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**FREEBIES ELECTION DRAWS CLOSE** 



(Left) Delhi CM Atishi marlena with Arvind Kejriwal with during the road show from kalkaji. (Centre) BJP leader Amit Shah with Delhi BJP President Virendra Sachdeva and party candidate from Jangpura constituency Tarvinder Singh Marwah. (Right) MP Priyanka Gandhi during a roadshow in the support of congress candidate Abhishek Dutt in Kasturba Nagar in New Delhi on Monday Photo: Ranjan Dimri and PT

### **BAJESH KUMAR** NEW DELH

he month long Delhi Assembly

poll campaign turned into AAP freebies vs BJP freebies vs Congress freebies as the high-voltage campaigning ended at 5 PM on Monday with top leaders from major political parties including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah, former Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal, Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi traded fierce jabs.

They accused each other of corruption and failing the city's residents. The fiercely contested electoral battle has been defined by an unprecedented use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)-generated spoofs, sharp political jibes with big guns from all three major parties holding roadshows, public meetings, padayatras and bike rallies in a final push to sway voters.

As the campaign ended on Monday evening, AAP and BJP have claimed to form the next government with Kejriwal predicting to win 55 for sure which can go up to 60. Addressing a press conference alongwith all BJP MPs from Delhi, Union minister Pivush Goval claimed that the BJP is headed for a massive poll victory in Delhi, similar to what happened

**GRAP III** revoked

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

The Commission for Air Quality Management

on

(February 3) lifted Stage III of

the Graded Response Action

Plan (GRAP) across Delhi-

NCR, effective immediately

However, measures under

GRAP Stage I and II will

remain in place to control

(CAQM)

nollution 1

Management

Monday

recently in Maharashtra and Haryana. While the AAP branded the BJP as the "Bharatiya Jhootha Party" (party of liars) and "Gali Galoch Party" (abusive party), Prime Minister Narendra Modi referred to the AAP as "AAP-Daa" (disaster) and its leader Kejriwal as "Ghoshna Mantri" (minister of announcements). Congress, attempting to regain relevance, has called Kejriwal relevance, has called Kejriwal "Farziwal" (Fake) and a "Chhota Recharge" (small recharge) of Modi. Kejriwal also slammed the Election Commission, accusing it of favouring

the BJP. the Delhi Interestingly, elections began with the AAP in the pole position to re PRIHI DECT gain power yet again. But has something changed as we enter the last lap before

the voting on February 5. BJP aiming to reclaim power in Delhi after more than 25 years, held 22 roadshows and rallies across the city. Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, BJP President J P Nadda, and several BJP chief ministers were at the forefront of the canvassing on Monday.

On the last day of campaigning, Prime Minister Narendra Modi lambasted the AAP government in

Delhi saying it was promoting only those students to Class 10 who were guaranteed to clear the board examination to guard its image. "I have heard that in Delhi they do not promote students to Class 10 if they perform poorly in Class 9," Modi said in an interaction with a group of students. "They only allow those students in Class 10 who are guaranteed to clear the exam. They fear that if the results are poor, the image of their government will be tarnished," the PM said in the interaction, a short video of which was shared by BJP leaders on

social media. Congress, seeking a revival after failing to win any seats in the last two elections, also intensified its efforts. Rahul Gandhi and Privanka Gandhi held separate roadshows in Kalkaji and Kasturba Nagar, aiming to regain

the party's lost foothold in the capital. BJP has changed its strategy from 2020 and is no longer calling the AAP's freebies as 'revadis' - in fact, it is promising to continue them. Whose face will attract votes? Will people trust Kejriwal again or is the vote this time in the name of Narendra Modi. who is asking people for one chance in Delhi?

BJP campaign got a last-minute boost with Centre's Annual budget announcement. The party was quick to come up with advertisements claiming it was Modi's gift for Delhi. This major announcement became a talking point not just in Delhi but even across the country as it impacts the large pool of salaried households. Around 45 percent middle class voters, a key support base of Modi, has traditionally been a stronghold of the BJP during the Lok Sabha polls, but recently, it felt overlooked as the party has focused on other vote banks.

**Established 1865** 

TIDE TOTOTOET IN MONEY 10 STATES TO APPROACH FINANCE COMMISSION ON TAX CONCERNS

NEW DELHI, TUESDAY FEBRUARY 4, 2025; PAGES 12 ₹4

Traditionally, this vote bank has largely split between the BJP and AAP, but this time on the ground, the feedback is that the middle class could consolidate for the BJP after the announcement of income tax exemptions for up to Rs 12 lakh. The 8th Pay Commission announcement is another positive for the BJP, as a large number of government employees are based in Delhi as voters.

There are 20 percent Dalit vote in the capital, which is primarily based in the jhuggis and clusters and it has been seen favourably towards the AAP, but may see a split now. If the jhuggi voters and Muslims remain fully behind the AAP, it could win big

with 50+ seats. But if there is a split in the jhuggi voters and the middle class consolidates behind the BJP, there could be a repeat of Haryana and Maharashtra results in Delhi.

LISHED FROM: DELHI I LUCKNOW I BHOPAL I BHUBANESWAR I RANCHI I RAIPUR I CHANDIGARH I DEHRADUN I HYDERABAD I VIJAYWADA

Voters residing in jhuggi-jhopdi (JJ) clusters have been backing the AAP for the past two elections. These voters are largely poor and the beneficiaries of free bijli-paani, free bus travel for women, mohalla clinics and more. BJP has focused on the slums and jhuggis clusters promising them of a pucca house to everyone in the jhuggis, and the promise to continue free water and power, is what is giving BJP a look-in here. The BJP strongly feels that there will be a split in the 20% Dalit vote this time, which primarily lives in the jhuggis, and this will hurt the AAP badly. Overall, the AAP and BJP are in a neck-and-neck battle here.

The second big factor in Delhi is the 13 percent Muslim vote, and at least 10-12 seats in Delhi where Muslim voters are pre-dominant. For over a decade now, the Muslims have consolidated in Delhi behind the AAP, bringing the party big victories. The BJP's chances in Delhi would have greatly improved if the Muslim votes had split between the AAP, Congress and Asaduddin Owaisi's AIMIM.



# **Rupee all time low**

#### PIONEER NEWS SERVICE MUMBAI

The Rupee plunged 55 paise to close at an alltime low of 87.17 (provisional) against the US Dollar on Monday, as global market sentiments were impacted after the Trump administration slapped tariffs on Canada, Mexico and China. Forex traders said the Indian rupee touched a fresh all-time low on a surge in the US Dollar

index and weak global markets after Trump Tariffs on Canada Mexico, and China triggered fears of a broad trade war. Donald Trump slapped Canada and Mexico with 25 per cent duties and China with a 10 per cent duty. At the interbank foreign

exchange, the Rupee opened on a weak note at 87.00 and touched an intraday low of 87.29 against the American currency during the session. The local unit finally settled at a record closing low of 87.17 (provisional), lower by 55 paise over its previous close. On Friday, the rupee settled flat at 86.62 against the American currency. "We expect the rupee to

trade with negative bias on strong US Dollar and FII



# **Rahul questions Modi's Trump invite, Jaishankar refutes**



Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Monday created a flutter by raking up the issue of Prime Minister Narendra Modi 'not' being invited for coronation of US President Donald Trump last month to which the External Affairs Minister S aishankar dismissed the claim

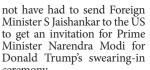


MARKETS SENSEX 77,186.74 77.400 7.200 N'and 77,000 76,800 3:00 pn 12:00 pm JS\$ = 87.08 INF

outflows amid a weak trend in the domestic markets. Worries over tariffs by the US administration may also pressurise the rupee," said Anuj Choudhary - Research Analyst at Mirae Asset Sharekhan. However, any central bank intervention may support the rupee. Traders may take cues from ISM manufacturing PMI data from the US. Investors may remain cautious ahead of the RBI's monetary policy meeting this week, Choudhary added.

Meanwhile, the Dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 1.01 per cent higher at 109.46. Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, rose 1.41 per cent to USD 76.74 per barrel in futures trade.

Continued on page 2



ceremony. "When we talk to the United States, we would not send the Foreign Minister three-four times to get an invite for our Prime Minister because if we had a production system and working

technologies, the US President

would come here and invite the

Rijiju said the LoP cannot

unsubstantiated statements.

This is about the relationship

between two countries. He is

making unverified statements

about the invitation of our

Prime Minister. He should be

responsible. If the Leader of the

Opposition has the information, he must tell the

House who has told him that

the Foreign Minister visited for

Replying to him, Rahul Gandhi said he would

apologise for disturbing the

Parliamentary Affairs Minister

peace of mind but the

Congress leader continued

with another his jab raking up

the China issue and said that

the Indian Army contradicted

Prime Minister Narendra

Modi's claims about Chinese

this purpose," Rijiju said.

serious,

Prime Minister," said Rahul.

such

make

Opposition



be stable.

acco a statement from the CAQM. The use of BS-III petrol and BS-IV diesel cars (4-wheelers) has been allowed in Delhi and nearby NCR districts after this order.





Stage III of GRAP had been implemented in Delhi on January 31, after a significant deterioration in air quality due to calm winds and smog, which caused the Air Quality Index (AQI) to spike to 365. "Delhi's average AQI has significantly improved as the AQI of the day clocked 286 today as per the AQI Bulletin provided by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), clearly indicating a downward trend. Continued on page 2 | undergoing treatment and

one dead, two injured MOHIT KANDHARI 🖬 JAMMU their condition was stated to

retired Territorial army Chief Asoldier, father of four Abdullah reacted strongly to daughters and one son, was killed in cold blood by unidentified terrorists inside the heinous act of violence. "Deeply saddened by the tragic killing of ex-serviceman his home in the Behibagh area Manzoor Ahmad Wagay Sahab in Kulgam. My heartfelt of South Kashmir's Kulgam district on Monday. The wife condolences to his family, and of an ex-serviceman and prayers for the swift recovery of his injured wife and another close relative, present daughter. Such heinous inside the home, also received violence has no place in our bullet injuries in the targeted strike, the first so far in 2025. society and must be condemned in the strongest The ex-serviceman, identified terms. May peace and justice prevail" the Office of Chief as Manzoor Ahmad Wagay, was rushed to the Government Medical College Minister said in a post on X (earlier Twitter). Hospital, Anantnag by family According to local reports, the members where he succumbed to his fatal terrorists struck around 2.00 injuries. According to preliminary reports, both the p.m. in the thickly populated area women, including the wife of managed to flee from the spot an ex-serviceman, were

as false and accused the Congress of harming India's global image.

Omar

Minister

Jaishankar asserted that no discussion about an invitation to Prime Minister Modi ever took place and pointed out that the Prime Minister does not attend such events. Union Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Kiren Rijiju too strongly objected to the remarks. "It is common knowledge that our PM does not attend such events. In fact, India is generally represented by Special Envoys," he clarified. Jaishankar represented India at Donald Trump's inauguration on January 20. He was seated in the first row during the ceremony.

Central the Mocking government during Motion of Thanks on the President's address in Lok Sabh, Rahul of Behibagh and claimed that if the Modi government had taken economic policies seriously, then the government would without facing any resistance. Continued on page 2

(Left) Rahul Gandhi speaks in the Lok Sabha during the Budget session of Parliament. (Right) MEA S Jaishankar

# **BJP moves Privilege against Sonia**

Rajya

to

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

 $B_{\text{MPs on Monday moved a}}^{\text{haratiya Janata Party (BJP)}}$ privilege motion against Rajya Sabha MP Sonia Gandhi over her "poor thing" remark on President Droupadi Murmu.

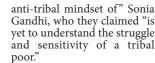
"We write this with great about certain dismay unparliamentary, derogatory and demeaning remarks and demeaning remarks recently made by Smt. Sonia

Gandhi, Member of Parliament, Rajya Sabha, against the Hon'ble President wrote chairman. The MPs alleged that the of India, which warrant statement was a "clear manifestation of elitist and serious consideration and disciplinary action," the MPs

poor."

Sabha

"clear



"Given the gravity of this issue, we humbly urge you to take cognizance of this matter and initiate appropriate disciplinary action against Smt. Sonia Gandhi," the MPs said.

"Such action is imperative not only to uphold the sanctity of parliamentary rules but also to reinforce the principles of decorum and mutual respect that are foundational to the effective functioning of our democratic institutions."

Continued on page 2 army intrusion in Ladakh.

Continued on page 2

# India's Chandrika Tandon shines at Grammys with 'Triveni'

### ABHI SINGHAL NEW DELHI

Under the dazzling glow of stage lights and the thunderous applause of a global audience Chandrika Krishnamurthy Tandon at the age of 71, made India proud with her first Grammy award for the album 'Triveni' in the Best New Age, Ambient or Chant Album category. The Grammy Awards were organised by the Recording Academy, and was held at the Crypto.Com Arena in Los Angeles on late Sunday. Tandon, an Indian-American vocalist and entrepreneur was earlier also nominated for her album 'Soul Call' in 2009. Her now won work 'Triveni' is a collaborative work with South African flautist Wouter Kellerman and Japanese cellist

As the music industry's most

Eru Matsumoto.

born, history is made, and emotions run high. While receiving the award alongside her collaborators, Chandrika Tandon said, ""Music is love, music is light, and music is laughter and let's all be surrounded by love, light, and laughter. Thank you for the music, and thank you to everyone who makes music. Triveni, her album, reflects the essence of its name that symbolises the confluence of India's sacred rivers Ganga, Yamuna, and Saraswati. It brings together three globally singer-composer Sonu Tandon, Grammy-winning flautist Wouter Kellerman, and

Japanese guitarist Matsumoto.

honour,

Grammys have long been a

platform where legends are

prestigious

the



Eru Matsumoto, from left, Wouter Kellerman, and Chandrika Tandon accept the award for best new age, ambient, or chant album for "Triveni" during the 67th PTI annual Grammy Awards

Vedic chants with melodic ambiance, and acclaimed artists: Indian flute and resonant cello, traditions appeals to a wide reflective audience while staying deeply creating а soundscape that fosters rooted in cultural authenticity. mindfulness, self-discovery, Released on August 30, 2024, each of the seven tracks on This and connection. harmonious blend of Indian 'Triveni' tells its own story The album weaves ancient classical music, New Age while contributing to its

resonance. The songs are: "Pathway to Light", "Chant in A", "Journey Within", "Aether's Serenade", "Ancient Moon", "Open Sky", and "Seeking Shakti". Tandon also took her

overarching theme of healing

Instagram to express gratitude for her first Grammy. She wrote, "Honoured to receive a GRAMMY for our collaborative album Triveni. A moment that reminds me that music is love, music ignites the light within all of us, and, even in our darkest days, music spreads joy and laughter. Congratulations to all the other nominees in our category. Thank you for the music, and thank you for each and everyone that creates and supports the music; may all our lives be enveloped in Love Light Laughter."

global

Continued on page 2





A Kinnar Akhara member tosses a trident while taking a holy dip on the 'Basant Panchami' during the ongoing Mahakumbh Mela, at the Sangam in Prayagraj



# Intelligence warns of rising cross border terror threat in West Bengal

### SAUGAR SENGUPTA 🗖 KOLKATA

Terror organizations from Bangladesh are rapidly establishing networks across the border, capitalizing on the political instability and confusion in that country. Indian intelligence agencies have uncovered efforts by several terror groups to unite and form a larger network aimed at creating disturbances in India.

According to intelligence sources, Tahidul Ulaiya, a relatively new militant group, has allied with Jamatul Mujahideen Bangladesh These (JMB). two Bangladesh - based fundamentalist organizations recently held meetings with the banned Popular Front of India (PFI) and Taha India, another emerging militant group. The meetings reportedly took place in Malda and Murshidabad. group. Sources say that one of these

meetings was held in Kamarpara, located in the Lalgola block of Murshidabad, which borders Bangladesh. Several Imams were allegedly

present, and security agencies cross the border into India, are are closely monitoring these individuals

It has been reported that the groups have decided to expand Jaha India's presence in various districts of Bengal and other parts of India with the assistance of PFI and JMB. It is still unclear whether Ansarullah Bangla, another militant group, has joined this new alliance. Pakistani Additionally,

agencies, in collaboration with Bangladeshi radical groups, have established networks in northern Bengal, particularly in the Sitai and Toofanganj areas of Cooch Behar. These networks are reportedly targeting Indian defense forces. Sources also indicate that

Pakistan's Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) has activated sleeper cells in various border districts of Bengal, including Malda, Murshidabad, Birbhum, Nadia, South 24 Parganas, and North Dinajpur.

It has been revealed that Bangladeshi terror masterminds, who frequently

engaged in indoctrinating local youth, particularly schoolchildren in various added.

madrasas. The Kolkata Police's Special Task Force (STF) is these investigating developments. A senior STF officer, commenting on recent arrests made by Punjab and Assam Police in Bengal, stated, "While infiltration and terror moles entering India is not a new issue, the political changes in our neighboring country have exacerbated the situation, leading to increased infiltration. The STF remains vigilant and is closely monitoring the situation." The officer also mentioned a

recently uncovered passport racket that has seen at least 3,000 fake passports issued to Bangladeshi nationals, some of whom have either traveled to other countries or settled elsewhere in India. Investigators have found that the racket is flourishing in South 24 Parganas and Nadia, with suspects using unused ration cards to obtain passports. "It wouldn't be

surprising if some of these fake passport holders have terror links," the officer

A Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of the Border Security Force (BSF) supported this claim, noting that recent border tensions in Malda, Cooch Behar, and Nadia were a result of terror groups collaborating with the Border Guards Bangladesh (BGB) to smuggle militants into India or keep the unfenced areas for open unchecked infiltration. The DIG further stated,

"While economic reasons are often cited as the main cause for infiltration, those preventing the BSF from erecting barbed fences are aware that once the fencing is complete, it will be much harder for terrorists to cross. If the fencing goes up, they may need to find alternate routes, possibly through the forests of the Sundarbans or Nepal. This would be more expensive and difficult, hence the recent border issues. But the BSF remains alert to these circumstances.

# Swati Maliwal protests outside Kejriwal's home

### STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

Delhi Police on Monday detained Rajya Sabha MP Swati Maliwal as she protested outside Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) national convener Arvind Kejriwal's residence over the government's failure to clean the Yamuna River. Maliwal, accompanied by a group of women from Purvanchal, carried water collected from the Yamuna to Kejriwal's residence, accusing him of neglecting the river's worsening condition. Maliwal said the Yamuna is "on a ventilator" while Kejriwal enjoys a luxurious lifestyle and challenged the AAP chief to take a dip in the Yamuna. Maliwal accused Kejriwal of being "afraid of women," stating, "Thousands of women from Purvanchal came to meet him at his house, but he hid inside. He should have come out and faced us, especially when we brought the polluted water from Yamuna. He should have taken a dip in it or even drunk it if he truly cared. Instead, he



cleaning of the Yamuna river,

"Kejriwal promised that he would take the first dip in the

Yamuna once it was clean. He even said that if the river

wasn't cleaned by 2025, he

wouldn't ask for votes. But

now, his tone has changed.

He's saying that cleaning the

Yamuna won't win votes.

Yamuna is our mother, and

Kejriwal must focus on

serving her, not on political

recalling his earlier vows.

got us detained by the police." She further criticised Kejriwal's failure to respond to the pressing concerns of the women, saying, "The women were crying out, asking when clean water would come to their homes and when Chhath Puja could be held at Yamuna Ghat. Kejriwal had no answers. If he continues betraying the women of Purvanchal, Chhathi Maiya's curse will be upon him." slammed

Maliwal also slammed Kejriwal for his unfulfilled gains. He should stop being a 'liquor broker' and start acting like the son of Yamuna. promises regarding the

### Metro starts early for Delhi elections on Feb 5, 8

### STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

Delhi Metro on Monday said that its services will begin at 4:00 a.m. on February 5 and 8 in a bid to facilitate election duty staff during the Assembly elections and counting of elections and counting of votes. The decision has been announced by Anuj Dayal, Principal Executive Director, Corporate Communications, Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC). On the day of the Assembly Election, February 5, and vote counting day on

vote counting day on February 8, all Delhi Metro train services will start from their terminal stations at 4:00 a.m. The services will run at a frequency of 30 minutes until 6:00 a.m. and after 6:00 a.m., regular Metro services will operate for the rest of the

day.

day. Additionally, to support polling officials and staff returning late after election duty, the last Metro services on all lines will be extended on the intervening night of February 5 and 6. Meanwhile, the Delhi Lieutenant Governor has declared February 5, a public holiday for all government offices, local bodies, public sector undertakings, and autonomous bodies in the National Capital Region (NCR) of Delhi. This notification was issued under the orders of the Lieutenant Governor.

Voting to pick a new 70-member Delhi Assembly will be held on February 5 and the result will be declared on February 8. In the outgoing House, the AAP has 62 candidates and the BJP has eight.

According to the data of the Delhi Chief Electoral Officer (CEO), 1.56 crore voters are eligible to cast their ballots across 13,766 polling stations. Among the total voters, 83.76 lakh are men, 72.36 lakh are women, and 1,267 are third-gender voters.

Russian Parliamentary delegation led by Vyacheslav Volodin, Chairman of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, called on Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla at the Parliament House on Monday

Court acquits six in Delhi riots

# Bandi Sudhakar slams BJP, AAP

### STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

¬elangana Congress I spokesperson Bandi Sudhakar Goud said that BJP has no moral right to ask for votes in the Delhi Assembly elections. Bandi Sudhakar campaigned from house to house for the victory of

Congress party candidate Rohit Chaudhary in Nangloi constituency in Delhi. Speaking during this campaign, he said that the leaders of the BJP party at the center and the AAP party in power in Delhi have forgotten the development of Delhi due to mutual political differences and have become

anti-development. He said that the entire Outer Delhi area has become a cesspool as the central government is obstructing the Lieutenant Governor in the Union Territory of Delhi and giving more importance to political factionalism. He said that no development

Tandon shines at...

From page 1

an

has taken place in the last ten years except the development done by the Congress government at that time. He said that the Nehru family gave their own lands for the people in Central Delhi and developed them

Bandi Sudhakar Goud called on the people of Delhi to understand the current situation, reject the antidevelopment AAP and BJP and support

### PTI NEW DELHI

A Delhi court has acquitted six persons in a 2020 Delhi riots case, raising doubts over witnesses regarding identifying the accused. litional

hearing the case registered by Gokalpuri Police Station two police officials, who were 2020. In an order dated January 24, the court said the prosecution relied upon two against the accused persons. According to the prosecution, the six accused were part of a key prosecution witnesses, assistant sub-inspectors, Vanvir the testimony of two key police riotous mob that committed and Jahangir, to establish the arson, theft and mischief by fire identity of the accused persons or explosives across various but they were examined only in and Decen properties shops in Pramachala was Gokalpuri on February 25, "This delay in examining these said.

Neeraj Pandit gang members encountered in Palwal

posted in the same police station, certainly casts doubt over the veracity of the prosecution's case. The investigating officer (IO) did not tender any reason for such delay in recording the statement of these witnesses," it

They were rushed to the

on January 19 have also been

"Both the deceased criminals

were from Rewari district and

have been involved in many

serious incidents like murder

and deadly attack. It has also

come to light that both the

recovered, said police.

# nation 02

## **Terror attack leaves** | India's Chandrika one dead, two injured

### From page 1

The residence of the deceased ex-serviceman is located in the close vicinity of an army camp in Behibagh. Soon after the attack took place, a joint team of security forces including army personnel from the nearby camp surrounded the village and sealed both the entry and exit points to track down the footprints of the terrorists behind the attack.

Till the time of filing the report, no terrorist outfit has claimed responsibility for the attack. On December 19, 2024, a joint team of security forces eliminated five terrorists belonging to the pro-Pakistan Hizbul Mujahideen terrorist outfit in Kulgam district.

