps and their responses are monitored, tracked and recorded. Most people happily and voluntarily give up their private data, often without realising it. The digital capitalists use several pretexts and constantly reassure the public that data collection is for their good.

For instance, in the name of developing custom diets, lots of personal medical information is being captured. Genetic data from a country's immense biodiversity is being collected as part of studies and medical collaborations with foreign organisations.

Another interesting development, COVID-19 forced physicians and their patients to use telemedicine, and the response has been universally appreciated. It might trigger your thoughts when I say that telemedicine can capture new kinds of patient data such as facial

expressions, emotional states, etc. The pandemic also accelerated the commercial availability of health and fitness wearables which facilitated doctors—supervised health monitoring, remote diagnostics, and even certain treatments. With these new kinds of devices, there will be new kinds of data captured as well. A word of caution here—we need a techno-legal approach to unlocking data. We need to work out modalities of Confidential Data Clean Room—Sangam of data and model where secrecy is maintained. The cause of concern is that in this game one player is largely ignorant. The suppliers of digital services understand the game and play it skillfully, while most doctors are not even aware that the interests of patient may be at odds with those of the digital and pharmaceutical companies. AI has entered the medical field so rapidly and unknowingly that it seems that doctors have accepted interactions with it without due diligence or in depth consideration. They are giving away their knowledge, research and data to AI apps voluntarily. AI may be capable of outstanding performance in terms of speed and accuracy, but all of its operations are built on data, ie, knowledge derived from experts in the field ie the doctors. We should realise that while AI is essential for meaningful progress in diagnosis and understanding of disease mechanisms, keeping AI within boundaries is essential for the survival of ethics in medical profession.

(The writer is UP's Agriculture Production Commissioner. Views expressed are personal)



MONIKA S GARG

## Starliner Mission redefines space exploration

SECOND Opinion



BIJU DHARMAPALAN

The recent record-breaking mission by NASA astronauts Butch Wilmore and Sunita Williams has captured global attention, not only for its remarkable duration but also for its implications on the future of space exploration. The mission of NASA astronauts Butch Wilmore and Sunita Williams aboard Boeing's Starliner spacecraft in July 2023 was intended to be an eight-day demonstration flight. Rather, their duration aboard the International Space Station (ISS) was extended by an extraordinary 286 days due to technical malfunctions. Even though this unanticipated mission demonstrates human resilience, it also emphasises the precarious equilibrium between ambition and preparedness in the field of space exploration.

The Starliner's propulsion system failures, including helium leaks and thruster malfunctions, exposed the dangers of deploying inadequately tested technology in the harsh space environment. While challenges are inherent in space exploration, this incident highlights a troubling trend: the rush to privatise and commercialise space travel may prioritise speed over reliability. Boeing's struggles with Starliner reflect broader concerns within the industry, where cutting corners to meet deadlines can jeopardise astronaut safety. Future space colonisation efforts demand rigorous

redundancy systems and fail-safes to ensure that no single malfunction can endanger lives millions of miles from Earth.

NASA has accumulated decades of data on long-duration missions, however, risks are exacerbated by unanticipated extensions. Over time, muscle atrophy, bone density loss, and radiation exposure accumulate, while mental health strains—such as isolation, confinement, and the stress of uncertainty—are exacerbated. Solving these issues at a large scale is necessary for the colonisation of Mars or the establishment of lunar bases. Is it possible to create artificial gravity? Protecting oneself from cosmic radiation? Psychological support systems that are reliable? The astronauts' ordeal is a living experiment, but it is one that we cannot afford to replicate indiscriminately.

The extended stay of Wilmore and Sunita Williams has yielded valuable insights into the long-term physical and psychological consequences of space travel. Although previous expeditions, such as Scott Kelly's year-long ISS stay, have provided critical data, this extended mission has significantly enhanced our comprehension. The effects of microgravity on muscles, bones, and cardiovascular systems, as well as the strains of protracted isolation, emphasise the necessity for improved medical protocols, exercise regimens, and mental health support systems for future astronauts. Colonising Mars or establishing lunar bases will require innovative solutions—from developing artificial gravity

systems to improved radiation shielding. The current ordeal has created an opportunity to refine these strategies, ensuring astronauts are better prepared for extended deep-space missions. The ISS served as a critical lifeline during the astronauts' extended mission, reinforcing the importance of private collaboration.

SpaceX's partnership with NASA has been pivotal in advancing spacecraft reliability. The Crew Dragon spacecraft's advanced life-support systems and automation capabilities played a key role in sustaining the crew. This highlights how public-private partnerships are essential for building resilient space infrastructure. As we expand our cosmic ambitions, maintaining cooperation in space exploration will be vital. Future colonies on Mars or the Moon will require shared resources, international rescue protocols, and diversified expertise. Yet rising geopolitical tensions threaten this cooperative spirit. For sustainable colonisation, global collaboration must become the foundation of our extraterrestrial endeavours. The prolonged mission of Wilmore and Sunita Williams exemplifies human creativity, adaptation, and perseverance. Their experience provides essential insights into spaceship design, astronaut welfare, and mission strategising. As mankind approaches interplanetary flight, these insights will ensure that future explorers are prepared to confront the challenges that await.

(The writer is an adjunct faculty at the National Institute of Advanced Studies. Views expressed are personal)

## Leaderspeak



The delimitation exercise, if carried out, will strike at the very foundation of federalism in India. It will erode the essence of democracy. Our voices in parliament will be silenced. Our rights will be compromised. This is nothing but a deliberate attempt to undermine certain states. States that have controlled their population growth, governed efficiently and contributed significantly to national progress must not be punished by the union government.

MK STALIN, CHIEF MINISTER OF TAMIL NADU

## Letters to the Editor

### Saliva ban lifted, spinners get a boost

Madam—Apropos to "BCCI lifts saliva ban in IPL" published on March 21, here is my response. The saliva ban was enforced during Covid pandemic because of obvious reasons and it has been five years since this ban has been in existence in international cricket.

Board of Control for Cricket in India's (BCCI) latest decision to lift the saliva ban ahead of IPL 2025 is a welcome move because it will aid fast bowlers in reverse swinging the ball.

And it will also bring some sort of equality into the context which is otherwise heavily tilted towards the batsman. Hope it will also trigger discussion at ICC level to bring this change in international cricket as well.

BCCI has also made another change of introducing two balls in second innings in night matches which is also praiseworthy because it will counter dew.

As the dew sets in it becomes really difficult for spinners to turn the ball as seams gets wet and becomes a bit grassy hence comes nicely on the bat so this change in the rule will help spinners make better grip over the ball.

Both these measures will significantly help bowlers and it is good for the game of cricket to bring some balance and hopefully fans will get to see some evenly contested matches in this IPL.

BAL GOVIND | NOIDA

### Respect, care for parents now legal necessity

Madam—A historic decision by the Tamil Nadu High Court has empowered the dignity and rights of the elderly. The court has made it clear that if children or heirs fail to properly care for and serve their elderly parents, the elderly have the full legal right to reclaim the property they had gifted. This decision gives a new direction to the sense of duty and sensitivity towards the elderly in society.

This case involved an elderly woman who, out of love and trust for her son, transferred her property to him through a gift deed. However, after her son's death, her daughter-in-law began mistreating her and showed a neglectful attitude. Unable to bear the situation, the elderly woman approached the court. The court ruled in her favour, stating that if the children or heirs fail to fulfil their duties, the elderly have the legal right to reclaim the gifted property.

This verdict has not only provided legal protection to the elderly but also sent a strong message to society that serving and respecting parents is not only a moral obligation but also a legal duty. If love and care from children are lacking, the existence of the gift deed can be nullified. This decision will serve as a milestone in protecting the dignity and self-respect of the elderly. It reminds every individual in society that respecting and caring for parents is not just a duty but a fundamental value of life.

RK JAIN | BARWANI

### Devotees' trust at stake

Madam—Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy's recent allegations against the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) are purely politically motivated. These accusations, based on false information, seem to be a deliberate attempt to mislead devotees and tarnish Hindu sentiments. The comments were made with the intention of disregarding the services provided by TTD and spreading misinformation.

TTD has always been committed to serving devotees without any regional discrimination. The institution ensures that devotees from all states receive equal treatment, and there is no scope for favoritism.

The ₹300 special entry darshan and VIP darshan tickets are made available transparently through an online booking system, ensuring that every devotee gets a fair opportunity to have darshan of Lord Venkateswara. Every day, thousands of devotees from Telangana successfully book their tickets online and visit the temple without any hindrance.

Recommendation letters from public representatives are considered only for the VIP break darshan.

However, due to limited slots, not all recommendations can be approved. The claim that TTD has rejected Telangana leaders' recommendation letters is entirely false.

APPANNA GONAPA | VISAKHAPATNAM

## ECONOMIC GROWTH ALONE IS NOT A GUARANTEE OF HAPPINESS

The 'World Happiness Report 2025' has shown a slight improvement in India's ranking, yet it remains unsatisfactory. India stands at 118th position among 147 countries, while Pakistan, despite its economic instability, is ranked 109th. Finland has secured the top spot for the eighth consecutive year, followed by Denmark, Iceland, Sweden, and the Netherlands. This report highlights that economic prosperity alone does not ensure national happiness, rather, a combination of social, cultural, administrative, and psychological factors shapes a truly content society.

India is one of the fastest-growing economies, but the extent to which this growth benefits its citizens remains debatable. The wealth gap continues to widen, leading to dissatisfaction and despair. In contrast, smaller European nations with limited resources offer better social security and fair economic distribution, ensuring greater happiness. India must focus on redistributing its economic

resources to make prosperity accessible to all. Social cohesion and community support play a vital role in happiness. While India has traditionally had strong family and social ties, modernisation and digitalisation have weakened these bonds, increasing isolation, stress, and depression.

Western countries emphasise mental health services, providing free counselling, community interactions, and a supportive environment. India must prioritise mental well-being through robust policies that encourage social cooperation and emotional resilience.

Healthcare accessibility and life expectancy are also crucial determinants of happiness. Despite improvements, India's healthcare system remains inaccessible to the general public. Government hospitals require urgent reform, while private healthcare remains unaffordable.

SACHIN TRIPATHI | SATNA

Please send your letter to the letterstopioneer@gmail.com. In not more than 400 words. We appreciate your feedback.



# Humanism and the world

The human race stands at a critical juncture, where its unchecked expansion and relentless exploitation of the natural world threaten its own survival. The pressing need to amend Protagoras' aphorism "Man is the measure of all things" has never been more urgent

FIRST Column

Is humanism as a philosophy leading to human extinction? The search for an answer must begin with the Greek sophist Protagoras' frequently-quoted aphorism, "Man is the measure of all things." It is generally considered to be the best encapsulation of the central message of humanism which asserts the centrality of humankind's place in the cosmic order of things, including both the quotidian and historic flows of time. The value of everything, according to the Humanist weltanschauung has to be judged by its impact on the well-being of humans. It, however, does not refer to half of humankind-women. This was obviously because gender had not become an issue in public discourse in Protagoras' time. He lived from 490 to 420 BCE. As things have changed vastly since then and the first amendment to his aphorism should make it read as, "Humankind is the measure of all things."

The need for the second amendment arises from the nature of humankind's relationship with other living beings-animals, birds, fish and plants-the essence of which is relentless exploitation of these by people, which is driving them to extinction. Significantly, the theme of Earth Day, 2019, observed, as in every year, on April 22, was "Protect our Species." Elizabeth Kolbert writes in *The Sixth Extinction: An Unnatural History* (first published in 2014), "Very, very occasionally in the distant past, the planet has undergone change so wrenching that the diversity of life has plummeted. Five of these ancient events were catastrophic enough that they're put in their own category: the so-called Big Five. In what seems like a fantastic coincidence, but is probably no coincidence at all, the history of these events is recovered just as people come to realise that they are causing another one."

It has become increasingly clear since the book first came out in 2014 that the sixth extinction is around the corner. The causes are well-known. Seabed mining is destroying unique ecosystems besides taking pollution to the deep sea. Rivers bring toxic industrial waste from hinterlands and, as in the case of stretches of Yamuna close to Delhi, make it impossible for fish to survive in their waters. Oil spills pollute hundreds of square miles. Increasing carbon emission is making sea water acidic and hence inhospitable to marine life. The consumption of plastic bags, hunting, poaching, the arrival of invasive species, have disastrous effects.

Container ships are killing a growing number of whales through accidents. Japan's murderous whaling expeditions are killing hundreds of whales. Global warming has worsened matters. All this is the result of human activity, which



has increased sharply as a result of growing human population, which, currently around 8.2 Billion, is, pace UN projections, set to peak at 10.3 Billion by the mid-1980s. According to another estimate, it is expected to exceed 10 Billion by 2060. It is not just their sustenance demands that are increasing with their numbers. Market capitalism, with advertising as its cutting edge, is manufacturing demands for ever new consumer goods and leisure activity.



HIRANMAY KARLEKAR

The result is pressure on nature, resources and space. Animal habitats and forests, for example, are destroyed to make room for townships, factories and roads, and rail lines linking them. Trees are cut en masse to provide for lumber for construction, firewood and the furniture industry.

Not surprisingly, Ian Johnston's report in *The Independent of the United Kingdom* of 31 May, 2017, cited scientists writing in a special edition of the magazine, *Nature*, that humans were causing the sixth mass extinction of life on earth. Chris Jasurek's piece in *The Epoch Times* of October 31, 2018, cites a World Wildlife Fund report as stating that humans have killed about

60 per cent of animals on the planet since 1970. The future of humans themselves is at stake. Population increase is an important cause of accelerating human activity. Referring to the soaring increase in global population under way, Desmond Morris predicts in *The Naked Ape: A Zoologist's Study of the Human Animal*, that time will come when "the densities we are now experiencing in our major cities would exist in every corner of the globe. The consequences of all this for all forms of wild animals is obvious. The effect it would have on our own species is equally depressing."

