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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

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

The 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 along with all BJP MPs from Delhi, Union minister Piyush Goyal claimed that the BJP is headed for a massive poll victory in Delhi, similar to what happened

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 "Farziwal" (Fake) and a "Chhota Recharge" (small recharge) of Modi. Kejriwal also slammed the Election Commission, accusing it of favouring the BJP. Interestingly, the Delhi elections began with the AAP in the pole position to gain power yet again. But has something changed as we enter the last lap before the voting on February 5. Delhi elections began with the AAP in the pole position to gain power yet again. But has something changed as we enter the last lap before the voting on February 5. Delhi elections began with the AAP in the pole position to gain power yet again. But has something changed as we enter the last lap before the voting on February 5.

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 Priyanka 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 voters? 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. 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

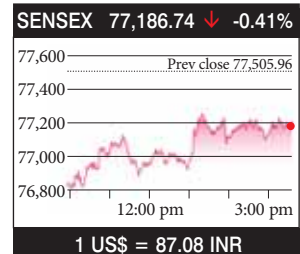
with 50+ seats. But if there is a split in the jhuggi voters and the middle class consolidates behind the BJP, there could be a repeat of Haryana and Maharashtra results in Delhi. Voters residing in jhuggi-jhopdi (JJ) clusters have been backing the AAP for the past two elections. These voters are largely poor and the beneficiaries of free bijli-panni, 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 voters had split between the AAP, Congress and Asaduddin Owaisi's AIMIM.



Rupee all time low

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ MUMBAI

MARKETS



The Rupee plunged 55 paise to close at an all-time 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

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 8**

GRAP III revoked

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) on Monday (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 pollution levels, according to 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.

WEATHER

LUCKNOW
MAX 28.0°C(+4.0)
MIN 11.5°C(+2.5)

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 8**



Terror attack leaves one dead, two injured

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

A retired Territorial army soldier, father of four daughters and one son, was killed in cold blood by unidentified terrorists inside his home in the Behibagh area of South Kashmir's Kulgam district on Monday. The wife of an ex-serviceman and another close relative, present inside the home, also received bullet injuries in the targeted strike, the first so far in 2025. The ex-serviceman, identified as Manzoor Ahmad Wagay, was rushed to the Government Medical College Hospital, Anantnag by family members where he succumbed to his fatal injuries. According to preliminary reports, both the women, including the wife of an ex-serviceman, were undergoing treatment and

their condition was stated to be stable. Chief Minister Omar Abdullah reacted strongly to the heinous act of violence. "Deeply saddened by the tragic killing of ex-serviceman Manzoor Ahmad Wagay Sahab in Kulgam. My heartfelt condolences to his family, and prayers for the swift recovery of his injured wife and daughter. Such heinous violence has no place in our society and must be condemned in the strongest terms. May peace and justice prevail" the Office of Chief Minister said in a post on X (earlier Twitter). According to local reports, the terrorists struck around 2.00 p.m. in the thickly populated area of Behibagh and managed to flee from the spot without facing any resistance. **Continued on page 8**

Rahul questions Modi's Trump invite, Jaishankar refutes

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

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

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. Mocking the Central government during Motion of Thanks on the President's address in Lok Sabh, Rahul claimed that if the Modi government had taken economic policies seriously, then the government would



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

not have had to send Foreign Minister S Jaishankar to the US to get an invitation for Prime Minister Narendra Modi for Donald Trump's swearing-in 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 we were working on these technologies, the US President would come here and invite the Prime Minister," said Rahul. Rijiju said the LoP cannot make such serious, 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 this purpose," Rijiju said. 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 jab raking up the China issue and said that the Indian Army contradicted Prime Minister Narendra Modi's claims about Chinese army intrusion in Ladakh. **Continued on page 8**

BJP moves Privilege against Sonia

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MPs on Monday moved a privilege motion against Rajya Sabha MP Sonia Gandhi over her "poor thing" remark on President Droupadi Murmu. "We write this with great dismay about certain unparliamentary, derogatory and demeaning remarks recently made by Smt. Sonia Gandhi, Member of Parliament, Rajya Sabha, against the Hon'ble President of India, which warrant serious consideration and disciplinary action," the MPs



wrote to Rajya Sabha chairman. The MPs alleged that the statement was a "clear manifestation of elitist and anti-tribal mindset" of Sonia Gandhi, who they claimed "is yet to understand the struggle and sensitivity of a tribal poor." "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 8**

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 Eru Matsumoto. As the music industry's most

prestigious honour, the Grammys have long been a platform where legends are 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 acclaimed artists: Indian singer-composer Sonu Tandon, Grammy-winning flautist Wouter Kellerman, and Japanese guitarist Matsumoto. The album weaves ancient



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 annual Grammy Awards

Vedic chants with melodic flute and resonant cello, creating a reflective soundscape that fosters mindfulness, self-discovery, and connection. This harmonious blend of Indian classical music, New Age

overarching theme of healing 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 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." **Continued on page 8**