A close relative who rushed Manzoor Ahmad Wagay to the hospital told reporters present at his residence, "Soon after the firing took place I ran

out of my room where I was

The Prime Minister also sleeping and found him (excongratulated her on 'X'. serviceman) in a pool of Modi wrote, "Congratulations blood". Manzoor Ahmad Wagay had received gunshot to @chandrikatandon on injuries in his abdomen. The winning the Grammy for the relative said I first took him to album Triveni. We take great pride in her accomplishments a nearby army camp located in the Behibagh and from there I him to GMC, philanthropist and of course. rushed Anantnag where he music! It is commendable succumbed to his injuries. how she has remained Close relatives, assembled in passionate about Indian

the house of Manzoor Ahmad culture and has been working Wagay to attend his last rites, to popularise it. She is an claimed he retired from active inspiration for services about two years ago people." Some other winners were and was running a business in Album of the Year -COWBOY CARTER, the area to support his family. He was the sole bread earner Beyoncé, Song of the Year -"Not Like Us," Kendrick in the family. On January 20, 2025, a soldier

Lamar, Best Rap Album of the Indian army Swr Pangala Kartheek laid down Alligator Bites Never Heal, his life during a fierce Doechii. The year 2025 marked the gunfight with a group of 67th edition of the biggest hiding terrorists in the Gujjarpati area of Sopore in musical awards night of the North Kashmir's Baramulla world and was echoed with district applause.

Congress party.

Pulastya

# Rupee all time low

From page 1

several

swearing-in

The Rupee continued to face pressure due to sustained foreign fund outflows and the broad strength of the American currency in the entrepreneur, overseas markets due to unabated dollar demand from oil importers and weak risk appetite, traders added. In the domestic equity market,

the 30-share BSE Sensex settled 319.22 points, or 0.41 per cent, lower at 77,186.74, while the Nifty fell 121.10 points, or 0.52 per cent, to close at 23,361.05

Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 1,327.09 crore in the capital markets on a net basis on according Saturday, to exchange data.

Meanwhile, India's forex reserves increased USD 5.574 billion to USD 629.557 billion rate is applicable to the in the week ended January 24, currency.

the Reserve Bank said on Friday. In the previous reporting week, the overall kitty had dropped from USD

1.888 billion to USD 623.983 billion. The reserves were on a declining trend for the last few weeks, and the drop has been attributed to revaluation, along with forex market interventions by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to help reduce volatilities in the rupee. Meanwhile, Finance Secretary Tuhin Kanta Pandey on Monday said there is no concern over the Rupee value, and the Reserve Bank of India is managing the volatility of the local currency. "There is no concern about the value of the rupee. The volatility in the rupee is being managed by the RBI," Pandey told reporters. He said the rupee is a "free float" and no control or fixed

wo wanted criminals of I Neeraj Pandit gang, who were carrying a reward of Rs 1 lakh each, were shot dead in an encounter that took place near Lalwa village in Palwal district last night, police said on

PTI 📕 NEW DELHI

Monday. The bodies of the deceased have been kept in the civil hospital for post-mortem examination, they said.

the Crime Lauding Investigation Agency (CIA) team, Superintendent of Police (SP) Palwal Chandra Mohan said there is no place for criminals in this district -whether the criminals leave the crime or the district.

The slain criminals were identified as Zorawar (27) and Neeraj (30), the residents of Rewari district, police said. Both were carrying a reward of

Rs 1 lakh each and were

warning and opened fire in self-defense and both the absconding in the deadly attack that took place in Maheshpur village on the night miscreants got injured after of January 19, they said. getting bullet shots.

Two people, including a hospital where doctors sarpanch, were shot in the declared them dead, he added. attack. After firing, the miscreants fled from the spot Two country made pistols, in a car and police are seeking three live cartridges used by their arrest, police said. the miscreants in the crime and the car used in the crime

The encounter took place near Lalwa village on the Palwal-Nuh road around 11 pm on Sunday when the CIA team, led by Inspector Deepak Gulia, put up a barricade after getting information that these criminals had been present in the area," said a senior police officer. When the police signaled to stop the criminals who were in a car, they opened fire on the CIA team which hit the bulletproof jackets worn by three policemen and they narrowly escaped, he added. The officer said that the police

criminals belong to the Neera Pandit gang and are convicted in a murder case," said Palwal DSP (Crime) Manoj Verma. "Other accused related to the incident will also be arrested

soon whose possible hideouts are being raided continuously," team in retaliation gave a he added.

**GRAP III** revoked

### BJP moves Privilege against Sonia **Rahul questions Modi's Trump** invite, Jaishankar refutes

### From page 1

"The Prime Minister has denied it and the Army has contradicted the Prime Minister that China is sitting on 4000 sq km of our territory...," said Rahul to which Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla mentioned that the LoP will have to present the evidence of what he was speaking in the House." During his address, Rahul

further also said both the NDA and UPA governments faltered in generating adequate employment. "Even though we have grown, we've grown fast, growing slightly slower now, but we are

growing. A universal problem Jaishankar dismissed Rahul that we have faced is that we Gandhi's claim that the Indian government sent him to the have not been able to tackle the problem US to secure an invitation for of unemployment. Neither the Prime Minister Narendra Modi to attend Donald UPA government nor today's NDA government has given a Trump's clear-cut answer to the youth ceremony "Leader of Opposition Rahul of this country about Gandhi deliberately spoke a

employment," he said. Through his social media falsehood about my visit to Jaishankar accused posts, the US in December 2024. I Rahul Gandhi of making went to meet the Secretary of State and NSA of the Biden misleading statements for political advantage, saying that such remarks harm India's standing on the global stage. "Rahul Gandhi's lies may be intended politically. But they damage the nation his rebuttal in a social media abroad," he stated. post.

#### From page 1

Sonia Gandhi triggered a controversy after she had referred to President Mumu as a "poor thing" during the latter's address to a joint sitting of Parliament on January 31.

After the President's address on the first day of the budget session of Parliament on January 31, Sonia Gandhi was asked by reporters outside the House about President Murmu's nearly hour-long speech.

Administration. Also, to chair "The President was getting a gathering of our Consuls very tired by the end...She General. During my stay, the could hardly speak, poor incoming NSA-designate met thing," the former Congress with me," Jaishankar said in chief was heard saying in clips in what appeared to be a reference to how long the

address was. Sonia Gandhi's comment immediately led to a storm of condemnation from BJP leaders. The Rashtrapati Bhavan also released a statement calling the remark "unacceptable" and saying that Murmu was not tired. Later, Prime Minister Modi also Narendra

attacked the Congress at an election rally here and claimed that Sonia Gandhi's comment had insulted tribal communities. "Droupadi Murmu ji has

come here from a tribal family. She inspired Parliament today in a wonderful way and gave a speech. But the royal family of Congress has started insulting her. A member of Gandhi had said.

the royal family said that the tribal daughter gave a boring speech. Another member went one step further and called the President a poor thing. They find the speech of a tribal daughter boring," Modi had said in Dwarka.

On its part, the Congress party defended Sonia Gandhi's remarks saying that the BJP was trying to twist an innocent comment. 'My mother is 78 years old, she has simply said that 'the President read such a long speech and she must have been tired, 'poor thing'... She fully respects [the President of India]. I think it is very unfortunate that this kind of thing is twisted," Priyanka

#### From page 1

Noting a downward trend in the AOI levels of Delhi, the CAQM Sub-Committee on GRAP met on Monday to review the current air quality scenario in the region as well as the forecasts for meteorological conditions and air quality index made available by IMD/ IITM and accordingly take an appropriate call on the preventive/ restrictive actions under Stage-III of GRAP in place in the entire National Capital Region (NCR) since 29.01.2025," the CAQM said in a statement. further said CAOM

construction and Demolition project sites etc. which have said.

been issued specific closure orders on account of violations/ non-compliances various statutory directions, rules, guidelines etc. under no circumstances shall resume their operations without any specific order to this effect from the Commission.

While GRAP Stage-III is being revoked, keeping in view the winter season when weather conditions may not be always favourable and in order to ensure that the AQI levels do not slip further, citizens are requested to strictly adhere the citizen charter to under Stages II and I of the extant schedule of GRAP," it



# **BJP claims AAP turned Delhi into a slum**



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

With Delhi set to go to polls on Wednesday, Parliament on Monday saw sharp attacks by BJP MPs against AAP government claiming it "looted" the national capital and turned it into a "dirty slum."

In the Lok Sabha, South Delhi MP Ramvir Singh Bidhuri alleged that the AAP government "looted" the national capital and turned it into "hell."

Initiating the debate on the Motion of Thanks on the President's Address, Bidhuri read out a list of initiatives of the central government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and accused the AAP government of depriving the people of Delhi of benefits like housing, transport, healthcare among others.

Bidhuri also asked the Congress members to support him and reminded the main opposition party of the

remarks that the AAP leaders had passed about their leaders. He listed out development work such as building biodiversity parks along the banks of the Yamuna River, expressways to ease traffic congestion and infrastructure projects carried out by the central government in the national capital "Such work is possible only if

God comes down on Earth or such miracles can be done by Modi ji and no one else, Bidhuri said. Assembly elections are sched-

uled in Delhi for February 5 and counting of votes will be held on February 8. The elections are a triangular fight between AAP, BJP and Congress.

"AAP government has looted Delhi and turned it into a hell. On February 8, the BJP will win more than 50 seats under Modi's guidance and form a government in Delhi and ful-fil the national capital's dream of being a world-class city,"

The BJP leader accused the AAP government of creating hurdles in development work by not allowing the implementation of schemes such as the Ujjwala Yojana, which provides cooking gas to women, non-allotment of flats built under the PM Awas Yojana for the poor, and refusing to give its monetary share for various development projects in the national capital. Bidhuri also reminded the Congress that the AAP caused obstacles in building a skill development centre in Delhi's Jonapur village, for which the

foundation was laid by the then Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit. 'You are also fighting them and should support us. Remember what they had said about your leader," Bidhuri said, in an apparent reference to AAP convenor Arvind Kejriwal's remarks against for-

mer Congress President Rahul Gandhi Attacking former Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal,

Naidu pitches double engine sarkar for Delhi

Bidhuri said he had come to power promising to lead a life of austerity and live in a tworoom home. However, he built a 'sheesh mahal' (glass palace) worth Rs 179 crore for himself, the BJP MP said.

"As many as 21 flats, including those of former judges, the residences of the Delhi home secretary and DDA vice-chairman were demolished to build the official residence of the chief minister," the BJP member claimed. BJP Rajya Sabha member

Kiran Choudhry on Monday accused AAP of turning Delhi into a "dirty slum", saying it was making excuses and blaming others for the bad state of affairs in the national capital. Initiating the discussion on the motion of thanks on the President's address in the Rajya Sabha, Choudhry said AAP has lost the faith of the people of Delhi.

Without naming former Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal, she tore into APP leaders for using "condemnable terms" added.

like "water terrorism, genocide, poison in Yamuna being supplied to Delhi and equating it with the bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki" during the campaign for Delhi assembly elections. They seem to have "lost their senses" and are making these statements when they have realised that after ten years, the people of Delhi are fed up with them for

their non-performance. Alleging that the AAP gov-ernment did not take up any developmental work in Delhi, Choudhry said they have not fulfilled the promises that they made to the people of Delhi, and it is shameful.

oday, the condition of Delhi has gone from worse to the worst. The state of Delhi, the national Capital, is like that of a dirty slum," she claimed. Further, she said for the name-

sake, Delhi is the capital of the country, and the world only sees Luytens' Delhi but a visit to the interior streets, outskirts and small colonies of Delhi presents the reality of Delhi, which is full of "dirty drainages, overflowing garbage dumps, overflowing garbage dumps, overflowing sewers, and polluted and stinking drinking water". "They should also go there and see what is the condition of Delhi. They will hang their heads in shame," she asserted. Terming the condition of the

present Yamuna river a cesspool of absolute dirt, toxic element" that the people of Delhi are made to drink, she asked AAP where has the Rs 6.000 crore that was supposed to be used in the cleaning of the Yamuna been used.

Delhi, under the AAP government, has the highest loss of processed water to the tune of 40-50 per cent. Nothing can be more shameful than this, she



# Shah criticises AAP's failures in Delhi

### STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

DELHI A DECIDES

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday said states with a double-engine BJP government have progressed in the last 10 years, but Delhi has been left behind because the Aam Aadmi Party kept "making excuses" and "fighting with the Centre".

Speaking at a public meeting in Jangpura, Shah called AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal and his deputy Manish Sisodia "bade miyan and chote miyan" who have "looted" Delhi.

"States having a double-engine BJP government have progressed in the last 10 years. Delhi has been left behind. They keep making excuses and fighting with the Centre like a cry baby (babua sa munh banakar)," the BJP leader said. \Firing a fresh salvo at Sisodia, who is contesting from the Jangpura Assembly seat against BJP's Tarvinder Singh Marwah, Shah said he is the only education minister in the country who went to jail in connection with a liquor scam.

'Sisodia ruined the future of Delhi's children by committing a scam in the name of classrooms. As soon as the BJP government comes, he will have to pay for every penny. The enthusiasm of the people in Jangpura shows that Delhi is going to be 'aapda' free," he said. Aam Aadmi Party or AAP has been referred to by BJP leaders as "aapda" (disaster).

Shah alleged that Kejriwal lied to the people of Delhi and gave them only "garbage, toxic water, and corruption". "Bade miyan and chote miyan' are both

AAP MLAs have left the party as it's a "sinking ship".

Shah claimed that BJP is the only party that can transform Delhi into the world's best capital city. Addressing a rally in support of BJP's Kailash Gahlot in Bijwasan, Shah blamed the AAP government for poor local infrastructure.

"Water pipes run alongside power lines and half of Delhi floods during rainfall. People are still looking for a world-class drainage system, schools, sports university, and London-like streets that Kejriwal had promised them," he said. Shah also criticised Kejriwal for

falsely accusing Haryana of contaminating the Yamuna's water, calling it an insult to all Haryanvis living in Delhi and neighboring areas. He also attacked Kejriwal for

failing to fulfill his promise of taking a dip in the highly polluted river. "Kejriwal did not take a dip, so BJP workers dipped his cutout in the river. They found that pollution in the river made the cut-out so sick that it had to be admitted to AIIMS," Shah quipped.

The BJP leader promised to clean the Yamuna and develop a riverfront on the lines of Sabarmati within three years and provide free healthcare under the Ayushman Scheme for Delhi residents. He reminded people that

Kejriwal had promised not to take official perks like a house, car, or security before becoming chief minister.

Referring to the construction of "After becoming the chief minthe Ram temple in Ayodhya, he said, "Ram Lalla lived in a tent ister, he got a car, security and a bungalow. Not satisfied with for 550 years before Modi won one bungalow, he demolished the case (Babri Masjid demour an uilt a

STAFF REPORTER N NEW DELHI

Bidhuri said.

A head of the assembly polls in the city, TDP chief and last decade. "In Delhi, you cannot differ-Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister entiate between drinking and drainage water" despite Central N Chandrababu Naidu on Monday launched a scathing attack on the ruling AAP over the lack of infrastructure devel-Mission, he claimed.

opment and dubbed the Delhi Naidu, whose Telugu Desam Party (TDP) is an ally of the ruling NDA at the Centre, took a jibe at the AAP governwas not implemented here. ment, saying Delhi has a "half-He also said "weather and political pollution" were plaguing Delhi.

Speaking to reporters after an

### ed lack of infrastructure development in the capital over the

government schemes like AMRUT and Jal Jeevan These two schemes were not implemented because the credit will go to the BJP-led central government, he said, adding even Swachh Bharat Mission

engine sarkar", and needs a double engine sarkar to achieve Underlining that performance and better living standards are home for building careers. It not mmg national capital, he highlight- ideology, Naidu said "poor is coming here. People are ship -- to address poverty.

people in Delhi have to think if they want to live permanently in slums without proper amenities and opportunities." He also

questioned the sustainability of welfare politics without wealth creation.

"Without creating wealth, what is the right of a politician to dis-tribute wealth?" he asked, calldone.' ing for a national debate on the issue.

Drawing from his political experience since 1978, Naidu highlighted the stark contrast between Delhi's current state and its historical position as a career-building hub.

"Originally, Delhi used to be y, nobody

everything possible." He added, "But the most dan-

gerous tactic they are employ-

ing is this: They will approach

you, especially those from eco-

nomically weaker sections, and offer you money. They will bring a box and claim to be

from the Election Commission,

asking you to cast your vote in

it. They will give you a piece of

paper, ask you to mark your

vote, put ink on your finger, and offer Rs 3,000, Rs 4,000, or

The AAP Convenor said, "The

Election Commission does not

conduct door-to-door voting.

Do not fall for this deception-

it is a fraud, a scam, and an act

of cheating. What they are planning is major electoral

fraud. They have already start-

ed implementing it. I have

received calls from various

slums reporting that people are

even Rs 5,000.

going from Delhi to other places for livelihood and opportunities," he observed. On development projects, he

asked if there "have been any infra projects in the last 10 years? Long back, the metro had come. Nothing has been

Naidu termed Delhi's controversial liquor policy as the worst scam" compared to other corruption cases and spoke about his own experience of introducing Extra Neutral Alcohol (ENA) in 1995 to reduce impurities in liquor. Advocating for a developmentfocused approach, Naidu proposed his "P4" model -- public,

He suggested that the top 10 percent of high-net-worth individuals should adopt the bottom 20 percent to improve living standards. Expressing confidence in Prime

Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, Naidu endorsed the vision of India becoming a developed nation by 2047. He cited the success of his own

"Hyderabad model" from 1995, which he said has made the city "the most livable place" with the highest per capita income in Telangana.

"In Delhi, it is half engine Sarkar. All these things are possible with the double engine Sarkar," he said, adding that

development.

model as a "total failure".

rivate, and p

as an ally of the NDA.

said, adding that 50 per cent of on 50,000 gaj (square yard) Ram Temple within five years."

with designer marble, remote-

controlled curtains, motion

sensor lights and doors, a gold-

en commode, carpet worth Rs

50 crore, a water purifier worth

Rs 15 crore, and a reclining sofa worth Rs 10 lakh," Shah

alleged. He urged voters to

press the button on the EVMs

so hard that it shatters the glass

of Kejriwal's 'sheesh mahal'".

Attacking Sisodia, he accused

the AAP leader of neglecting

education and instead opening liquor shops in every corner of

Delhi, including near religious

Shah also spoke about the

"surgical strikes" against

Pakistan-based terrorists in

late 2016. "Pakistan orches-

trated attacks in Uri and

Pulwama, they forgot that

Narendra Modi is the prime

minister of India, not

Manmohan Singh. Within 10

days, we neutralised the ter-

rorists by conducting surgical

He said Modi has worked to

end terrorism in India in the

past 10 years, and his govern-

ment will eradicate Naxalism

Shah also said opposition lead-

ers, including Kejriwal, Rahul

Gandhi, Mamata Banerjee,

Akhilesh Yaday, and Mehbooba

Mufti, used to warn about

"rivers of blood" if Article 370

was revoked in Jammu and

Kashmir. "We removed Article

370. Forget rivers of blood, no

one can dare throw a pebble (kankar)," he said.

strikes," he said.

by March 2026.

places.

# Kejriwal links BJP's street hooliganism, vote supression tactics to imminent defeat



### STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

Amid allegations and counter allegations ahead of Delhi assembly elections; AAP National Convenor Arvind Kejriwal warned on Tuesday alleged that the BJP, staring at defeat, is resorting to brazen 'Gundagardi' (hooliganism) and 'electoral fraud' in a lastditch attempt to cling to power. Kejriwal claimed that BJP workers-masquerading as Election Commission officialsare bribing the poor, marking their fingers with ink, and ren-dering them ineligible to vote. He asked people not to fall for this 'fraud' saying that if you let PID ink your finger you will be BJP ink your finger you will be signing a warrant for your own destruction. Do not sell your family's future for just Rs 3,000 or Rs 4,000. The former Delhi CM said that

his party has launched an allout counteroffensive to thwart BJP's tactics, deploying hidden

cameras, body cams, and Quick

Response Teams (QRTs) to

expose and stop the onslaught

of illegalities. "BJP will use Delhi Police, BJP will use goons, and BJP will use fraud.

But we will fight back. The peo-

ple of Delhi will not let their

democracy be hijacked," Kejriwal said urging citizens to

stay vigilant and report any attempts at electoral malprac-

Addressing the people of Delhi, Kejriwal said that the atmos-

phere across Delhi has made it

clear that the AAP is heading

toward a historic victory, while

the BJP is on the verge of extinction. "Disregarding all

laws and the Constitution,

Delhi Police will resort to

Gundagardi. They will use

their goons to intimidate and

tice.

before the election and collect votes from people's homes. Voting never happens at home-under any circumstances. Do not fall into their trap. Their only intention is to put an ink mark on your finger so that you cannot go to the polling booth and vote. If they try to ink your finger, refuse outright."

going door to door, saying they will come on the night

Earlier in the morning, Kejriwal Monday attacked Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar once again as he urged him to leave his "greed" for the post. On the last day of campaigning ahead of the Delhi Assembly polls on February 5, Kejriwal also slammed the Election Commission, accusing it of favouring the BJP. "Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar ji is retiring at the end of this month. What position has he been offered that he is ready to mortgage the country? What is the post in return for which you can destroy the democracy of the country? Governor, President?" Kejriwal asked. "You have worked 45 years... Don't mortgage the country for your career... Don't end the country's democracy in greed of getting some post." This was not the first time Kejriwal questioned CEC Rajiv Kumar. On January 30, he said that the CEC was seeking a job after retirement and made the Election Commission a mess. Kejriwal also addressed a Jansabha in Chhatarpur and led an roadshow in Kalkaji, galvanizing support for AAP's gov-

ernance model.



### Nadda calls elections a battle for future

### STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

BJP national president J P Nadda on Monday attacked Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), asserting that the upcoming elections are a battle for Delhi's future to make it Viksit Delhi'. At a public meeting in Burari, Nadda expressed confidence in the growing discontent against former Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal.

He urged voters from all communities to support the BJP, emphasizing, "We need every vote to bring about this change.'

"This election is not just about the BJP's lotus symbol or any the BJP's lotus symbol or any other party's symbol; it is about changing Delhi's fate and image," Nadda said, urging voters to bring an end to what he termed as "AAP-da". He accused the AAP govern-ment of stalling progress in Delhi and called for a return to a "Viksit Delhi." Nadda criti-cized the AAP government's governance style, alleging that

governance style, alleging that their daily routine consisted only of holding press conferences and blaming the Central overnment.

Every morning, they wake up, hold a press conference, hurl abuses at Modi Ji, criticize the Centre and make baseless allegations to cover up their failures. Kejriwal has been doing this for the last ten years," he remarked.

The BJP leader also labelled the AAP as a "lying machine" and "an encyclopedia of corruption and deceit". Nadda accused the party of mislead-ing the public while indulging in corruption.

Those who once called themselves the 'kattar imaandar' (staunchly honest) party have turned out to be the 'kattar bhrashtachari' (staunchly corrupt) party. Their chief minis-ter is out on bail, their deputy CM is out on bail and their ministers have spent time behind bars," he said. "They have not been declared innocent; they are guilty.

Nadda went on to highlight the allegations of scams under the AAP government, including a

purported Rs 2,800 crore liquor scam, a Rs 1,300 crore school building scam, and a Rs 65,000 crore fake medical test scam linked to Mohalla Clinics.

"They looted public money while building a luxurious palace for themselves," he accused.

The BJP leader also took a jibe at the AAP's handling of education and infrastructure, claiming that science education was being neglected in classes 10 and 11. "Do you want such an education system to continue?" he asked the crowd. Nadda assured that, before

2026, Delhi would receive 2,600 new electric buses and reiterated the BJP's commitment to providing pucca hous-es to slum dwellers without demolishing existing ones. He also alleged that the AAP government had mismanaged Yamuna cleaning funds. "Ďid you get clean water in the Yamuna? They gobbled up Rs 8,000 crore and then blamed the Haryana government for poisoning it," he claimed.

Delhi CEO: 7,499 poll related complaints received

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

The Chief Electoral Officer of Delhi on Monday informed that a total 7,499 complaints have been received through cVigil. Of these, 7,467 complaints have been successfully resolved. Only 32 cases remain under process, reflecting the swift action taken by authorities. According to a statement issued by the CEO, Delhi, over 90 percent of the complaints were addressed within 100 minutes, underscoring the effectiveness of the redressal mechanism. The Suvidha platform has played a crucial role in processing permission requests from political parties and candidates. Since the announcement of the elections: A total of 43,992 permission requests have been received. Of these, 34,823 requests have been approved. Nearly 8,900 requests have been rejected, adhering to established guidelines.113 applications have been cancelled due to duplication or

invalidity. The Commission has deployed over 1.8 lakh personnel includ-ing 11 DEOs; 15 DCPs; 77 Central Observers; 70 ROs; 232 AROs, 2009 Sector Officers, 940 FST, 933 SST, 324 WTs, 316 VSTs; 220 companies of Paramilitary forces comprising over 16,000 personnel; 35,600 Delhi police personnel; 19,000 Home Guards; 13,033 BLOs; 1314 BLO Supervisors and nearly 69,000 polling personnel for the assembly polls.