Morris adds shortly thereafter, "Long before our populations reach the levels envisaged above we shall have broken so many of the rules that govern our biological nature, that we shall have collapsed as a dominant species. Many exciting species have become extinct in the past and we are no exception." Those dismissing Morris' prediction as alarmist can argue that the human mind, which accounts not only for the survival of the species but its dominance over nature through technology, will find a way of preventing this. Nothing of the sort. Technology would remain a formulation on paper if the environment in which it has to be applied disappears.

More important, the devising and application of technologies would require continued and

THE RESULT IS PRESSURE ON NATURE, RESOURCES AND SPACE. ANIMAL HABITATS AND FORESTS, FOR EXAMPLE, ARE DESTROYED TO MAKE ROOM FOR TOWNSHIPS, FACTORIES AND ROADS, AND RAIL LINES LINKING THEM. TREES ARE CUT EN MASSE TO PROVIDE FOR LUMBER FOR CONSTRUCTION, FIREWOOD AND THE FURNITURE INDUSTRY

## Himachal factors in growth aspirations amid fiscal challenges

Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvir Singh Sukhu, who also oversees the finance portfolio, recently presented the 2025-26 state budget, aiming to balance fiscal prudence with developmental aspirations. The budget emphasises tourism expansion, green energy, and rural upliftment as key growth drivers. However, persistent financial challenges-including declining central grants, rising debt, and increasing revenue expenditure-continue to pose significant hurdles to fiscal management.

### Plummeting central grants

Himachal Pradesh's fiscal distress stems from policy shifts and structural financial limitations. A major setback has been the sharp reduction in central grants, particularly the Revenue Deficit Grant (RDG), which dropped from ₹10,949 Crore in 2021-22 to ₹3,257 Crore in 2025-26. Additionally, the withdrawal of GST compensation has led to a cumulative revenue shortfall of ₹9,478 Crore, further exacerbating the fiscal deficit.

The state's debt burden has surged to ₹1,04,729 Crore, including ₹29,046 Crore in liabilities inherited from the previous BJP-led administration. Capital expenditure has also taken a significant hit, declining by 46.58 per cent from ₹8,485.83 Crore in 2024-25 to ₹3,941.85 Crore in 2025-26. This substantial reduction restricts long-term infrastructure investments, raising concerns about future economic expansion.

The revenue deficit stands at ₹361 Crore (0.83 per cent of GSDP), while the overall fiscal deficit remains high at ₹10,338 Crore (4.04 per cent of GSDP), reflecting ongoing financial strain despite expenditure control efforts. The slight reduction in the overall revenue deficit-from ₹6,486 Crore to ₹6,390 Crore-offers little relief, as fiscal imbalances continue to hinder development prospects.

In contrast, the Union Budget 2025-26 has allocated ₹11.21 Lakh Crore for capital expenditure, constituting 3.1 per cent of the national GDP, a 10.1 per cent increase over the previous year's revised estimate. This disparity in resource allocation leaves states like Himachal Pradesh struggling to secure adequate fiscal support.

### Pathways to financial stability

Himachal Pradesh's fiscal crisis calls for a multi-pronged approach to revenue generation, ensuring financial stability while maintaining developmental momentum. Given the state's heavy reliance on central grants and borrowings, the government must diversify its revenue streams through effective taxation policies, asset monetisation, tourism expansion, and private sector participation. Below are key areas requiring focused action:

### Enhancing tax compliance

Improving tax compliance and minimising revenue leakages are crucial for fiscal recovery. The

state must focus on: Expanding the tax base: Increasing the number of taxpayers through effective registration drives and stricter enforcement of tax laws.

Digital tax governance: Implementing advanced digital tracking systems to monitor tax collections, curb evasion, and streamline compliance.

Rationalising tax incentives: Reviewing and eliminating unnecessary tax exemptions that lead to revenue losses.

Strengthening enforcement: Enhancing audit mechanisms to detect tax evasion while promoting voluntary compliance.

### Rationalising subsidies

Himachal Pradesh bears a high subsidy burden, which, while essential for social welfare, often leads to fiscal strain when not managed effectively. A targeted subsidy framework is necessary to balance welfare with financial sustainability. Key measures include: Identifying non-essential subsidies: Phasing out benefits that primarily aid economically well-off sections while protecting critical subsidies for health-care, education, and agriculture.



KS TOMAR

1. Direct Benefit Transfers (DBT): Ensuring subsidies reach intended beneficiaries directly, reducing middlemen and leakages.

2. Performance-based subsidies: Linking benefits to efficiency and sustainability, particularly in the power sector, where leakages are common.

3. Encouraging alternative funding models: Exploring Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) partnerships to support social welfare initiatives.

By curbing wasteful subsidies, the government can reallocate resources to productive investments, fostering long-term economic stability.

### Monetising state assets

Himachal Pradesh possesses vast underutilised assets in land, tourism, hydroelectricity, and public infrastructure. Monetising these resources can generate substantial revenue.

a) Land monetisation: Leasing state-owned land for commercial and industrial use while ensuring sustainable development.

b) Maximising hydroelectric revenue: Enhancing revenue-sharing agreements with power producers and improving efficiency in the hydropower sector.

c) Revamping state properties: Converting unused government buildings into revenue-generating assets like hotels, business centers, or cultural hubs.

d) Auctioning mineral resources: Regulating and monetising mineral deposits through transparent and competitive bidding processes.

Effectively utilising state assets can reduce fiscal dependence on external sources and create sustainable revenue streams.

### Seeking ecological compensation

As a major ecological contributor, Himachal Pradesh provides critical environmental services, including carbon sequestration and water conservation. However, these contributions often go uncompensated in national financial allocations. The state must aggressively advocate for ecological compensation, estimated at ₹90,000 Crore annually, through:

Financial incentives for forest conservation: Seeking compensatory grants from the central government.

i) Monetising carbon credits: Participating in national and international carbon trading markets.

ii) Eco-taxation: Imposing green taxes on businesses impacting the environment, with revenues directed toward conservation efforts.

iii) Securing environmental compensation will provide much-needed fiscal support while reinforcing Himachal's commitment to sustainability.

### Boosting tourism revenue

Tourism is a cornerstone of Himachal Pradesh's economy, yet its revenue potential remains underutilised. The government must focus on:

i) Eco-tourism and adventure tourism: Developing sustainable resorts, trekking trails, and adventure sports facilities.

ii) Religious tourism infrastructure: Enhancing connectivity and amenities around pilgrimage sites.

iii) Cultural and heritage tourism: Restoring historical sites and promoting Himachal's unique culture and handicrafts.

iv) Better taxation and regulation: Ensuring proper taxation of tourism-related businesses to minimise revenue leakages.

v) With strategic investments and promotional efforts, tourism-driven revenue can significantly reduce dependence on external grants.

vi) Himachal Pradesh stands at a critical economic juncture where strategic action is essential to overcome fiscal distress.

By diversifying revenue streams, strengthening tax governance, optimising state resources, and fostering private sector collaboration, the state can navigate financial challenges while sustaining economic growth.

A well-implemented, multi-sectoral strategy will not only bridge fiscal deficits but also position Himachal Pradesh as a model of financial resilience.

(The writer is a strategic affairs columnist and senior political analyst. Views expressed are personal)

## Phishing scams: Protect yourself from cyber threats!

Imagine waking up to an urgent email with the subject line "immediate action required: your bank account has been suspended!" or "your streaming subscription has been terminated—update your payment details now!" The message no doubt looks official, with the bank's or the streaming service's logo and a professional tone, warning that your account has been compromised or your payment details need to be updated immediately.

Panic sets in. You don't want to lose access to your hard-earned money or favourite shows. Without thinking twice, you click the link in the email, which takes you to what appears to be the official website. It prompts you to enter your login credentials, bank details, or social security number. The urgency of the message makes you act fast until you realise, too late, that you have just handed over your sensitive information to cybercriminals.

This is a classic phishing scam, a deceptive tactic that is used by hackers to trick people into revealing personal and financial information by pretending to be a trusted entity. With a single click, all your accounts, confidentiality and finances could be at risk. Phishing is a cyber-attack technique where malicious actors or hackers attempt to trick people into sharing sensitive information, such as usernames, passwords, and financial details by using fake websites, emails, or messages to steal data such as credit or debit card details and login credentials. This form of social engineering exploits human psychology rather than technical vulnerabilities, making it a persistent and evolving threat in the digital age. There are numerous types of Phishing Attacks, such as:

1. Whaling: A specialised type of spear phishing aimed at high-profile individuals like CEOs or government officials, often involving sophisticated social engineering tactics.

2. E-mail phishing: The most common form, where attackers send fraudulent emails pretending to be reputable entities, such as banks or online services, urging recipients to click on malicious links or download harmful attachments.

3. Spear phishing: A targeted attack where hackers gather personal information about their victims to create personalised, convincing messages that appear legitimate.

4. Smishing and vishing: Smishing (SMS phishing) uses fraudulent text messages to lure victims, while vishing (voice phishing) involves phone calls from attackers impersonating trustworthy organisations.

5. Clone Phishing: Attackers replicate legitimate emails, replacing attachments or links with malicious versions to deceive recipients.

6. Website Spoofing: Fraudsters create fake websites that closely resemble legitimate ones to trick users into entering sensitive credentials.

The first and foremost way to prevent yourself from being a victim is to enable multi-factor authentication (MFA), even if credentials are compromised for it adds an extra layer of security. Organisations should conduct regular cybersecurity training to raise awareness about phishing tactics for their employees. Even, the Indian government has taken several initiatives such as the Cyber Surakshit Bharat Initiative, Digital India Campaign and many more to raise awareness about phishing and enhance cybersecurity among citizens, businesses and government institutions. The Indian Government regularly posts cybersecurity tips and scam alerts through platforms like Twitter (@Cyberdost) and Facebook and the Cyber Crime Helpline 1930 allows victims to report phishing attacks quickly as a few initiatives that aim to guide how to detect and avoid phishing attacks and educates users about common phishing tactics used especially in digital payments, banking frauds and fake emails.

As a safety concern, it would be beneficial to install and update antivirus and anti-phishing tools to detect malicious content. Before entering any personal information, one must ensure the website's URL begins with "https://" and is authentic, as attackers often use slight variations of legitimate domains. It is crucial to look for red flags such as poor grammar, urgent requests and generic greetings that indicate phishing attempts.

If you fall victim to a phishing scam, act quickly to minimise damage and protect your personal and financial information. You may:

i) Immediately turn off your Wi-Fi or unplug your internet connection to prevent malware from spreading or further data theft. Report the attack to the relevant authorities or IT departments.

ii) If you entered your login credentials on a phishing site, then change the password of the compromised account immediately, followed by updating other accounts that use the same or similar passwords.

iii) If you entered banking details or made a payment, then call your bank or credit card provider immediately explain the situation, and Request to block or freeze your account if necessary.

There is no denying that phishing remains a prevalent cybersecurity threat, but with vigilance and proactive measures, individuals and organisations can mitigate risks. As cybercriminals refine their techniques, staying informed and implementing robust security practices is essential to safeguard personal and professional data from phishing attacks. Taking the mentioned steps immediately after falling victim to a phishing scam can help minimise financial and data loss while preventing further damage.



SHAINYA SHARMA

(The writer is a political analyst. Views expressed are personal)



# 18 BJP MLAs suspended from Karnataka Assembly

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Bengaluru

Eighteen BJP MLAs were suspended for six months from the Karnataka Legislative Assembly on Friday for “disrespecting” Speaker UT Khader. The suspension resolution, moved by state Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister HK Patil, was adopted by the Assembly.

The incident occurred on the last day of the assembly's budget session, when the opposition BJP MLAs staged a massive protest. The legislators climbed onto the podium where Speaker Khader's chair is situated and threw papers at him. The protest was sparked by opposition anger over the allocation of a four percent reservation to Muslims in public contracts.

Earlier, the BJP members had protested from the well of the house, accusing the government of attempting to “honey trap” a minister and demanding a judicial probe into the matter, even as the Chief Minister addressed the budget discussion.

As the suspended legislators remained in the assembly, they were forcefully evicted by marshals. Leader of Opposition, R Ashoka condemned the resolution, saying that the government should be ashamed after Minister KN Rajanna raised the issue of “honey trap” and it failed to protect him. A similar display of unruly behaviour was witnessed in the Legislative Council, where BJP MLCs tore the bill and



A BJP MLA being evicted by Marshals during the Budget session of Karnataka Assembly in Bengaluru on Friday

threw it into the well of the House, directly in front of Council Chairperson Basavaraj Horatti.

While reading out the suspension order, Khader said, “The incident has hurt us a lot and it's painful. This seat is not just a chair. This is the symbol of democracy, truth and justice. To speak from this chair is a matter of pride. Every member should protect the dignity and sanctity of this chair. None of us are above the chair. Our

personal sentiments should not be above the dignity of this chair. We should behave with commitment, calm and civilised way. Let this incident be a lesson for us. Let us in the coming days respect constitution and sanctity of this chair.”

“This chair cannot tolerate interrupting the proceedings of the House, ignoring the dignity of the Chair and behaving in a way that damages the parliamentary traditions,” he added.

# Bengal opens bars for women workers

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ Kolkata

Thanks to the Mamata Banerjee Government new watering hole laws, now the women in Bengal will go miles in proving that they are no less than men inside the pubs. This, but for a few eyebrows being raised.

The Bengal Government's new legislation allowing women to work in hostels has evoked mixed response in the civil society and political circles. While those in the Trinamool Congress have said that this would go miles in ensuring “emancipation for women in the State” others including the Opposition parties said it would bring more miseries to them and had been done to attract more customers including the TMC goons.

The Government had on Wednesday proposed a new Bill lifting a century old ban on women working in bars. The British had through Bengal Excise Act in 1909 imposed a ban on women working in bars. However, Bengal Finance Minister Chandrima Bhattacharya, while presenting the West Bengal Finance Bill 2025 before the legislative assembly on Wednesday, said, “women couldn't work at on-shops until now. They will get this opportunity. We all talk about gender equality. That's what we kept in mind while taking this decision.”

The Bill is now pending with Governor CV Ananda Bose for his assent.