A DIP OF FAITH



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

Fire breaks out during Sanatkada Festival

10-12 canopies of eatery stalls gutted

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A fire broke out during the Sanatkada Festival on Monday, destroying 10-12 temporary canopies of eatery stalls. The fire started around 2 pm at the Salempur Estate ground, where the festival is underway, with the main venue located nearby at Safed Baradari in the Qaiserbagh area. "Shocking, there was fire equipment at the event, but no one knew how to use it. As a result, the fire quickly spread, engulfing over 10 stalls," said Chief Fire Officer (CFO), Lucknow, Mangesh Kumar. "Though the fire started small, it could have escalated if it hadn't been controlled in time," he added. At the time of the fire, a literary session was in progress, with many visitors present. "Upon receiving the alert, five fire tenders were immediately dispatched to the site. The fire spread rapidly

because the stalls were made of jute and bamboo, and the wind helped it spread quickly," explained Fire Station Officer, Hazratganj, RK Rawat. According to the fire officials, the blaze likely started from a flame at one of the food stalls. "Domestic cylinders were being used at the food stalls, and due to the fire, refrigerator compressors began exploding. People fled after hearing the blasts," said an official requesting anonymity. The CFO on the scene confirmed that the fire started during food preparation and stated that an investigation into a possible short circuit is also underway. On the other hand, the event organisers credited the volunteers' fire safety training for helping contain the fire. "Thanks to the volunteers and their fire safety training, the fire was limited to a few food stalls. We also appreciate the prompt

response from the administration, police, and fire officials, which allowed us to resume services within two hours," Sanatkada organisers said in a press release. They also reassured attendees: "The events at Safed Baradari continued as scheduled, with only three events that were supposed to take place at Salempur Estate being rescheduled. Normal services have resumed at Safed Baradari. We're ready and excited to welcome you back to your favorite festival." In a separate incident, a fire broke out in a school uniform shop at Janpath Market, Hazratganj, on Monday morning. However, there were no casualties reported. According to the Hazratganj FSO, the fire was caused due to a short circuit inside the shop located in the parking lot. Two fire engines brought the flames under control in 25 minutes.

Rider killed as bike rams into mini-truck

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A speeding bike rammed into a stationary mini-truck in the Banthra area here, resulting in the death of the rider. The victim was identified as Lalit Gautam (20), the son of Hiralal Gautam, a resident of Gadhni Chunauti village in Banthra. Lalit worked for a private company in Sohrama, Unnao. According to the police, Lalit was returning home on his bike around 6 am on Monday after completing his duty. While approaching a turn before the bridge on Lucknow-Kanpur Road, he collided from behind with a mini-truck that was parked at the side of the road. The impact caused his bike to lose control, sending him and the bike crashing to the ground, resulting in serious injuries. Upon being alerted, police reached the scene and transported Lalit to the Sarojininagar CHC, where doctors declared him dead. The body was then sent for a postmortem, while the mini-truck was seized by the police.

Meanwhile, a 40-year-old woman died in a road accident in Sarojininagar on Sunday evening. According to reports, Roma Sonkar, a resident of Khajua in Bazaarkhala, was riding a motorcycle with her relative Kallu and her younger sister Mohini to distribute her brother's wedding invitation cards when the accident occurred. The incident took place near Hydell crossing on Kanpur Road when a speeding truck collided with their motorcycle. The impact was so severe that the motorcycle lost control, causing all three to fall and sustain injuries. The truck driver fled the scene after the collision. The injured were rushed to the Sarojininagar CHC. Given Roma's critical condition, she was referred to KGMU Trauma Centre, where she succumbed on Monday morning. Kallu and Mohini, after receiving first aid, were discharged. Roma's brother, Ankit, was set to marry on February 14. Roma's husband, Munna, works at a shop in Yahiyaganj.

Missing minor girl murdered as part of black magic ritual?

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The 8-year-old girl who went missing from Dubagga area here was allegedly murdered as part of a black magic ritual, sources claimed. The killers reportedly wanted to please the deity to fulfil their sinister desires, they insisted. Sources revealed that a garland was found around the girl's neck, and a red cloth was placed on her body, which was discovered in a drain. The body was wrapped in a plastic sheet. The police are investigating the case with this angle in mind, they added. Previously, a suspect, Sonu Pandit aka Sonu Joshi from Barawan Khurd village took his own life after being released from police custody. Sonu had been brought in for interrogation and, after the questioning, his mobile phone was seized by the police. Let off around 9 pm on Feb 1, he allegedly hanged himself at his home. Sonu was originally from Rajasthan and had been living in Dubagga, where he worked in the cosmetic business. The girl went missing on January 23 and the case was reported by her family the next day. The family, accusing the police of negligence, staged a protest on Dubagga-Hardoi road on January 27, but were dispersed by the police. On the day of her disappearance, the girl had gone to the market to sell vegetables but did not return by late evening. The following day, February 1, local residents informed the Sairpur police about a body found in a drain behind Sahara City Homes. Upon reaching the site, the police confirmed it was the missing

girl. The family was contacted and identified the body as that of their daughter. In the investigation into Sonu's death, sources say that when his body arrived for the post-mortem, the police restricted family members from entering. Sonu's father and brother arrived at the mortuary around 2 pm, but denied any police mistreatment during his detention. His wife made a similar claim. However, villagers claimed that the police had intimidated the family. Deputy Commissioner of Police (West Zone), Vishwajeet Srivastava, stated that the case was being investigated from all angles and that the truth would soon be revealed. According to the police, two individuals were questioned in connection with the case. A woman from the area was interrogated and released, while Sonu, who was later found dead, was also questioned. Investigators found evidence linking Sonu to the girl, including footage showing a woman talking to the girl and Sonu following her. However, Sonu was not seen in the CCTV footage after he turned a corner. So far, police have searched 200 homes in the area as part of the investigation. The police are piecing together the puzzle: How did the girl end up 6 kilometres away from home, and why did Sonu take his own life after being questioned by the police? Furthermore, police discovered messages on Sonu's phone, which he later deleted. These messages suggested that Sonu feared he was being watched by the authorities.

Additionally, a video on his phone showed him with a female relative, which was later revealed in the presence of Sonu's wife. The police suspect that Sonu may have taken his life out of shame before his wife.

MAN ARRESTED FOR RAPING DAUGHTER

A man was arrested for allegedly raping his 13-year-old daughter in Deoria district, police said on Monday. Based on the complaint lodged by the girl's mother on Sunday, the accused was arrested and the minor was sent to Maharishi Devraha Baba Medical College Deoria for medical examination, officials said. Superintendent of Police Vikrant Veer said that the incident took place in a village under Bhatpar Rani police station area. Upon receiving information about the incident, a police team along with a forensic team reached the spot and inspected it, the officer said.