# nation 04

# **Parliament: Opposition seeks accountability** from Government on Maha Kumbh tragedy

#### PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELH

The Rajya Sabha on Monday witnessed uproar from the treasury benches after Leader of Opposition(LoP)and Congress president Malliarjun Kharge paid tribute to 'thousands" who died in stampede in Maha Kumbh on January 29. Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar asked him to authenticate or retract the statement. Opposition MPs in the Lok Sabha also voiced strong concerns over the Kumbh Mela stampede, accusing the Government of negligence and insensitivity and calling for accountability.

Kharge was quick to add that "this is my estimate (and) if this is not right you (the Government) should tell what is the truth". He said he was ready to be corrected. "I did not say 'thousands' to blame anyone. But how many people died, give that information at least. I will apologise if I am wrong. They should give figures how many died, how many are missing," he said. However, while participating in a debate on the Motion of Thanks to the President's address in Rajya Sabha, Kharge used the phrase "the thousands who died in Kumbh" to pay tributes to the deceased.

"I pay my tributes to the people who died in Maha Kumbh... The thousands who died in



Delhi Vice President and Raiva Sabha Chairman Jaodeep Dhankhar conducts proceedings of the House as LoP Mallikariun Kharge speaks during the Budget session of Parliament, in New Delhi

Kumbh," he said, leading to the appeal to you as one of senior protest by the ruling members. Kharge, however, added this was his estimate and the government should provide the "correct" figures. "This is my estimate, if this is not right you should tell what is the truth... I am asking you to declare what the actual numbers are. If I am wrong I am ready to correct," he said. Dhankhar urged him to retract his statement. "The LoP has indicated a scenario using figures to the extent of thousands. I appeal to him, in this House, whatever is spoken, carries great weight. You have spoken something which has numbed everyone," Dhankhar said. "A message that goes from here, even if it is contradicted, goes to the whole world. Can you go to that extent? I would

most leaders of this country, if you put a figure in thousands I can only appeal to your conscious," he said. Meanwhile in Lok Sabha. Opposition MPs voiced strong concerns over the Kumbh Mela stampede, accusing the government of negligence and insensitivity and calling for accountability. Speaking during the debate on the Motion of Thanks on the President's Address, DMK MP Kanimozhi expressed her condolences and criticised the government for its failure to ensure the safety of pilgrims 'I would like to express my grief

and empathy to the people who lost their lives in the Kumbh Mela stampede. These people trusted the Union and state

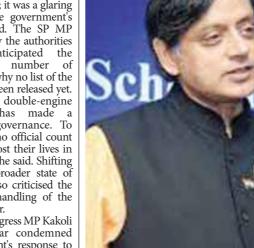
governments, hoping they would be protected, but unfortunately, no one protected them," she said. The Lok Sabha Monday witnessed on prolonged noisy protests by opposition parties, demanding a discussion on the stampede in Uttar Pradesh's Prayagraj and a list of the deceased. She alleged that the Government's approach to governance has led to societal divisions. "When religion and politics merge, it is the innocent who suffer. We don't even know the exact number of people who died in the stampede," she remarked. Samajwadi Party MP Naresh Chandra Uttam Patel also lashed out at the Uttar Pradesh Government's handling of the Kumbh event. "The Kumbh

natural disaster; it was a glaring example of the government's failure," he said. The SP MP questioned why the authorities had not anticipated the overwhelming number of attendees and why no list of the deceased had been released yet.

"The government has made a mockery of governance. To date, we have no official count of those who lost their lives in the stampede," he said. Shifting focus to the broader state of affairs, Patel also criticised the government's handling of the education sector.

Trinamool Congress MP Kakoli Ghosh Dastidar condemned the Government's response to the Kumbh tragedy, criticising the brevity of the President's mention of the incident. "Millions of Hindus were preparing for the Mahakumbh, and many poor people saved money for the Mauni Amavasya. It is sad to say that the President only spent 61 words on this tragedy. She has neither condemned the deaths nor sent condolence messages to the families of the deceased, she said. She further alleged discrepancies in the official death toll. "There is a clear discrepancy between the number of dead bodies in the morgue and the number of people reported missing. The same thing happened during Covid times," she added.

# Delhi HC summons Shashi Tharoor in Rajeev Chandrasekhar defamation case



### PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Monday summoned Congress leader Shashi Tharoor on a defamation plea filed by BJP leader Rajeev Chandrasekhar, seeking Rs. 10 crore for damaging the reputation.

Justice Purushaindra Kumar Kaurav posted the matter on April 28.

"Let the plaint be registered as a suit. Issue summons to the defendant (Tharoor). List before the joint registrar

on April 28," said the court. In his suit, Chandrasekhar claimed Tharoor made false and defamatory statements at various public fora in April, 2024 that severely damaged his professional and personal reputation. Chandrasekhar has sought to restrain Tharoor from making any defamatory statements.

While seeking a public apology, he sought Rs 10 crore in damages from allegedly for Tharoor defaming and tarnishing his reputation. The BJP leader

murder, destruction and

filed the defamation case over Tharoor's purported statements during interview to a television channel where the latter allegedly said Chandrasekhar offered money to voters during 2024

Lok Sabha polls. The BJP politician is represented by law firm Karanjawala and company. In a tightly fought contest in Lok Šabha election from Thiruvananthapuram. Tharoor won by over 16,000 votes, against Raieev Chandrasekhar.

# Manipur violence: SC seeks forensic report on audio clips against CM

### PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

Saying the State was "limping back to normalcy", the Supreme Court on Monday sought a sealed-cover forensic report on the authenticity of leaked audio clips alleging the role of Manipur Chief Minister Biren Singh in the ethnic violence. A bench comprising Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna and Justice Sanjay Kumar sought the report from the Central Forensic Science Laboratory (CFSL) within six weeks and posted the plea by the Kuki Organisation for Rights Human Trust (KOHUR) on March 24.

KOHUR, represented by advocate Prashant Bhushan,



sought a court-monitored probe into the alleged SIT role of the chief minister in the ethnic violence. Justice Sanjay Kumar, who was the Chief Justice of the Manipur High Court before being

elevated to the top court, said, "The chief minister of Manipur had hosted a dinner for me when I was elevated to this court, so if you have an issue with me hearing the matter then you can tell

me...." Bhushan said he did not have a problem at all.

Mela was not struck by a

The state is gradually limping back to normalcy limping back to normalcy and we will keep it (the matter) on hold at the moment," the CJI said . The bench would later see whether the top court or the high court should hear the case. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta appearing for Tushar Mehta, appearing for the State, was in agreement with the observations. Bhushan, however, termed the contents of the audio leaks a "very serious matter" and said in the clips the chief minister was purportedly saying that Meitei groups were allowed to loot arms and ammunition of the state government. "I have annexed

transcripts tape recordings," he added. The Solicitor General said

the petitioner had "ideological inclinations" and there was a report by the three high court judges' committee stating there were efforts to keep the "pot boiling". "A truth lab confirmed that 93 per cent it is the voice of the chief minister," said Bhushan, "and truth labs are far more reliable that the FSL reports." The law officer questioned the veracity of the report of the truth lab. On November 8, last year, a

bench headed by former CJI D Y Chandrachud directed the Kuki organisation to produce material to indicate

authenticity of some leaked audio clips. Bhushan alleged the recorded conversation prima facie showed the complicity and involvement of the state machinery in violence against the Kuki Zo community. He said the clips "disturbing had conversations" and the chief minister could be heard instigating the violence and protecting the attackers while fuelling the violence aside from allowing arms and ammunition to be looted.

The Kuki organisation's plea alleged the chief minister of Manipur was instrumental in "inciting, organising and centrally thereafter orchestrating the large-scale

other forms of violence against the Kuki dominated areas in Manipur". "Petitioner is praying for a the court-monitored investigation by special investigation team into the leaked audio tape clips as there is clear and strong prima facie evidence showing involvement of highest functionary, i.E., chief minister of a state. The investigation would need to unearth the conspiracy which appears to involve the highest functionary of state," it added. The plea said the investigation couldn't be done by the CBI, ED, etc., and would have to be carried out by a special investigative

of officers team impeccable integrity selected by the top court.

Asked about the clip during a recent PTI interview, Chief Minister Singh said, "Some people are after me... There is a conspiracy. The matter is sub-judice. I won't talk much about it. An FIR has been filed." Over 200 people were killed and thousands rendered homeless after Meitei and Kuki communities clashed with Kuki each other in May last year. Bhushan alleged the recorded conversation prima facie showed the complicity and the involvement of the state machinery in violence against the Kuki Zo community.

Punjab CM Bhagwant Mann urges Delhi voters to choose AAP | BJP leader Kiran Choudhry slams Opposition | Gurugram Police

DELHI

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann said peo-ple in Delhi will have to choose between education, development and women's upliftment on one side and "misconduct" on the other as they go out to vote on Wednesday. He led multiple roadshows on the last day of

campaigning on Monday and encouraged people to vote for the Aam Aadmi Party(AAP)on February 5 to sustain Delhi's development. Mann held and Shalimar Bagh to support AAP candidates

Mukesh Goel and Bandana Kumari.

"Today is the last day of the

day to decide which party to bring to power," said Mann. "On one side, there is a party that supports education, women's

side, there is a party that engages in misconduct. "I don't know about 'Achhe Din' but the Aam Aadmi Party will surely bring

election campaign, and upliftment, and honest and better days," February 5 will be your last development; on the other Mann said referring to BJP's

widely known poll slogan that was first used during 2014 the Lok Sabha

elections. "If the AAP comes to power, every household in Delhi will be able to save at least Rs 20,000 to Rs 25,000 per month," he asserted referring to the party's 'Bachat Patra' -- savings made by people due to the AAP government's schemes. Mann further stated, "The Bharatiya Janata Party has a lot of money-they may come today, tonight, tomorrow, or the day after with money. He said if "they come to offer you money, take it and buy essentials with it" but press the "broom" button --AAP's poll symbol -- to ensure AAP' victory. Voting for Delhi Assembly election is scheduled for February 5

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

Bleader Kiran Choudhry on Monday criticized Opposition parties, saying they are bereft of ideas and trying to build a false narrative against the Modi gov-ernment, as the Rajya Sabha started a discussion on 'Motion of Thanks On The President's Address'.

Moving the motion in the Upper House, Choudhry said the Prime Minister has addressed all the important issues, which had been lying dormant for a long time because of policy paralysis and the indifferent attitude of the erstwhile Congress

government. "And it is heartening to know that Modi has put Bharat on the centre stage of the world community," said the BJP MP and results will be declared



from Harvana.

President Droupadi Murmu on Friday, the first day of the Budget Session, addressed both the Houses of Parliament assembled together in the Lok Sabha chamber and said the pace of work has tripled in the third term of her government, which has worked with strong determination to lift the economy out of the state of "policy paralysis". Launching a scathing attack on the Opposition, Choudhry said they are running a false narrative and trying to paint a wrong picture of the Narendra Modi government

Modi government. She said the Modi-led government has taken transformative steps to find holistic solutions to address all

important issues. "The opposition parties, who are bereft of all agenda, are trying to paint this government as anti-farmer, patriarchal, misogynist, majoritarian and despotic. This false propaganda is born out of their desperation for their plummeting political fortunes," she said.

Choudhry said the false narrative of Opposition has been rejected by the people and cited the resounding victories of the BJP in recently concluded assembly elections in Haryana and Maharashtra.

arrest accused in model assault case at Dorsia club STAFF REPORTER GURUGRAM

Aman was arrested on Monday for allegedly beating a 31-year-old man inside a club on January 28, police said.

The victim was identified as Nikhil Sehrawat, originally from Mohan Garden in Uttam Nagar, Delhi, who was currently living in Anantraj Estate in Sector-63 Gurugram.

It is being said that the victim was a model by profession. The accused was identified as Rohit, a resident of Gwal Pahari of Gurugram.

According to the police, the victim filed a complaint on January 28 that he went to the Dorsia Club located on Gurugram-Faridabad Road on

January 25 with his friends. The victim alleged that after having food he started dancing. Meanwhile, the bouncers pushed him on the instructions of the club owner. They started pulling him out and attacked him with sticks and weapons. The victim was later undergone nose surgery at a hospital in Delhi. On the complaint of the victim model, the police have registered a case and started an investigation. Based on his complaint a case was registered against the club owner and the bouncer at the DLF Phase-1 police station.

during

interrogation, the accused disclosed that the victim had consumed excessive alcohol and got injured during the scuffle while being taken out of the club. "In connection with the matter, an accused has been arrested for assaulting the victim. The investigation team is scrutinizing the CCTV footage of the club to identify the remaining accused," Sandeep, spokesperson of the Gurugram police, said.



on February 8.

### PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

 $T^{he \ South-East \ Asia}_{Region \ reported \ the \ highest \ number \ of \ cancers \ of \ lips}$ and oral cavity, uterine cervix, and childhood cancers among all World Health Organisation regions in 2022, regional director of the WHO SEAR Saima Wazed said on

Monday. She said it is estimated that by 2050, there will be 85 per cent increase in the number of new cancer cases and

deaths in the region. Wazed, who is the regional director of World Health Organisation South East Asian Region (WHO-SEAR) called for joint efforts led by governments, supported by WHO and partners, and through collaboration that will make the region better equipped to tackle the rising cancer burden cancer burden.

Ahead of World Cancer Day



and the value of people- "Among all the WHO region," Wazed stated. In centred care delivered regions, our region had the the last few years, she said

healthcare highest number of cancers uterine

of lips and oral cavity, cervix, and childhood cancers. It is estimated that by 2050, there will be 85 per cent increase in the number of new cases and deaths in the region," Wazed stated. In

the countries in the region countries have introduced have made notable progress nationwide Human in cancer control. Six countries have dedicated national plans for cancer have included cancer as part of national NCD plan to strategically guide cancer prevention and control prevention and control activities.

Bhutan successfully completed the Health Flagship project in 2020, where more than 90 per cent of the target populations were screened for gastric, cervical, and breast cancer each, with screened positives being linked to diagnosis and treatment.

The country is currently integrating the model into mainstream health services. Through Anywhere' the 'Cancer program, has Thailand adopted universal health coverage approach to cancer management.

populationoperational based cancer registries. In ten countries, tertiary level cancer care is generally available, reaching 50 percent or more patients in

need, she said. The region has seen the fastest rate of decline in tobacco use which is a major risk factor for several high burden cancers. WHO has worked closely with all the member states supporting these efforts.

"There are, however, persistent challenges," Wazed said pointing out that the response to cancer control is not uniform Eight among countries.

"National cancer control programmes and plans are not fully aligned with evidence or best practices resulting in their ineffective implementation. Policies and guidance on control of cancer-causing agents prevalent in the region, such as areca nut, is lacking," she said. Existing cancer prevention

policies and programmes are not fully implemented, leading to millions of avoidable cases. Cancer services are included in health benefit packages in only six countries, Wazed stated. "Screening foi specific cancers is low. For example, cervical cancer

screening has less than 50 percent coverage in seven countries, which is much below the target of 70 elimination of cervical cancer as a public health problem," she said.

Meanwhile,

on February 4, she said, "On this year's World Cancer Day themed 'United by Unique', which is a reminder of the collective Community". The WHO South-East Asia Region reported 2.4 million community commitment against cancer, new cases of cancer in 2022, WHO acknowledges every including 56,000 children, and 1.5 million deaths. and the value of people- "Among all the WHO



# Third Amrit Snan draws millions in a spectacle of faith and devotion

### BISWAJEET BANERJEE MAHAKUMBH

The third grand 'Amrit Snan' of the Maha Kumbh took place on the auspicious occasion of Basant Panchami, drawing millions of devotees from across the globe to the sacred confluence of the Ganga, Yamuna, and the mythical Saraswati at Triveni Sangam. Pilgrims, sadhus, and kalpvasis gathered in massive numbers, seeking spiritual liberation through the holy dip, reinforcing the centuries-old faith that a bath in these holy waters cleanses one of past sins and paves the way for moksha (salvation).

At the break of dawn, the ceremonial bathing processions began with the arrival of the revered Naga sadhus, their bodies smeared in ash, wielding tridents, and chanting sacred hymns. The akharas, following the timehonored tradition, led the way as thousands watched in reverence.

By evening, around 2 crore devotees had performed the sacred ritual, raising the total number of bathers since January 13 to an estimated 35 crore, according to Information Director Shishir.

This staggering figure includes 10 lakh kalpvasis, who observe a month-long spiritual retreat, and

6.58 lakh general pilgrims. The significance of this year's Maha Kumbh is further heightened by the rare 'Triveni Yog,' a celestial alignment that occurs once in 144 years, believed by astrologers to magnify the spiritual potency of the event. For many devotees, this was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

"This is not just a bath; it is a divine calling. The presence of Triveni Yog makes it all the more sacred," said Manoj Tripathi, a pilgrim from Varanasi. Another devotee, Kamala Devi from Rajasthan, expressed her joy: "I feel blessed to be here. I have waited my entire life for this moment. The energy is divine, and I feel spiritually uplifted."

However, the spiritual fervor was accompanied by heightened security concerns following the tragic stampede during the previous 'Amrit Snan' on Mauni Amavasya, which resulted in at least 30 deaths and left 60 others injured. In response, the Uttar Pradesh government has significantly intensified security and



inspected

Jaga Sadhus' arrive to take a holy dip at the Sangam on the occasion of Basant Panchami in Pravagra crowd management measures to Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath arrangements on Saturday, directing ensure a safe and seamless event. personally

the officials to enforce strict safety

protocols. Additional personnel, medical teams, and emergency response units were deployed to maintain order and facilitate a "zero-

error" bathing experience. 'After the unfortunate incident, we have doubled security personnel at key entry and exit points, ensuring a regulated flow of devotees. Our priority is to protect the faith and lives of all who come here," said

a senior police official overseeing the arrangements. A devotee from Madhya Pradesh, Ravi Sharma, praised the government's efforts, saying, "The arrangements are much better this time. The administration has

ensured smooth movement, and I felt safe throughout the process." As per tradition, the three main sects-Sanyasi, Bairagi, and Udaseen-performed their ceremonial dips in a predetermined sequence. Each akhara was allotted a 40-minute window at the confluence, with the first group completing their ritual and returning to their camps by 8:30 a.m. Akhil Bharatiya Akhara Parishad head Ravindra Puri expressed his satisfaction with the

arrangements

'The administration has taken extensive measures to ensure a smooth and disciplined bathing experience. The Naga sadhus and all akharas are content with the coordination," he said. Another sadhu, Mahant Gopal Das, added, This Kumbh is a reflection of our collective devotion.

The discipline and faith of devotees inspire us all."

Stretching across a 12-kilometer radius, the ghats of Sangam remained densely packed with devotees, many carrying traditional danda-kamandalu (wooden staff and water pot), while others walked with bundles on their heads and shoulder bags, chanting religious hymns.

"The atmosphere is surreal, filled with devotion and purity. It is a blessing to be part of this divine congregation," said Sadhvi Ganga Bharti, a pilgrim from Haridwar. Another participant, Ramesh Yadav from Bihar, described his experience: 'Taking a dip in the Sangam is a moment of complete surrender. I feel rejuvenated in mind and soul.



# UP CM monitors Amrit Snan arrangements from war room

that

control.

instructing officials to ensure

He stressed the need for

heightened security at the bathing ghats, directing

authorities to implement strict

safety protocols and finalize all

essential arrangements. With

lakhs of devotees participating in the sacred dip at Triveni Sangam, CM Yogi placed

special focus on administrative

preparedness, including crowd management and traffic

His

monitoring underscored the

government's commitment to

devotees

bathing ghats,

inconvenience.

faced no

### BISWAJEET BANERJEE MAHAKUMBH NAGAR

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath closely monitored the arrangements for the Amrit Snan on Basant Panchami, convening a high-level meeting in the war room at his official residence at 3:30 AM. Receiving real-time updates from Director General of Police (DGP), Principal Secretary (Home), and officials from the Chief Minister's Office, he issued key directives to ensure a smooth and secure event. Reviewing security and ogistica Chief Minister emphasized spiritually enriching Amrit | occasion arrangements,

# Agni Snan Sadhana of Vaishnav Akharas begins on Basant Panchami



BISWAJEET BANERJEE MAHAKUMBH NAGAR

**D**rayagraj Mahakumbh is witnessing the convergence of various spiritual resolutions and rigorous sadhanas. Among them, the Panch Dhuni Tapasya, also known as Agni Snan Sadhana, commenced with the Amrit Snan festival on Basant Panchami. Mahakumbh is a sacred land

of chanting, penance, and sadhana, where ascetics can be seen deeply immersed in their spiritual practices in every corner. A unique and intense sadhana has begun Tapasvi Nagar on

curiosity among devotees. This sadhana, called Panch Dhuni Tapasya or Agni Sadhana, is Snan an extraordinary practice where the sadhak (ascetic) surrounds himself with multiple circles of fire and meditates at the center.

The intensity of the flames, which can scorch human skin in an instant, is multiplied several times, making this a supreme test of endurance and spiritual discipline.

There is a tradition of this Agni Snan sadhna in Khalsa of Vaishnav Akhara, which is done after reaching a state

Digambar Ani Akhara explains that this practice is a special sadhana of the All India Panch Terah Bhai Tyagi Khalsa of Digambar Ani Akhara, the principal Akhara of Vaishnav Akhara tradition.

The sadhana follows a rigorous cycle lasting eighteen years, with practitioners enduring the extreme heat and flames for five months every year. This extended period of penance is not only a spiritual pursuit but also a

test of endurance and ritual on Monday. ascetic capability. successfully Upon arduou Akhara

released a continuous cascade of fresh rose petals over the ghats.

Floral showers enchant

The final Amrit Snan of Maha Kumbh 2025 on Devotees, saints, and Naga Sadhus stood in awe as the petals descended upon them, chanting "Jai Shri Ram" and "Har Har Basant Panchami turned into a mesmerizing spectacle as crores of devotees at the and Mahadev," creating a divine Sangam were showered with atmosphere.

devotees on last Amrit Snan

rose petals from helicopters. Pradesh Under the Yogi government's The Uttar Horticulture Department, directive, the grand floral following the government's elaborate plans for Maha Kumbh's bathing festivals, tribute elevated the spiritual fervor of the sacred bathing ensured the availability of fresh rose petals for the Starting at 6:30 AM, as their occasion. A staggering 20 quintals of Kumbh 2025.

petals were used for each bathing event, a tradition that has been maintained since Paush Purnima and the first Amrit Snan on Makar Sankranti. The floral tribute was also a highlight of the second Amrit Snan on Mauni Amavasya.

The breathtaking aerial floral showers not only enhanced the spiritual grandeur of the event but also left devotees with an unforgettable experience, marking а fitting to the culmination Amrit Snans of Maha

Snan at Maha Kumbh.

proactive

organized and

Basant restraint. of Panchami, sparking great Mahant Raghav Das of Shri the revered title of Vairagi. | confluence,

extreme sacrifice and

journey, the ascetic earns ritualistic dip in the holy helicopters

BISWAJEET BANERJEE

MAHAKUMBH NAGAR

### Naga Sadhus steal spotlight at Triveni Sangam King of Bhutan set to visit Mahakumbh on Tuesday

#### BISWAJEET BANERJEE MAHAKUMBH NAGAR

 ${
m T}^{
m he~Naga}$  Sadhus emerged as the center of attraction during the final Amrit Snan of Maha Kumbh 2025, mesmerizing thousands of devo-tees with their ancient traditions, martial arts, and spiritual fervor.

Their disciplined rituals and striking presence on the banks of the Triveni Sangam created an atmosphere of awe and reverence.

Leading the procession of Akharas in the sacred bathing ritual, the ascetics demonstrated their mastery of weaponry, expertly wielding spears, swords, and tridents.

The rhythmic beats of the damru and the display of traditional combat techniques amplified the grandeur of the event, drawing both devotees and media alike. The Shobha

garlands, sacred ash, and Yatra, organized for the Amrit Snan on Basant matted hair decorated with Panchami, was a spectacle to flowers. Their fierce yet



asceticism.