While the Bill was passed without any resistance from the Opposition which had walked out of the Assembly on issues including refusal by, Speaker to allow

debates on attacks on the Hindu religious places the Left opposition which has no representation in the House attacked both the TMC and the BJP for letting the women to be exposed before “night vultures.”

Senior CPI(M) leader Sujana Chakrabarty reminded how Bengal was topping the list of victimisation of women. “You cannot stop rapes and attacks on women ... you have no adequate security for them particularly in the nights ... your government victimises doctors who protested against the rape and murder of the lady doctor inside the RG Kar Medical College and Hospital... and now you are exposing them to further danger without even arranging for their security... the TMC government talked of taking steps to ensure safety of women at work place... Now it has walked in the opposite direction.”

BJP's Shankar Ghosh on the other hand wondered whether the new law would be accompanied by additional police security for women during the nights. “It is an open fact that bars are mostly functional during the nights and the women who will work in the bar will not only be exposed to the hazards of the job inside the bar also their return home will be a problem ... has the Government arranged for their protection ... has the Government thought about enhancing their security?”

Women social activist Saswati Ghosh falsified the claims made by the Finance Minister that the Bill had been brought as a gender equality measure. “Those talks

of gender equality are only an eyewash this Bill has been brought to increase revenue of the Government ... everyone knows that there is minimum industrial investment in Bengal as a result of which the Government's revenue has declined ... the only big money that the Government earns is through the thousands of liquor shops that has come up in the past one decade or so ... no other thing ... if at all they have on the mind of the Government,” she said. “they do not expose women bar tenders to attract more and more customers.”

Another social activist and a poet who is also a professor in a college said requesting anonymity, “these are very cunning and unscrupulous rulers ... the Opposition is no better ... the Government should have better tried to bring investment ... if at all they had gender inequality in mind then they could have prevented that in other sectors, especially unorganised industries... the BJP on the other hand instead of communalising the atmosphere would have taken up this Bill as a women's cause ... but they chose to walk out and give a free passage to the Government ... even the Left should have raised the issue on streets ... they have bright faces like Meenakshi Mukherjee, Dipсата Dhar and Aishe Ghosh but they too would not.”

However a TMC leader who reportedly owns a bar cum restaurant hailed the decision saying, “women in bar would help the women guests ... in any case the Government should not allow women workers in the national highways.”

# Bangladeshi link emerge in Nagpur violence

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ Mumbai

Bangladeshi link has emerged during the investigations into the recent Nagpur riots, with the police identifying as many as several fake social media posts, including the ones with Bangladesh IP addresses.

In the investigations conducted into social media posts that surfaced prior to and after the March 17 riots, the Nagpur cyber police sleuths have identified 97 such fake posts which were offensive in nature. Many of the social media posts reportedly came from computers with Bangladesh IP addresses.

The Nagpur cyber police personnel are investigating four FIRs registered in connection with the rumour-mongering that went on ahead of the communal violence, in which nearly 40 persons, including 33 police personnel, were injured and scores of vehicles were damaged in Bhaldarpura area of Nagpur.

The violence broke out late on the evening of March 17 after the 200-odd workers of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) and the Bajrang Dal staged a protest near the Shivaji Maharaj statue in Nagpur demanding the removal of Aurangzeb's tomb and allegedly burnt the burnt an effigy of Aurangzeb. However, the protest sparked rumours that a holy book had been desecrated, leading to violence in Nagpur's Chitnis Park, Mahal, Kotwali and Ganeshpeth.

Meanwhile, it has come to light that the alleged mastermind behind the Nagpur riots Fahim Shamim Khan, who is a Minority Democratic Party leader, hails

from the communally-sensitive town of Malegaon in Nashik district in north Maharashtra.

Speaking at an event organised by a Marathi news channel, Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis said: “One of the masterminds of the Nagpur riots hails from Malegaon. A thorough investigation will be conducted and those who spoiled the atmosphere will not be spared. We have also filed cases against VHP and Bajrang Dal members. If we tolerate the attacks on the police, law and order in the state will collapse. Therefore, we shall teach the culprits a lesson,” he said.

Fadnis, who holds the state Home Portfolio, said that the Nagpur riots could not be described as a fallout of “intelligence failure”. “We cannot term it as intelligence failure. However, the monitoring of social media after noon was inadequate. Inflammatory posts were spread through social media. We have the capacity for social media monitoring, but we need to develop the habit of using it. Now, violence is less on the streets and more through social media,” the Chief Minister said.

The chief minister said that whether there were some larger plan or design was being probed. “In the past incidents of violence in the country, we have seen a pattern... whether the same pattern was there in Nagpur also is being investigated. More than 100 persons have been arrested so far”

“Some of the offensive social media posts were found to be in Bengali. In fact, it is the kind of Bengali spoken in Bangladesh. We will probe whether there is a larger design,” Fadnis said.

# Magisterial probe holds cops responsible for custodial death of Parbhani protester

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ Mumbai

Three months after he died in police custody in the wake of his arrest made in connection with the violence witnessed at Parbhani in Maharashtra region, a magisterial inquiry has held the police responsible for the death of Somnath Suryavanshi, a Dalit youth, prompting the Maharashtra State Human Rights Commission (MSHRC) to seek reports from the state government and police.

In its report submitted to the MSHRC, the magisterial inquiry has attributed Suryavanshi's death to police brutality. “Perusal of the report of the magisterial inquiry shows that the judicial magistrate has concluded that Suryavanshi was assaulted at Nava Mondha, Police Station in Parbhani. The police officials named in the Magisterial Inquiry are responsible for the custodial death of Suryavanshi.”

Following the magisterial inquiry report, the MSHRC, which is hearing complaints concerning Suryavanshi's death, has issued notices to the Chief Secretary, Additional Chief Secretary (Home), Additional Director General of Police (CID) and the Deputy Superintendent of Police (CID), Parbhani, seeking their reports in the matter.

Earlier, the post-mortem done on Suryavanshi's body had recorded the cause of his death as ‘shock following multiple injuries’.

The MSHRC has scheduled the next hearing of the complaint on Suryavanshi's custodial death for June 23.

It may be recalled that Suryavanshi

(35), a law student who hailed from the Wadar community, died at a state-run hospital in Parbhani on December 15, 2024 while in judicial custody, days after he was arrested in connection with violence Parbhani in the wake of desecration of a replica of Constitution of India placed in a glass box alongside the statue of Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar.

**Earlier, the post-mortem done on Suryavanshi's body had recorded the cause of his death as ‘shock following multiple injuries. The MSHRC has scheduled the next hearing for June 23**

The magisterial inquiry report has political significance considering that within days after Suryavanshi's death, Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi had — after a visited the family of Suryavanshi — had created a major stir in the Maharashtra political circles, by alleging that a Dalit man was “murdered by the police” and that chief minister Devendra Fadnis had “lied” in the State Assembly over the issue.

After his visit to Suryavanshi's family on December 23, 2024, Rahul Gandhi had said, “The family showed me the post-mortem report and videos. From what I saw, I can say it was 100 per cent judicial death. The police have murdered him in custody. He was killed because he was a Dalit who was trying to protect the Constitution. He was beaten and finished

off”. Rahul had gone on to accuse the chief minister, claiming that the ‘CM has lied in the Assembly’, ostensibly to convey a ‘message to the police’.

“It is the RSS ideology to finish off the Constitution. The (MahaYuti) government and their ideology are responsible (for Suryavanshi's death). The CM and those who thrashed him (the Dalit man) are responsible for all this,” Rahul had said.

Questioned by the media as to whether he was trying to politicise the issue by issuing a statement, Rahul had said, “There's no politics here. It's a matter of justice. There's been a murder. It's a question of ideology. We want immediate action in the matter. We want this to be resolved and those behind it must be punished”.

Meanwhile, the Prakash Ambedkar-led Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi (VBA) has come down heavily on the BJP-led MahaYuti government over the findings of the magisterial inquiry. “Even though Somnath Suryavanshi died due to police beatings, attempts are being made to suppress this case...we will ensure that the family gets justice”, VBA vice-president Siddharth Mokle said.

Senior NCP (SP) leader and former state Home Minister Anil Deshmukh has demanded action against the police personnel from the Nava Mondha police station responsible for Suryavanshi's death. “Strictest action should be taken against the culprits in this case. The time to come will not forgive the rulers who support the guilty police officers,” Deshmukh said.

# Tharoor slams Government after private members' business 'scrubbed' from LS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

Congress leader Shashi Tharoor slammed the Centre over private members' business “scrubbed” from the Lok Sabha's revised list of business on Friday and wondered whether Parliament exists only for the government to pursue its own agenda.

Tharoor pointed out that there has been no private members' business in the Lok Sabha since July 2024.

“I was ready to introduce three Private Members' Bills today on important national issues. MPs are normally given opportunities every other Friday to introduce their Bills when Parliament is in session. But yet again, the item for private members' business was scrubbed from the Lok Sabha's revised list of business today, the Friday when it was due,” the Congress MP from Kerala's Thiruvananthapuram said in a post on X. There has been no private members' business in the Lok Sabha since July 2024, he pointed out.

“Does Parliament exist only for the government to pursue its own agenda?” the former Union minister asked.

In July last year, Tharoor introduced a private member's bill seeking to reserve 10 seats in the Lok Sabha for those below 35 years of age, asserting that young members are a clear minority in Parliament and this is leading to a “democratic deficit”.

# Union Minister calls out Allahabad HC rape ruling

Continued from >> P1 Sibal subsequently said judges, especially those from the high courts, should refrain from making such statements, as it would “send wrong message to the society and people will lose faith in the judiciary”.

Senior advocate Vikas Pahwa said the interpretation of the Allahabad High Court appeared to set a concerning precedent by narrowly defining what constitutes an attempt to rape.

He further said that at the summoning stage, courts typically assess whether there is a prima facie case based on the allegations, without delving deeply into the evaluation of evidence. Echoing his views, senior advocate PK Dubey said such an observation was not warranted.

# Justice Varma accused in CBI FIR

Continued from >> P1 As per the Constitution, the High Court Judge and above enjoys impunity from cases and only Impeachment by Parliament is the only way to initiate actions against them. CBI was in fact, copy paste the complaint of the Bank in the FIR and no facing dilemma over this FIR for naming a person who had already become a High Court judge, having impunity from cases. According to many lawyers, as the CBI FIR wrongly included Varma's name, the trial procedures are still at frozen stage.

# Collaborate with social media: Parliament to Doordarshan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

Parliamentary panel on Friday suggested that Doordarshan collaborate with influencers and social media creators to enhance its reach among younger audiences.

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Communications and Information Technology, chaired by BJP member Nishikant Dubey, also recommended that Doordarshan enhance its digital footprint by boosting presence on social media and expanding content offerings on other digital platforms.

“The committee feel while providing vulgar-free content for entertainment, Doordarshan can still continue to fulfil its public service mandate by remaining relevant in an increasingly competitive media environment...” according to the

11th Report on Demands for Grants (2025-26) relating to the Union Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.

The committee's report was tabled in the Lok Sabha on Friday.

It also asked the public broadcaster to continue extensive coverage of cultural, social and political events but in modern presentation formats, appealing to younger demographics, and increase localised programming.

The ministry told the committee that Doordarshan was in the process of hiring personnel in various categories on a contract basis to strengthen manpower in its programme wing.

It informed the panel that against a sanctioned strength of 45,791, there were 30,221 vacancies in Prasar Bharati.

Of these, 13,970 vacancies are in Doordarshan and 16,251 in All India Radio (AIR).

# Home Minister tears into Opposition over north-south language war

Continued from >> P1 Shah said the government has worked for the propagation of regional languages and made provisions for imparting medical and engineering education in Indian languages. “I want to tell the Tamil Nadu government, we have been saying this for two years... You do not have the courage to provide medical and engineering education in Tamil because your economic interests will be affected,” he alleged.

“But when our NDA government comes to power (in the southern state), we will provide medical and engineering education in Tamil,” he said. Assembly

elections are due in Tamil Nadu next year.

Without naming any party or individual, Shah said, “Those who are spreading poison in the name of language prefer a foreign language and not an Indian language. Tamil youths can work in Gujarat, Kashmir, Delhi... You have been elected to Parliament, what kind of a system do you want?”

“There have been enough divisions of the nation in the name of language and it should not happen anymore. Don't use language to hide your corruption. We will go to every village and tell people,” he said, attacking the DMK.

# Congress to launch six-day statehood movement in J-K

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Jammu

Paradesh Congress Committee (JKPCC) will launch a six-day movement, “Hamari Riyasat - Hamara Haq” from March 24 to press for the early restoration of statehood to Jammu and Kashmir.

“We will intensify the movement for the early restoration of statehood to Jammu and Kashmir. In this regard, we will launch the six-day ‘Hamari Riyasat - Hamara Haq’ movement in Jammu city from March 24,” JKPCC President Tariq Hameed Karra said.

Karra reviewed preparations for intensifying the movement, which will take place from March 24 to March 29, involving evening marches from different locations in the region in a phased manner.

Carrying forward the campaign alongside the AICC abhiyan, “Jai Babu, Jai Bhim, Jai Samvidhan,” the JKPCC chief said that Congress would continue its struggle for statehood, which is the right and demand of every citizen in Jammu and Kashmir.

“The movement will also highlight issues faced by common people in their daily lives and seek their redressal from the administration,” he said.

The meeting decided to intensify the statehood movement while also raising concerns about the misgovernance of the BJP-led Centre and the Lieutenant Governor's administration over the past decade, which has led to multiple hardships for the common people.

They also supported the demands of daily wagers for regularisation.

# Senior doctor of RG Kar Medical College transferred

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ Kolkata

In what is being viewed as a part of the Mamata Banerjee Government's “vendetta politics”, Dr Subarna Goswami a senior specialist doctor who had taken a frontal role in the last year's RG Kar Medical College and Hospital movement has been transferred to an allegedly lesser position in far off Darjeeling prompting the association of Bengal health services doctors and joint platform of doctors associations to threaten a renewed agitation “if Dr Goswami's transfer order is not withdrawn and victimisation of doctors is not stopped.”