E-AUCTION NOTICE

REMNANTS OF FIRE AFFECTED HOME APPLIANCES AND ELECTRONIC ITEMS ETC. Interested Buyers are invited to participate in the e-Auction for the disposal of "Remnants of Fire Affected Home Appliances and Electronic Items etc." The subject salvage will be sold on "As is Where is", whatever there is and "No Complaint" Basis and belongs to M/s. Great Eastern Retail Private Limited. The subject materials can be inspected at Kharsa No. 56, Bhargava Estate, Bhitauli Khurd, P.O. diguria, Sitapur Road, Lucknow-226020 on working days only between 04-02-25 to 13-02-25 between 10AM to 5 PM. Kindly contact Mr. Vineet Gupta at 9076589999 for inspection. E-AUCTION WILL BE HELD ON 14.02.25 Kindly contact Ms. Pranita Parah at 836964069 to obtain the form containing terms & conditions of e-Auction or download from website https://www.sealthedeal.co.in/. Auctioneers: Seal The Deal having registered office at 148, Pocket C2, Sector 5, Rohini, Delhi - 110085. LAST DATE OF SUBMISSION OF FORM & EMD DEMAND DRAFT IS 13.02.25

Power failure disrupts flight ops at CCSIA

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A major power failure disrupted operations at the Chaudhary Charan Singh International Airport (CCSIA) on Monday morning, officials said. The technical fault caused the power outage, resulting in a delay of six flights by 15 to 20 minutes, they added. To manage the situation, the airport shifted operations to manual procedures. A CCSIA spokesperson stated, "A power outage this morning led to minor delays in passenger processing. The airport's techni-

cal team was able to quickly restore power. There was no impact on flight operations. During this time, the airport operations team worked closely with stakeholders to ensure passenger needs were met." Sources revealed that the power outage came as a surprise, as such an incident had never occurred before. "There was an issue that was quickly rectified, but it affected flight operations. The airport has a backup system, but the technical problem was beyond anyone's control," said an airport official. The official explained that once the system went down, the airport immediately switched to physical mode. "We began physical check-ins, including security checks and other processes. The entire team worked diligently," he added. He admitted that no one expected this situation to arise. "The passengers were understandably concerned since incidents like these are rare. However, there was no panic, and the airport teams kept the passengers informed," he noted. One passenger wrote on X that while the flight was still on schedule, the baggage belt and other terminal activities were temporarily halted. Another passenger shared that the power failure was smoothly managed: "Delays can be frustrating, but it was great to see everything back on track."

Enthusiasm, religious fervour mark Basant Panchami



PNS ■ LUCKNOW

King George's Medical University (KGMU) organised the worship of Goddess Saraswati on the occasion of Basant Panchami on Monday, continuing a tradition that has been upheld for 113 years. KGMU spokesperson Dr Sudhir Singh said that the worship was first held in 1913. "This event is organized by the second-year undergraduate students. Even during the COVID-19 period, the worship continued, though symbolically. Now, a grand event is

being organised again," he said. The rangoli on the lawns featured symbols of the Veena and Swan, representing Goddess Saraswati, who is also known as Veendharini and Hansvahini. A large rangoli was crafted with rice to wish for prosperity, along with five smaller rangolis. The event also featured selfie points themed around women empowerment, Mahakumbh, and 'I Love KGMU'. A khichdi feast was arranged along with prasad. Meanwhile, the Institute of Pharmaceutical Sciences at the University of Lucknow, in col-

laboration with Sanskritiki, the university's cultural board, also celebrated Basant Panchami. Students performed Saraswati Vandana. Soumya Mishra, a student of DPharma, portrayed Goddess Saraswati, captivating the audience with her graceful presence. LU Vice-Chancellor Prof Alok Kumar Rai extended greetings, emphasizing the importance of knowledge and wisdom in shaping young minds. The non-teaching staff recited the Sundar Kand and enjoyed a festive meal of 'tehr'. Saraswati Puja was also performed in various departments.

CLASSIFIEDS

NOTICE

I, Prabhu Prasad Singh s/o Taran Prasad Singh, resident of Semra Railway Colony Gonda, inform that in my son Krishna Kumar Singh CBSE High school market sheet my name is mistakenly reported as Prabhu Pd. Singh. Whereas my correct name is PRABHU PRASAD SINGH.

NOTICE

I have changed my name from Seema Singhani to Seema to be known as Seema in all future references. Seema, Add- 1401 Rama Tower, Indraprastha Appartment, Ratan Lal Nagar, Kanpur

NOTICE

It is informed to the general public that Shiv Prasad son of late Triloki Nath resident of Aza N o. 580 Mauja Rannagar, Pargana-Rannagar, District-Varanasi which was purchased by Shiv Prasad's father late Triloki Nath son of late Nand Kishore and mother late Savitri Devi wife of late Triloki Nath and uncle late Santoshi son of Nand Kishore and aunt late Malti Devi wife of late Santoshi through a sale deed dated 31.05.1969 whose entry is mentioned in Indraj Bahi No. 1 Volume No. 105 page 229/231 serial number 326 dated 31.05.1969. Shiv Prasad son of late Triloki Nath is the owner of 50 percent share of the above Aza. The above property is being mortgaged against (CICI) Home Finance Limited loan. If any person or organization has any objection in this, then within 7 days of publication of the information with written evidence and documents. Contact the undersigned. Aniruddha Chakraborty Advocate Chamber No. 112, New Banaras Bar Building Civil Court, Varanasi, Mobile No. - 9335288319

NOTICE

Be it known to all that Malik Salauddin and Mlik Salahuddin both the name are same and one person. In future I shall be known as Najmuddin Malik S/o Mohd Aslam R/o Chamrauli, Aliyabad, Barabanki, UP, India