The energy of the Naga Sadhus was palpable as they behold. Some Naga Sadhus disciplined demeanor, performed martial arts, rode majestically on horses, guided by their Akhara danced to the beats of while others walked leaders, highlighted their drums, and engaged with barefoot, adorned with unwavering commitment to onlookers. Many devotees

captured the electrifying saffron, moments on their mobile phones, while the Sadhus, in renounce turn, welcomed them into their world of traditions. Some even added a touch of modernity by donning black sunglasses, blending their ancient customs with contemporary intrigue. As they took their ritual dip

at the confluence of the at the confluence of the Ganga, Yamuna, and the mythical Saraswati, the Naga Sadhus maintained their distinct style-splashing water, laughing, and playfully interacting with one another. Their joyous participation enhanced the spiritual aura of the Maha Kumbh, reinforcing its significance as a grand significance as a grand confluence of faith,

tradition, and nature. Alongside the male Naga Sadhus, a significant number of female Naga Sanyasis also participated in

unstitched garments, these women have renounced worldly ties, gesture complete detachment.

hegan

Their presence sparked great curiosity among devotees eager to learn more about their ascetic way of life.

Through their remarkable displays of devotion, discipline, and tradition, the Naga Sadhus reaffirmed that the Maha Kumbh is more than just a religious gathering-it is a profound celebration of spirituality, heritage, and the deep-rooted bond between humanity and the divine.

Their mesmerizing presence at Maha Kumbh 2025 ensures that this event will be etched in the memories of the sacred rituals. Dressed in devotees for years to come. | In return, the King of Bhutan

BISWAJEET BANERJEE MAHAKUMBH NAGAR

King of Bhutan, Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, arrived in Lucknow on Monday. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath warmly welcomed the King at Chaudhary Charan Singh International Airport.

The Chief Minister presented a bouquet to the King and inquired about his well-being.

extended his greetings to CM Yogi Adityanath. In keeping with Indian tradition, artists welcomed the King with various cultural performances at the airport. Wangchuk acknowledged their efforts and

encouraged the artists. On Tuesday, the King of Bhutan is set to visit Prayagraj Mahakumbh, where he will take a holy bath at the Triveni Sangam and perform darshan and Pujan at the sacred site.

# Ayodhya sets record as over one Crore devotees visit since January 26

### KAMLESH SRIVASTAVA AYODHYA

A yodhya has set a new record with over one crore devotees visiting the holy city between January 26 and Basant Panchami (February 3). Amid vigilant administrative devotees arrangements, arriving in Ayodhya are filled with joy and devotion, chanting slogans in praise of Modi, Yogi, and Lord Shri Ram. On Basant Panchami, lakhs of devotees performed sacred baths and offered prayers,

further enriching the spiritual

atmosphere. For the first time since Ramlala was enthroned in the grand temple, Mahakumbh is being held in Prayagraj, drawing an influx of pilgrims to Ayodhya as well. Anticipating this, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath had deployed a dedicated team of officials to oversee the arrangements and ensure a experience for seamless devotees.

Following a public meeting in Milkipur on February 2, he reinforced instructions to officials, emphasizing that no devotee should face any



difficulty. The sacred bathing ritual on Basant Panchami began at dawn and continued the afternoon, until accompanied by acts of charity and devotion. Devotees then proceeded to maths and temples for darshan, with queues stretching till late evening at Ram Temple and Hanuman Garhi. The Ram Temple remains the

spiritual epicenter of Ayodhya, attracting around three lakh devotees daily. The temple trust has made elaborate arrangements to facilitate

open for 18 hours a day. Hanuman Garhi continues to witness a steady stream of devotees, reinforcing Ayodhya's deep-rooted spiritual significance. The maths and temples of Ayodhya witnessed vibrant celebrations on Basant Panchami, as sadhus and saints joyfully played with colors, marking the festive spirit. As part of the rituals, abir and gulal were also applied to the deity seated in the sanctum sanctorum. Ramlala, was

the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Tirtha Kshetra Trust, gulal was applied to Ramlala, and priests applied to Ramiala, and priests exchanged it as prasad, enhancing the spiritual atmosphere. A variety of offerings, including kheer, puri, dry fruits, and fruits, were presented as part of the sacred rituals. While Prayagraj offers vast spaces for ritual baths, Avodhva's focus remains on Ayodhya's focus remains on Ramlala, drawing massive crowds to a concentrated area. Managing such a large has made elaborate adorned in new yellow gathering was a significant arrangements to facilitate garments, symbolizing the challenge, but effective darshan, keeping the temple arrival of spring. According to administrative planning and

strategy ensured smooth coordination.

IG Praveen Kumar highlighted key measures implemented for crowd management, including road diversions, designated parking areas, and a substantial police deployment to maintain order. Entry to the fairgrounds was regulated based on safety protocols, ensuring a hasslefree experience for devotees. Divisional Commissioner Gaurav Dayal affirmed that officers are monitoring the fair zone 24/7, with arrangements in place to accommodate 25,000 to 30,000 people. NEW DELHI | TUESDAY | FEBRUARY 4, 2025

# the pioneer

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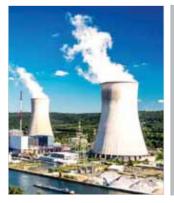
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-PAPER WITH PASSION-

# Quest for clean energy

With a strong financial backing, the country is poised to make nuclear power a cornerstone of its energy mix

s India continues its journey toward energy transition and sustainability, the role of nuclear power has become increasingly vital. The Union Budget 2025-26, for the Nuclear Energy Mission, aiming to significantly enhance India's nuclear energy capacity. This ambitious initiative is set to propel India towards achieving at least 100 GW of nuclear energy capacity by 2047, a significant leap from the current 8 GW. Presently, nuclear energy constitutes less than 2 per cent of India's total energy mix. With an installed capacity of 8 GW, India's nuclear sector lags behind other energy sources, such as coal, solar and wind. The Modi government is prioritising nuclear power as a stable and clean energy source. The July 2024 Budget had already set the stage for nuclear expansion by highlighting the need to amend the Atomic Energy Act of 1962 to allow private sector participation in nuclear power generation. The 2025-



26 Budget builds upon this foundation by reinforcing the push for small modular reactors (SMRs). India's ambitious renewable energy targets include achieving 500 GW of non-fossil fuel energy capacity by 2030. While solar and wind energy play a crucial role in this mix, they are subject to weather conditions and require large-scale energy storage solutions. Nuclear energy, on the other hand, provides continuous, low-carbon power without the intermittency issues of renewables. SMRs, with a capacity of up to 300 MW, offer distinct advantages over conventional nuclear reactors. Their modular design allows for quicker assembly, reduced costs and

enhanced safety features. By promoting indigenously developed SMRs, India aims to increase its self-reliance in nuclear technology and reduce dependency on foreign nations. The allocation of Rs 20,000 crore under the Nuclear Energy Mission signals a clear intent to boost nuclear power generation. This funding will support research and development in indigenous nuclear technologies, particularly SMRs. Infrastructure development will be a key focus, with plans to set up at least five SMRs by 2033 as part of a long-term nuclear expansion plan. Despite its benefits, nuclear energy in India faces several challenges. Regulatory barriers exist due to the Atomic Energy Act and the Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act, which currently limit private sector involvement and require amendments. Public concerns on safety remain a significant issue, as nuclear accidents worldwide have created scepticism, necessitating stringent safety protocols. Technological monopolies present another challenge, as nuclear technology is concentrated among a few global players, making domestic capacity-building initiatives essential. But a push for nuclear energy is the need of the hours. It will reduce country's carbon footprint, enhance energy security, and meet its growing electricity demands sustainably.



# Budget 2025: A game changer

# for MSMEs and startups



With focus on financial accessibility, technology and market linkages, the budget will strengthen India's startup ecosystem and boost employment

icro, Small and M e d i u m Enterprises (MSMEs) are the backbone of India's economic structure, contributing nearly 30 per cent to GDP, 45 per cent to our exports and generating employment for over 200 millions. The budget for 2025-26 holds much promise for the 5.7 crore MSMEs in India. As India chases its 'Viksit Bharat' dream, Agriculture, the MSME sector, Investment and Exports have been identified as the key engines for driving growth. MSMEs account for about 27 per cent of India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), positioning themselves as the backbone of economic activity and growth.

Ranging from small-scale artisans and local service providers to growing businesses across rural and urban India, MSMEs are diverse and significantly contribute to industrial output and innovation in India. In line with the government's recognition of MSMEs as the 'second engine' of economic expansion, the 2025-26 Budget introduces key reforms to enhance financial accessibility, technological adoption, and market linkages. A notable step was the enhancement of the credit guarantee cover for MSMEs from Rs 5 crores to Rs 10 crores, leading to additional credit of Rs 1.5 lakh crore over the next 5 years. By enhancing the investment and turnover limits, the 20.09 million registered MSMEs (19.4 million micro-enterprises, 5,54,000 small enterprises and 52,000 medium enterprises) now have greater and easier access to capital for technological upgradation and to build

efficiencies. Traditionally, MSMEs have battled limited access to affordable and timely credit, inadequate infrastructure, and complex regulations. The increased guarantee cover addresses one of the major pain points for MSMEs and start-ups while the budget's continued emphasis on skilling

world's third-largest startup ecosystem. The special funding options for start-ups and first-time entrepreneurs in the budget are likely to encourage more individuals to start businesses, innovate and generate employment. In this regard, to additional Rs 10,000 crore Fund of Funds Scheme (FFS) and the proposed Deep Tech Fund will provide crucial capital for startups, particularly in AI, Climate Tech, and Agri Tech. Enhanced MSME support and policies will improve the ease of doing business and further accelerate growth for

future entrepreneurs. The new simplified taxation and regulatory framework will attract private capital, which in turn will further accelerate growth. Many MSMEs are labour-intensive. Key industries like leather, and textiles are major employment generators. The focus on improving productivity and quality of the leather industry goods Government through schemes that support design, machinery etc will positively impact the sector's export potential and generate employment too.

With the Government's aim to make India a global hub for toys, MSMEs can consid er setting up units in identified clusters to create an ecosystem that manufactures

THE DIRECT TAX

**BENEFITS PROVIDED** IN THE BUDGET WILL

CONSUMPTION-LED **DEMAND THROUGH ENHANCED** DISPOSABLE **INCOMES IN THE** HANDS OF TAXPAYERS. THIS WILL FURTHER GIVE IMPETUS TO MSME **PRODUCTION AND** 

ENHANCE THEIR **OVERALL GROWTH** AND DEVELOPMENT

moting Indian toy makers, who can perhaps use the infrastructure in these clusters to explore overseas markets. Food processing is another sector that has received attention in the budget and which can make the MSME sector in our country more robust. It gives our farmers an opportunity to sell their produce, gives businesses an opportunity to add value and also generates employment in the northeast region which needs more

economic opportunities. The direct tax benefits pro-vided in the Budget will bol-BOLSTER ster consumption-led demand through enhanced disposable incomes in the hands of taxpayers. This will further give impetus to MSME production and enhance their overall growth development. and Agriculture is the backbone of the Indian economy and has rightfully received attention in the budget. Most of our farmers hold small and medium land areas

and come under the MSME category. By focusing on 100 districts with low productivity, moderate crop intensity and below-average credit parameters, the farming output will get a boost.

employment opportunities, access to credit and promote the food processing industry. It will also help develop the backward areas of rural India and curtail urban migration significantly. The substantial increase in credit through Kisan credit cards is also commendable.

India's traditional textiles have received a lift with the mission to improve cotton production using sustainable practices and technological support. Not just cotton farmers, but the Indian textile industry has a chance to reclaim its past glory, especially with the political upheaval in neighbouring Bangladesh pushing textile units there into a tailspin.

The proposal to transform India Post into a large supply chain across rural India will link up rural artisans to entrepreneurs and markets. While these measures could significantly enhance the growth trajectory of MSMEs and startups, solidifying their role as key drivers of the Indian economy, the need for simpler cross-border payments to enable seamless global trade and include service exports under interest equalisation schemes could further reduce operational nurales and encourage more units to be set up. (The writer is Secretary General, ASSOCHAM, views are personal)

People fly kites at the annual Basant Panchmi festival in Amritsar

#### comises an ongoing supply of skilled labour.

As of January 2025, India has over 159,000 recognised startups, securing its place as the world-class toys while proMissions promoting pulse cultivation, and fruit and vegetable cultivation are bound to improve agricultural practices, infrastructure,

### THE EDITO LETTERS

# The human touch in AI: Why we anthropomorphise machines

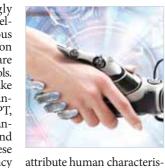


DHARMAPALAN

As AI continues to evolve, it is crucial to maintain clear boundaries between machine intelligence and human cognition

n an era increasingly defined by artificial intel-Lligence (AI), a curious psychological phenomenon has emerged—humans are anthropomorphising AI tools. From virtual assistants like Siri and Alexa to large language models like ChatGPT, people often ascribe humanlike emotions, intentions and even personalities to these systems. While this tendency may seem benign or even endearing, it has profound implications for society, ethics, and the way we perceive technology.

By giving AI tools human-like names, voices and personalities, developers create a sense of familiarity and comfort. For instance, when Alexa responds with a cheerful "Hello!" or when ChatGPT uses conversational language to explain complex topics, users are more likely to feel at ease. This human-like interaction fosters trust, making people more willing to rely on AI for tasks ranging from scheduling appointments to providing emotional support. A lot of evidence points to psychological causes for this behaviour. As a species, we have an innate propensity to



tics to things that do not exist. Even inanimate things, like animals and objects, can have feelings and purposes.

The advent of AI has amplified this tendency to an unprecedented degree by creating tools that can engage in ing. decision-making, interactive communication and natural language processing in ways that are reminiscent of humans. Incorporating human-like characteristics into AI systems takes advantage of this natural propensity, making them appear more relatable and trustworthy. While the benefits of anthropomorphising AI are evident, the practice is not without its pitfalls. When AI tools

are designed to mimic human

behaviour too closely, users

ing with a machine. This blurring of lines can lead to over-reliance, misplaced trust, and even exploitation. For instance, a user might confide deeply personal information to a chatbot, unaware that their data could be stored, analysed, or misused. Deploying AI tools in delicate situations raises even more

serious ethical concerns. Take into account the application of AI in counselling and treatment. Although a chatbot designed to mimic human behaviour can offer some assistance, it can't replace a human expert when it comes to empathy and moral reason-

> Users' potential misunderstanding of AI as a substitute for human therapists highlights the importance of openness and limits. The ethical ramifications of anthropomorphisation need to be considered by regulators and lawmakers as AI becomes more integrated into everyday life. AI tools do not yet possess awareness, emotions, or free will; thus, companies must be forthright in informing consumers of these limits.

may forget they are interact- Another important point is

that AI could be used in a deceptive way. Companies and governments might use human-like AI to make convincing and emotionally engaging connections. AI chatbots used for customer service or political campaigns might quietly sway people's views and choices, which raises concerns about ethics and whether users agree to

this influence. While AI can enhance productivity, creativity, and convenience, it is essential to maintain a clear distinction between human intelligence and machine intelligence. Designers should focus on developing efficient and useful AI without encouraging unrealistic emotional attachments. Additionally, individuals should cultivate a healthy

scepticism toward AI interactions, recognising the sophisticated abilities yet realising that they are fundamentally non-human. The moment humans forget social interactions and machines start social interactions, it's the end of humanity.

(The writer is the Dean-Academic Affairs, at Garden City University; views are personal)

### **AMERICA RAISES TARIFFS**

Madam - The United States has decided to increase tariffs on Canada, Mexico and China. This step can be considered significant in enhancing America's self-reliance and strengthening domestic industries. From the American perspective, this policy aims to boost their economy, increase domestic employment opportunities, and reduce the trade deficit. It will lead to a higher demand for local products in the US, thereby strengthening its production capacity

For India, this situation could open new opportunities. The additional 10 per cent tariff on China may benefit Indian exporters, as it could make Indian products more competitive in the US market. Sectors such as textiles, IT and automobiles are particularly likely to experience growth in exports. Moreover, this decision could also support India's 'Make in India' initiative. If India strengthens its manufacturing capabilities, it could become a better alternative to China for the US. This situation has the potential to further deepen India-US trade relations. Thus, while this policy might pose challenges for some countries, it could create new opportunities for developing nations like India. If India aligns its production and export strategies effectively, it can emerge as a key player in global trade.

**R K Jain** | Barwani

### **TAX RELIEF FOR MIDDLE CLASS**

Madam- This year's Union Budget of FY 2025-26 is one of the most special ones among every such Union Budget being presented in Modi's prime ministerial term. One of the welcoming aspects of the budget is its substantial focus on the middle class section of society. So far, in the last decade, the Budget's so on the table were serving the two extremes of the society, either the poor class or the rich class. In an attempt to please these extreme sections of society, the government often misses the opportunity to cater to the aspirations of the larger line of society formed by the middle class. The cherry on the cake for the

# Women U-19 win T20 World Cup



ndia beat South Africa by nine wickets in the 2025 U-19 T20 World Cup final at the Bayuemas Oval in the Malaysian capital of Kuala

middle class people is the increase in the personal income tax slab from erstwhile 7 to 12 lakhs. Just like the government tries every possible attempt to lure the state of Bihar with multiple announcements, similarly, the government's focus on the middle class is welcoming.

The nutritional scheme-like revamping of the poshan abhiyaan, the establishment of five centres of excellence for skilling, Saksham Anganwadi, the National Manufacturing Mission, and so on are among the welcoming initiatives from the side of the government. We hope that the middle-class section of society will happily enjoy the upcoming year with quality improvement on their wellbeing and attentive focus. Hopefully the middle class businessmen as well as the salary class will gain from the welcoming developments announced in the budget 2025-26. Kirti Wadhawan | Kanpur

**SONIA GANDHI DRAWS FLAK** 

Madam — Apropos of the headlines (February 1) 'Rashtrapati Bhavan Slams the Congress' and PM Modi's scathing attack

Lumpur. Champions India won all their group-stage matches against West Indies, Malaysia and Sri Lanka before getting the better of Bangladesh and Scotland in the Super Six. In the semifinal, they defeated England to make it six wins on the bounce. Meanwhile, South Africa topped Group C with wins over New Zealand, Samoa, and Nigeria.

In the Super Six round, South Africa defeated Ireland but had to share points with the USA after the game was abandoned due to rain. In the semifinal, they defeated Australia by five wickets to seal their spot in the final. In the final, India defeated South Africa by nine wickets to win the coveted trophy.

Jayanthy S Maniam | Mumbai

on Congress, Sonia Gandhi's unsavoury comments on President Draupadi Murmu have been widely criticised in public.

The slangs like 'boring,' 'tired,' and 'poor lady' demean the supreme constitutional authority and supreme commander of armed forces. In the presidential elections, Congress had opposed President Murmu. Embroiling the president in a political wrangle must be condemned. Congress is setting new records of low politics. The ruckus the Congress party created on Hindenburg reports in the Parliament, media, and demonstrations met the inevitable tragic end when the Hindenburg Research wound up its operations. Nothing could be proved, but of course, it misled the people. Congress has not spared any constitutional authority from the Election Commission, CAG, Supreme Court and now the President herself. Congress has finally written its script of losing credibility as a political party.

Vinod Johri | Delhi

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# **FIRSTCOLUMIN A PARENTING GUIDE** FOR THE DIGITAL AGE

This new era of parenting demands a thoughtful, proactive approach to raising future-ready generations



SHAINY SHARMA

he 21st century has introduced new challenges and opportunities in parenting. As we raise Generation Alpha (born 2012-2024) and Generation Beta (born 2025-2039), it is crucial to adapt parenting strategies to their digital upbringing, rapid technological advancements and changing societal norms. Ensuring these children grow up healthy, happy and disciplined requires a balance of traditional values and modern approaches.

There is no denying that, unlike previous generations, Generation Alpha and Generation Beta are growing up with easy access to technology, which affects their lifestyle habits. It is of utmost importance that parents/quardians take proactive steps to ensure their children's wellbeing such as providing balanced nutrition such as a diet rich in proteins, vitamins and fibres while limiting processed foods and sugary snacks; reducing screen time and promoting physical activities such as cycling, swimming and team sports to improve fitness and social skills; setting screen-free bedtime routines to ensure quality sleep, which is crucial for the cognitive and emotional development and encouraging children to spend time offline by engaging in hands-on activities like painting, gardening and DIY projects.

Not only these, but in an era of social media influence and fastpaced lifestyles, parents/guardians need to support their children by creating a strong emotional connection; encouraging resilience and a growth mindset; guiding them in reducing digital overload, and engaging them in mindful activities such as yoga, meditation, journaling, or simple relaxation exercises to help them cope with



Above all, what matters the most is the art of discipline

# The impact of tariffs: Global shifts and the US dilemma



analys \$ 07

From China's rapid economic ascent to the stagnation facing developed nations, trade tariffs have profound effects, influencing international trade



he present world is witnessing a situation of several impending tariffs on international trade. Tariffs in international trade are an instrument to reduce imports from specific countries and to promote indigenous production of goods and services. Countries grow rich by producing and selling value-added goods and services. The buyers of these goods and services can be within the country or outside. Obviously, more buyers are outside than inside and for this reason, exports hold the prime key to countries' enrichment.

The newly installed government in the USA is proposing to impose trade tariffs on several countries ostensibly to reduce the burden of taxes on the domestic population and promote indigenous manufacturing of goods. For any country, it is the balance of trade i.e. the excess of exports over imports that determines its buying capacity in the international market as well the strength of its monetary currency vis-a-vis the international ruling currency US Dollar. This is true of every country except the USA because its currency is not pegged to gold whereas other currencies are. For this reason, we see how post World War 2 (1939-1945), Japan and Germany developed fast a big indigenous man-ufacturing capability based on modern technologies and through extensive exports of valued added industrial goods like machinery, automobiles and other technological products. The currencies of these countries gradually strengthened and a stage was reached when their products became price uncompetitive in exports. For example, the Japanese Yen which was equivalent to approximately 0.01 USD in the year 1994 is now traded for USD 0.0064 in 2025. This was true of most of the developed countries at that time (1990 to 2000). The result was that diminishing price competitiveness in exports led to an industrial and economic decline. This led to the consti-



through a unique model of eco-nomic growth based on high borrowing, mega-scale produc-CASE OF THE tion and export focus. USA IS While all the above was going on, even the Chinese economic **TYPICAL AND** model began to falter because it

was unsustainable, being heavi-ly debt and export-dependent. The stagnating economies of DIFFERENT. IT HAS BEEN Europe and many other countries sought to revive growth through tariffs. Tariffs are basically import duties enabling higher EXPORTING costs of landed goods imported HIGH-TECHNOLOGY from specific countries. The agreed tariffs under GATT helped the developed countries to grow, albeit to a small degree GOODS AND because of the limitations imposed by demographic factors LIBERALLY and technological obsolescence, besides the economic blizzard unleashed by China. IMPORTING The result of the above developments was that in the last 5-10 LOW-END years, countries have become increasingly protective and insu-CONSUMER lar in their trade practices and have started putting tariff barri-ers to protect and bolster their **GOODS FOR A** domestic industries. LONG PERIOD The case of the USA is typical and different. It has been exporting high-technology goods and liberally importing low-end consumer goods for a long period. But high technology goods including arms and ammunitions export could not keep pace with its requirements due to ever-changing secu-

rity scenarios, absorption or If the USA chooses to abolish tution of WTO and GATT development of high technology in countries like India, Brazil and South Africa. This has led to the debt of the USA touching an astronomically high figure of 33 trillion USD. This is long-term unsustainable. With the growth of domestic technologies and production facilities in the erstwhile third-world countries, of which India is a prime example, export prospects of US-made products have fallen considerably. This is also due to the emergence

of Chinese multinational companies which are giving a serious challenge to the existing MNCs in Europe and the USA. But the tariff war by the USA on specific countries of the world is not going to be a panacea for its impending economic ills. Its population will have to be made more productive.

With a very high cost of produc- ther the above possibility. tion due to the high cost of ser- Given this, the best course of vices and labour, the US economy is presently not in a favourable position to compete for international exports of lowerend consumer goods in general. Even for high technology goods like warfare and space technology products, it cannot today compete with emerging industrial economies like China and India. What is happening to the USA is quite opposite to what happened to Japan and Germany in the late nineties and thereafter. The continuing strengthening of the USD is due to the flight of the dollar from various countries to the USA by the operations of FIs and FIIs. Excess of money supply in the US economy will lead to runaway inflation which will further impact adversely its middle and lower class population. The imposition of high tariffs on

imported goods will have the

same effect.

income tax alongside import tariff increase, it could very well end up with huge domestic fiscal deficits which will have to be met by debt or currency printing. Thus what the present US government contemplates could well land it into an economic inflationary spiral.