Dr Goswami, who has been posted as the Deputy CMOH-II, East Bardhaman district has been transferred as the Superintendent, Darjeeling TB Hospital, some 600 km north of Kolkata. The order would be implemented with immediate effect, according to a notification published by the State Health Department of which Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee is the minister in charge. “Dr Goswami who has been fighting for justice for the victim doctor of RG Kar Medical College and Hospital has now been transferred to Darjeeling ... this is clearly a vendetta and proves amply the mindset of the State Government,” said another senior Dr Utpal Chatterjee adding, “if the order is not withdrawn forthwith the doctors fraternity will soon launch a bigger movement.”

Another senior doctor recounted how Dr Goswami had been transferred on eight occasions in a span of past a few years “just for raising his voice against corruption threat culture in various Government hospitals ... he

had been at the forefront of the RG Kar movement ... the Government tried to purchase or threaten him into silence but he would not cow down ... and so now he has been transferred out to Darjeeling ... a letter has been sent to the Principal Secretary Health to withdraw his transfer ... if it is not done immediately then the doctors' fraternity will start a more intense agitation,” said another senior doctor.

Senior TMC leader Kunal Ghosh however justified the transfer saying it was a routine transfer. “When you are in a government job and a transferable service ... you should be prepared for such routine transfers ... the people should not see anything bad in such transfers,” he said. The incident relates to the State wide doctors' agitation after a postgraduate lady doctor was on August 9 last year found brutally raped and murdered inside the Chest Medicine Department of RGKMCH where she had been working.

It was Dr Goswami who had for the first time revealed the contents of postmortem reports that suggested gangrape on the deceased medic.

The RG Kar case recently took a new turn with the Supreme Court allowing the case to be heard and the investigation done by the Central Bureau of Investigation to be monitored by the Calcutta High Court.

The Apex Court order came after the victim's parents approached it aggrieved by an order of the trial court that awarded life imprisonment to the main accused Sanjoy Roy a civic volunteer. The parents of the victim contended that there were other persons too involved in the case and the Government was shielding them.



## Travel disrupted as fire shuts down Heathrow Airport

ASSOCIATED PRESS ■ London

A large fire near London's Heathrow Airport knocked out power on Friday to Europe's busiest flight hub, forcing it to shut and disrupting global travel for hundreds of thousands of passengers. Heathrow said it didn't know when power would be restored — raising the possibility that the shutdown would last longer than just the day, as previously expected.

At least 1,350 flights to and from Heathrow were affected, flight tracking service FlightRadar 24 said, and the impact was likely to last several days as passengers try to reschedule their travel and airlines work to get planes and crew to the right places. Authorities do not know what caused the fire but so far found have no evidence it was suspicious.

Residents in west London described hearing a large explosion, followed by a fireball and clouds of smoke, when the blaze ripped through the electrical substation near the airport. Some 120 flights were in the air when the closure was announced, with some turned around and others diverted to Gatwick Airport outside

London, Charles de Gaulle Airport near Paris or Ireland's Shannon Airport, tracking services showed. Lawrence Hayes was three-quarters of the way to London from New York when Virgin Atlantic announced they were being diverted to Glasgow.

"It was a red-eye flight and I'd already had a full day, so I don't even know how long I've been up for," Hayes told the BBC as he was getting off the plane in Scotland. "Luckily I managed to get hold of my wife and she's kindly booked me a train ticket to get back to Euston, but it's going to be an incredibly long day."

Heathrow is one of the world's busiest airports for international travel. It had its busiest January on record earlier this year, with more than 6.3 million passengers, up more than 5 per cent from the same period last year. Still, the disruption on Friday fell short of the one caused by the 2010 eruption of Iceland's Eyjafjallajökull volcano, which spewed clouds of ash into the atmosphere and created trans-Atlantic air travel chaos for months.

**Unclear what caused the fire but foul play not suspected:** It was too early to determine what sparked the huge blaze about 2 miles (3 kilometers) from the air-



This photo provided by London Fire Brigade, shows a fire at the North Hyde electrical substation, which caught fire Thursday night and led to a closure of Heathrow Airport in London, on Friday. AP/PTI

port, but there's "no suggestion" of foul play, Energy Secretary Ed Miliband said.

The Metropolitan Police force said counterterrorism detectives were leading the investigation because of their ability to find the cause quickly and because of the location of the electrical substation fire and its impact on critical national infrastructure. Miliband said the fire, which took seven hours to control, also knocked out a backup power supply to the airport. Heathrow said in a statement that it had no choice but to close the airport for the day. "We expect significant disruption over the coming days, and passengers should not travel to the airport under any circumstances until the airport reopens," the airport said.

The fire's widespread impact on travel led to criticism that Britain was ill prepared for disaster or some type of attack if a single blaze could shut down Europe's busiest airport. "The UK's critical national infrastructure is not sufficiently hardened for anywhere near the level it would need to be at to give us confidence this won't happen again," said Alan Mendoza, the executive director of the Henry Jackson Society, a security think tank.

"If one fire can shut down Heathrow's primary systems and then apparently the backup systems, as well, it tells you something's badly wrong with our system of management of such disasters."

Tom Wells, a spokesperson for Prime Minister Keir Starmer, acknowledged that authorities had questions to answer and said a rigorous investigation was needed to make sure "this scale of disruption does not happen again".

Heathrow — where the UK government plans to build a third runway — was at the heart of a shorter disruption in 2023 when Britain's air traffic control system was hit by a breakdown that slowed takeoffs and landings across the UK on one of the busiest travel days of the year.

**Disruption could last days:** Though the fire has been brought under control, the airport said in a statement it does not have "clarity on when power may be reliably restored". It said it expects "significant disruption over the coming days and passengers should not travel to the airport under any circumstances until the airport reopens".

Heathrow earlier said the airport was not expected to reopen until Saturday.

## Sudan military says it has retaken Khartoum's Republican Palace

ASSOCIATED PRESS ■ Cairo

Sudan's military said on Friday it retook the Republican Palace in Khartoum, the last heavily guarded bastion of rival paramilitary forces in the capital, after nearly two years of fighting.

The seizure of the Republican Palace, surrounded by government ministries, represents a major symbolic victory for Sudan's military against the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces. However, it likely doesn't mean the end of the war as the RSF holds territory in Sudan's western Darfur region and elsewhere.

Social media videos showed its soldiers inside giving the date as the 21st day of Ramadan, the holy Muslim fasting month, which corresponds to Friday. A Sudanese military officer wearing a captain's epaulettes made the announcement in the video, and confirmed the troops were inside the compound.

The palace appeared to be partly in ruins, with soldiers' steps crunching broken tiles underneath their boots. Soldiers carrying assault rifles and rocket-propelled grenade launchers chanted: "God is the greatest!"

Khaled al-Aiser, Sudan's information minister, said the military had retaken the palace in a post on the social platform X. "Today the flag is raised, the palace is back and the journey continues until victory is complete," he wrote.

**Palace's fall a symbolic and strategic moment:** The fall of the Republican Palace, a compound along the Nile River that was the seat of government before the war erupted and is immortalised on Sudanese banknotes and postage stamps, marks another battlefield gain for Sudan's military. It has made steady advances in

recent months under army chief Gen. Abdel-Fattah Burhan.

It means the rival Rapid Support Forces, under Gen. Mohammed Hammad Dagalo, have been mostly expelled from the capital, Khartoum, after Sudan's war began in April 2023. Sporadic gunfire could be heard throughout the capital Friday, though it wasn't clear if it involved fighting or was celebratory.

Brig Gen Nabil Abdullah, a spokesperson for the Sudanese military, described its troops as holding the palace, surrounding ministry buildings and the Arab Market to the south of the palace. Khartoum International Airport, only some 2.5 kilometers (1.5 miles) southeast of the palace, has been held by the RSF since the start of the war.

The RSF did not immediately acknowledge the loss, which likely won't stop the fighting as the paramilitary force and its allies still hold territory elsewhere in Sudan. Late Thursday, the RSF claimed it seized control of the Sudanese city of al-Maliha, a strategic desert city in North Darfur near the borders of Chad and Libya. Sudan's military has acknowledged fighting around al-Maliha, but has not said it lost the city.

Al-Maliha is around 200 kilometers (125 miles) north of the city of El Fasher, which remains held by the Sudanese military despite near-daily strikes by the surrounding RSF. The head of the UN children's agency has said the conflict created the world's largest and humanitarian crisis. The war has killed more than 28,000 people, forced millions to flee their homes and left some families eating grass in a desperate attempt to survive as famine sweeps parts of the country. Other estimates suggest a far higher death toll.

The Republican Palace had been the seat of power during the British colonization of Sudan. It also saw some of the first independent Sudanese flags raised over the country in 1956. It also had been the main office of Sudan's president and other top officials. The Sudanese military has long targeted the palace and its grounds, shelling and firing on the compound.

**Sudan has faced years of chaos and war:** Sudan, a nation in northeastern Africa, has been unstable since a popular uprising forced the removal of longtime autocratic President Omar al-Bashir in 2019. A short-lived transition to democracy was derailed when Burhan and Dagalo led a military coup in 2021. The RSF and Sudan's military then began fighting each other in 2023.

Burhan's forces, including Sudan's military and allied militias, have advanced against the RSF since the start of this year. They retook a key refinery north of Khartoum. They then pushed in on RSF positions around the capital itself. The fighting has led to an increase in civilian casualties.

Al-Bashir faces charges at the International Criminal Court over carrying out a genocidal campaign in the early 2000s in the western Darfur region with the Janjaweed, the precursor to the RSF. Rights groups and the UN accuse the RSF and allied Arab militias of again attacking ethnic African groups in this war.

Since the war began, both the Sudanese military and the RSF have faced allegations of human rights abuses. Before US President Joe Biden left office, the State Department declared the RSF are committing genocide. The military and the RSF have denied committing abuses.

## Indonesia's Mount Lewotobi Laki Laki volcano erupts, prompting alert level to be raised

ASSOCIATED PRESS ■ Jakarta

The Mount Lewotobi Laki Laki volcano in south-central Indonesia erupted three times into Friday, sending an ash column 8,000 metres (26,200 feet) high and prompting authorities to expand the danger zone around the volcano.

The volcano on the remote island of Flores in East Nusa Tenggara province has had hundreds of earthquakes and visible volcanic activity has significantly increased in the last seven days. After the three eruptions late Thursday and early Friday, the volcano was quiet during the day. Seismic activity monitored from the observation post in Wulangitang showed a decline.

Authorities raised the eruption alert to the highest level and expanded the danger zone from 7 kilometres (4.5 miles) to 8 kilometres (5 miles) from the crater. No new evacuations were immediately reported. Several airlines cancelled flights between Australia and Indonesia's tourist island of Bali due to the eruption, while other international and domestic flights to the island have been delayed.

Residents were warned to be vigilant about heavy rainfall triggering lava flows in rivers originating from the volcano, Indonesia's geology agency said in a statement. An eruption of Mount Lewotobi Laki Laki in November killed nine people and injured dozens. The 1,584-metre mountain is a twin volcano with Mount Lewotobi Perempuan in the Flores Timur district. Indonesia is an archipelago of 270 million people with frequent seismic activity. It has 120 active volcanoes and sits along the "Ring of Fire," a horseshoe-shaped series of seismic fault lines encircling the Pacific Basin.

## N Korea tests new missiles as it threatens strong steps against US-S Korea drills

ASSOCIATED PRESS ■ Seoul

North Korea said on Friday it test-launched new anti-aircraft missiles, as its military threatened unspecified grave steps against the US and South Korea over their joint military drills that it views as an invasion rehearsal.

The official Korean Central News Agency said that leader Kim Jong Un oversaw the tests Thursday and called the missiles involved "another major defense weapons system" for North Korea. The missile launches, North Korea's sixth weapons testing activity this year, occurred on the same day that the US and South Korean militaries concluded their annual Freedom Shield command post exercise. The 11-day training was the allies' first major joint military exercises since the inauguration of President Donald Trump in January, and the two countries held diverse field training exercises alongside the Freedom Shield drills.

US and South Korean officials describe their combined military drills as defensive in nature, but North Korea slams them as a major security threat. Hours after this year's Freedom Shield training began on March 10, North Korea fired several ballistic missiles into the sea.

On Friday, the North Korea's Defence Ministry alleged the recent US-South Korean drills involved simulations to destroy underground tunnels in the North to remove its nuclear weapons. An unidentified ministry spokesperson said the US and South Korea would face consequences if they perform similar provocative actions again. "The accumulated reckless military moves of the US and the ROK, seized with the daydream that they can jeopardize the sovereignty and security of a nuclear

weapons state, can undoubtedly bring the gravest consequences they do not want," the spokesperson said in a statement carried in KCNA. ROK is the Republic of Korea, South Korea's official name.

North Korea often churns out warlike rhetoric and threats of attacks when the US and South Korea militaries conduct big drills. South Korea's Unification Ministry on Friday warned North Korea not to use its defensive drills with the US as a pretext to launch provocations.

Trump has said he's willing to reach out to Kim to revive their nuclear diplomacy, but North Korea hasn't made any public responses to Trump's overture. Many experts say Kim, now preoccupied with his support of Russia's war efforts against Ukraine with supply of troops and conventional weapons, won't likely embrace Trump's outreach anytime soon, but could seriously consider it when the war ends.

Kim and Trump met three times in 2018-19 to discuss North Korea's possible nuclear disarmament, but their diplomacy eventually fell apart due to disputes over US-led economic sanctions on North Korea. Russian state news agency Tass reported Friday that Russian Security Council Secretary Sergey Shoigu has arrived in Pyongyang and plans to meet with Kim. It gave no further details.

In 2023, when Shoigu, then a defense minister, traveled to North Korea, Kim gave him a personal tour of a North Korean arms exhibition in what outside critics likened to a sales pitch. In September 2024, Shoigu, then with the new security council post, went to North Korea again for a meeting with Kim, and the two discussed expanding cooperation, according to North Korea's state media.