CLASSIFIEDS

सूचना

में आराध्य शुक्ल पुत्र चैतन शुक्ल निवासी C-13 लक्ष्मण बिल्डिंग बाबूगंज थाना हसनगंज लखनऊ में अब तक आराध्य शुक्ल था जिसे मैं परिवर्तित कर अपना नाम अब अनुरज शुक्ला रख लिया है। सार्वजनिक जानकारी हेतु प्रसारित

NOTICE

Be it known to all that Najmuddin Malik and mlik Najmuddin Ahmad both the name are same and one person. In future I shall be known as Najmuddin Malik S/o Malik Salauddin R/o Chamrauli, Aliyabad, Barabanki, UP, India

NOTICE

Be it known to all that Malik Salauddin and Mlik Salahuddin both the name are same and one person. In future I shall be known as Najmuddin Malik S/o Mohd Aslam R/o Chamrauli, Aliyabad, Barabanki, UP, India

Six people die in road accident

Lucknow (PNS): In a tragic incident, six people were killed in a head-on collision between a Creta and a trailer in Sonbhadra. All the occupants of the car were residents of Chhattisgarh and they were going to Prayagraj to take a holy dip in Ganga on occasion of Basant Panchami. According to initial information, six people, including a Chhattisgarh police inspector, his mother, wife and son, died on the spot in the accident while two people were seriously injured. The injured have been admitted to the hospital

and their condition remains critical. According to the people present at the spot, the accident was so terrible that the bodies of many people were stuck in the car. The car had to be cut to take out the bodies. The accident took place in the Ranitali area of Varanasi-Shaktinagar state highway. The car belonged to Ravi Prakash Mishra posted as inspector in Chhattisgarh Police. He was going to Prayagraj with his mother Usha Mishra, wife Priyanka Mishra, son Divyanshu Mishra, Atharva Mishra and maid

Durga Devi. A driver was driving the car. The local police, which arrived for help, rescued the injured and took them to the hospital. The bodies were sent for post-mortem. Local police officials said that the accident took place in Hathinala police station area at around 8 pm on Sunday. The high-speed trailer went out of control and crossed the road divider and came to the other side of the road. At the same time, a car with Chhattisgarh registration number was coming and the trailer collided with it.

LSWA asks liquor sellers not to go on the warpath

Lucknow (PNS): Liquor Sellers Welfare Association (LSWA) president SP Singh has appealed to liquor sellers not to go on the warpath as the state government is sympathetically considering their demand. The liquor sellers have threatened to close the liquor shops if their demand for relaxation in policies and quota is not met. Singh made the appeal after a meeting with the LSWA office-bearers and prominent liquor dealers. Singh said that no liquor shop in the state should be closed as the government was considering the issues and its decision would be beneficial for all. Meanwhile, Singh, along with office-bearers of the association, including Neeraj Jaiswal, Vikas Mohan Srivastava, Jaiprakash Jaiswal, Shivkumar Jaiswal and Sanjay Jaiswal, met the new district excise officer of Lucknow, Karunendra Singh, and welcomed him.

Rao Iqbal appointed RLD minority cell's gen secy

Lucknow (PNS): In an exercise to infuse strength in the minority wing of the party, the Rashtriya Lok Dal, on Monday, appointed Rao Iqbal Mohammad Khan as the national general secretary of its minority cell, RLD national secretary Anupam Mishra said Khan was state president of Lok Dal and he joined the RLD a few months back. The letter appointing Khan as minority cell general secretary was issued by the cell's national president Khalid Masood. "A few months ago, he (Khan) took membership of RLD. He has been entrusted with this important responsibility by the top leadership of the party. His elevation will strengthen the minority wing of the RLD. He was appointed minority wing general secretary on the instruction of RLD chief Jayant Chaudhary," Mishra said.

MURDER OF DALIT WOMAN CONDEMNED

The Communist Party of India (Marxist) said that no one was safe under Bharatiya Janata Party rule. The party was referring to the recovery of a Dalit woman being found in Ayodhya. The CPI (M) said incidents of rape of Dalit women were coming to light every day and the police were taking no action. Party leaders said that the 21-year-old Dalit woman from Sahawan village of Ayodhya district had gone to listen to Bhagwat katha and when she did not return home, her father had lodged a missing report and her nude body was found near a drain on February 1.

verka
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 tenders 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- 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, 0.5 MT-01 Vehicle, 0.4 MT-01 Vehicle, 1.2 MT-01 Vehicle). 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). c) Advertisement Agency for the purchase of advertisement and branding material. d) Cold Store (Deep Freezer) for the storage of white butter. (Cap. approx. 400 to 500 MT)	One year with extension upto one year As per requirement One year and extended upto three months One year with extension upto three months and further three months/As per requirement

NOTE:
1. For complete details regarding above tender (NIT), please visit our website i.e. www.verka.coop & e Tendering portal i.e. eproc.punjab.gov.in.
2. Corrigendum, if any, will be uploaded on website only.

NA/12/27863/2023/41339 Dated CHD :- 2/3/2025
Dy. General Manager (Purchase)

shubham SHUBHAM HOUSING DEVELOPMENT FINANCE CO. LTD.
Corporate Office : 425, Udyog Vihar Phase IV, Gurgaon-122015 (Haryana)
Ph. : 0124-4212530/31/32, E-Mail: customercare@shubham.co website : www.shubham.co

POSSESSION NOTICE (FOR IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES)

Whereas the undersigned being the authorized officer of the Shubham Housing Development Finance Company Limited (hereinafter called Shubham) under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest (SARFAESI) Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued demand notice calling upon borrowers to repay the amount within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

The borrowers having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrowers and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described hereinafter in exercise of powers conferred on him under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

The borrowers in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealing with the property will be subject to the charge of Shubham Housing Development Finance Company Limited for an amount detailed below and interest thereon.