This situation will be exactly a more intense version of what the government desires to remedy presently. It could be almost something like falling from the frying pan into the fire.

The possibility of all this happening becomes pronounced because of the coming together of BRICS nations and the usage of parallel currencies for international trade. Also, the fact that many countries could well retaliate with countertariffs on the USA after the US imposed tariffs strengthens fur-

action for the US would be to linl once again its currency with gold a process of reversal of what was done in 1971. This will lend stability and sustainability to the US economy and also to the global economy. In general, the matter of trade tariffs is best left to individual countries, looking at their resources and economic circumstances. Global countries have always been historically interdependent because of their specific areas of strengths and weaknesses in resources. The naturally existing areas of resource abundance and deficiency will remain. However social and political factors are dynamic and will always impinge on policy pronouncements. The prudent and perseverant will win even in this arena. (The author is a management consultant based in New Delhi; views are personal)

With instant gratification becoming a norm in the digital age, parents/quardians must realise that these generations will grow up in an Al-driven world, requiring skills beyond academics. Parents/Guardians can help prepare them by encouraging critical thinking and creativity and providing problem-solving challenges, STEM activities and artistic outlets.

They can also provide proper guidance on responsible internet usage, cybersecurity and online ethics, followed by developing social skills in a hybrid world. Raising healthy, happy and disciplined Gen Alpha and Gen Beta children requires a thoughtful blend of love, guidance, and adaptability. Parents/Guardians must embrace new-age parenting by integrating digital awareness with traditional values while fostering emotional resilience and self-discipline.

By prioritising wellbeing, education and strong moral foundations, one can ensure these generations grow into responsible, fulfilled, and future-ready individuals. Also, by providing proper nutrition, encouraging physical and mental wellbeing, fostering social skills, and setting positive examples, parents/guardians can create an environment where children thrive. It is aptly said that a happy and healthy child is not just the result of luck but of consistent efforts, care and understanding from those who nurture them.

(The writer is an educator; views expressed are personal)

# The colours of identity: Unraveling the layers of race, bias and belonging

Among the many facets of identity, skin colour remains one of the most prominent yet divisive markers of difference

Tariety. A singular word that carries depth, stretching across every horizon within our periphery Everything, whether tangible or intangible, holds a streak of diversity, existing in more than just one form. The human race is the finest testament to this theory, embodying an expansive fluctuation of diversity in ways unparalleled. No two humans are exactly the same, no matter the similarity. From the obvious-gender, ethnicity, nationality-to the microscopic strands of DNA, variety defines existence. Among the many dimensions

of human diversity, skin color stands as one of the most visible yet most divisive. The spectrum of human skin spans hues of black, brown, white, and even shades of yellow,



ALINA HUSSAIN

beyond national borders, appearing across continents where South Asians have forming a palette that should migrated and settled. However, symbolise coexistence. However, rather than being unlike colors on a painter's palette, which blend to create embraced as a natural manifestation of diversity, this specnew shades, human societies tend to resist seamless integratrum has historically been distorted into a hierarchy. The tion. Instead, racial identities darker shades, unfairly posiremain dissonant, sometimes tioned at the bottom, contrast even immiscible. The concept starkly with the privileges of being "white-washed" is afforded to the lighter tones at one such manifestation of this the top. This stratification of resistance—an observation color has shaped life experi- aimed at those who adopt

ences, often determining Western customs, implying a dilution of their native culture opportunities, treatment, and under the influence of whitesocial perceptions. India, with its rich cultural and genetic ness

diversity, encapsulates nearly South Asians, however, have the entire range of this scale. long held a deep connection to To the global eye, Indians and their cultural roots. Even in their South Asian neighbours fall in the middle—brown. foreign lands, communities of brown-skinned individuals This stain of brownness seeps tend to cluster together, finding comfort and belonging among their own. This natural act of unity transcends national identities, allowing individuals from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka to identify simply as brown in predominantly white societies. Migration dissolves political boundaries, fostering a sense of kinship rooted in shared experiences rather than nationality.

The primary reason for South Asian migration to the West



has historically been the pursuit of a better livelihood. The roots of this movement can be traced back to 19th-century colonisation, where white Europeans established themselves as the superior race while relegating the browns and blacks to a lower status. This racial hierarchy was not only imposed but deeply internalised, embedding itself into the psyche of societies across generations. The consequences of this structured superiority continue to persist, subtly influencing perceptions and

opportunities to this day. Though the era of overt, institutionalised racial discrimination has passed, its remnants linger. Silent racism manifests in subtle yet persistent ways— being followed in a store, being presumed guilty before proven innocent, or being typecast into stereotypes like

smelly" or "uncivilised." The unspoken biases that people of color endure may be so ingrained in social interactions that they sometimes question whether their experiences of discrimination are real or imagined. But just because racism has grown quieter does not mean it has disappeared. At times, however, this silence gives way to overt expressions of prejudice. The question India and other parts of the

then arises: can racism be unlearned? Can deep-seated biases, cultivated over centuries, be eradicated? Some argue that racism is built on a foundation of illusion-a false construct designed to uphold power structures rather than any scientific or logical basis. Commerce, globalisation and education might pave the way toward dismantling these biases, but the journey is long and uncertain.

Yet racism is not a one-way

street. Just as people of color

face discrimination in white-

majority societies, white indi-

viduals experience racism in

South Asian countries as well.

Whether rooted in resent-

ment from the colonial past, an

ingrained inferiority complex,

or sheer ignorance, racism in

region is equally loud and apparent. This internal bias is a lingering vestige of colonial influence, stubborn and deeply embedded in the collective consciousness.

Ultimately, our skin color is an inescapable part of our identity. But as history has shown, social constructs evolve. Just as oppression once seemed an immutable reality but has gradually been challenged and deconstructed, so too can racial prejudices fade with time. While the road to a world free of color-based biases is long, there remains a glimmer of hope-a strip of rainbow amidst the storm, promising a better, more inclusive tomorrow (The writer is a law student

and a freelance writer; views *are personal)* 

# world 08

**North Korea** 

slams Rubio

for calling it

'rogue' state

intent on reaching out to its



# **Trump plans to cut US funding** China reiterates threat to to South Africa over land law retaliate against US tariffs

#### PTI CAPE TOWN

Us President Donald Trump has said he will cut all funding to South Africa and has launched an investigation into the country's polices, claiming a "massive" human rights violation is happening over a new land expropriation law.

Trump made the pledge to stop all future funding on his Truth Social platform on Sunday, writing: "South Africa is confiscating land, and treat-ing certain classes of people VERY BADLY." In South Africa, Trump wrote,

a "massive Human Rights VIO-LATION, at a minimum, is happening for all to see. The United States won't stand for it, we will act. Also, I will be cutting off all future funding to South Africa until a full inves-tigation of this situation has

been completed!" The South African govern-ment said Monday that the Trump administration needed to have a better understanding of the new law, which is meant to help redress the impact of decades of white minority rule in South Africa under the apartheid regime, which ended in 1994. South African President Cyril Ramaphosa said in a statement that "the South African government has

not confiscated any land." During apartheid, land was taken from South Africa's Black majority, who were forced to live in areas designated for Blacks only. Billionaire Elon Musk, who is

one of Trump's close allies, was born and raised in South



Africa and has also targeted Ramaphosa's government, accusing it of being anti-white and claiming in 2023 it was allowing a "genocide" against white farmers. Experts in South Africa say that while there are cases of white farmers being killed, it is rather a reflection of the country's desperately high levels of violent crime across the board, which are some of the worst in the world.

In comments to reporters, Trump said Sunday "they're taking away land, they're confiscating land and actually they're doing things that are perhaps far worse than that." Trump didn't say exactly which policy he was referring to, or which people were being mistreated. But his comments appeared to be in reaction to the new land law South Africa passed last month that gives the government scope to acquire land from private parties if it is

in the public interest. The law has been debated and considered for years and has



been criticized by some interest groups in South Africa as opening the way to seize land from some of the country's white minority. However, the government says people's rights are still protected and land can only be taken in specific circumstances where it is not being used productively and it's in the public interest that the land is redistributed. The office of Ramaphosa

released a statement Monday, saying: "The recently adopted Expropriation Act is not a confiscation instrument, but a constitutionally mandated legal process that ensures public access to land in an equitable and just manner as guided by the constitution

South Africa, like the United States of America and other countries, has always had expropriation laws that balance the need for public usage of land and the protection of rights of property owners." South African Foreign Minister

Ronald Lamola said Trump's

administration should use the investigation it says it is launching "to deepen their understanding of South Africa's policies as a constitutional democracy. Such insights will ensure a respectful and informed approach to our democratic

South Africa is a major bene-ficiary of US funding under the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, or PEPFAR, which contributes around \$400 million a year to the country's HIV/AIDS program. That funding was already under threat after Trump's freeze on foreign aid across the world. Trump has been critical of South Africa in the past. Ramaphosa's office said there is "no other significant funding that is provided by the United States in South Africa," although South Africa is America's largest trading partner in Africa by some way, according to the US International Trade Commission.

Trump has previously been critical of South Africa's government, writing in a social media post during his first term in 2018 that land was being seized from white farms and there was "large scale killing of farmers." Trump said in the same message — which was roundly criticized in South Africa as making false claims - that he was ordering then-Secretary of State Mike Pompeo to investigate. There are an average of around

70 homicides a day in South Africa, according to official crime statistics, and the vast majority of victims are Black.

### PTI TAIPEI (TAIWAN)

President Donald U<sup>S</sup> President Donald Trump's trade war with Canada, Mexico and China is ramping up over the production and importation of the opiate fentanyl, along with trade sur-pluses and illegal border cross-

ings by migrants from across the globe. Here is what Beijing says about

What has been China's reaction so far?

China has reiterated its threat to take "necessary countermea-sures to defend its legitimate rights and interests" following Trump's decision to impose 10 per cent tariffs on China for allegedly doing too little to stem the production of precursor chemicals for fentanyl.

The Foreign Ministry statement issued Sunday did not mention any specific retaliatory measures, but said "China calls on the United States to correct its wrongdoings, maintain the hard-won positive dynamics in the counter-narcotics cooperation, and promote a steady, sound and sustainable development of China-US rela-

China says the US action vio-lates World Trade Organisation rules and has vowed to bring a case before the body that gov-

The Ministry of Public Security What other issues may be having an impact on the dispute? on Sunday made near identical charges and the Commerce China's enormous trade deficit with the US, which reached Ministry also issued a closely nearly USD 1 trillion last year, worded statement.

Who does China say is to has been a constant target of blame? Trump accuses China of allow-

would make Chinese goods more expensive for US coning the production of fentanyl,



countries with arbitrary tariff

to view and solve its own fen-

tanyl issue in an objective and

terms of policy and its imple-

but domestic drug use is rela-

statement said the US has not

since Beijing began to take legal

mentation

tively low.

action.

which is then made into tablets in Mexico and smuggled into and distributed throughout the US, which records some 70,000 from toys to clothing overdose deaths from the drug

could be impacted if US con-China's vital export market annually. China says the US must hold itself to account sumers decide to American." The Chinese instead of "threatening other domestic economy has failed to hikes," the Foreign Ministry said. "The United States needs respond to a range of government-backed stimuli, while for eign infrastructure projects and other major government initia-tives that add to the country's rational way ... (China is) one of the world's toughest countries already high public debt threaten more economic stagnation. on counter-narcotics both in That is already starting to derail Chinese President Xi Jinping's push to overtake the US in key Experts say China executes an economic and political indicaunknown number of people tors, threatening his ultimate each year for smuggling drugs, ambition to conquer the island republic of Taiwan and assert The Ministry of Public Security Chinese primacy in the Indo-

Pacific region. Stopping illegal immigration has also been one of Trump's core political messages, and was named in tariff actions reported any fentanyl precursor seizures originating in China against US neighbours Mexico and Canada. Illegal arrivals from China are considered a fraction of such numbers, but Trump has put virtually every country on notice that he will Trump's complaints. Tariffs hold them accountable for their nationals who enter the US outside the law.



have to pay a significant part of the cost of importing everything

leader Kim Jong Ün to revive diplomacy. "The hostile words and deeds of the person who is in charge of the US foreign policy served as an occasion of confirming once again the US hostile policy toward the DPRK which remains unchanged," the Foreign Ministry said, using the acronym of the country's official name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. "Rubio's coarse and nonsensical remarks only show directly the incorrect view of the new U.S. administration on the DPRK

and will never help promote the US interests as he wishes," it said. The statement took issue with what the ministry called Rubio's branding of North Korea as a 'rogue" state in a media interview. It likely referred to Rubio's appearance on "The Megyn Kelly Show" on Jan. 30, in which he called North Korea and Iran "rogue states" as he addressed foreign policy challenges. It was not the first time for US officials to describe

North Korea as a rogue state. But the North's latest statement suggests the country won't likely quickly embrace Trump's overture.

# Denmark PM seeks support from EU partners

Trump 'agreed' **USAID** should be PTI BRUSSELS Denmark's prime minister Dinsisted on Monday that Greenland is not for sale and shut down: Musk

PTI WASHINGTON

The US Agency for International Development is on the cusp of being shut-tered, according the Trump administration's billionaire adviser and Tesla CEO Elon Musk - who has been wrestling for control of the agency in

recent days. Early Monday, Musk held a live session on X Spaces, previously known as Twitter Spaces, and id that he spol about USAID with the president. "He agreed we should shut it down," Musk said. "It became apparent that its not an apple with a worm it in," Musk said. "What we have is just a ball of worms. You've got to basically get rid of the whole thing. It's beyond repair." "We're shutting it down. His comments come after the administration placed two top security chiefs at USAID on leave after they refused to turn over classified material in restricted areas to Musk's government-inspection teams, a current and a former U.S. official told The Associated Press on Sunday. Musk's Members of Department of Government Efficiency, known as DOGE, eventually did gain access Saturday to the aid agency's classified information, which includes intelligence reports, the former official said. Musk's DOGE crew lacked high enough security clearance to access that information, so the two USAID security officials - John Voorhees and deputy Brian McGill - believed themselves legally obligated to deny access. The current and former US officials had knowledge of the incident and spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to share the information. Musk on Sunday responded to an X post about the news by saying, "USAID is a criminal organization. Time for it to die? He followed with additional posts on X about the aid agency. Kate Miller, who serves on an advisory board for DOGE, said in a separate post that no classified material was accessed "without proper security clearances It comes a day after DOGE carried out a similar operation at the Treasury Department, gaining access to sensitive information including the Social Security and Medicare customer payment systems. The Washington Post reported that a senior Treasury official had



### called for a robust response from her European Union part-ners should US President Donald Trump press ahead with his threat to take control of the island

"I will never support the idea of fighting allies. But of course, if the US puts tough terms on Europe, we need a collective and robust response," Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen told reporters in Brussels as EU leaders gathered for defense talks.

Greenland, home to a large US military base, is an autonomous erritory of Denmark a long

harmony,

the light of knowledge, he

said

to respect the sovereignty of all national states in the world, and that Greenland is today a part of the Kingdom of Denmark. It's part of our territory and it's not for sale?

She acknowledged US concerns about security in the Arctic Region, where Russia and China have been increasingly active.

"I totally agree with the Americans that the High North, that the Arctic region is becoming more and more important when we are talking about defence and security and deterrence," Frederiksen said, adding that the US and Denmark could have "stronger footprints" in Greenland, in

security terms.



end Russia's war on Ukraine The Europeans fear that any attempt to pull together a quick deal would not be favourable to Ukraine.

UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer and NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte were set to join the bloc's 27 leaders at a self-styled "retreat" at Egmont Place in the Belgian capital. The summit agenda focuses on EU-US cooperation, military spending and ramping up

Europe's defense industry. The meeting comes as Europe's biggest land conflict since World War II approaches its third anniversary, and with confidence in Trump shaky as he threatens his allies with tariffs. Trump already slapped duties on F aluminum during his first term. 'We were listening carefully to those words, and of course we are preparing also on our side," EU foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas said. But, she underlined "there are no winners in trade wars. If ... the US starts a trade war, then the one laughing on the side is China. We are very interlinked?

tionship."

erns global commerce.

resigned over Musk's team accessing sensitive information. Musk formed DOGE in cooperation with the Trump administration with the stated goal of finding ways to fire fedty purposes," he said. eral workers, cut programs and slash federal regulations. USAID, whose website vanished Saturday without explanation, has been one of the fed-

eral agencies most targeted by the Trump administration in an escalating crackdown on the federal government and many of its programs.

"It's been run by a bunch of radical lunatics. And we're getting them out," Trump said to reporters about USAID on Sunday night.

The Trump administration and Dhaka (PTI): Bangladesh belongs to all of its citizens and Secretary of State Marco Rubio have imposed an unprecedentis a safe place for all people regardless of religion or caste, ed freeze on foreign assistance that has shut down much of Chief Adviser Muhammad USAID's humanitarian, devel-Yunus has said, as he greeted opment and security programs members of the Hindu comworldwide - compelling thoumunity on Saraswati Puja. sands of layoffs by aid organi-Hindus in Bangladesh celebrat zations - and ordered fured Saraswati Puja on Monday loughs and leaves that have gutamid traditional enthusiasm festivity and religious fervour. ted the agency's leadership and staff in Washington. In a message on Sunday, Yunus The US is by far the world's said Bangladesh is an abode of

largest donor of humanitarian communal harmony "For thousands of years, peoaid, with USAID administering billions of dollars in humani ple of all religions have been living together in this country tarian, development and security assistance in more than 100 irrespective of caste, colour and religion," he said. "The councountries. Peter Marocco, a returning political appointee try belongs to all of us and is from Trump's first term, was a a safe place for all people leader in enforcing the shutregardless of religion or caste," he added down. USAID staffers say they Yunus took over as the counbelieve that agency outsiders with visitors badges asking try's interim leader after a stuquestions of employees inside dent-led uprising last year forced former Prime Minister the Washington headquarters are members of Musk's DOGE Sheikh Hasina to flee to India on August 5, ending her 15team. Democratic Sen. Elizabeth Warren said in a year rule. The interim governpost on Sunday that Trump was ment "has been relentlessly allowing Musk to access peoworking to improve the fate of ple's personal information and all irrespective of race, religion, and caste and ensure their shut down government funding. "We must do everything in equal rights," Yunus said. our power to push back and The goddess Saraswati is a protect people from harm," symbol of truth, justice, and

the Massachusetts senator said,

without giving details.

time US ally. Last month, they can have more possibili-Trump left open the possibilities," she said, underlining that Denmark itself can also "scale up" its security presence. "If this ty that the American military might be used to secure is about securing our part of Greenland, as well as the Panama Canal. "We need the world, we can find a way forward," Frederiksen said. Greenland for national securi-

Last week, her government Frederiksen said she has "great announced a roughly 14.6 billion kroner (nearly \$2 billion) support" from her EU partners on the fact "that everybody has agreement with parties includ-



European Council President Antonio Costa, left, greets French President Emmanuel Macron as he arrives for an EU summit at the Egmont Palace in Brussels, on Monday AP/PT

ing the governments of It would include three new Greenland and the Faeroe Arctic naval vessels, two addi-Islands to "improve capabilities tional long-range surveillance for surveillance and maintain- drones and satellite capacity, ing sovereignty in the region." the Defence Ministry in

Copenhagen said. Frederiksen's remarks came as EU leaders met for defence talks but with no clear sign yet from Trump about how he intends to try to

#### **B'desh abode** Schools closed, emergency crews At least 19 killed, mostly of communal deployed on volcanic Greek island women, in car bomb Spike in seismic activity raises quake concerns blast in northern Syria says Yunus

PTI SANTORINI (GREECE)

Schools were closed and emer-gency crews deployed on the volcanic Greek island of Santorini on Monday after a spike in seismic activity raised concerns about a potentially powerful earthquake.

Precautions were also ordered on several nearby Aegean Sea islands — all popular summer vacation destinations - after more than 200 undersea earthquakes were recorded in the area over the past three days.

"These measures are precautionary, and authorities will remain vigilant," Civil Protection Minister Vasilis Kikilias said late Sunday following an emergency government meeting in Athens. "We urge citizens to strictly adhere to safety recommendations to minimise risk. While Greek experts say the quakes, measuring up to magnitude 4.7, are not linked to Santorini's volcano, they acknowledge that the pattern of seismic activity is cause for concern. Government officials met with scientists throughout the weekend and on Monday to assess the situation, while schools were ordered shut on the nearby islands of Amorgos Anafi and Ios.

On Santorini, residents and visitors were advised to avoid large



indoor gatherings and areas where rock slides could occur, while hotels were instructed to drain swimming pools to reduce potential building damage from an earthquake. Fire Service rescuers who arrived on the island on Sunday set up yellow tents as a staging area inside a basketball court next to the island's main hospital.

'We arrived last night, a 26member team of rescuers and one rescue dog," said fire brigadier Ioannis Billias. Quakes continued rattling the island through the night and on Monday morning, many over magnitude 4.0, and Billias said many residents, including entire families, spent the night in their

Crescent-shaped Santorini is a premier tourism destination with daily arrivals via commercial flights, ferries, and cruise ships. The island draws more people should stay calm."

#### than 3 million visitors annually to its whitewashed villages, built along dramatic cliffs formed by a massive volcanic eruption more than 3,500 years ago.

Prominent Greek seismologist Gerasimos Papadopoulos cautioned that the current earthquake sequence - displayed on live seismic maps as a growing cluster of dots between the islands of Santorini, Ios, Amorgos, and Anafi - could indicate a larger impending

event. "All scenarios remain open," Papadopoulos wrote in an online post. "The number of tremors has increased, magnitudes have risen, and epicentres have shifted northeast. While these are tectonic quakes, not volcanic, the risk level has escalated."

In Santorini's main town of Fira, local authorities designated gathering points for residents in preparation for a potential evacuation, though Mayor Nikos Zorzos emphasized the preventive nature of the measures. "We are obliged to make preparations. But being prepared for something does not nean it will happen," he said during a weekend briefing. 'Sometimes, the way the situa tion is reported, those reports may contain exaggerations... so

### PTI DAMASCUS (SYRIA)

A car bomb exploded on the Syrian city on Monday, killing at least 19 people, all but one of them women, and leaving more than a dozen wounded, hospital workers said.

The car detonated next to a vehicle carrying mostly female agricultural workers on the outskirts of the city of Manbij. The dead included 18 women and one man, a nurse at the hospital, Mohammad Ahmad, told The Associated Press. Another 15 women were wounded, some of them in critical condition, according to the local Syrian civil defence. No group immediately claimed responsibility for the explosion.It was the seventh car bomb explosion in Manbij in

just over a month, said Munir Mustafa, the deputy director of civil defence.

Manbij in northeastern Aleppo province continues to witness violence even after the downfall of President Bashar Assad in December.

Turkish-backed factions, known as the Syrian National Army, have clashed with the US-backed Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces. The factions took the city from the SDF in early December during

a lightning insurgency that toppled President Bashar Assad. A resident said the car that detonated was parked on the roadside. The recurring attacks have forced residents to become more vigilant, he said. 'There are efforts from the people of Manbij to focus on protecting some neighbourhoods as well as setting up surveillance cameras in the main neighbourhoods of the city, Jameel al-Sayyed, a Manbij activist and journalist said. Mustafa warned that the attacks in Aleppo province near Syria's second city are a threat to Syria's progress to bring about

post-war security and economic recovery. Most of the explosions took place at night. "The continued attacks on

Syrian civilian areas and targeting civilians while they are trying to recover from the effects of the war of the defunct Assad regime ... threaten their lives, deepens their humanitarian tragedy, undermines educational and agricultural activities and livelihoods, and worsens the humanitarian situation

in Syria," Mustafa said. A car bombing in Manbij on Saturday killed four civilians and wounded nine, state news agency SANA reported, citing civil defense officials.