## Turkiye opposition urges peaceful protests over Istanbul mayor's arrest despite bans

ASSOCIATED PRESS ■ Istanbul

The leader of Turkey's main opposition on Friday renewed a call on supporters to take to the streets for peaceful demonstrations against the arrest of Istanbul's mayor and top rival to President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, even as authorities widened a ban on protests and criticized the call as irresponsible.

Mayor Ekrem Imamoglu was arrested in a dawn raid on his residence on Wednesday over alleged corruption and terror links, escalating a crackdown on opposition figures and dissenting voices. Several other prominent figures, including two district mayors, were also detained.

Many view the arrest as a politically driven attempt to remove a popular opposition figure and key challenger to Erdogan from the next presidential race, currently scheduled for 2028. Government officials reject claims that legal actions against opposition figures are politically motivated and insist that the courts operate independently.

Since Imamoglu's arrest, thousands of people have gathered at Istanbul's city hall for night-time rallies, and clashes have erupted between demonstrators and police in Istanbul, the capital, Ankara, and Turkey's third largest city, Izmir.

The most violent clash took place at Ankara's Middle East Technical University, where police deployed tear gas and water cannons to disperse the demonstration and students claimed rubber bullets were used. The government has denied the use of the bullets. On Friday, authorities in Ankara and Izmir announced a five-day prohibition on demonstrations, following a similar ban imposed earlier by the Istanbul governor's office. The bans came after the country's justice minister acknowledged people's right to demonstrate but said street protests amid ongoing judicial investigations were unacceptable.

## Russian drones strike Ukrainian city of Odesa

ASSOCIATED PRESS ■ Kyiv

Russian drones pummelled the Ukrainian Black Sea port city of Odesa, injuring three people and sparking massive fires, officials said on Friday, an attack that underlined Moscow's intention to pursue aerial attacks even as it agreed to temporarily halt strikes on energy facilities.

The strike came shortly before Czech Republic President Peter Pavel visited Odesa early Friday morning and held meetings with the city's leaders and officials from other southern regions.

"This is another reminder to the whole world: the war continues and Ukraine continues to fight," the head of the Odesa region, Oleh Kiper, said in a statement. He reported blasts at at least three locations after the attack late Thursday. "Civilian infrastructure, commercial facilities are on fire, cars damaged," Kiper said.

Over 70 people and 20 fire engines were involved in extinguishing what the emergency services called "massive fires".

In another attack, Russian glide bombs

injured at least six people, including a child, in the Zaporizhzhia region overnight Thursday to Friday. Regional head Ivan Fedorov published photos showing fire fighters extinguishing flames at multiple damaged residential buildings. The Ukrainian air force reported that Russia fired 214 exploding drones and decoys in the latest wave of attacks. It said 114 of them were intercepted and another 81 were jammed. Russia's Defence Ministry said air defences shot down 43 Ukrainian drones, 34 of them over the Volgograd region and others over Rostov, Kursk and Belgorod regions. The authorities didn't report any casualties or significant damage.

Meanwhile, a massive blaze at an oil depot in the Krasnodar region has continued to rage since it was hit by a Ukrainian drone attack late Wednesday. Ukraine and Russia agreed in principle Wednesday to a limited ceasefire after US President Donald Trump spoke with the countries' leaders this week, though it remained to be seen what possible targets would be off limits to attack.

After a roughly hourlong call with Trump on Wednesday, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy told reporters that "technical" talks in Saudi Arabia this weekend would seek to resolve what types of infrastructure would be protected from attack under the agreement.

The three sides appeared to hold starkly different views about what the deal covered. While the White House said "energy and infrastructure" would be covered, the Kremlin declared that the agreement referred more narrowly to "energy infrastructure". Zelenskyy said he would also like railways and ports to be protected.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov emphasised on Friday that the agreement reached between Trump and Putin referred only to energy facilities, adding that the Russian military is fulfilling Putin's order to halt such attacks for 30 days. "The Russian military are currently refraining from strikes on Ukraine's energy infrastructure in accordance with the agreement reached between Russia and the United States," Peskov said in a conference call with reporters.

## Army captain, 10 terrorists killed in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Peshwar

A Pakistani Army captain and at least 10 terrorists associated with a banned outfit were killed during a gunfight in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Dera Ismail Khan district, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) has said.

The intelligence-based operation (IBO) was conducted on Thursday following reports of the presence of terrorists in the area, a statement from the military's media wing said.

It said that during the intense fire exchange, Captain Hasnain Akhtar fought gallantly and made the ultimate sacrifice, leading his troops from the front.

"Hasnain was a brave officer and renowned for his courage and bold and daring actions during previous operations," it said. The ISPR said weapons and

ammunition were seized from the killed terrorists who were involved in numerous attacks against law enforcement agencies as well as target killing of innocent civilians. It further said, "A sanitisation operation is being conducted in the area and the security forces are determined to wipe out the menace of terrorism from the country. Such sacrifices of brave young officers further strengthen our resolve."

The country has been reeling under increased terrorist attacks especially targeting law enforcers and security forces since the Taliban returned to power in Afghanistan in 2021, particularly in the bordering provinces of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan.

The country witnessed a surge in terror attacks in January 2025 – an increase of 42 per cent compared to the previous month — according to data released by the

Pakistan Institute for Conflict and Security Studies (PICSS), a think tank.

The data revealed that at least 74 militant attacks were recorded nationwide, resulting in 91 fatalities, including 35 security personnel, 20 civilians, and 36 militants. Another 117 individuals sustained injuries, including 53 security forces personnel, 54 civilians, and 10 militants. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa remained the worst-affected province, followed by Balochistan. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's settled districts, militants carried out 27 attacks, resulting in 19 fatalities, including 11 security personnel, six civilians, and two militants.

The tribal districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (erstwhile Fata) witnessed 19 attacks, resulting in 46 deaths, including 13 security personnel, eight civilians, and 25 militants.

## Top Russian official visits North Korea to meet Kim

ASSOCIATED PRESS ■ Seoul

A top Russian security official travelled to North Korea on Friday to meet leader Kim Jong Un, after North Korea recently reportedly sent additional troops to Russia to support its war against Ukraine. A brief dispatch by Russia's state-run news agency Tass reported that Sergey Shoigu, Russia's Security Council secretary, had arrived in Pyongyang, the North Korean capital, and plans to meet top North Korean officials including Kim. It gave no further details including what Shoigu would discuss with Kim.

North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency confirmed the arrival of a Russian delegation led by Shoigu but didn't provide details on the purpose of their visit. Shoigu's visit comes after Ukraine and Russia agreed in principle Wednesday to a limited ceasefire after President Donald Trump spoke with the countries' leaders, though it remained to be seen when it might take effect and what possible targets would be off limits to attack.

North Korea has been supplying a vast amount of conventional weapons to Russia, and last fall it sent about 10,000 to 12,000 troops to Russia as well, according to US, South Korean and Ukraine intelligence officials. In late February, South Korea's spy agency said North Korea appeared to have sent additional troops to Russia. South Korean media put the number of newly sent North Korean soldiers at about 1,000 to 3,000. South Korea, the US and others suspect North Korea is receiving economic and military assistance from Russia in return for providing weapons and troops. Many experts say North Korea will likely ramp up its support of Russia to win as much benefits as possible from Russia before the war ends. Shoigu's trip could be related to Kim's possible trip to Russia, some observers say.



This photo provided by the North Korean government shows Russia's Security Council secretary, Sergey Shoigu, right, who arrived at Pyongyang Airport being greeted by Party Secretary Park Chung-cheon on Friday, March 21, 2025. AP

In June 2024, Russian President Vladimir Putin visited Pyongyang and signed a major mutual defense treaty with Kim. At the time, Putin invited Kim to visit Moscow.

In 2023, when Shoigu, then a defense minister, traveled to North Korea, Kim gave him a personal tour of a North Korean arms exhibition in what outside critics likened to a sales pitch. In September 2024, Shoigu, then with the new security council post, went to North Korea again for a meeting with Kim, and the two discussed expanding cooperation, according to North Korea's state media.

Earlier Friday, KCNA said Kim oversaw the test-launches of new anti-aircraft missiles the previous day. It cited Kim as calling the missiles "another major defense weapons system" for North Korea.

The missile launches, North Korea's sixth weapons testing activity this year, occurred on the same day that the US and South Korean militaries concluded their annual training that North Korea views as an invasion rehearsal.



## Unregistered advisors a menace: Narayan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Mumbai

Markets regulator SEBI, in consultation with social media platforms, has removed 70,000 misleading handles and posts since the implementation of the influencer framework last year, said its whole-time member Ananth Narayan G on Friday.

Amid concerns over foreign portfolio investors selling equities, the SEBI's whole-time member said the overall flows are not as bad as one would imagine and stressed that they "remain invested" in India.

The unregistered investment advisors and research analysts are a "menace" who

are cashing in on the rising interest in investments, he said.

"Since October 2024, SEBI has worked with social media companies to bring down over 70,000 misleading handles/posts," he said while addressing an event organised by registered investment advisors here.

He sought the advisors' help in ensuring compliance and mentioned the UPI 'Payright' handle to help identify SEBI-registered entities and the optional Centralised Fee Collection Mechanism as SEBI's efforts in the direction.

Narayan, a commercial banker-turned-regulator, also offered a nuanced take on the FPI outflows, stressing that the situa-

tion is not as bad, but added that we should not be complacent as India needs foreign savings.

"Notwithstanding recent trends, overall, FPI flows have not been as bad as one might perhaps imagine today," Narayan said.

As of February 2025, FPIs held ₹62 Lakh Crore or over USD 700 Billion of Indian equities, and about ₹5.9 Lakh Crores or USD 68 Billion in debt, he said.

The last five years have seen USD 54 Billion of foreign flows into equity and debt, which is much higher than the USD 19 Billion in the prior five years, he said.

"The onus is on us, and we will need to deliver sustained growth, stable macros,

and governance to keep their interest, he said. "We are working with all stakeholders, including FPIs, to enhance their investment experience in our country," he added.

Lauding the surge in domestic flows, especially from the mutual funds, he said the supply of quality investment options is essential, and pointed out that in FY24, there was only ₹2 Lakh Crore of equity issuances against flows of ₹5 Lakh Crore by MFs and FPIs.

"Adequate supply of fresh paper, in line with the demand for such paper, spurring fresh businesses and economic activity, is crucial for sustained capital formation and stable markets," he said.

## Minister Sirsa meets CTI officials, discusses reforms

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

Delhi's Food and Supplies Minister Manjinder Singh Sirsa met officials from the Chamber of Trade and Industry (CTI) to discuss key reforms, including a new food policy, cloud kitchen regulations, and streamlining multiple food licences.

The meeting focused on implementing a single-window system to improve the Ease of Doing Business in the food sector.

During the discussion on Thursday, Sirsa highlighted the need for a dedicated cloud kitchen policy in Delhi and simplification of food licence procedures, as per a statement. He said these measures would not only create more jobs but also provide greater convenience to the public. Additionally, he proposed setting up food trucks at 20 public locations where food and water would be available 24/7.

According to the statement, CTI officials suggested organising food fairs similar to those held in other countries to boost the industry.

CTI Chairman Brijesh Goyal highlighted the urgent need for a revamped food policy and the promotion of nightlife in the capital. "Delhi operates 24 hours a day with travellers arriving by train, bus and flights, yet there is a lack of quality food options after midnight, as most hotels and restaurants close early," Goyal said.

Traders raised concerns about the licensing process and said vendors selling sweets and snacks must obtain an FSSAI licence, yet a separate health licence from the Delhi Municipal



Delhi food and supply minister Manjinder Singh Sirsa PIONEER PHOTO

Corporation is also mandatory, it stated. They argued that this duplication is unnecessary and fosters corruption, the statement added. "These outdated requirements should be abolished, as they only lead to 'harassment' by inspectors. Additionally, some dry fruit and mixtures items attract 12 per cent GST while others are taxed at 18 per cent, which needs to be rationalised," the traders stated.

In response, Sirsa assured traders that he would take up their concerns with the GST department and the Chief Minister. He said the cloud kitchen policy would be properly implemented and promised that there would be no 'inspector raj' in Delhi, it stated.

The meeting was attended by Virendra Jain, President of the Federation of Sweets and Namkeen Manufacturers, along with traders, including 40 leading food industry brands, it added.

## Ola Electric shares surge over eight per cent, market valuation jumps ₹1,914 Crore

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

Shares of Ola Electric on Friday jumped more than 8 per cent after the company said sales were strong and it remains focused on clearing all backlog by the end of March.

The stock surged 8.40 per cent to settle at ₹56 apiece on the BSE. Intra-day, it zoomed 10 per cent to ₹56.85.

On the NSE, it rallied 8.25 per cent to ₹55.98 per share.

The company's market valuation climbed ₹1,914.31 Crore to ₹24,700.65 Crore.

Ola Electric on Friday sought to address sale discrepancies saying the backlog in February, caused due to vendor negotiations, has been 40 per cent cleared and the remaining will be fully addressed by the month-end.

The company had previously said it sold 25,000 electric scooters in February but the data on the government's Vahan portal showed only 8,651 scooter registrations.

As of March 20, the company's registrations stood at 11,781 on the Vahan portal.

"Our sales remain strong, and the temporary backlog in February was due to ongoing negotiations with our vendors responsible for vehicle registrations."

"This backlog is being rapidly cleared, with daily registrations exceeding 50 per cent of our three-month daily sales average. About 40 per cent of the February backlog has already been cleared, and the remaining will be fully resolved by the end of March 2025," the company said.

On the discrepancies in its sales claim and data on Vahan portal, Ola said, "This is a straightforward case of a temporary registration backlog" and yet it was "deliberately misrepresented as a regulatory issue through misinformation and smear campaigns" by "vested interests."

## DP World, Reliance partner on rail solution

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

DP World and Reliance Industries have partnered to launch an innovative logistics solution for the petrochemicals industry, shifting product transport from road to rail, significantly cutting carbon emissions.