The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets. Details are as below:

S. No.	Loan No/Borrower(s), Co-Borrower	Demand Notice Amount	Date of Demand Notice	Secured Asset	Date of Affixation
1.	0ALB230600005064783, Ali Husain, Sumaila Bano	Rs. 15,98,855/-	22-11-2024	H. No. 172 K / 10 Plot Part of Kharsa No. 1814 MI Situated at Kasari Masari, Pargana and Tehsil Sadar Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh -211011	31-01-2025
2.	0LKW2103000005035926, Santosh Singh, Kamla Singh, Dilip Singh	Rs. 8,13,606/- Rs. 7,40,801/-	22-11-2024	Part of House No. -616 / 272 built on Part of Plot No. -57 Part of Kharsa No. -192 & 197 Ka Min Situated at Semra Gaudhi, Basant Vihar Colony, Ward- Faizullaganj, Tehsil & Distt Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh -226001	31-01-2025

PLACE:- GURGAON, DATE :- 03-02-2025
Authorized Officer, SHUBHAM HOUSING DEVELOPMENT FINANCE COMPANY LTD.

CHHATRAPATI SAMBAHAJINAGAR MUNICIPAL CORPORATION
PHONE NO: (0240)-2333536-40,2348001-05 (PBX)
FAX-(0240)-2331213
website:-http://www.aurangabadmahapalika.org/

No. /CSMC/2025/57 Date: 3/2/2025

Request for Proposal
E-Tender Notice No 2025-AMCA-114533-1/2024-25

Development of Project for Sports Complex and Commercial Shops under P.G.3 at TV Centre N10 in Chhatrapati Sambhaji Nagar Municipal Corporation on Build Operate and Transfer (BOT) Basis. Situated at Chhatrapati Sam Bahajinagar. 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 https://www.mahatenders.gov.in portal. All interested bidders may apply online through this portal.

Sr.No	Description	Details
01	Name of Work	Development of Project for Sports Complex and Commercial Shops under P.G.3 at TV Centre N10 in Chhatrapati Sambhaji Nagar Municipal Corporation on Build Operate and Transfer (BOT) Basis. Situated at Chhatrapati Sambhaji Nagar
02	Department	Build Operate and Transfer (BOT)
03	EMD (Online payment only)	Rs. 4,71,028/-
04	Bid Validity	120 Days
05	Form Fee (Online payment only)	Rs. 11,800/- (Including GST)
06	Time Limit of Work	18 Months
07	Performance Bank Guarantee (For successful bidder only)	5% of Project cost in the form of Bank Guarantee of Nationalized bank.
08	Date & Time of Publishing/ Downloading of Tender	4/2/2025 Time 17:00Hrs
09	Date of pre- bid meeting	14/2 /2025 Time at 13:00 Hrs
10	Date & Time of Submitting the Tender	28/2/2025 Time upto 14:00 Hrs .

Sd/-
Municipal Commissioner & Administrator
Municipal Corporation Chh. Sambhaji Nagar

Basant Panchami: Millions take amrit snan

PNS ■ MAHAKUMBH NAGAR

The third amrit snan of Maha Kumbh 2025 concluded on Basant Panchami in Prayagraj with akharas taking the sacred ritual bath.

According to the administration, millions of devotees took a holy dip in the sacred waters of Triveni Sangam on Basant Panchami on Monday.

A wave of unwavering faith surged along the banks of Triveni as devotees participated in the amrit snan of Basant Panchami. The third amrit snan commenced with the ritualistic dip of saints from 13 akharas, the torch-bearers of Sanatan Dharma, at the confluence of the Ganga, Yamuna, and the mystical Saraswati.

The alignment of Basant Panchami, the divine day marking the manifestation of Goddess Saraswati, with the amrit snan of the akharas made this occasion even more extraordinary. Amrit snans at Maha Kumbh hold deep spiritual significance - the first signifies karma, the second devotion, and the third knowledge. Upholding their ancient Sanatan traditions, the akharas of sadhus and sanyasis took the sacred amrit snan following an elaborate shobha yatra taken out with full rituals and grandeur.

The sight of this millennia-old unbroken tradition left common devotees spellbound as the dharma rakshak Nagas, ascetics from the Himalayan caves, monasteries and temples, descended on the holy Sangam, adorned in their traditional attire.

Following the customary order, the akharas proceeded towards the Sangam with full grandeur. The amrit snan began with Maha Nirvani Akhara, followed by the Naga Sadhus of Niranjani Akhara, Panchdashnam Juna Akhara,



Devotees gather to take a holy dip at the Sangam on the occasion of Basant Panchami during the Maha Kumbh in Prayagraj on Monday

Aawahana Akhara, and Panch Agni Akhara. The Vaishnav and Udasin Akharas took their sacred dips next, and finally, the Nirmal Akhara completed the holy bathing ritual in the auspicious amrit kaal. Adding to the divine spectacle, the Yogi Adityanath government showered flowers from helicopters upon the crores of devotees who thronged the Sangam for this last amrit snan of Maha Kumbh 2025. The floral showers, which began at 6:30 am, continued throughout the amrit snan, blessing saints, Naga sanyasis and devotees with a celestial

downpour of rose petals from the skies. The atmosphere reverberated with sacred chants of 'Jai Shri Ram' and 'Har Har Mahadev'. On all three amrit snans of Maha Kumbh 2025, floral showers from helicopters honoured the saints, akharas, devotees and kalpasis. On this auspicious occasion of Basant Panchami, marking the divine appearance of Goddess Saraswati, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath congratulated revered saints, religious leaders, akharas, kalpasis and devotees who attained spiritual merit by taking the amrit snan in the sacred Triveni