# Pakistan Prez Zardari to leave for China on 5-day state visit today

Asif Ali Zardari will travel to China on Tuesday on a five-day state visit during which he will discuss a broad spectrum of bilateral relations with the Chinese leaders, with a focus on economic and trade cooperation, security collaboration, and the multi-billion dollar economic corridor (CPEC). The Foreign Office said on Monday that President Zardari, who is visiting Beijing at the invitation of his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping, will hold high-level meetings with the President, Premier Li Qiang, and other senior officials.

pass the full spectrum of Pakistan-China relations, with a particular focus on economic and trade cooperation; counter-terrorism and security collaboration, China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and future connectivity initiatives," state-run Radio world. Pakistan quoted the Foreign Office as saying. The two sides will also

exchange views on regional and global geopolitical developments and cooperation in multilateral forums, it added. The CPEC, which connects Gwadar Port in Pakistan's

Islamabad (PTI) President Their "discussions will encom- Balochistan with China's Xinjiang province, is the flagship project of China's ambi tious Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). The BRI is seen as an attempt by China to further its influence abroad with infrastructure projects funded by Chinese investments across the Thousands of Chinese per-

sonnel are working in Pakistan on several projects under the aegis of the USD 60 billion China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Several Chinese workers have been killed in suicide attacks by a Baloch insurgent group,

To be known to all that I, Prabhjot Kaur W/ Sh. Parminder Singh R/o 457,Ground Floo DDA SFS Flats, Pocket GH-13, Paschim Viha

New Delhi-110087 has applied for conversio of DDA Flat No. 457, Ground Floor, SFS Cat.-I Pocket GH-13,Paschim Puri now known a

aschim Vihar, New Delhi-110087 from lea

has constituted a 12,000-strong para-military force to protect Chinese workers in the country. China has asked Pakistan to make efforts to effectively close the security loopholes and demanded more targeted measures to provide full protection for the CPEC and the safety and security of Chinese personnel, projects and institutions in Pakistan. Zardari will also attend the

inaugural ceremony of the 9th Asian Winter Games in Harbin, Heilongjiang province,

which is opposed to China's at the special invitation of the investments in the resource-rich province. Pakistan said it at the special invitation of the Express Tribune newspaper **SHARP INCREASE IN TERROR ATTACKS IN JANUARY 2025** 

reported. In a statement, Foreign Office Spokesperson Shafqat Ali Khan said the visit underscores the tradition of high-level exchanges between Pakistan and China, reflecting the deep commitment of the two coun tries to strengthen their allweather strategic cooperative Partnership, it added.

Zardari's trip comes at a crucial time as Pakistan seeks to revitalise its economy and strengthen regional connectivity through CPEC.

Public Notice

Meanwile, Pakistan witnessed a sharp increase in terror attacks in January 2025, surging by 42 per cent compared to the previous month, a think tank has said. Quoting the data released by the Pakistan Institute for Conflict and Security Studies (PICSS), Dawn reported on Monday 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 suffered injuries, including 53 security

forces personnel, 54 civilians and 10 militants. The report high-lighted an intensified counterterrorism campaign by security forces, which led to elimination of at least 185 militants in January, making it the second deadliest month for militant casualties since 2016.

The highest number of militants killed in a single month since 2016 was recorded in December 2024, when security forces neutralised 190 militants. The combined toll of militant attacks and security operations in January stood at 245 fatalities, comprising 185 militants, 40 security forces personnel and 20 civilians.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP remained the worst-affected province, followed by Balo¬chistan. In KP's settled districts, insurgents carried out 27 attacks, resulting in 19 fatalities, including 11 security personnel, six civilians, and two militants. The tribal districts of KP (erstwhile Fata) witnessed 19 attacks, leading to 46 deaths, including 13 security personnel, eight civil-ians, and 25 militants. Balochistan also experienced a surge in militant activity, with at least 24 attacks, which claimed 26 lives, including 11 security personnel, six civilians, and nine militants.

Date: 3/2/2025

**Central Coalfields Limited** 

"A Miniratna Company" (A Subsidiary of Coal India Limited)

NOTICE

### **Officials: Remains of 55** of 67 victims of midair collision identified Arlington (PTI): Authorities

said Sunday they have recovered the remains of 55 of the 67 people killed in the deadliest US air disaster since 2001. Washington, DC Fire and EMS Chief John Donnelly said at a news conference that divers still need to find the bodies of 12 more victims and are committed to the dignified recovery of remains as they prepare to lift wreckage from the Potomac River as early as Monday morn-

"Reuniting those lost in this tragic incident is really what keeps us all going," said Colonel Francis B Pera of the Army Corps of Engineers. Portions of the aircraft will be loaded onto flatbed trucks and taken to a hangar for further investigation.

They spoke hours after families of the victims visited the crash site just outside Washington, DC, walking along the banks of the Potomac River near Reagan National Airport to memorialize their loved ones.

Dozens of people arrived in buses with a police escort close to where an American Airlines jet and an Army Black Hawk helicopter collided Wednesday, killing all 67 aboard the two aircraft. Federal investigators were working to piece together the events that led to the crash while recovery crews were set to pull more wreckage

from the chilly water. Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy on Sunday said he wanted to leave federal aviation investigators space to conduct their inquiry. But he posed a range of questions about the crash while appearing on morning TV news programs. "What was happening inside the towers? Were they understaffed? ... The position of the Black Hawk, the elevation of

Airlines flight with 64 people on board was preparing to land from Wichita, Kansas. The Army Black Hawk helicopter was on a training mission and had three soldiers on board. Both aircraft plunged into the Potomac River after colliding. The plane's passengers included figure skaters returning from the 2025 US Figure Skating Championships in Wichita, Kansas, and a group of hunters returning from a

army Staff Sgt Ryan Austin O'Hara, 28, of Lilburn, Georgia; Chief Warrant Officer 2 Andrew Loyd Eaves, 39, of Great Mills, Maryland; and Cpt Rebecca M Lobach, of Durham, North Carolina, were killed in the helicopter. The National Transportation Safety Board said Saturday that preliminary data showed conflicting readings about the altitudes of the airliner and the Army helicopter.

Investigators also said that about a second before impact, the jet's flight recorder showed a change in its pitch. But they did not say whether that change in angle meant that pilots were trying to perform an evasive maneuver to avoid the crash.

PUBLIC NOTICE is is to inform you that Mr. Anwar Jamal intends to uurchase the second floor, without terrace/roo ights, measuring 113.69 square meters, built or part of the property bearing no. 3680, Ward No. XI ndroon Sabzi Mandi, Darya Ganj, New Delhi, fro

Androon Sabzi Mandi, Jarya Gani, New Delm, from Mrs. Arisha. The said property was originally owned by Mr. Badar Sabri. He sold it to Mrs. Nafisa Begun through a Sale Deed dated 15.03.2013. Thereatter Mrs. Nafisa Begum sold the property to Mr. Rashid Subsequently, Mr. Rashid sold the property to Mrs. Subsequently, Mr. Rashio solo the property to Miss. Arisha Khan, Mrs. Arisha Khan is the undisputed owner of the said property. The same property is being financed by RBL Bank, Branch Gurgaon. If any person(s) objection& regarding subject property, then kindly may submit his/her objection within 07 days from the date of the Notice in writing.The said objection may be kindly sent to the undersigned by way of the Registered Post on the address given below and by E-mail failing which, the claim as per aforesaid shall be treated as null and void in respect

hold to free hold in DDA. The origin documents i.e.Fifth & Final Demar Letter of the above flat have been lost. An F Letter of the above flat have been lost. An FIR to this effect has been lodged in R.S. Crime Branch in vide S.O. No.430/2014 LR No.25531 30/2025 dated 03.02.2025. Any person(s) claiming any right, interest, having any objection or found in possession of original documents, may write/contact with above named person at above address/phone No. 9899044717 within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice. The person claiming any right, interest, objections with respect to this property can personally inform or write to Dy. Director (LAB) H or Director (H)-1,D Block, 3rd Floor, Vikas Sadan, INA, New Delhi. night vision goggles?" Duffy asked on CNN. The American PUBLIC NOTICE Information is given to general public at large that Mrs. Laxmi Devi who is/are purchasing the Residential built up Third Floor, with roof/terrace

rights, built on property bearing NO. L-SA-A having plot No. 58, area measuring 75 sq. yards out of khasra No. 30, situated in the area of

within 07 days at below address

Dontha Karuna W/o-I, No.15218801A Hav (DS) Dontha Siddaiah Goud, R/o-9-67-38, H S Kottala, Kanala, Kurnool, A.P.- 518593, have

Public Delhi.

03/02/2025

PUBLIC NOTICE PUBLIC NOTICE General public is hereby informed that my clients Kshitiz Bhatnagar S/o Late Arun Kumar Bhatnagar, his wife Smt Anshika Bhatnagar and their daughte Ms. Tushika Bhatnagar all R/o SRB 58C Shipra Riviera, Indirapuram, Ghaziabad (U.P)201010 have severed all personal and family relations & ties with their respective elder brother, brother-in law and uncle Sh. Nikhil Bhatnagar R/o SRB-58C, Shipra Riviera, Indirapuram Ghaziabad (U.P) 201010. The presen declaration signifies that as of today, my clients will no be involved in any sort of social or family affairs with the above said person. My clients further undertake to not interfere in his personal life or activities and explicitly renounce any form of connection or ommunication with him. Anybody lealing with the said person shall do

at their own risk and responsibilities and my clients shall not be responsible for the same. Saarthak Gupta (Advocate)

Enrl. No.: D/6398/2023 Ch. No.553, Dwarka Court, New Delhi-110075, Mob: 9871022208

PUBLIC NOTICE **LU131 CENTOTICE** Notice is hereby given that my client Dajit Singh and Lokesh Goyal partners of M/s Eleannt Enterprises is in process to purchase Property Bearing No. 1, area measuring 1280 sq. yards situated in the layout plan of Vasant Vihar, Munrika Marg, New Delhi - 110057 (availing Cedif Facility from HDEC Bank) from The Indian Society of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints vide Sale Deed dated 27/B/2012 (Document No. 7411) executed by M/s Golden Chariot Recreations Pvt. Ltd, whereas The Indian Society of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints confirmed that they are not having the below mentioned the Complete Title Deed pertaining to the said Property. FIR has already been lodged on dated 231/12025

23/1/2025 Page Nos. 34.552 (being blank stamp papers on lot to purposes of fulfilling applicable stamp duty) of the Driginal Sale Deed dated 10.12.2007, registration No. 11943 All person's having any claim against or in respect of the said Property, or any part thereof, by way of sale, exchange, mortgage (equitable/registered or otherwise), gift, trust, inheritance, family arrangement

arrangement, maintenance, bequest, partnership, possession, lease, sublease, tenancy, license, lien,

Public Notice

changed my name from Dontha Karuna to Kancharla Karuna, vide affidavit dated 03/02/2025 before Notary

I, Bala Devi, Mother of No.14832213Y Hav Baljeet Singh, R/o- Vill & Post-Hoshdarpur Garhi, Teh & Dist- Hapur, U.P.- 245101, have changed my name from Bala Devi to Bala, vide Public Notice This is to inform the general public that Mr. Vijay Sharma, Mr. Vishal Sharma & Mr. Kunal Sharma are the owner of Plot no. 291, property ID no. 18FANP72 area measuring 209.06 sq. mtrs. situated at 7A, Urban Estate HSVP Faridabad, Tehsil Balladgarh, Distt. Faridabad, Haryana through Transfer Deed in blood relation dated 15.07.2024 as doc. No. 2491 executed by Mr. Tarsem Lain favour of Mr. Vijay Sharma, Mr. Vishal Sharma & Mr. Kunal Sharma in respect of Plot. Mr. Vijay Sharma, Mr. Vishal Sharma & Mr. Kunal Sharma e in the process of mortgaging the said property with Tata Capital Limited. Any objections or concerns regarding this transaction should be raised within a period of 7 days from the date of this public notice. Any objections submitted after the considered binding with respect to the said property or the interests of our clent. If anyone wishes to raise an objection, please do so within the stipulated 7-days period by contacting Law Veritas: North (Advocates & Lecal)

PUBLIC NOTICE Notice is hereby given on behalf of SAUMYA GUPTA with respect to FIRST FLOOR WITHOUT ROOF/TERRACE RIGHTS OF BUILT-UP PROPERTY BEARING NO.15-A. AREA MEASURING 60 SQ. YDS., OUT OF KHASRA NO.19/20, SITUATED IN THE REVENUE ESTATE OF VILLAGE MATIALA, KNOWN AS COLONY JAIN COLONY, IN BLOCK-T EXTN., PART-III, UTAM NAGAR, NEW DELH-110059; which is presently owned by MRS. LALITA CHAUHAN had purchased the subject properly from MR. RAHUL KOHLI AND MR. VICKY CHAUHAN vide Notarized General Power of Attorney, Agreement to sell and Will dated 02.05.2022, now SAUMYA GUPTA intend to purchase the same and mortgage against the financial assistance from ADITYA BIRLA HOUSING FINANCE LIMITED. To comply the requirements of BANK/NBFC, we give this public notice that if any Person having any type of claim (right/tile/interset/creating mortgage over the said property, may inform in writing, at the address Inglinitientersoftream infortigate offer in Bisan property, may inform in writing, at the address mentioned below, about his objections, within days from today, failing which it shall be presume that the said property is free from all type o Encumbrances, lienetc. Lucem Legal LLI Plot No.136, (Basement) Uday Park

New Delhi-110049, Contact # 011-40046316 PUBLIC NOTICE

Reg: Entire Third Floor with roof/terracc rights "said floor", a part of Property Bearing No. 305, area measuring 80 sq.yds., falling in Khasra No. 144 min, Situated at Amrit Puri (B), in the area of Village BarhiJharia Maria, Lajpat Nagar, New Delhi (Hereinafter referred to as the 'Said Property').

possession, lease, sublease, tenancy, license, lien, charge, pledge, aessment or otherwise howsever, are hereby requested to notify the same in writing to us with supporting documentary evidence at the address mentioned below within 15 days from the date hereon, failing which the claim or claims, if any, of such person or persons will be considered to have been waived and/or abandoned. **Kamal Kant Gupta (Advocate)** Uni No. F.2, First floor, Mahaluxni Merto Tower Sec-4, Vaishali, Gzb., U.P., Mob. 9810063351]

"Said Property"). Be it known to all that our clientess, Mrs. Beena (hereinafter called the "Purchaser") intends to purchase the said floor from Mr. Amod Mishra, Attorney of Mr. Tan Sukh Khimji Shingdia (hereinafter called the 'Attorney-holder'). In this connection, the Attorney-holder has informed the purchaser that he is the sole and absolute attorney holder in respect of the said floor of the said property vide POA documents viz.,GPA, ATS and Will dated 11.11.1996 executed by Mr. Tan Sukh Khimii Shinodia in his favour. Public Notice This is to inform the general public that Kailash Marain Mehra is the owner of Property no. 255, area measuring 33 Sq. Yds., i.e. 27.60 Sq. Mts. situated at Kucha Sangigi Tam, Naya Bans, Khari Baoli, Delhi – 110006. He became the owner through 3 Relinquishment Deed i.e. (1) Relinquishment Deed dated 08.02.2006 as doc. No. 1155 executed by (1)Mr. Shyam Narain Mehra (2) Mr. Om Narain Mehra (3) Mr. Virender Kumar Mehra (4) Mr. Subhash Chand Mehra (5) Mr. Akhil Kumar Mehra in favour of Mr. Kailash Narain Mehra (10) Mr. Mohan Narain Mehra (2) Mrs. Shiri Rani mesoed to forogerly no. 255. (2) Relinquishment Deed dated 10.02.2006 as doc. No. 1193 executed by (1) Mr. Mohan Narain Mehra (2) Mrs. Shiri Rani Mehra (3) Mr. Schwani Mehra (4) Mr. Harish Mehra (5) Mrs. Shaila Rani Mehra (6) Mr. Santosh Kumar Mehra (3) Br. Kallash Narain Mehra in respect of property no. 255. and Saliash Narain Mehra intends to transfer the Al's and Will dated 11.11.1996 executed by Mr. Tan Sukh Khimji Shingdia in his favour The Attorney holder has further informed tha Mr Tan Sukh Khimji Shingdia owned the said property vide POA documents viz., GPA, ATS and Will dated 11.04.1990 executed by Mr and Will dated 11.04.1990 executed by Mir Darshan Lal in his favour. The Attorney holder has also informed the purchaser tha the said floor is not mortgaged anywhere and there is no charge or dispute or any litigation pending regarding the said floor.

Itigation pending regarding the said floor. Any person including Bank/s, Financial Institution/s. relative/s having any claim, right, title or any interest of any nature whatscever into or upon the said floor is hereby called upon to make the same known, in writing, with documenlary evidence, by Registered AD Post, to the undersigned at the address mentioned herein below within 07 days of publication of this notice and in the event of no response having been received to the notice, the title of the attorney-holder in respect of the said floor shall be deemed to be clear of any charge or encumbrance of any nature whatsoever and any subsequent. Property no. 255. Kailash Narain Mehra intends to transfer the natash Narain Mehra intends to transfer the ownership of above-mentioned Property by way of Sale Deed to Shavitri Devi. Subsequently, Shavitri Devi is in the process of mortgaging the said property with SMFG India Home Finance Co. Ltd. (Formerly Fullerton India Home Finance Co. Ltd.). Any objections or concerns regarding this Co. Ltd.). Any objections or concerns regarding this transaction should be raised within a period of 07 days from the date of this public notice. Any objections submitted after the completion of this 07-

Notice is hereby given to the General Public tha Mrs. Seema Batra is the owner of Residentia First Floor, without roof rights of House No. 5 H-44, land Area Measuring 150 Sq. Yards. Situated in the area of Village N.1.T. Faridabad Teshil and District Faridabad, Haryana by virtue of Regd. GPA Dated 10.08.2018, as Doc. No 2036, executed by Mrs. Shashi Gandhi, same tt be finance by SMFG India Credit Company Limited (Formerly Fulletron India Credi Company Limited), General public hereby informed that if anybody has any kind of dispute kindly inform the undersigned in writing on the below mentioned address within vriting on the below mentioned address with 7 days of the present. **Rahul Raj Pathak, Advoca SG Associates (Law Fir** 

No. /CSMC/2025/57

Public Procurement Portal https://eprocure.gov.in in addition, procurement is also done through GeM portal https://gem.gov.in CHHATRAPATI SAMBHAJIINAGAR MUNICIPAL CORPORATION PHONE NO: (0240)-2333536-40,2348001-05 (PBX)

FAX-(0240)-2331213 website:-http://www.aurangabadmahapalika.org/

### **Request for Proposal**

### E-Tender Notice No 2025-AMCA-114533-I/2024-25

Development of Project for Sports Complex and Commercial Shops under P.G.3 at TV Centre N10 in Chhatrapat Sambhajinagar Municipal Coloration on Build Operate and Transfer [BOT] Basis. Situated at Chhatrapat Sambhajinagar. Details Such as bid document last date of submission, date of Pre bid conference etc. will be available from 4/2/2025 from 17.00 hrs. on <u>https://www.mahatenders.gov.in</u> portal. All interested bidders may apply onlin through this portal.

Sr.No	Description	Details
)1	Name of Work	Development of Project for Sports Complex and Commercial Shops under
		P.G.3 at TV Centre N10 in Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar Municipal
		Corporation on Build Operate and Transfer [BOT] Basis. Situated at
		Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar
)2	Department	Build Operate and Transfer (BOT)
)3	EMD (Online payment only)	Rs. 4,71,028/-
)4	Bid Validity	120 Days
)5	Form Fee (Online payment only)	Rs.11,800/- (Including GST)
)6	Time Limit of Work	18 Months
)7	Performance Bank Guarantee	5% of Project cost in the form of Bank Guarantee of Nationalized bank.
	(For successful bidder only)	
)8	Date & Time of Publishing/	4/2/2025 Time 17:00Hrs
	Downloading of Tender	
)9	Date of pre- bid meeting	14/2 /2025 Time at 13:00 Hrs
0	Date & Time of Submitting	28/2/2025 Time upto 14:00 Hrs .
	the Tender	
		Sd/-
		Municipal Commissioner & Administrator

### जा क्र मनपा ।बी ओ टी।२०२५/५९

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Municipal Corporation Chh. Sambhajinaga

	Har Din Da, Har Dil Da		
THE PUNJAB STATE COOPERATIVE MILK PRODUCERS FEDERATION LTD. SCO 153-155. SECTOR 34-A, CHANDIGARH-160022. EPABX NO. 0172-5041812,66			
	Notice Inviting Tender	www.verka.coop	
e ter	nders are hereby invited for the purchase and supply of following items:-		
Sr. No.	Name of Work/Item	Period/Tentative Qty	
1.	For Verka Head Office, Chandigarh Di-Calcium Phosphate	Half yearly /450 MT	
2.	For Verka Bathinda Dairy Hiring of:-		
	<ul> <li>a) Insulated vehicles for supply of packed milk and fresh milk products in bathinda milkshed area. (1.5 MT-04 Vehicles, 1.7 MT-01 Vehicle, 05 MT-01 Vehicle, 04 MT-01 Vehicle, 1.2 MT-01 Vehicle).</li> </ul>	One year with extension upto one year	
	b) Vehicles for sale depot bathinda & verka bathinda dairy for supply of W.M.P., S.M.P. Panjiri, Ghee, Butter, Powder, Tetra Pack & Other products all Punjab & other States (Cap.09 Ton, 15 Ton, 20 Ton, 25 Ton).	As per requirement	
	<li>c) Advertisement Agency for the purchase of advertisement and branding material.</li>	One year and extended upto three months	
	<ul> <li>d) Cold Store(Deep Freezer) for the storage of white butter.(Cap. approx. 400 to 500 MT)</li> </ul>	One year with extension upto three months and further	

### Village anagli jalib, colory known as New Mahavi Nagar, in block-L, Gali NO. 19, New Delhi from Mrs. Deepika Batra W/o Mr. Rajesh Batra who was the owner of property by virtue of Sale Deed dated 25.08.2022 (Doc. No. 21180) executed by Mrs. Deepali Makkar W/o Mr. Kanwal Kumar Makkar Intend to mortgage the same against the financia assistance from Hero Housing Finance Limited assistance from Hero Housing Hinance Limited. Electricity Billis not available in the name of Seller i.e Mrs. Deepika Batra W/o Mr. Rajesh Batra. To comply therequirements of BANK/NBFC, we give this public notice that if any person(s) having any objection regarding ownership and/ or creating mortgage of the said property is/are hereby requested to intimate in writing to the undersigned within 0.7 days at below address. NCR LAW ASSOCIATES Advocates & Consultants A-98, Sector-9, New

Vijay Nagar, Ghaziabad, (U.P.)-201009, MOB- 9999826427, 9999721152



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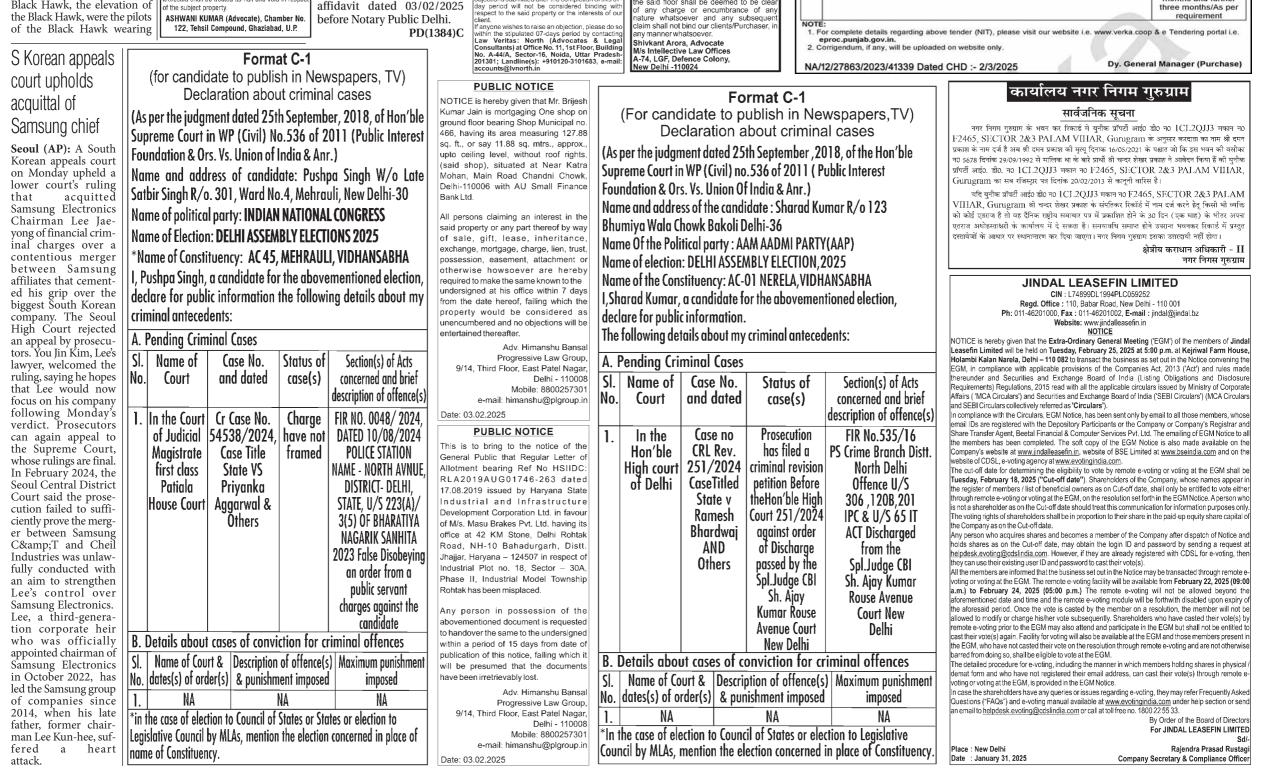
II anyone wishes to raise an objection, piease do so within the stipulated 7-days period by contacting Law Veritas: North (Advocates & Legal Consultants) at Office No. 11, 1st Floor, Building No. A-44/A, Sector-16, Noida, Uttar Pradesh-201301: Landline(s): +910120-3101683, e-mail: accounts@lvnorth.in PUBLIC NOTICE

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world 09





# Sitharaman encourages states to approach **Finance Commission on tax concerns**

PTI NEW DELHI

With southern states voicing concerns over unfair' tax 'unfair' tax money devolution, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has said the states have to engage and highlight their concerns with 16th Finance the Commission, whose recommendations will decide how the funds are divided.