The Dubai-based logistics operator in a statement said the new solution connects Reliance Industries' Jamnagar plant in Gujarat to DP World's inland container depot (ICD) in Ahmedabad and onward to the port of Mundra.

Previously, the Mundra-Jamnagar-Mundra round trip involved approximately 700km of road transport for each container, it added.

"With the new solution, the Ahmedabad-Jamnagar-Mundra route, also approximately 700km, has been converted to rail," the statement said, adding that this transition eliminates the environmental and operational challenges associated with long-distance road transport while maintaining the same coverage.

The statement said the integrated rail service enables the transport of up to 1,260 tonnes of cargo and consolidates up to 45 containers in a single movement, streamlining logistics and reducing the need for multiple trailers and drivers.

By reducing over 700 km of road transport per container, the rail solution significantly reduces carbon emissions and

contributes to Reliance's environmental goals, it added.

DP World Marine Services Global Chief Operating Officer Ganesh Raj said this innovative approach not only aligns with Reliance's sustainability commitments but also ensures greater efficiency, seamless coordination, and timely exports to support their growing operational demands.

Reliance Industries Ltd - Petchem head SCM operations Ravikumar Nair said the shift from road to rail has streamlined our operations, reduced carbon emissions, reduced road exposure by eliminating 45 road trailer movement, and reinforced our commitment to responsible and efficient supply chain practices.

## Adani Energy wins ₹2,800 Crore transmission project in Gujarat

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Ahmedabad

Adani Energy Solutions Ltd (AESL), India's largest private transmission and distribution company and part of the globally diversified Adani portfolio, today said it has won a power transmission project in Gujarat, which will supply green electrons for manufacturing Green Hydrogen and Green Ammonia in Mundra, Gujarat.

The project which will cost ₹2,800 Crore, will be delivered to the nation in 36 months. This project "Transmission System for Green Hydrogen and Ammonia Manufacturing Potential in Mundra, Gujarat" involves upgrading the Navinal (Mundra) electrical substation by adding two large 765 per 400kV transformers. Additionally, a 75 km long 765kV double-circuit line will be constructed to connect this substation to the Bhuj substation.

The project will see the addition of 150 cKM of transmission lines and 3,000 MVA of transformation capacity to AESL's overall transmission infrastructure, taking them to 25,928 cKM and

87,186 MVA, respectively. AESL won the project under the Tariff Based Competitive Bidding (TBCB) mechanism and PFC Consulting Limited was the bid process coordinator. The project SPV was formally transferred to AESL on March 20, 2025.

This is AESL's 6th order win this fiscal year, taking its orderbook to ₹57,561 Crore. AESL, part of the Adani portfolio, is a multidimensional organisation with presence in various facets of the energy domain, namely power transmission, distribution, smart metering, and cooling solutions. AESL is the country's largest private transmission company with a cumulative transmission network of 25,928 ckm and 87,186 MVA transformation capacity.

In its retail electricity distribution business, as on AESL serves approximately 13 million consumers in metropolitan Mumbai and the industrial hub of Mundra SEZ.

AESL is ramping up its smart metering business and is on course to become India's leading smart metering integrator.

## SEBI relaxes 'skin in game rule' for AMC's employees

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

With an aim to address concerns about the "skin in the game" rule for designated employees of mutual funds, including CEO, CIO, and fund managers, markets regulator SEBI on Friday reduced the mandatory investment percentage, with the requirement now based on specific salary brackets.

Earlier, AMC-designated employees were required to invest 20 per cent of their annual salary and perks in the mutual funds they manage. This amount is locked in for three years. The new framework will come into effect from April 1, 2025, SEBI said in a circular.

Apart from easing regulatory framework pertaining to reduction of minimum investment amount, SEBI has reduced frequency of disclosure, lowered lock-in period for employees who have resigned, empowered Nomination and Remuneration Committee to verify compliances by designated employees

and relaxed requirements for employees managing liquid funds.

percentage of their salary or compensation (after tax and statutory deductions) in mutual fund schemes where they have oversight.

The required investment percentage is determined by their gross annual compensation. Employees with a compensation below ₹25 Lakh are not required to make any investment. For those earning

**SEBI has reduced frequency of disclosure, lowered lock-in period for employees who have resigned, empowered Nomination and Remuneration Committee to verify compliances by designated employees**

above ₹25 Lakh, a minimum of 10 per cent of their salary (or 12.5 per cent if employees stock options or ESOPs are included) must be invested.

Further, employees with compensation between ₹50 Lakh and ₹1 Crore must invest at least 14 per cent of their salary (or 17.5 per cent with ESOPs), while those earning above ₹1 Crore are required to

invest a minimum of 18 per cent (or 22.5 per cent with ESOPs).

For employees managing liquid funds, up to 75 per cent of their required investment can be in riskier schemes, while the rest must be in liquid funds, SEBI said. With regards to lock-in period for investments, SEBI said if an employee retires, they can redeem their mutual fund units after a lock-in period, except for close-ended schemes, which remain locked until the scheme's tenure ends. If an employee resigns or leaves before retirement, the lock-in period for their investment will be reduced to one year from their last employment date.

If a designated employee violates the code of conduct or engages in fraud or gross negligence, the AMC's Nomination and Remuneration Committee is required to investigate and recommend actions to SEBI. SEBI has asked AMCs to disclose the total compensation invested in mutual fund units by employees on the stock exchange website within 15 days after each quarter.

The move is aimed at aligning the interests of AMC employees with those of the mutual fund unitholders.

## Rupee jumps 36 paise to close at 86 against US Dollar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Mumbai

Rising for the sixth straight session, the rupee appreciated 36 paise to close at 86 (provisional) against the US Dollar on Friday on a sharp rise in the domestic equity markets and fresh foreign capital inflows. At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 86.26, then touched an intraday high of 85.93 and a low of 86.30 against the greenback.

The unit ended the session at 86 (provisional) against the dollar, registering a gain of 36 paise from its previous closing level. On Thursday, the rupee stayed almost flat and appreciated just 1 paise to close at 86.36 against the US Dollar.

This is the sixth straight session of gain for the rupee, during which it has added 123 paise. "We expect the rupee to trade higher on strength in the domestic equities and fresh FII inflows. However, positive crude oil prices may cap sharp gains. USDINR spot price is expected to trade in a range of 85.80 to 86.25," said Anuj Choudhary — Research Analyst at Mirae Asset Sharekhan. Meanwhile, the Dollar index, which gauges the greenback's



strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 0.19 per cent higher at 104.04. Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, fell 0.29 per cent to \$71.79 per barrel in futures trade. In the domestic equity market, the 30-share BSE Sensex surged 557.45 points, or 0.73 per cent, to settle at 76,905.51, while the Nifty advanced 159.75 points, or 0.69 per cent, to close at 23,350.40 points.

Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) purchased equities worth ₹3,239.14 crore on a net basis on Thursday, according to exchange data.

## BLS launches Aadhaar enrolment service in Punjab

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

BLS International Services on Friday said it has received a mandate from the Department of Food and Civil Supplies, Punjab for Aadhaar enrolment and update services in the state.

This initiative is designed to assist children, individuals with disabilities, bedridden patients, senior citizens, and other vulnerable groups who face challenges in visiting Aadhaar enrolment centres, a release said. BLS International Services Limited is the parent company of BLS E-Services.

BLS E-Services officials will visit homes of people who are unable to visit the centre, set up mobile enrolment stations, and guide them through the necessary procedures. Residents are required to submit a duly filled Aadhaar Enrolment or Update Form along with original supporting documents, which are verified and returned immediately, the release said.

## 1.91 Lakh circuit km transmission lines to be added by 2032

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

Union Power Minister Manohar Lal on Friday said that India has planned to add about 1.91 Lakh ckm (circuit kilometre) of transmission lines and 1274 GVA of transformation capacity by 2032. Addressing a meeting of the Parliamentary Consultative Committee of Members of Parliament for Ministry of Power on Thursday evening he stated that power is a critical component in achieving the goal of a developed India by 2047.

He said that the National Electricity Plan provides the details of transmission system required to be added in the country during the period 2023 to 2032, commensurate with the generation capacity addition and growth of electricity demand in the country.

He also said that the optimal utilisation of generating capacity can be ensured with availability of adequate transmission system, which is the requirement of a reliable power system.

As per the NEP-Transmission, about 1.91 Lakh ckm of transmission lines and 1274 GVA of transformation capacity is

planned to be added during the ten-year period (2023 to 2032), he stated. National Electricity Plan-Transmission covering transmission plan till the year 2031-32 has been prepared by CEA (Central Electricity Authority).

The Plan has been released in October, 2024. As per Section 3 of the Electricity Act, 2003, Central Electricity Authority (CEA) has to prepare the National Electricity Plan in accordance with the National Electricity Policy.

In the meeting issues related to RoW (Right of way), new technologies in transmission, Cyber Security were also discussed. Members of Parliament provided several suggestions concerning various initiatives and schemes.

They also commended the initiatives and efforts of the power ministry in expansion of the transmission network in the country. Lal concluded the meeting by expressing gratitude to the participants for their valuable contributions.

He further directed officials to take appropriate actions to incorporate the suggestions made by Members of Parliament and prioritise the welfare of the people.



## Gold declines ₹400 to ₹91,250 per 10 grams

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

Gold prices decreased ₹400 to ₹91,250 per 10 grams in the national capital on Friday due to profit-taking and a subdued trend in the global markets, according to the All India Sarafa Association.

The precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity had settled at ₹91,650 per 10 grams on Thursday. Gold of 99.5 per cent purity went lower by ₹400 to ₹90,800 per 10 grams. It had concluded at ₹91,200 per 10 grams.

"Gold prices fell...due to profit-taking by the traders and a recovery in the US dollar." "The precious metal is taking a break in response to the US Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell's comments about slowing US growth and higher inflation," Saumlil Gandhi, Senior Analyst of Commodities at HDFC Securities, said.

Extending the losses for the second straight day, silver prices also declined by ₹1,700 to ₹1,00,300 per kg from Thursday's closing level of ₹1.02 Lakh per kg. Meanwhile, gold futures contracts for April delivery on the Multi Commodity Exchange depreciated by ₹493 to ₹88,213 per 10 grams. Chainwala said markets remain on edge as Trump recently said both broad reciprocal tariffs and certain additional sector-specific tariffs would come into force on April 2. In the international markets, spot gold slipped by \$12.15 to \$3,032.75 per ounce.

## Reclaiming India's agricultural, water sovereignty: A call to action

Binod Anand

BROTHERS AND SISTERS, let us pause for a moment and reflect-who truly controls the destiny of our farmers? Who decides how we grow our food, manage our water, and secure our future? While our ancestors tilled this sacred land for generations, a quiet but sinister force is at work, attempting to hijack our agricultural policies, control our resources, and turn our farmers into mere pawns in a global game played by corporate giants and foreign think tanks.

Today, as we mark World Water Day 2025, we must recognise that the theme-"Glacier Melting and the Emerging Threats to the Global South"-is not just an environmental issue, but a political one.

It is yet another attempt to manipulate climate change narratives to push policies that weaken our sovereignty. Make no mis-

take-this is a direct assault on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of "Viksit Bharat@2047".

And at the heart of this attack lies the shadowy influence of global entities like George Soros' Open Society Foundations (OSF), which, under the guise of research and philanthropy, are working to disrupt India's cooperative model of agriculture and water management.

For years, Indian farmers have relied on the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) for guidance, innovation, and indigenous solutions. But today, underhanded funding mechanisms and collaborations with international institutions like the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) are being used to infiltrate our policies. OSF-backed research promotes genetically modified crops, patent-heavy seed regulations, and reliance on multina-

tional agrochemical companies-effectively making our farmers dependent on foreign corporations. NGOs funded by Soros-backed networks are positioning themselves as "experts" on water scarcity and climate change-slowly shifting control of water policy from local farmers to international bodies.

By undermining age-old farming techniques and forcing farmers into contract-based, corporate-dominated models, they are ensuring that control over India's food supply slips from our hands.

Our forefathers built civilisations on rivers like the Ganga, Yamuna, Brahmaputra, and Narmada. Today, our enemies are using fearmongering tactics around glacier melting and water scarcity to push policies that will privatise water management, take power away from local communities, and open the floodgates for Western corporations to take over our irri-

gation systems. This is a direct attack on Modi's Jal Shakti Abhiyan, Atal Bujal Yojana, and the larger vision of Viksit Bharat@2047. By controlling access to water, these organisations hope to dictate what Indian farmers grow, how they grow it, and who they sell it to.

We do not need foreign-backed policies to solve our problems. India already has the solution-Cooperative Economic Frameworks! Local farmer-led organisations must have the power to govern their own water resources without interference from foreign-funded NGOs. Our traditional rainwater harvesting, community irrigation models, and organic farming methods must be protected and promoted.

Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) must be empowered to control supply chains, dictate pricing, and ensure fair markets for Indian-grown produce. The gov-

ernment must legally restrict foreign influence in agricultural policymaking, ensuring that research remains independent and farmer-centric.

India's fight for agricultural and water sovereignty is not just about food-it is about our freedom, our future, and the very soul of Bharat.

If we do not wake up now, tomorrow may be too late. We must reject the foreign-funded think tanks that claim to know what's best for our farmers. We must embrace cooperative-led development, indigenous agricultural wisdom, and local governance over our water and land. Our ancestors fought for India's independence from colonial rule. Today, the battle is different, but the stakes are just as high. Will we let foreign corporations dictate our future, or will we rise to defend Viksit Bharat @2047? The choice is ours. Jai Kisan, Jai Bharat!