Sangam. The chief minister described Maha Kumbh 2025 as a momentous opportunity to showcase India's rich cultural heritage and spiritual values. He hoped the event would spread the essence of peace, prosperity and harmony throughout society. To ensure a smooth and secure bathing, an extensive police and security arrangement was put in place across the Maha Kumbh Mela area. Water police and trained divers were stationed at the holy Sangam to ensure the safety of bathers. To enhance surveillance, CCTV cameras were installed

throughout the Maha Kumbh Mela area while drones kept an eye from sky. Senior administrative and police officers personally oversaw crowd control and security measures, remaining present in the mela area throughout the day. ADG Prayagraj Zone Bhanu Bhaskar, Police Commissioner Tarun Gaba, IG Prayagraj Zone Prem Gautam, Divisional Commissioner Vijay Vishwas Pant, DIG Vaibhav Krishna, Mela Adhikari Vijay Kiran Anand, and SSP Rajesh Dwivedi were among those monitoring the arrangements.

Devotees feel blessed

PNS ■ MAHAKUMBH NAGAR

On Monday, crores of devotees gathered for the amrit snan on Basant Panchami at the grand Maha Kumbh, a sacred celebration of Sanatan faith. Pilgrims from Karnataka, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Odisha and various cities across Uttar Pradesh started arriving in Prayagraj early morning to take a holy dip in Sangam.

The devotees marveled at the scale and divinity of Maha Kumbh, calling it the most magnificent and well-organised event they had ever seen. Grateful for the seamless arrangements, they thanked the Yogi Adityanath government for ensuring a smooth, spiritually enriching experience. Many also refuted social media rumours, affirming their firsthand experience as proof of their falsehood.

The amrit snan on Basant Panchami at Maha Kumbh attracts millions of devotees to Prayagraj. This sacred event, beginning with the auspicious Brahma muhurta, sees devotees and akharas participating in ritual baths at the Sangam.

The devotees dismissed rumours circulating on social media about Maha Kumbh as "baseless", and praised the seamless administration and the grandeur of the divine event, describing it as an unforgettable experience. Ravi, a pilgrim from Hubli, Karnataka, expressed his appreciation, stating that all arrangements were excellent and there were no difficulties in performing the ritual bath. His fellow traveller, R Takale, shared his excitement, calling Maha Kumbh a memorable experience and eagerly anticipating the amrit snan of the akharas.

Aditya Shukla, who travelled nearly 3,000 kilometres from Mumbai, Maharashtra, to take a holy dip in the Sangam, expressed his appreciation for the seamless arrangements at Maha Kumbh. He emphasised



that he faced no difficulties reaching the Sangam bank and was in awe of the efficient management of such a massive spiritual gathering. Similarly, Sahdev from Maharashtra, who arrived with his family, including his 9-year-old son, described the event as divine and well-organised. He commended the police administration for their cooperative approach, stating that they faced no inconvenience while taking the holy bath in Sangam.

Vivek Rastogi from Lucknow reinforced these sentiments, affirming that the arrangements are completely systematic, allowing devotees to take the holy dip without any hindrance. Dismissing social media rumours as baseless, he highlighted that crores of devotees are taking part in the sacred event peacefully, with no signs of disorder or difficulty.

SERVICE DEVOTION CONVERGE
The Maha Kumbh witnessed an inspiring confluence of service and social harmony in Prayagraj on Basant Panchami on Monday. The Social Welfare Department's pandal along the

banks of the Sangam, set up in partnership with the National Medicos Organisation and ALIMCO, aids the underprivileged at the Maha Kumbh. Shrivani Kumari supports thousands, offering examination and assistance to those with hearing impairments, with beneficiaries steadily rising.

AGNI SNAN SADHANA OF VAISHNAV AKHARAS

The 'panch dhuni tapasya', also known as 'agni snan sadhana', commenced with the amrit snan on Basant Panchami.

A unique and intense sadhana has begun in Tapasvi Nagar on the occasion of Vasant Panchami, sparking great curiosity among devotees. This sadhana, called 'panch dhuni tapasya' or 'agni snan sadhana', is 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. There is a tradition of this 'agni snan sadhana' in Khalsa of Vaishnav Akhara, which is done after reaching a state of extreme sacrifice and restraint.

Ayodhya witnesses devotional surge

PNS ■ AYODHYA

Ayodhya has set a new record with over one crore pilgrims visiting the holy city between January 26 and Basant Panchami (February 3). Amid vigilant administrative arrangements, pilgrims arriving in Ayodhya are filled with joy and devotion, chanting slogans in praise of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, and Lord Shri Ram.

On Basant Panchami, lakhs of devotees took the holy dip and offered prayers, further enriching the spiritual atmosphere. For the first time since Ram Lalla was enthroned in the grand temple, Maha Kumbh is being held in Prayagraj, drawing an influx of pilgrims to Ayodhya as well. Anticipating this, Chief Minister Yogi had deployed a dedicated team of officials to oversee the arrangements and ensure a seamless experience for devotees.

Following a public meeting in Milkipur on February 2, he reinforced instructions to officials, emphasising that no devotee should face any difficulty. The sacred bathing ritual on Basant Panchami began at dawn and continued until the afternoon, 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 darshan, keeping the temple open for 18 hours a day. Simultaneously, 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 colours, marking the festive spirit. As part of the rituals, abir and gulal were also applied to the deity seated in the sanctum sanctorum. Ram Lalla, the presiding deity, was adorned in new yellow garments, symbolising the arrival of spring. According to the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teertha Kshetra Trust, gulal was applied to Ram Lalla, 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, Ayodhya's focus remains on Ram Lalla, drawing massive crowds to a concentrated area. Managing such a large gathering was a significant challenge, but effective 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 hassle-free experience for devotees. Divisional Commissioner Gaurav Dayal affirmed that officers were monitoring the fair zone 24x7, with arrangements in place to accommodate 25,000 to 30,000 people. Additionally, vehicles have been deployed to transport those sleeping in the open to designated shelters, ensuring their comfort and safety. As a result of these measures, devotees arriving in Ayodhya are experiencing well-organised facilities and a spiritually enriching atmosphere.