Population is one of the criteria used by Finance Commissions to decide how the tax revenues are divided. Southern states, which have managed to check the rise in population, feel they get a raw deal when compared to the northern states with

much larger population growth Ĭn an interview with PTI. Sitharaman said the central

government does not decide

output prospects, with nearly

Robust sales gains and upbeat

the manufacturing

industry, as the index

increased to its highest level

since the series was created.

Input cost inflation eased for

a second month, relieving

pressure on manufacturers to

raise final output prices,'

On the price front, cost

pressures retreated to their

weakest in 11 months, but

selling prices rose solidly

The survey further noted that

capacity pressures among manufacturers in India remained mild. Underlying

data showed that strong job

creation in recent months

amid buoyant demand.

Bhandari noted.

growth prospects.

forecasts

companies

fiscal year.

in

economic

prompted to recruit

recruit



on the devolution formula. The devolution of taxes is made in accordance with the with the recommendations of the Finance Commission and concerns parameters based on which the aggrieved southern states should approach the panel the tax devolution principles

for change in parameters. "It is for the states to engage Finance Commission to express their about the

are laid down by them. "And if they think over a they've had a decade, distinctly different paradigm happening there. It is for them to highlight those issues to the Finance

## Give suggestions on new income tax bill: CBDT chief to industry

### PTI NEW DELHI

Commission," she said. After all, she said, the Centre takes the Finance Commission's recommendations, particularly on the core suggestions, and follows them.

It is not appropriate for them to voice concerns as the central government does not decide devolution of taxes, she added.

The Finance Commission typically gives recommendations for the division of tax revenues for five years. The 13th Finance Commission gave recommendations for 2010-11 to 2014-15 and its successor recommended formula for 2015-16 to 2019-20. The 15th Finance Commission gave suggestions for 2020-21 in its first report and then for 2021-2025-26.

### Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) Chief Ravi Agrawal on Monday asked industry players to give their suggestions on the new income tax bill, which will be tabled in Parliament this

week. The new income tax bill, which will replace the six decade old Income Tax act, 1961, has been drafted within six months and efforts have been made to simplify the language to make tax compliance easier for taxpayers and make it easier to read and understand. Agrawal said that the new bill

has been drafted in such a that way it meets international standards. Also, the new law has been

made concise, as old provisions have been provisions have been removed, making it less bulky. He asked the industry to give

their suggestions once the new bill is introduced and assured them that the suggestions would be looked into.

With regard to updated I-T returns (ITR-U), Agrawal said in the last three years about 90 Lakh such returns were filed. Around ₹8,500

Crore additional revenues were garnered.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in her Budget speech had said that the time limit to file updated ITRs for any assessment year will be extended from the current limit of two years to four vears.

BharatPe

to launch

**CMO** Parth

Joshi resigns

### India's manufacturing growth peaks at six-month high in January

### PTI NEW DELHI

32 per cent of firms India's manufacturing sector growth started the year forecasting growth and just one per cent expecting a 2025 on a strong footing and reduction. According to panel members, touched a six-month high in buoyant underlying demand, January, fuelled by the steepest upturn in exports in better customer relations, nearly 14 years, a monthly survey said on Monday. favourable conditions and marketing efforts all bode well for

The seasonally adjusted HSBC India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) rose from December's one-year low of 56.4 to 57.7 in January supported by the fastest upturn in new export orders since February 2011. In PMI parlance, a print above 50 means expansion, while a score below 50 denotes contraction.

"India's final manufacturing PMI marked a six-month high in January. Domestic and export demand were both strong, supporting new orders growth," said Pranjul Bhandari, Chief India Economist at HSBC.

Goods producers attributed the substantial increase in new orders to better domestic demand and a pick-up in international sales.

Subsequently, manufacturers in India continued to scale up production volumes. The latest increase was substantial and the fastest since October 2024.

enabled companies to stay on Going forward, companies top of their workloads, the turned more optimistic about survey said.

# India's customs duty cut to 10.66 per cent: CBIC

### PTI NEW DELHI

ndia has significantly reduced its average customs duty rate to 10.66 per cent from 11.65 per cent and is now moving towards the same levels as prevalent in the Southeast Asian countries, a senior government official said on Monday. Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) Chairman Sanjay Kumar Agarwal said the rate rationalisation exercise was carried out with the objective of making the tariff structure

additional workers at the start of the fourth quarter of this simple, ensuring The exercise was also competitiveness of Indian important for dispelling the "The employment PMI suggested robust job creation

industry representatives. The 10-nation bloc ASEAN Brunei, countries are Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

from 11.65 per cent to 10.66

per cent and we are now

moving towards the average

rate in Association of Southeast Asian Nations

(ASEAN) countries," he said

here at an interaction with

tax regime.

industry and simplifying the narrative of developed direction. countries like the US that "Now the average customs India has one of the highest rate in India has come down tariffs.

> The US President Donald Trump's administration has accused India of being "tariff king" and "tariff abuser" He noted that in the high duty

brackets from 25 per cent to 150 per cent, only a few products are available in the country. "There are very few items on

these high rates...Rates are otherwise in the narrow band of zero to 10 per cent," he said, adding that steps have also been announced in the Budget 2025-26 in this

government has The rationalised basic customs duty rates, slashing the number of levies to just eight, but has kept the effective duty rates on most items the same

by adjusting cess to further ease of doing business. Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman removed seven tariff rates in the 2025-26 Budget. This is over and above the seven tariff rates removed in the 2023-24 budget. After this, there will be only eight remaining tariff rates, including a 'zero' rate to further ease of doing business.

rationalisation is This designed to simplify the tariff structure, enhance trade competitiveness, and support India's integration into global supply chains, he added. He said the thrust in the

new venture budget was to ensure adequate availability of the items which are critical for manufacturing in the country like critical minerals.

These minerals, he said, are required for manufacturing areas like semiconductors, for transitioning to clean energy and for space programmes. These minerals are not available in the country and they are imported.



### PNS NEW DELHI

Porth Joshi, Chief Marketing Officer (CMO) of BharatPe has resigned to launch his own venture in consumer brands space, according to sources in the industry.

Joshi was appointed as BharatPe's CMO in June 2021. "After an incredible journey at BharatPe, I have decided to take the next step and pursue my entrepreneurial ambitions. I am grateful for the opportunities, learnings, and support I have received during my time here. BharatPe has always encouraged innovation and leadership, and I leave with nothing but appreciation for the team and the culture that fosters growth," Joshi said.

# Gold jumps ₹400 to breach ₹85,000-mark

### PTI NEW DELHI

Saturday.

Gold prices jumped ₹400 to hit a fresh record high of ₹85,300 per 10 grams in the national capital on Monday on the back of continued demand by jewellers and stockists, according to the All India Sarafa Association. Traders said sharp depreciation in rupee and firm trends in the international markets lifted gold rates to record high levels. The precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity had settled at ₹84,900 per 10 grams on

on

that

would

protection

Gold of 99.5 per cent purity rose for the fourth straight session by climbing ₹400 to hit another record high of ₹84,900 per 10 grams.

The yellow metal ended at ₹84,500 per 10 grams in the previous trading session. fifth Rallying for the

consecutive session, silver increased ₹300 to ₹96,000 per kg on Monday. The white metal finished at ₹95,700 per kg in the previous market close. On Monday, the rupee plunged 55 paise to close at an all-time low of 87.17 (provisional)

against the US dollar as global

market sentiments were impacted after the Trump administration slapped tariffs on Canada, Mexico, and China. In futures trade on the MCX gold contracts for April delivery increased ₹461, or 0.56 per cent, to ₹82,765 per 10 grams.

"Gold rallied positively on MCX. Participants increased gold allocations as concerns over a potential Trade War 2.0 from the US triggered safehaven demand," Jateen Trivedi, VP Research Analyst of Commodity and Currency, LKP Securities, said.

### Hindustan Media Ventures posts Q3 net profit at ₹18 Crore

Hindustan Media Ventures Ltd (HMVL) on Monday reported a consolidated profit after tax of ₹18 Crore in the December quarter.

PTI 📕 NEW DELHI

The company had posted a loss after tax of ₹0.82 Crore in October-December the period a year ago, according to a regulatory filing by HMVL, the publisher of rose eight per cent to ₹197.47 corresponding quarter.

Crore in the third quarter. It stood at ₹182.95 Crore in the corresponding period a year ago. Total expenses of HMVL were ₹201.68 crore, down 3.2 per cent in the December quarter.

Its revenue from printing and publishing of newspapers and periodicals was ₹179.72 Crore. HMVL's revenue from Digital jumped four-fold to ₹16.72 Crore in the Hindi daily Hindustan. December quarter against Its revenue from operations ₹4.18 Crore in the

### Agriculture industry hails Budget as bold play for revitalising rural India

### PNS NEW DELHI

 $E_{\rm Saturday}^{\rm xperts}$  and farmers on comprehensive package to revitalise agriculture sector, calling it "bold and a Mahakumbh of reforms. Susheel Kumar, Country Head and Managing Director of Syngenta India Pvt Ltd, lauded the budget for its commitment to bridging the urban-rural divide. "This Budget reflects a clear intent to create new opportunities for farmers, youth, women, and agrientrepreneurs, ensuring inclusive growth across the agricultural sector. It is encouraging that the

government is leveraging India's demographic High-Yielding Seeds and the demographic Mission Productivity as key policy dividend to engage rural agricultural youth in reforms activities," he said. "Hybrid seed varieties should be included in the significantly benefit the seed industry. However, some expressed concerns over unmet expectations. Dr. KC National Mission on High-Seeds. Ravi, Chief Sustainability Yielding Also, reinstating the 200 per cent Officer of Syngenta India, income tax deduction for noted the absence of long-R&D would be crucial for standing demands, including private attracting GST rationalisation and an investment," Ajai Rana, extension of the Production chairman of the Federation Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme to the agrochemicals of Seed Industry of India and CEO and MD, Savannah sector. "The Jan Vishwas Bill Seeds emphasised. He 2.0 is a welcome reform, but praised the Budget's focus on we hope similar trust-based advancing research and seed governance is extended to innovation. He highlighted the the National Mission on industry," he remarked.

### Investors from EFTA bloc, Israel coming to India to explore business opportunities

### PTI NEW DELHI Cotton

Alarge contingent investors from contingent of four bloc European nation European Trade Free Association (EFTA) and Israel are visiting India next week to explore business opportunities, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal has said. The EFTA members are Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland. Visit of more than 100 investors

from EFTA member countries assumes significance as it has signed a Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA) with India on March 10, 2024. Under the pact, India has received an investment

billion in 15 years from the grouping while allowing several products such as Swiss watches. chocolates, and cut and polished diamonds at lower or zero duties. The pact is expected to come into force by the end of this year. EFTA Goval said representatives are coming with over 100 investors. More than 200 investors are expected to visit from Israel. The three-day visit will start from February 10. "Big companies are coming. People with interests in technology and setting manufacturing units (are coming)," he added.

The EFTA bloc committed an investment of USD 100 billion -

commitment of USD 100 USD 50 billion within 10 years after the implementation of the agreement and another USD 50 billion in the next five years which would facilitate the creation of one million direct jobs in India.

This is a first-of-its-kind pledge agreed upon in any of the trade deals signed by India so far.

EFTA countries are not part of the European Union (EÛ). It is an inter-governmental organisation for the promotion and intensification of free trade. It was founded as an alternative for states that did not wish to join the European community. India is separately negotiating a comprehensive free trade agreement with the EU, the 27-nation bloc.

education.

### INBRIEF

### REC WINS GOLD SHIELD IN ICAI AWARD FOR **EXCELLENCE IN FINANCIAL REPORTING**

**NEW DELHI:** REC Limited, a Maharatna Public Sector Enterprise and a leading NBFC-IFC under the Ministry of Power. Government of India, has been awarded 'Gold Shield' in ICAI Awards for Excellence in Financial Reporting for the financial year 2023-24.



### SCHOOL EDUCATION IS MOTHER OF ALL EDUCATION-**PROF K K AGGARWAL**



NEW DELHI: School education is mother of all education. The final product depends on the raw product. That is why formative but foundation stage of school education must be taken care of very seriously, said Prof K K Aggarwal, President, South Asian University.

### SCIENCE NEEDS DEMOCRACY TO FLOURISH: PROF **AARON CIECHANOVER**

KATTANKULATHUR: Nobel Laureate Prof Aaron Ciechanover delivered a special address at the inaugural of Pro UPS conference held at SRM Institute of Science and Technology (SRMIST). The conference focused on protein homeostasis, its impact on human diseases, and drug discovery.





AMRITSAR: A group of Master's students of M Sc Botany from the Department of Botanical Environmental and Sciences, Guru Nanak Dev University. completed a four-day visit to the Statue of Unity for participating in National Botany Fest 2025, which took place

### recently at Gujarat. The event was inaugurated by Dr A A Mao, Director of the Botanical Survey of India. Kolkata

# Cooperative renaissance through Tribhuvan Sahkari University Bill, 2024



BINOD ANAND NEW DELHI

 $P_{Modi's \ commitment \ to}^{rime \ Minister \ Narendra}$ strengthening the cooperative sector has taken a major step forward with the introduction of the Tribhuvan Sahkari University Bill, 2024. This initiative aims to establish Tribhuvan Sahkari University, dedicated to cooperative education, research, and management training. It will play a pivotal role in achieving the vision of "Sahkar Se Samriddhi' (Prosperity through

necessary to innovation and efficiency in cooperative enterprises. The cooperative sector is vital to India's socio-economic structure, providing to millions. livelihoods Recognising its potential, the government has introduced structured education and

training through this university. By integrating cooperative principles into mainstream education, the institution will offer specialised courses to empower students, cooperative society members, and industry professionals. This initiative will also foster research and development, bridging existing knowledge gaps and strengthening India's cooperative movement on a global scale. A key feature of this initiative

Cooperation) by equipping ancient wisdom with modern professionals with the skills education aligns with Modi's education aligns with Modi's enhance vision of a self-reliant and culturally enriched India.

crop

will The curriculum emphasise holistic learning, integrating traditional Indian economic philosophies with contemporary management techniques. Inspired by Vedic traditions, students will learn about sustainable agricultural practices, ethical business conduct, and community-

driven economic models. Another objective of the university is to standardise cooperative education across India. Currently, cooperative training is fragmented and lacks uniformity. By offering diploma, degree, and certification programs in anď sectors such as dairy, fisheries, agriculture, banking, and marketing, the university will streamline cooperative education.

will also act as a central institution, converging resources from ICAR centers, Krishi Vigyan Kendras, CSIR institutions, health-related institutes, and other universities. This will train PACS secretaries and support national development programs, ensuring a multidisciplinary approach to cooperative growth. Moving beyond the traditional MSP model, the university will help cooperatives adopt marketdriven solutions and selfsustaining business models. Additionally, it will align with health institutions to develop cooperative models for rural healthcare, ensuring affordable medical services. A major goal of the university is to protect national interests by securing the economic rights of farmers and artisans. Farmers and artisans form the backbone of India's rural is going to be the blend of Tribhuvan Sahkari University economy, and their prosperity

is critical for national selfreliance.

The university also has a longterm economic vision: to generate 50 per cent of India's Gross National Product (GNP) from the cooperative sector by 2047. Through research, training, and policy advocacy, it will incubate human resources that drive entrepreneurship, create employment, and foster financial inclusion. Bv Sustainable advancing Development Goals (SDG) and transitioning toward Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles, the university will prepare cooperatives for long-term sustainability. Encouraging green technologies, ethical business practices, and inclusive governance, this initiative will position India as a global leader in sustainable cooperative development. The university will redefine

positioning cooperatives as key drivers of economic and social transformation. It will conduct research on global cooperative blockchain in cooperatives, and strategies to enhance cooperative entrepreneurship through mentorship and funding initiatives. introduction of the Tribhuvan Sahkari University Bill reflects Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visionary leadership and dedication to inclusive economic growth through cooperative empowerment. This initiative will create a new generation of skilled professionals dedicated to strengthening India's cooperative movement.

cooperative

As India moves towards economic self-sufficiency, the cooperative sector will play a pivotal role in sustainable development and rural prosperity.

models, The

**GURU NANAK DEV UNIVERSITY STUDENTS SHINE AT** NATIONAL BOTANICAL FESTIVAL





# Jonathan, Kaur clinch gold at National Games

### PTI 📕 DEHRADUN

Fifteen-year-old Bengaluru shooter Jonathan Antony delivered a grand performance on the biggest domestic stage when he outwitted Paris Olympics bronze-medallist Sarabjot Singh and the more fancied Saurabh Chaudhary to clinch the 10m air pistol gold at the National Games here on Monday.

Jonathan, whose shooting career took wings when he won gold in the CBSE South Zone Rifle Shooting Competition in 2022 while studying in eighth standard, shot a superb 240.7 for Karnataka in the final to overcame the challenge of Services veterans Ravinder Singh (silver, 240.3) and Gurpreet Singh (bronze, 220.1) and Sarabjot, who won a bronze in the Paris Olympics' 10m air pistol

mixed team event with Manu Bhaker last year. Sarabjot finished fourth on Monday.

The champion marksman had earlier entered the final placed eighth with a score of 578, denying Olympian and national record holder Saurabh Chaudhary, who also shot an identical score but missed out in the shootoff to finish ninth and out of contention for the eightshooter final.

Ravinder topped the qualification with 584, while Sarbjot finished second with Ravinder an aggregate of 583. Jonathan showed nerves of steel in the medal round despite some of his shots fetching him low-nine scores.

This would count as Ionathan's biggest achievement in the senior category after the Bengaluru teenager won the 10m air pistol mixed team (junior)



category. talented shooters who have victory even more all c "I'm thrilled with this win. represented India at the meaningful. Today was my said.

gold and bronze in the youth Competing against such highest level makes this day, and I'm proud of how it more all came together," Antony

50m rifle 3-positions event after shooting a superb 461.2 to overcome the challenge of state-mate Olympian Anjum Moudgil, who shot 458.7. Surabhi Bharadwaj of Telangana bagged the bronze medal, shooting 448.8. The 23-year-old Samra, an Asian Games gold medallist, produced a commanding performance in the

Punjab's Sift Kaur Samra secured gold in the women's

performance in the qualification round as well to finish second behind Madhya Pradesh's Ashi Chouksey (598). Ashi was in a different zone in the qualification but she could not maintain tha

could not maintain the rhythm in the final to finish

a dismal seventh. "This feels like a comeback for me after the Olympics," said Samra, who had a forgettable Paris Olympics. "I didn't take a break (after Paris) and kept training, so winning the gold today feels special," Samra said in a

press release. 'I'm pleased with how I executed my routine and the small details that made the difference. It's also wonderful to share the podium with Anjum, who's an incredible shooter." Moudgil, also from Punjab,

sports 11

claimed the silver medal with 458.7 points. "This is the third National Games where Sift and I have finished on the podium together. She's an together. extraordinary shooter, and I've always admired her," said

Moudgil, a winner of two silver medals at the 2018 World Championships. "While my scores weren't great in the beginning, I knew that staying calm and focused would get me to the podium. This has been the

best shooting range I've competed in and the organisation has been fantastic."



# Marcus Rashford joins Aston Villa

### PTI LONDON

Marcus Rashford will look to reignite his career at Aston Villa after joining on loan for the rest of the season from Manchester United, where he has fallen out with recently hired manager Ruben Amorim.

The move was completed late Sunday, with neither Premier League club disclosing any more terms surrounding the deal. The Press Association and other sections of the British media have reported Rashford was joining Villa with a view to a anent transfer for 40

manager Unai Emery he

deserves playing time. Villa sold Colombia striker Jhon Duran to Saudi club Al-Nassr for a reported fee of 64 million pounds (\$80 million) on Friday so needed an attacking player to provide competition for Ollie Watkins.

Rashford scored 30 goals in the 2022-23 season, the most prolific of his career after bursting onto the scene early in 2016 at the age of 18, but hasn't approached that level since. He has seven goals in all competitions this season. Amorim recently said he would rather put United's

Sanju Samson fractures index finger

### PTI NEW DELHI

Star wicketkeeper-batter Sanju Samson has fractured his index finger after being hit by a Jofra Archer scorcher during the fifth T20 International against England in Mumbai and will be out of action for more than a month, sidelining him from the upcoming Ranji Trophy quarterfinals.

It is learnt that Sanju has returned to his home base Thiruvananthapuram and will only start training after completing his rehabilitation at the National Cricket Academy (NCA). He would need NCA's green light before

returning to competitive action. "Samson has fractured his

right index finger. It will take him five to six weeks before he can resume proper nets. So there is no chance of him

Barcelona beats Alaves to move

closer to the top in Spanish league PTI MADRID There was no rout this time but Barcelona still prevailed with Robert

playing the Ranji Trophy quarter-final for Kerala (vs J&K) in Pune from February 8-12," a BCCI source in the know of things told PTI on conditions of anonymity. "In all likelihood, his

comeback will happen in the IPL for Rajasthan Royals," he added

Samson, who had a poor T20I series after a stupendous an away series against series against England and is run against Bangladesh and Bangladesh in August.

not a part of the ODI set-up, was hit off the third ball bowled by Archer which was close to 150 clicks. While he hit another six and

four, the swelling increased once he was back in the dugout. The scans showed a fracture.

Samson, who came into the

South Africa with three centuries in seven games, missed the Champions Trophy selection as he hadn't played a single Vijay Hazare

Trophy game. The England series turned out to be an underwhelming one for the flamboyant Rajasthan Royals skipper, who scored only 51 in five games with 26 in the opening game at the Eden Gardens

being his top score. He was consistently troubled by the short deliveries from Archer, Mark Wood, and Saqib Mahmood and was mostly dismissed within the first Powerplay.

With India not due to have any white-ball assignments after Champions Trophy till end of July, the 30-year-old Samson will have to wait considerably for his next opportunity, which would be

# India is a sleeping giant in golf: Greg Norman

### PTI GURUGRAM

Australian legend Greg Norman believes India is a sleeping giant in golf and it would require more competitions in the country to help its players realise their true potential as he pitched for making the recently-concluded International Series here an annual affair.

The 69-year-old former world number one, who has 88 professional titles under his belt, was hopeful of India's

growth in the sport. "One of my initial focus points was to invest into the sleeping giant, which was the Asian tour. India is a sleeping giant when it comes to Golf. I mean you just look what's happening in India with the game of golf, it has only just started, right?" Norman told select media on

The LIV events have also faced significant resistance from the existing PGA Tour (USA)and the European Tour, which claim that the parallel tour "disrupts" the sport by offering players higher prize money and a seemingly more relaxed rules structure.