## SHADOWS OF A DISTANT HOME

An artistic journey through home, migration, and identity, where cinema and visual arts converge, writes **SAKSHI PRIYA**

Kabir Khan, Imtiaz Ali, Mithu Bhowmick (Producer of My Melbourne) and artist Ajaysingh Bhadoriya exploring the art exhibition

Art and cinema are powerful forms of expression that capture human emotion, identity, and the stories we tell ourselves to make sense of the world. Walking into the '1 View World Film Festival' at Travancore Palace, curated by Myna Mukherjee, felt like entering a living canvas, where each frame, each brushstroke of storytelling, attempted to grasp the elusive, shifting meaning of home, migration, and belonging. This was part of something much larger: **Desh Pardesh**, a multidisciplinary art exposition exploring history, displacement, and identity. Art exhibition that explores notions of home, migration, gender, race, and memory across mediums and aesthetics. Bringing together several projects from micro solos by artists, designers, and architects to group shows, film festivals, and performances, in a range of mediums and scales, that respond to the complex notion of 'home' that occupies the central place in the imagination of both the local, global, and Diasporic deliberations in the global south today.

This series of parallel exhibitions allows a creative articulation of Diasporic self and space, desire, dilemmas, discontent, and delight. It uses the genre of creative representation and productions of Diaspora to ascertain the extent to which these representations and productions collapse the distinction of home and abroad and create a new global-local South Asia, highlighting that the history of modern art is a history of global turmoil, migration, and transnational exchange.

### AT HOME IN THE WORLD

While the festival showcased cinematic brilliance, with auteurs like Imtiaz Ali, Kabir Khan, Onir, and



### FINDING ART THROUGH HOME

As the festival drew to a close with Five Films for Freedom, an online celebration of LGBTQIA+ narratives, it was clear that this was an invitation to engage, challenge, and rethink the spaces we inhabit, both physically and emotionally.

Standing amid these artistic expressions, whether in the dark of the screening hall or the luminous glow of an art installation, there was a shift. This Festival served as reminders that in the chaos of borders, histories, and identities, storytelling remains our most powerful way of finding home.



Rima Das telling stories of the marginalised and misunderstood, it was the accompanying art exhibitions that gave the event its depth. Future-Past Continuous, a group show, featured paintings, installations, and visual provocations that whispered stories of migration and memory.

The connection between cinema and art was undeniable. Take The Shameless, the festival's centrepiece, which unfolded like a haunting painting - dark, visceral, and poetic. Anasuya Sengupta's award-winning performance pulled audiences into the story of Renuka, a woman navigating the violence of survival and the longing for freedom. It was a moving portrait of resilience, much like the evocative works displayed at Desh Pardesh, where the idea

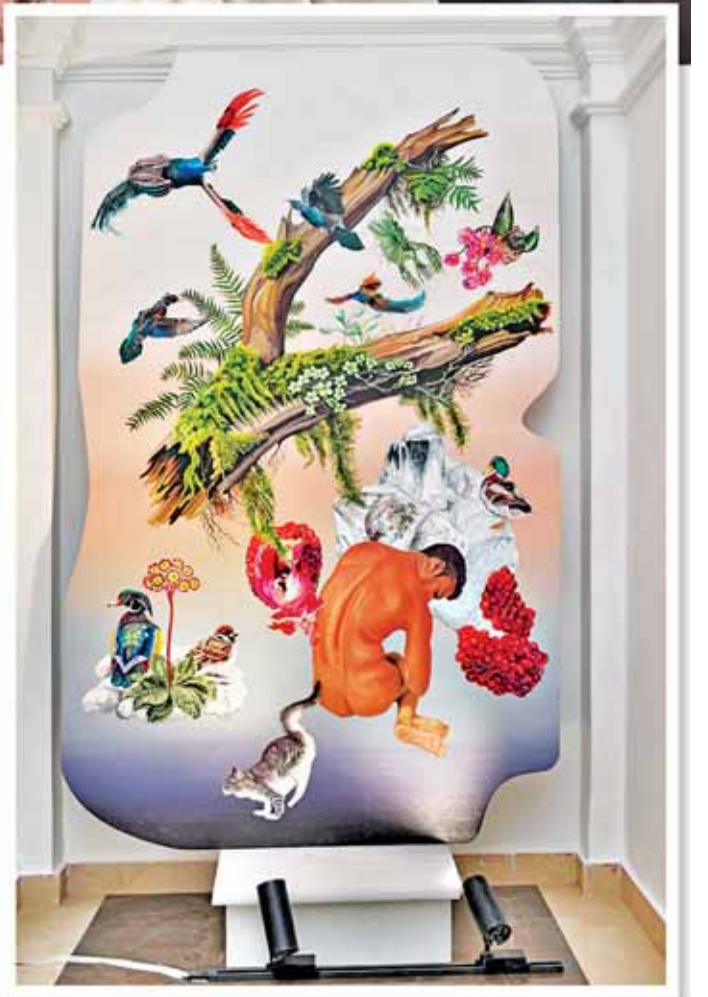
of 'home' was not just a place, but an aching question. The city premiere of Puratwan - The Ancient added another layer to this exploration of time and memory. With the legendary Sharmila Tagore marking her return to Bengali cinema, the film became an introspective mirror, reflecting how history, family, and unspoken truths shape us.

Desh Pardesh extended beyond paintings and film. Dance and performance became another medium of storytelling, none more powerful than, performed by Nrityagram. The piece captured the feeling of Hiraeth, a Welsh word for a deep, unfulfilled longing for something lost. It was a wordless narrative, told through movement, of memories fading and reappearing like ghosts.

At Bikaner House and Stir Gallery, micro solos and queer art shows expanded this dialogue. The exhibition questioned not just where we belong, but how identity is constructed in an ever-changing world. Do we carry home with us, or does it remain a distant echo?

The visual arts segment featured over 55 artists from across the country, each responding to the themes of migration and belonging through diverse artistic mediums. From painting and sculpture to new media art and interactive installations, the exhibition

showcased how contemporary artists engage with the evolving landscapes of home and identity. The selection of artworks highlighted both personal narratives and broader socio-political concerns, reflecting the fluidity and fragmentation of cultural memory in a rapidly changing world.



## Lost in Ragas, found in Ruhaniyan's Soul

PHOTOS: PANKAJ KUMAR



Experiencing the magic of Sufi music and poetry, says **SAKSHI PRIYA**

Some evenings stay with you long after they are over. **Jahan-e-Khusrau's** 25th edition was one such evening and curated by Muzaffar Ali, has completed 25 years, yet it remains as timeless as the poetry it celebrates. The festival, brought together voices, rhythms, and poetry that felt like something ancient yet deeply relevant. On the opening evening, *Naara-e-Mastana* by Kanwar Grewal set the tone. His voice, raw and unfiltered, carried the weight of longing that defines Sufi music. There was no hurry, just a quiet surrender to the music.

The second evening belonged to the mesmerising Saiyaan Sajilay, *Torey Naina*

*Rasilay*, where Manjari Chaturvedi's Kathak met the qawwali of Danish Husain Badayuni and Gufran Aslami Khairabadi. There was something hypnotic about the way dance and music intertwined, each responding to the other, neither overpowering nor retreating. *Yaad-e-Kanhaiya* by Malini Awasthi followed, her voice bringing a thumri-inspired touch to the intensity of the night. On the final day, *Raqs-e-Junoona* saw Shivani Varma's dance meet the melodies of Sina Fakhroddin and the Tehran-Delhi Music Ensemble. Their performance felt less like an act and more like a prayer. Later, *Ruh*, a poetry and storytelling session by Murad Ali, wove together words and whirling dervishes in a way that made time slow down, just for that moment.

The night ended with a qawwali, voices rising, claps growing louder, the energy filling every corner of the venue. No one was in a hurry to leave. Music had done what it always does, brought people closer, made everything else fade away for a while.

"Ishq likhne baithe toh har lafz mehka mile..."  
"Jahan-e-Khusrau sirf mehfil nahi, ek manzar mile."  
The festival may have drawn to a close, but its presence remains, much like the verses of a Sufi poet, growing louder in memory, until they become a part of you.



## PALETTE OF POSSIBILITIES

PHOTOS: PANKAJ KUMAR

BY **SAKSHI PRIYA**

Delicate Sanjhi papercuts cast intricate shadows. Kalamkari paintings unfold mythological tales in rich detail, and the textured patterns of Lippan art shimmer under the lights, each piece of **Art for Hope** - Season 4 carried a story waiting to be discovered. Organised by Hyundai Motor India Foundation. This exhibition was a platform where creativity intersected with tradition, innovation, and social change.

The event brought together 50 talented artists and collectives from across India, each presenting work that reflected personal and cultural narratives. The visual experience was enriched by performances that embodied movement and expression - Lavani, Otan Thullal, Theyyam, and Yakshagana dancers brought age-old traditions to life, their vibrant costumes and rhythmic gestures captivating the audience. A special musical performance by differently-abled artists demonstrated the transformative power of art, proving that creativity knows no boundaries. Accessibility and inclusivity were at the heart of the exhibition. Tactile artworks, braille descriptions, and sign language tours ensured that vis-

itors of all abilities could fully engage with the displays. This thoughtful curation extended to discussions and workshops that explored themes of sustainability and representation in art. Sessions on 'Art from Waste' and 'Inclusivity in Design and the Arts' provided insight into how artistic practices can address contemporary issues while preserving heritage.

Every artwork, every performance and every discussion at exhibition reinforced the idea that art is a living, breathing entity, it carries memories, challenges norms and shape the cultural landscape.





# New rules, saliva ban reversal as IPL kicks off

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Kolkata

New rules and new captains will be in focus but the razzmatazz will be pretty much the same when the 18th Indian Premier League kicks off here on Saturday with defending champions Kolkata Knight Riders taking on perennial underachievers Royal Challengers Bengaluru amid a looming threat of rain.

There is plenty to look forward in the league. Among the most prominent rule changes is the lifting of saliva ban. For the first time since the COVID-19 pandemic, bowlers will be allowed to use it to shine the ball.

The BCCI lifted the ban after receiving a majority consensus from IPL captains in a landmark decision taken at the captains' meeting in Mumbai.

The International Cricket Council had made the saliva ban permanent in 2022, but the IPL operates under its own regulations and the latest move could set a precedent for the global game.

The 18th season will also witness tactical innovations, including a major change to counter dew's impact.

The second innings of evening matches will see a fresh ball introduced from the 11th over, provided the on-field umpires deem the dew factor significant as the trend of high-scoring games is likely to continue.

However, this rule will not apply to afternoon games.

Additionally, the Decision Review System has been expanded to include

height wides and off-side wides, ensuring a fairer adjudication of deliveries. Despite debates about its influence on the game, the Impact Player rule remains in place.

## Captain's corner

As many as seven teams will start IPL 2025 under new leadership, although some of them will be a stop-gap arrangement due to varied reasons.

The most surprising of them all is Rajat Patidar, who is yet to play a T20I for India, leading the RCB team that features megastar Virat Kohli.

Axar Patel takes charge of Delhi Capitals to lead, among others, his Team India senior KL Rahul, who would be aiming to shake off the disappointment of a turbulent stint with Lucknow Super Giants in 2024.

Shreyas Iyer, fresh off leading KKR to glory in 2024, will don the captain's armband for Punjab Kings with Ajinkya Rahane replacing him in the Kolkata team.

Rajasthan Royals will start the season with Riyan Parag as interim captain for the first three matches due to Sanju Samson's recovery from a finger injury taking longer than expected.

Mumbai Indians will be led by Suryakumar Yadav in their away opener against Chennai Super Kings on Sunday, as Hardik Pandya serves a suspension for an over-rate violation from last season.

## Pant's redemption arc

Rishabh Pant is set to begin a crucial new chapter in his career after his resolute comeback from a life-threatening accident



became part of cricketing lore. The IPL's most expensive player in history — acquired by Lucknow Super Giants for a record INR 27 crore — will be eager to silence his critics.

Despite making the squads for the Champions Trophy and the T20I series against England, he was not given a single match.

Now, he has a point to prove, particularly in the T20 format, where he has struggled to cement his place in the Indian team.

Pant's explosive batting style and leadership skills have long been debated, and this season presents an opportunity for him to not only justify his hefty price tag but also send a strong message to the selectors ahead of future international assignments. There are changes in the support staff line-ups too. Ricky Ponting has moved from Delhi Capitals to Punjab Kings as head coach. Hemang Badani has replaced Ponting as Delhi Capitals' head coach. Kevin Pietersen has joined Delhi

Capitals as mentor, while Rahul Dravid returns to Rajasthan Royals as head coach, his first IPL coaching stint after leading India to the T20 World Cup title last year.

CSK veteran Dwayne Bravo will be KKR mentor, replacing Gautam Gambhir, who is now India's head coach.

## Bumrah's fitness

A major question mark hangs over Jasprit Bumrah's fitness. The pacer, back at the National Cricket Academy in Bengaluru, is undergoing

assessments to determine his readiness for the IPL. Mumbai Indians coach Mahela Jayawardene remains optimistic but cautious, given that Bumrah's availability crucial not only for MI but also for India's upcoming tour of England.

## The Dhoni question

As the IPL returns, so does the never-ending speculation: Is this Mahendra Singh Dhoni's last season?

The 43-year-old, who retired from international cricket in 2020, remains an enigma, gracing the field only during the IPL.

While he may not be the consistent match-winner of old, his presence alone bolsters Chennai Super Kings.

His sharp cricketing brain, field placements, and ability to finish games with quick cameos make him an invaluable asset.

Exactly 30 years his junior is Vaibhav Suryavanshi, a prodigal batting talent acquired by Rajasthan Royals but it remains to be seen how many games he manages to get.

## Ro-Ko in T20 again

Both Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma retired from T20Is after India's triumphant World Cup campaign last year, making IPL 2025 their first major outing in the shortest format post-retirement.

Kohli, the highest run-getter in IPL 2024 with 741 runs, remains the linchpin for RCB, while Rohit, after a lean patch, will look to rediscover his magic for Mumbai Indians.

# Sankar stuns world no 2 Antonsen in Swiss Open

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Basel

India's Sankar Muthusamy Subramanian caused a major upset by knocking out world no 2 Anders Antonsen of Denmark in a thrilling three-game contest to reach the men's singles quarterfinals of the Swiss Open Super 300 badminton tournament here.

The 21-year-old from Tamil Nadu, a silver medalist at the 2022 World Junior Championships and currently ranked 64th in the world, put up an impressive display of defense to defeat the three-time World Championships medallist 18-21 21-12 21-5 in a 66-minute contest.