CM Yogi welcomes King of Bhutan to Lucknow

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

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

The chief minister presented a bouquet to the king and enquired about his well-being. In return, the King of Bhutan extended his greetings to Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.

In keeping with Indian tradition, artists welcomed the Bhutan king with various cultural performances at the airport. Wangchuck acknowledged their efforts and encouraged the artists.

On Tuesday, the King of Bhutan is set to visit Prayagraj Maha Kumbh, where he will take a holy bath at the Triveni Sangam and perform darshan and puja at the sacred site. Among those who were present to welcome the Bhutan king at the airport were Mayor Sushma Kharkwal, Principal



Secretary (Home) Sanjay Prasad, DGP Prashant Kumar and Lucknow District Magistrate Vishak G, who also presented bouquets to the king.

Bank of Baroda Regional Office, Kanpur Dehat Region: 118/330, 2nd Floor, Gumti No. 5, Kaushalpur, Kanpur-12

DEMAND NOTICE Branch : Lalitpur Main, Distt. Lalitpur

Here by this is to inform that under named borrower has not repaid principal and interest thereon of the loan. Therefore the loan become NPA on below Dated . A notice under section 13(2) of the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002 was issued at last known address, which was returned undelivered. Therefore we again inform to under named borrower/ Guarantor by this public notice to repay the loan amount due including interest and other expenses as mentioned in this notice within 60 days from the date of publication of this notice otherwise bank will take action u/section 13(4) of the SARFAESI Act 2002.

The borrower's attention is invited to provision of sub-section (8) of 13 of the act, in respect of time available to redeem the secured assets, that after publication of public auction/inviting quotation/tender/private treaty your right to redeem the secured assets will not be available.

Name and Address of Borrower / Guarantor and Security agreement with brief description of securities/N.P.A. Date & Outstanding Amount as per Demand Notice

Borrower : Shri Rajkumar S/o Shri Kshamadar and Smt. Nirasha W/o Shri Rajkumar, Both R/o : Ramlila Bandh Ke Pas, Rawatya, Lalitpur, Tehsil & Distt. Lalitpur.
N.P.A. Date : 24-12-2024 **Demand Notice Date :** 03-01-2025
Property : Residential House Bearing Land No. 1576, Mohalla Rawatya, Ward No. 11, Tehsil & Distt. Lalitpur in the name of Smt. Nirasha W/o Shri Rajkumar, Area : 55.76 Sq. Ft., **Bounded-North :** Road, **South :** Property of Seller (Heeralal), **East :** Property of Seller (Heeralal), **West :** Property of Amarchand,
Os/Amount as per Demand Notice : Rs. 5,79,619.28 + Intt. upto Dt. 31-12-2024 + Others Charges
Date : 03-01-2025 **Place :** Lalitpur **Authorised Officer**

इंडियन बैंक (भारत सरकार का उपक्रम) **Indian Bank** (A Govt. of India Undertaking) **ALLAHABAD**

POSSESSION NOTICE (for Immovable Property)
[Under Rule-8 (1) of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002]

Whereas, the undersigned being the authorised officer of the Indian Bank under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002, (Act 54 of 2002) and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with rule 3, 8 and 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a demand notice as detailed herein below calling upon the borrower to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

The Borrowers/Guarantors having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrowers/ Guarantors and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the properties described herein below in exercise of the powers conferred on him/her under section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 and 9 of the said Rules.

The Borrowers in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the properties and any dealings with the properties will be subject to the charges of the Indian Bank.

The Borrower's / Guarantor's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

This Possession Notice is being served to the Borrower (s), Guarantor (s) & Mortgagor (s) to deposit the said dues. Details as under:

S. No.	Name & Address of the Borrower (s)/ Guarantor (s) / Proprietor / Mortgagors	Description of the Immovable Property	Dt. of Demand Notice	Dt. of Possession	Outstanding Amount
Branch : Alambagh Branch					
1.	1. Ashok Kumar Yadav S/o Bal Kishore, R/o 555-J/68Chha Mehndi Khara Manak Nagar Alambagh Lucknow 2. Suman Yadav W/o Ashok Kumar Yadav, R/o 555-J/68Chha Mehndi Khara Manak Nagar Alambagh Lucknow	All that part and parcel of the property consisting of Flat No. 555-J/68CHHA, Mehandi Khara Manak Nagar Alambagh, Lucknow, the Registration Sub-District Lucknow and District Lucknow, Bounded by:- North: Plot of Others, South: House of Ajit Singh, East: Nala Badahu Railway Line, West: Road	23.07.2024	30.01.2025	Rs. 5,75,122.00 and interest thereon
Branch : Ujariyanagar Branch					
1.	M/s Karkadham Enterprises (Borrower), Address: 656/5/1636, Mohammadpur Khatri, Adil Nagar, Lucknow-226021 2. Mr. Jeevan Singh S/o Mr. Mata Badal Singh (Borrower/Mortgagor), Address: 9, Alkapuri, Kursi Road, Lucknow-226022 3. Mrs. Mandavi Singh W/o Mr. Jeevan Singh (Guarantor), Address: 9, Alkapuri, Kursi Road, Lucknow-226022	All that part and parcel of the property situated at Plot No. 20, part of Khasra No. 67, measuring area 1200 sqft, Adil Nagar, Ward-Shankerpurwa, Lucknow, in the name of Mr. Jeevan Singh Patel, Bounded as per deed: North: Plot No. 21 Samiti, South: Plot No. 19 Samiti, East: Plot Deegar Samiti, West: Rasta 20 ft wide	21.11.2024	03.02.2025	Rs. 17,32,381.00 and interest thereon
Date : 04.02.2025 Place: Lucknow Authorised Officer Indian Bank					