Norman believes LIV can have a great role in helping Indian golf, which was on a high when the likes of Jeev Milkha Singh, Shiv Kapur, SSP Chawrasia, Jyoti Randhawa and Arjun regularly Atwal won tournaments on all three tours till about a decade back.

However, the momentum has been somewhat lost in the past five years. "I love LIV to come to India

(\$50 million pounds million) and that Villa was paying a loan fee as well as covering the majority of Rashford's salary, reportedly worth nearly \$400,000 a week.

The 27-year-old forward, one of the most famous players in the Premier League, had not played for United, his hometown club, since Dec. 12 amid concerns from Amorim about Rashford's commitment to training. He has also been overlooked for recent England squads and didn't play at the European Championship last year, after a season when he was dropped by United on one occasion for disciplinary reasons.

There was speculation about a move to Italy or Saudi Arabia, but Rashford is staying in England and now needs to prove to Villa

63-year-old goalkeeping coach in the squad ahead of someone who isn't fully committed in training, as he

perceives Rashford. "The reason is the training, what I think a footballer should do in training, in life and every day. If things don't change, I will not change,"

said. "It's the same he situation for every player. If you do the maximum and the right things then we can use every player." At one point, Rashford even acknowledged he was "ready

for a new challenge. Rashford has made 426 appearances for United, scoring 138 goals, and made a name for himself for his off-the-field work during the pandemic when his lobbying led to the British government agreeing to

keep funding meals for poor students after initial resistance.

Lewandowski scoring second-half winner as Catalan club beat Alaves 1-0 to move within four points of rival Real Madrid at the top of the Spanish league. "It's not every time that we will be able to score three, four or

five goals in a game," Lewandowski said. "We had to be patient and in the end we did what we had to do, which was to score one more goal than our opponent." Madrid lost 1-0 at Espanyol on

Saturday after a run of 10 victories in its last 11 matches in all competitions.

Third-placed Barcelona is three points behind secondplaced Atletico Madrid, which ended a two-match winless streak in the league with a 2-0 victory against Mallorca on Saturday.

"We knew we had to win this match," Lewandowski said. "We needed the victory. We had lost too many points in the league already." It was an unusually low-

scoring game for Barcelona, which had claimed 14 goals in its last three matches including a 7-1 rout of Valencia in the league.

Lewandowski scored his fourth goal in as many matches across all competitions, and his seventh in the last eight games. The Poland striker scored from close range after a volley by Lamine Yamal from inside the area deflected off a defender.

Yamal had amazed the crowd only a few minutes into the game, using nifty moves to get past six defenders in a run that ended with Raphinha sending a shot wide of the net.

Alaves, which ended with no attempts on target, stayed inside the relegation zone with the loss. It has won only one of its last 11 matches in all competitions. HEAD INJURIES FOR GAVI AND CONECHNY

Barcelona midfielder Gavi and Alaves forward Tomás Conechny had to be substituted in the first half after a collision of heads while going for the ball about 10 minutes into the match at Montjuic stadium. Gavi left the field on his own

but Conechny was carried off on a stretcher and taken to a local hospital for further tests.

Second-to-last Valencia from rebounded the embarrassing 7-1 loss at Barcelona with a 2-1 home victory over 13th-placed Celta Vigo, which is winless in its last five matches across all competitions. Valencia won two in a row at home in the league for the first time this season. It beat Real Sociedad 1-0 two rounds ago.

said

sustained a head trauma and was expected to spend the

night in the hospital. VALENCIA REBOUNDS

FROM EMBARRASSING

Conechny

Alaves

Ante Budimir scored a goal in each half as seventh-placed Osasuna defeated 11th-placed Sociedad 2-1 at home. It was the third straight league loss for Sociedad.

Osasuna won for the first time after nine consecutive league matches without a victory, with its last win in the competition coming against last-place Valladolid back in Fourth-placed November. Athletic Bilbao missed a chance to move even closer to the top three after a 2-2 draw at ninth-placed Real Betis.

international the sidelines of the Asian Tour event here on Sunday.

"For the next 25 years, which is a generation, India is right in the middle of them," he said. Norman was the CEO of LIV, a breakaway league founded in 2022 and financed by Saudi Arabia. It has introduced some fresh

rules like three-day 54-hole tournaments, instead of the traditional 72-hole four-day events. The LIV tournaments have also done away with the concept of weekend cut and all those who start get to play the entire tournament besides being entitled to prize money. The International Series is a partnership between the Asian Tour and LIV but it adheres to the traditional 72-hole concept with a cut at the end of two rounds to ensure that players are entitled to points under the world golf ranking system, which has refused to recognise

the 54-hole LIV events.

league is important to do that," he pointed out.

because to me, it's significant,

right? Everything takes baby

steps. And obviously, the

lace to enter the

"LIV created a new dynamic for the game of golf because it gave an opportunity in the competitive golfing world for a new business model...Different formats have come out and enticed millions and millions of people to come into the

game of golf," he asserted. I truly believe LIV will be the true global golf platform for golf. We want to be in all the continents of the world...We bring a product that's a plug and play that's never been done before. We bring franchise models. We're bringing the youth side of it," he explained. Norman lauds Anirban Lahiri

Lahiri has joined ranks with LIV along with some other prominent names like Bryson DeChambeau, two-time Major winner Dustin Johnson and Lee Westwood, a former world number one.

# **Manchester City thrashed 5-1 by Arsenal and in Premier League**

### PTI 📕 LONDON

fter a recent uplift in their Aresults, the pain returned for Manchester City and Manchester United in the Premier League.

City conceded a goal inside two minutes and was overwhelmed in the second half in a 5-1 loss at Arsenal, which trimmed the gap to leader Liverpool to six points on Sunday.

United lost again at home, 2-0 to Crystal Palace, and now has seven defeats in 13 league games at Old Trafford this season — something not seen since the 1890s.

The chances of City winning a fifth straight Premier League title are surely over — the champions are 15 points behind Liverpool with 14 matches remaining - and they must have felt humiliated by the end of the game at

Emirates that again demonstrated the new-found hostility between Arsenal and City.

City arrived having won six of its last eight games in all competitions but all is still not right with Pep Guardiola's team, which let in a sloppy

opener when Manuel Akanji was dispossessed near his own area and Martin Odegaard scored. Haaland was goaded after that goal by Gabriel in a hangover

from the spiky 2-2 draw between the teams in September but responded by equalizing in the 55th. Arsenal went back in front in the 57th through Thomas Partey's deflected shot and there were further goals from

Myles Lewis-Skelly, Kai Havertz and Ethan Nwaneri as City fell apart in a similar fashion to the 4-2 loss at Paris

Champions League last month. "How we played in the last 30

minutes is not acceptable. It's not us," City defender John Stones said. "I'm angry, upset?

> Arsenal reveled in the win. Lewis-Skelly, an 18-year-old defender, marked his goal by sitting down, crossing his legs and delivering a "Zen" celebration — one often used by Haaland. And when the final whistle sounded, the home team played Kendrick Lamar's "Humble" loudly around the stadium — surely a nod to Haaland telling Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta to "stay humble" after the 2-2 draw in September. This is a thing that's been building up over a certain amount of time," Arsenal midfielder Declan Rice said.

"With the Etihad at the start Saint-Germain in the of the season and everything



that went on there, you do have that fire in your stomach." Arsenal was alone in second place, three points above Nottingham Forest and nine above fourth-placed City. MARTINEZ SUSTAINS SERIOUS' INJURY IN Sunday for United with a tearful Lisandro Martinez carried off on a stretcher with a left knee injury – the latest injury to afflict the Argentina defender. Jean-Philippe Mateta scored

both goals in the second half for Palace to end United's three-match winning run in all competitions — a streak coming after manager Ruben Amorim had called his team "the worst team, maybe, in the history of Manchester United."

The Amorim era looks set to be without Rashford, at least until the end of the season, with the forward reportedly undergoing a medical examination at Aston Villa ahead of sealing a loan move with a view to a permanent transfer.

Even with striker Rashford absent, Amorim fielded a team with no out-and-out

striker and failed to create many good chances against Palace, which picked off United on the counterattack. Mateta's goals came in the 64th and 89th minutes.

United has lost seven of its

since the 1893-94 season,

according to the competition's

statistic supplier, Opta. Five of

those defeats have come in

the last six home matches

"It is difficult to play here

because we want to please our fans," Amorim said. "This

season is going to be like that,

United dropped to 13th in the

standings and was just one

place and two points ahead of

Tottenham, which won 2-0 at

FOR

AS

I said it since the first day."

POSTECOGLOU

TOTTENHAM WINS

under Amorim.

RELIEF

Postecoglou. Vitaly Janelt scored an owngoal at a corner to put Tottenham ahead at halftime and Pape Sarr added the second goal in the 87th. first 13 home games in the Premier League this season and that hasn't happened

Brentford to end a four-

match losing run in the

league and ease some

pressure on manager Ange

We needed a big effort again today, a physical effort. We put that in," said Postecoglou, who rested defender Micky van de Ven after the defender returned from injury in the midweek win over Elfsborg in the Europa League. "Outstanding effort by the players."

The result was a huge boost for Tottenham ahead of arguably the team's biggest match of the season, the second leg of the English League Cup semifinals against Liverpool on Thursday.



UNITED LOSS On the day locally born striker Marcus Rashford edged closer to a departure Old from Trafford, Manchester United lacked a

cutting edge up front in the loss to Crystal Palace. And there was more bad news



break.

# **Praggnanandhaa beats Gukesh to clinch Tata Chess title**

### PTI WIJK AAN ZEE

The Indian juggernaut in international chess

remained unstoppable as Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa fought through exhaustion and nerves to defeat world champion D Gukesh in a clash of compatriots to clinch the Tata Steel Masters title for the first time in his prolific career.

The bespectacled 19-year-old from Chennai, a city that has become the cradle of Indian chess, came from behind to upstage the 18-year-old world number three 2-1 in the tiebreaker of the event's 87th edition here on Sunday.

This was after both players ended up tied on 8.5 points after losing their 13th-round games. While Gukesh lost to fellow Indian Arjun Erigaisi, Praggnanandhaa went down to Vincent Keymer of Germany.

In the tie-breaker, there was huge drama typical of two young players looking to win each and every game they played in the tournament as they played the tie-

"I am still shaking, it was such a crazy day. I don't know how to express. I didn't really expect to win. Somehow things went my way," Praggnanandhaa told the official tournament website after his triumph.

Asked if it was the most tense day of his chess career, which began when he was a mere two years of

"Today is more special because I won the tournament. Definitely most stressful day," he responded. The teenager became the first Indian after Viswanathan Anand to win the title. Anand won it thrice (2003, 2004 and 2006) individually when it was called the Corus Chess Tournament, named on the title sponsor of that time. The legend also shared the honours twice (1989 and 1998) in its earliest form of Hoogovens Tournament.

Praggnanandhaa faced the Benoni with reversed colours in the first game of the tie-break and it seemed like he had equalised easily in the middle game. However, Gukesh had other



thoughts as he kept trying and won, thanks to a blunder by Praggnanandhaa that cost him a full rook

In a must-win second game of the Praggnanandhaa the Trompowsky tiebreaker, employed the Trompowsky opening, and this time Gukesh could claim a slight advantage with his black pieces.

"I was just trying to relax, to rest a bit. It was a very difficult game. Against Vincent I didn't play anywhere close to the level I was playing here. I should buy something for Arjun. At some point I thought Gukesh was better," the former world youth

champion quipped. "For sure, (this win) it is the highlight. When I came here, I wanted to win but the field was very strong. I didn't really think about it much until yesterday," he added.

"I am completely exhausted. I was also quite tired. I just want to get some rest now.

During the tie-break, by just keeping his position together, Praggnanandhaa patiently waited and capitalised on an unforced

error from Gukesh to first knock down a pawn and then his technical abilities were enough to see the normal blitz games through with a 1-1 score.

sports 12

This took the match into sudden death, where Praggnanandhaa drew white and once again Gukesh was better with some imaginative play on the queen side that netted him a pawn.

The sudden death had a time control of two minutes and thirty seconds for white against three for black but that did not deter Praggnanandhaa from trying to defend an inferior endgame. Just while the position looked

completely drawn and another game was on the cards, Gukesh lost control in the battle of nerves and first lost a pawn then his last remaining knight.

Praggnanandhaa showed perfect technique to take the full point and his maiden victory at the Masters. For Gukesh, this was the second year running when he tied for first position and lost the tiebreaker. In the previous edition, Gukesh had lost to Chinese Wei Yi.



# CT 2025 Trophy tour concludes in India

### PTI NEW DELHI

The trophy tour for the ICC Champions Trophy concluded in India with the coveted prize touring cities of Mumbai and Bengaluru ahead of the tournament beginning

"The Trophy Tour has covered all eight participating nations during its global journey and, with the conclusion of India leg, it will now travel to its final stop in Pakistan," the ICC said in a statement on Monday.

trophy's visits to the Wankhede Stadium, Shivaji Park, the Gateway of India, historic Road, Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus, and Bandstand among other

It was also displayed during

the celebrations to mark the completion of 50 years of the Wankhede Stadium.

In Bengaluru, the trophy visited venues including Nexus Shantiniketan Mall, Mary's Basilica, M

# Australia's Hall of Fame

Australia's Hall of Fame.

The 54-year-old, who was a part of Australia's 1999 and 2003 World Cup-winning teams, made 6912 ODI runs at a brilliant average of 53.58 in 232 games, batting in middle-order, mostly at number six.

maximum

# **Bevan inducted to Cricket**

### PTI MELBOURNE

Former batter Michael Bevan, widely regarded as one of the greatest ODI finishers who displayed impeccable game awareness and mastered difficult run added the owner of 67 unbeaten ODI knocks who chases with minimal risk, has been inducted to Cricket

six hundreds in the format. He replicate that success in Tests and Bevan said he accepted that the traditional form was

early. Bevan played only 18 Tests. He made his debut in 1994 and played the five-day During his career that ran game only till 1998. from 1994 to 2004, Bevan I wasn't ready to play Test exemplified cricket. I had my own returns at minimum risk, and eping the demon required rate during chases in check by picking singles and twos that would often lull the opposition and ultimately steer Australia over the line. "Congratulations to former Australian player Michael Bevan on his induction to the Australian Cricket Hall of Fame," Cricket Australia posted on X. Speaking to 'cricket.Com.Au', the imposing left-hander, who has also dabbled in coaching, said his ODI success was down to a deep understanding of the format. "When I reflect on my oneday career, and get an understanding of why I performed like I did, how I was able to manage the innings, or the run rate ... I think that was sort of natural to me," he said. "Minimising risk,

### Buttler praises Abhishek Sharma's innings PTI MUMBAI

England captain Jos Buttler has heaped high praise on Abhishek Sharma for smashing a whirlwind 54-ball 135 in India's 150-run win in the fifth T201 here, describing the record knock as one of the the record knock as one of the finest examples of "clean ball striking".

Abhishek entered record books with the second fastest T20I century by an Indian batter off 37 balls and hit 13 sixes -- the most in an innings for any player from the country, powering the hosts to 247 for nine.

disappointed (with the result), they (India) played a fantastic batting innings. I think credit to Abhishek Sharma, I thought that's as clean a ball striking as I've seen, I thought he played fantastically well," Buttler told the media after India recorded their second biggest T20I win by runs on Sunday

Buttler denied England were 'shellshocked" from Abhishek's onslaught on his bowlers but said there were only two options for his side -

either to go boom or bust. "We always sit down and think

brilliant innings and sometimes you want to credit



what more could we have done or how we could have stopped him, but some days I think you have to give a lot of credit to the opposition, I thought he played brilliantly well," Buttler

"Shellshocked's not quite the word, I think. It can be difficult sometimes when a player gets on a roll and they play as well as he did," Buttler said.

"Looking back at the last IPL, him and Travis Head were the same at the top of the order for Sunrisers (Hyderabad) and obviously he's brought that into India "He (Abhishek) played a

the opposition. You always think of what more could you do, how could we get him out, how could we slow him down and, but yeah, credit to us for, you know, sticking in there and fighting back and keeping

The England captain acknowledged the pitch remained the same for his batters as the visitors were bowled out for 97 in 10.3 overs with Phil Salt scoring a 23-ball

"I've played in a few games like this and it generally goes one of two ways, you either get actually somewhere near or you fall in a heap and today was that day," he said.

"The way Phil Salt went out there and struck the ball, it was obviously a really good wicket, vou needed someone to go with him and one or two guys to catch fire and that's the way you're going to chase that down.

certainly work but, no, we certainly wor't change the way we want to play. We need to, you know, keep backing that, be even more committed and you're desperate to do well and execute that," he said.

the first one probably and today. We had moments in Chennai, Pune and obviously the game we won in Rajkot," he said.

we want to play and the nuances of the game of how we're going to win those moments, then (we would) go on to win the match and win series," he added.

Carter locations.

Bengaluru Palace, Freedom Park, KR Market, Town Hall, St Chinnaswamy Stadium, Church Street and Vidyarthi Bhavan.

# We want to play high-risk, high-reward cricket in T20s: Gambhir

And these guys have adopted

these boys. I haven't seen a and economy rate of 7.66 better T20 hundred against bowlers who are bowling at 140-150 kph consistently," he added.

'Yeah, (we are) obviously

the principles that I used," he

not really meant for him quite

understanding which bowlers to target, what types of shots to play in certain situations, and the ability to understand when to put your foot down, and when to take the foot off the accelerator as well...(were)

said

India. them down to 240 after the start they got," Buttler said.

"Like I said, you either get quite close in games like this and surprise yourselves or it doesn't work but, no, we

Buttler said he wouldn't want England to change their style of play after a 1-4 series loss to

"We've had our moments actually in all the games bar

"As we get more experienced, more committed to the style

February 19.

The upcoming edition of the eight-team 50-overs tournament will be held in Pakistan and Dubai from February 19 to March 9.

# The tour in Mumbai included

His long-time captain Steve Waugh was a huge fan of his work ethic in the nets and in his book, he mentioned that Bevan "would literally invent strokes to fuel his search for greatness and his desire to levels attain new of excellence."

e said

struck 46 half-centuries and

could never really

Bevan could maneuver Australia out of trouble with his tenacity and the ability to find the gaps in the tightest fields to keep the scoreboard ticking and eventually chase down targets for victories by the thinnest of margins. "...I felt with the one-day game, I always did what I did I had the ability to win close games, and that was always there. It wasn't something that I learned or had to go through, it was really just intrinsic, which is kind of a bit risk, high-reward cricket. weird," he said of his career.

PTI MIIMBAI

ndia head coach Gautam **L**Gambhir said the team is ready to push the barriers in T20 Internationals with the adoption of a fresh "high-risk, high-reward" approach, and the target is now "to get 250-260 regularly" in the format. That shift in mindset was evident in India's 4-1 mauling of England in the justconcluded five-match series. In the fourth T20I at Pune, India kept attacking England despite losing wickets to eventually set a match-winning 181 for 9, and at Mumbai on Sunday, the hosts raced to 247 for 9, their fourth highest total in this format. That's the kind of T20 cricket we want to play. We don't want to fear losing a game of cricket. We want to play high-

that ideology really well," Gambhir told the host broadcaster after the match on Sunday.

Gambhir said they are looking to post tall totals in the vicinity of 250 in every game, and he doesn't mind getting out for a low score in some matches while attempting to achieve the task.

"We want to try and get to 250-260 regularly. And in trying to do that, there'll be games where we'll get bundled out for 120-130. And that is what T20 cricket is all about.

"Unless and until you don't play that high-risk cricket, you won't get those big rewards as well. Most importantly, I think we're on the right track. Come those big tournaments, we want to



continue playing this way and we don't want to fear losing anything," he added.

"I think the ideology of this T20 team is based on selflessness and fearlessness, and I think in the last six months, these guys have done

it day in, day out." Gambhir used breathtaking 54-ball 135 of Abhishek Sharma to further

validate his point. "We want to keep backing players like Abhishek Sharma. We have to be patient with

Gambhir also lauded spinner Varun Chakravarthy for reinventing himself and coming back stronger to international cricket.

"I think his transformation from IPL to international T20 cricket has been phenomenal. This series was probably the benchmark as well because England is a high-quality side. "They've got some really quality cricketers and the kind of surfaces we've played on - I think they were the fantastic batting wickets and the way he's bowled those tough overs has been phenomenal," said Gambhir. Chakravarthy was the highest wicket-taker in the series with 14 scalps at an average of 9.85

There were talks about rifts in the Indian dressing room after the team's disastrous outing in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy series

against Australia. Gambhir said everything will fall in place once the team returns to winning ways.

They (these players) have played a lot of cricket against each other. That's all Indian cricket is all about us.

'When results start going your way, everything goes well. Our players know what it means to represent 140-150 crore Indians," he added.

the On controversy surrounding Harshit Rana coming in as a concussion sub for Shivam Dube in the previous match at Pune, Gambhir said rather lightly: "He (Dube) probably bowled four overs today.

# Head wins Allan Border medal, Sutherland receives Belinda Clark honour

### PTI MELBOURNE

Star batter Travis Head was named the winner of the prestigious Allan Border Medal for the top Australian men's cricketer, while young all-rounder Annabel Sutherland was awarded the Belinda Clark Medal at the Australian Cricket Awards held here on Monday.

Head, who had an outstanding year across all three formats with 1,427 runs since the start of the polling period, received 208 votes to secure the top honour, surpassing Josh Hazlewood (158 votes) and Pat Cummins (147 votes).

"Pretty hard to believe. It's been a good year. Very pleased I've been able to fit in, do a role, and lucky I've been able to play all formats. It's a nice accomplishment, and I'll

enjoy it," Head said in a recorded interview from Galle.

The 31-year-old Head also took home the Men's ODI Player-ofthe-Year award and finished second in the Twenty20 and Test Player-of-the-Year awards.

Head won the ODI honours despite figuring in just five of the 11 ODIs that Australia played during the eligibility period. His standout performance, including a magnificent 154 not out against England at Trent Bridge, helped him edge past Alex Carey, Steve Smith, and Xavier Bartlett for the top prize.

For Sutherland, it was a first Australian Cricket Award, which came just days after her maiden century at the MCG, Test becoming the first woman to make a ton on that ground. The 23-year-old all-rounder began

the 12-month voting period with an impressive 210 against South Africa at the WACA and later scored her third Test century -- a brilliant 163 in the Ashes.

Sutherland received 168 votes,

surpassing Ashleigh Gardner (143 votes) and Beth Mooney (115 votes) to win the Belinda Clark Medal

"Pretty surreal. To win an award named after Belinda Clark is pretty

special," said Sutherland. Australia pacer Josh Hazlewood claimed the Men's Test Player-ofthe-Year award. It marked his first Australian Cricket Award, with Hazlewood taking 30 wickets at just 13.16 in Tests against the West Índies, New Zealand, and India. Young cricketer Sam Konstas, who made an impressive debut at 19 during the Boxing Day Test of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy against India, was named Young Cricketer of the Year. Konstas scored 113 runs across the last two Tests, including a memorable 60 off 65 balls on debut.

He became an instant sensation after he took down star India pacer Jasprit Bumrah, who had been a menace to Australian batters throughout the five-Test series, which Australia ultimately won 3-1.

Though the award night was devoid of the stars, as they were busy in the ongoing Test series in Sri Lanka, allrounder Mitchell Marsh stole the spotlight with a hilarious Bumrah anecdote that had the audience in stitches at the Crown Casino here.

"My little nephew, Ted, is four vears old. We played backyard cricket the other day, and he came in with Bumrah's action... And the nightmare continues," Marsh joked.

In other awards, Ashleigh Gardner was named Women's ODI Player of the Year after finishing as Australia's leading run-scorer in the format with 385 runs. Beth Mooney was crowned Women's T20 Player of the Year for the third time, having scored 618 runs during the voting period. Leg-spinner Adam Zampa won Men's T20I Player of the Year after taking 35 wickets in 21 T20Is, edging out Head by three votes. Cameron Green was awarded the Community Impact Award for his efforts in raising awareness about kidney disease.

The award ceremony also saw Michael Clarke, Michael Bevan, and Christina Matthews inducted into the Australian Cricket Hall of Fame.

Other awardees included Beau Webster and Georgia Voll, who won Men's and Women's Domestic Player of the Year, and Chloe Ainsworth, who was named Young Cricketer of the Year. Glenn Maxwell and Cooper Connolly were named joint winners of the BBL Player of the Tournament, while Ellyse Perry and Jess Jonassen shared the WBBL Player of the Tournament award.

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