This win marks one of the biggest victories of Subramanian's career, which will boost his confidence as he continues his transition into the senior ranks.

Next, the Indian will face world no 31 Christo Popov of France, a 2019 World Junior Championships silver medallist. Popov had a strong 2024 campaign, claiming titles at the German and Hylo Opens. He was the runner-up at this year's German Open.

Subramanian is the sole Indian singles player remaining in the tournament, while the women's doubles pair of Treasa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand also advanced to the quarterfinals. The world no. 9 pair defeated Germany's Amelie Lehmann and Selin Hubsch 21-12 21-8 on Thursday.

Among other Indians, Isharani Baruah put up a valiant fight but lost 19-21 18-21 to China's Han Qian Xi in 63 minutes.

Anupama Upadhyaya was ousted by Indonesia's world no. 11 Putri Kusuma Wardani as she lost 17-21 19-21 in



another women's singles match.

The mixed doubles pair of Sathish Karunakaran and Aadya Variyath had a tough outing, going down 14-21 16-21 to Liu Kuang Heng and Jheng Yu Chieh.

## Subramanian vs Antonsen

Subramanian was more precise, while Antonsen struggled with his control at St Jakobshalle, often sending his shots wide and long. In the opening game, the two engaged in a tough battle, with leads changing frequently. Antonsen managed just a one-point lead at the break. The left-handed Subramanian made it 16-14 but couldn't sustain the pressure as the Dane took the first game.

However, the momentum shifted completely in the second game, with

Subramanian giving no chance to his illustrious opponent.

After Antonsen sent another shot wide and kicked his racket in frustration, Subramanian moved from 8-4 to 11-6. He then surged to 18-9 as Antonsen continued his errors.

Subramanian soon sealed the game, taking it 21-12, with Antonsen sending another shot long.

The third game started with the score tied at 3-3 before Antonsen completely lost control, committing a series of unforced errors as the Indian raced to an 11-3 lead at the break.

The Dane continued to send his net shots, cross-court shots, and tosses out, and Subramanian emerged victorious without much ado.

# AIU bans two more Indian athletes

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

Indian long distance runners Pradhan Kirulkar and Vivek More have been banned for three and five years respectively by the Athletics Integrity Unit (AIU) after they tested positive for prohibited substances.

Both athletes' positive results were from in-competition tests conducted during the Pune Half Marathon on December 15, 2024, adding to a recent surge in doping cases involving Indian athletes. On Tuesday, Archana Jadhav also tested positive for a banned substance from a urine sample collected during the same event. She has been banned for four years.

Kirulkar's urine sample collected during Pune Half Marathon in December last year, which he had won with a time of 1:04:22, was found to

contain Meldonium when tested at the National Dope Testing Laboratory in New Delhi. His ban period was to be four years but it was reduced by one year following his early admission of the doping offence and acceptance of sanction. His ban period has already started from February 19 and his results from December 15, 2024 — the date of sample collection — onwards will be disqualified.

Indian long distance runners Pradhan Kirulkar and Vivek More have been banned for three and five years by the Athletics Integrity Unit after they tested positive for prohibited substances

The 24-year-old More's sample was also collected at the same event in December last year and it returned positive for Mephentermine, Meldonium and DEPO.

More was to be suspended for six years for testing positive for multiple prohibited substances but he was given one year reduction in the ban period due to his early admission of the doping offence and acceptance of sanction.

His ban period began Friday and his results from December 15, 2024 onwards disqualified. Jadhav's sample, meanwhile, was found to contain prohibited substance Oxandrolone. This synthetic anabolic steroid promotes protein production and muscle building in the body.

The ban came into effect from January 7. Jadhav has been under provisional suspension for the duration.

# Novak Djokovic wanted players to add names to antitrust lawsuit

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Miami Gardens (US)

Novak Djokovic doesn't want the antitrust lawsuit filed by the players' association he co-founded to create a rift in tennis, but he also said that the athletes' share of revenues and their influence both need to increase.

The 24-time Grand Slam champion, speaking at a pre-tournament news conference at the Miami Open on Thursday, explained that he was not listed among the plaintiffs on the case filed Tuesday in federal court in New York — along with actions in Brussels and London — "because I want other players to step up."

The suit by the Professional Tennis Players' Association (PTPA) against the women's and men's tours, the International Tennis Federation and the sport's integrity

agency said the organizations hold "complete control over the players' pay and working conditions," calling them a "cartel." "I've never been a fan and supporter of division in our sport, but I've always fought for better representation and influence of and positioning of the players globally in our sport, which I think is still not where I think it should be," Djokovic said, "and where most of the players think it should be, not just in terms of prize money, but in terms of many other points that have been also stated in that document."

The PTPA said it had spoken with more than 250 players — women and men — and gotten backing for the class-action suit. Players whose names are attached to the US lawsuit include 2022 Wimbledon runner-up Nick Kyrgios, Sorana Cirstea, Varvara Gracheva, Reilly Opelka, Tenny Sandgren and Nicole Melichar-Martinez.

But four-time major champion Carlos Alcaraz said Wednesday at the Miami Open that he wasn't a fan — in part because he wasn't aware he'd be quoted in the filing, hadn't been told it was happening and didn't agree with everything stated by the attorneys.

Djokovic echoed that last sentiment. "I really hope that all the governing bodies, including PTPA, will come together and solve these issues," he said.

"This is a classic lawsuit, so lawyers to lawyers, type of situation. So to be quite frank with you, there are things that I agree with in the lawsuit, and then there are also things that I don't agree with. And I found that maybe some wording was quite strong in there, but I guess the legal team knows what they are doing and what kind of terminology they're supposed to use in order to get the right effect."

# Parry, Hillier to participate in Hero Indian Open

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Gurugram

England's John Parry and New Zealand's Daniel Hillier, both in outstanding form, have confirmed their participation in the 2025 Hero Indian Open, scheduled to be held at the DLF Golf and Country Club here from March 27 to 30.

The tournament, sanctioned by the DP World Tour and the Indian Golf Union, will feature 138 players from nearly 30 countries competing for a prize purse of \$2.25 Million.

Both Parry and Hillier are currently in Top-5 of the Race to Dubai rankings on the DP World Tour.

Parry, ranked third in the Race to Dubai, is no stranger to success in India, having won the Delhi Challenge on the Hotelplanner Tour last year. He followed up this victory with two more wins on the Hotelplanner Tour and secured his first DPWT win in 14 years at the AfrAsia Bank Mauritius Open.

Parry has continued his strong form in 2025, finishing T-8 at the Australian PGA, T-2 at the Alfred Dunhill Championship in South

Africa, and clinched a win at Mauritius, followed by a runner-up finish in Kenya.

Hillier, 25, is also in impressive form, having finished runner-up at the 2025 Hero Dubai Desert Classic. He has posted consistent Top-20 finishes across Australia, South Africa, Bahrain, and Qatar and is currently ranked fifth in the Race to Dubai standings.

Among other top players in the Race to Dubai standings, three winners from the ongoing season will also be competing. They are Johannes Vermeer (No. 8), winner of the Nedbank Golf Challenge; Callum Hill (No. 11), winner of the Joburg Open; and Rysgaard Johnston (No. 14), winner of the ISPS Handa Australian Open. Additionally, Jayden Schaper, ranked 15th, will also take part.

The tournament is part of the Asian Swing, which began in Singapore and will conclude with two events in China. The winner of the 'Asian Swing' will earn an exemption into the next Rolex event, the Genesis Scottish Open, co-sanctioned with the PGA Tour.

# Pakistan beat New Zealand by 9 wickets in third T20

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Auckland

Hasan Nawaz made an unbeaten 105 from 45 balls as Pakistan beat New Zealand by nine wickets in the third Twenty20 international on Friday to keep alive the five-match series. Pakistan won the toss and was able to bowl first, reversing the trend of the first two matches which New Zealand won by nine and five wickets. Nawaz was supported in his first century by captain Salman Ali Agha, who made 51 from 31 balls in an unbroken partnership of 133 for the second wicket. Pakistan finished at 207-1, running down the home team's total of 204 with four full overs to spare to inflict New Zealand's heaviest T20 loss in terms of wickets.

Mark Chapman made 94 from 44 balls before New Zealand was bowled out with one ball remaining in their 20 overs. Chapman hit 11 fours and four sixes but lacked support. Captain Michael Bracewell's 31 was the next-best effort by the Kiwis, who lost wickets regularly.

<p>यूनियन बैंक अफ इंडिया एकता शक्ति असावरी</p>	<p>Union Bank of India A Government of India Undertaking</p>	<p>Regional Office : 117/H-1/240, Pandu Nagar, Kanpur Head Office : 239, Vidhan Bhawan Marg, Nariman Point Mumbai</p>
<p><b>SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES   Date of e-Auction : 25-04-2025</b></p>		
<p>E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable assets under the securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 Read with Proviso to Rule 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rule, 2002.</p> <p>Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the secured creditor, the constructive possession of which has been taken by the authorized officer of Union Bank of India (Secured Creditor), will be sold on "As is Where is," "As is What is," and "Whatever there is" on the date mentioned below, for recovery of dues as mentioned hereunder to Union Bank of India from the below mentioned Borrower(s) &amp; Guarantor(s). The Reserve Price &amp; the Earnest Money Deposit or also mentioned hereunder.</p>		
<p>Branch Name : Uttaripura • Address : G.T. Road, Uttaripura, Kanpur Nagar, Branch Head : Shri Shivam Dwivedi • Mob.: 9554962093</p>		
<p><b>Borrower : M/s Annapurna Enterprises, Proprietor :</b> Late Vijay Pratap Singh S/o Mohar Singh through its Legal Heirs (1) Smt. Pappi - Wife, (2) Master Shiv Pratap Singh (Minor)-Son and Master Vishnu Pratap Singh (Minor)-Son, Natural Guardian Mother, All R/o : Village Sukha Niwada, Harnu, Post Beeramau Tehsil-Bilharu, Distt. Kanpur Nagar. <b>Guarantor :</b> Smt. Pappi W/o Late Vijay Pratap Singh, R/o : Village Sukha Niwada, Harnu, Post Beeramau Tehsil-Bilharu, Distt. Kanpur Nagar. <b>O/s Amount as per Demand Notice : Rs. 10,47,080.64 + Intt. + Others Charges.</b> <b>Property :</b> Non Agriculture property at Arazi Plot No. 559, Situated at Revenue Village Harnu, Tehsil-Bilharu, Distt. Kanpur Nagar. <b>Owner of Property :</b> Smt. Pappi W/o Late Vijay Pratap Singh, Area : 0.1335 Hectare, (1/8 Part of Total Area 1.068 Hectare), <b>Bounded-North :</b> Chak Road, <b>South :</b> Land Neelu Awasthi, <b>East :</b> Land Puttan Agnihotri, <b>West :</b> Chak Road. <b>Date &amp; Time of E-Auction : 25-04-2025 at 12.00 Noon to 5.00 pm</b> <b>Reserve Price : Rs. 20,36,000/-, Earnest Money to be deposited Rs. 2,03,600/-.</b> For detailed terms and condition of the sale, please refer to the link provided in <a href="https://www.unionbankofindia.co.in/english/TendeViewAllAuction.aspx">https://www.unionbankofindia.co.in/english/TendeViewAllAuction.aspx</a></p>		
<p><b>Borrower : M/s Aasiyan Poultry Farm, Proprietor :</b> Shri Shakir Ali S/o Shri Masuk Ali, R/o : Village Sunahuda, Post Ghanshyampur, Tehsil Bilharu, Distt. Kanpur Nagar. <b>Guarantor :</b> Smt. Rasulan W/o Shri Masuk Ali, R/o : Village Sunahuda, Post Ghanshyampur, Tehsil Bilharu, Distt. Kanpur Nagar. <b>O/s Amount as per Demand Notice : Rs. 15,08,084.45 + Intt. + Others Charges</b> <b>Property :</b> Non Agriculture Property at Arazi Plot No. 401, Area 0.09204 Hectare, Plot No. 402 Area 0.225 Hectare, Plot No. 403, Area 0.164 Hectare, Total Area 0.4810 Hectare, 1/4th Share of Total Area ie 0.1203 Hectare, Situated at Village Sunahuda, Tehsil Bilharu, Distt. Kanpur Nagar. <b>Owner of Property :</b> Smt. Rasulan W/o Shri Masuk Ali, <b>Bounded-North :</b> Part of Arazi No. 401 and 404, <b>South :</b> Chak Road, <b>East :</b> Part of Arazi No. 403, <b>West :</b> Part of Arazi No. 402. <b>Date &amp; Time of E-Auction : 25-04-2025 at 12.00 Noon to 5.00 pm</b> <b>Reserve Price : Rs. 17,82,000/-, Earnest Money to be deposited Rs. 1,78,200/-.</b> For detailed terms and condition of the sale, please refer to the link provided in <a href="https://www.unionbankofindia.co.in/english/TendeViewAllAuction.aspx">https://www.unionbankofindia.co.in/english/TendeViewAllAuction.aspx</a></p>		
<p>For Registration and Login and Bidding Rules visit <a href="https://baanknet.com">https://baanknet.com</a></p>		
Date : 21.03.2025	Place : Kanpur	Authorized Officer, Union Bank of India

Although every possible care and caution has been taken to avoid errors or omissions, this publication is being sold on the condition and understanding that information given in this publication is merely for reference and must not be taken as having authority of or binding in any way on the writers, editors, publishers, and printers and sellers who do not owe any responsibility for any damage or loss to any person, a purchaser of this publication or not for the result of any action taken on the basis of this work. All disputes are subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of competent court and forums in Lucknow only. Readers are advised and requested to verify and seek appropriate advice to satisfy themselves about the veracity of any kind of advertisement before responding to any contents published in this newspaper. The printer, publisher, editor and any employee of the Pioneer Group's will not be held responsible for any kind of claim made by the advertisers of the products & services and shall not be made responsible for any kind of loss, consequences and further product-related damages on such advertisements.