CONTINENTAL CHEMICALS LIMITED.
CIN - L24123UP1984PLC014111
REGISTERED OFFICE: A-7, SECTOR-7, NOIDA-201301, U.P.
Tel : 91-120-2423316 Email: info@continentalsoft.com, nkc@continentalsoft.com web: www.continentalchemicals.com

UNAUDITED FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE QUARTER AND NINE MONTHS ENDED 31ST DECEMBER, 2024
Amount in lakh except EPS

PARTICULARS	3 Months Ended 31.12.2024	3 Month Ended 30.09.2024	3 Month Ended 31.12.2023	9 Month Ended 31.12.2024	9 Month Ended 31.12.2023	Year ended 31.03.2024
	(Unaudited)	(Unaudited)	(Unaudited)	(Unaudited)	(Unaudited)	(Audited)
1 Income from operations	43.81	35.72	44.65	117.44	120.14	157.49
2 Net Profit/ (Loss) for the period (before Tax, Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items)	13.83	2.90	18.49	28.73	45.59	60.55
3 Net Profit/ (Loss) for the period before Tax (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items)	13.83	2.90	18.49	28.73	45.59	60.55
4 Net Profit/ (Loss) for the period after tax (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items)	9.75	2.97	17.50	23.90	39.91	51.82
5 Total Comprehensive Income for the period (comprising Profit/ (Loss) for the period (after tax)	9.83	2.98	17.58	24.06	40.17	52.11
6 Equity Share Capital	224.90	224.90	224.90	224.90	224.90	224.90
7 Reserves (excluding Revaluation Reserve as shown in the Balance Sheet of previous year)	-	-	-	-	-	-
8 Earnings Per Share (of Rs. 10/-each)	0.43	0.13	0.78	1.06	1.77	2.30
Basic :	0.43	0.13	0.78	1.06	1.77	2.30
Diluted :	0.43	0.13	0.78	1.06	1.77	2.30

Notes:
1 The above financial result are reviewed by audit committee and thereby have been taken on records by board of Director in their meeting held on 03.02.2025
2 Previous period figures have been re-grouped/reclassified whenever necessary to make them comparable with the current period figures
3 These results have been prepared in accordance with the Companies (Indian Accounting Standards) Rule 2015 (Ind As) prescribed under Section 133 of the Companies Act 2013 and other recognised accounting practices and policies to the extent possible.
4 The company operates only in one segment.
5 The above is an extract of the detailed format of Quarterly Financial Results filed with the Stock Exchange under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing and Other Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the Quarterly Financial Results are available on the website of the Stock Exchange i.e. BSE Limited at www.bseindia.com and website of the listed entity i.e. Continental Chemicals Ltd at www.continentalchemicals.com. The same can be accessed by scanning the QR code provided below.

For and on behalf of the Board of Continental Chemicals Limited Sd/- (Naresh Kumar Chibba) Managing Director DIN: 00376963

Place : Noida Date : 03.02.2025

Milkipur bypoll a 'chunauti', says Akhilesh

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav launched a scathing attack on the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party, saying the by-election in Milkipur assembly constituency was not a "chunav" (election) but a "chunauti" (challenge). "Milkipur bypoll is a direct contest between people and administration; it is not just an election but a challenge," he said. Addressing a rally in Milkipur

on the last day of campaigning, Yadav said that Milkipur would send a strong message for the future of Uttar Pradesh politics. He alleged that the BJP deliberately postponed the Milkipur bypoll, fearing a loss. "This is not just an election, it is a challenge. The BJP knew that the people of Milkipur would never abandon the Samajwadi Party, so they ensured the poll did not take place earlier. But those who run away from elections will have to face the people's verdict,"

Yadav said while addressing the rally in support of party candidate Ajit Prasad. The SP candidate is son of party MP from Faizabad Awadhesh Prasad. The former chief minister of Uttar Pradesh accused the BJP government of engaging in divisive politics while failing to address real issues. He also targeted the administration over the handling of the Maha Kumbh at Prayagraj, alleging mismanagement and under-reporting of casualties. "They claim crores have taken

a dip in the Maha Kumbh, but they are unable to provide the real count of those who lost their lives in the stampede," he said. "The chief minister says he wakes up at 3 am to monitor arrangements, but when the tragedy happened, where was he?" Yadav asked. Referring to the victory of SP's Awadhesh Prasad from Faizabad constituency in the 2024 Lok Sabha election, Yadav said the people of Ayodhya had already rejected communal

politics. "The BJP tried to create a communal atmosphere, but Ayodhya's voters stood with Samajwadis. Now, Milkipur will send another strong message for the future of Uttar Pradesh politics," he added. The Milkipur bypoll is scheduled for February 5 and the results will be announced on February 8. The contest is primarily between the SP and the BJP, with both parties deploying senior leaders for campaigning.

BHU drenched in spring colours on 110th foundation day

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The Banaras Hindu University (BHU) was drenched in spring colours on its 110th Foundation Day on the auspicious occasion of Basant Panchmi on Monday. The foundation stone of the university was laid on Basant Panchmi in 1916. The students and members of the university family celebrated this special occasion with traditional fervour and gaiety. The ceremony began with a *havan puja* at the foundation site in which Vice-Chancellor-in-charge and Rector Prof Sanjay Kumar, Registrar Prof Arun Kumar Singh, Dean of Students Prof Anupam Kumar Nema, directors of various institutes, faculty deans, officers and employees were present. On the occasion, various faculties, centres and institutes presented tableaux on the theme of 'Pratichi Prachi Ka Mel Sundar - Kashi Hindu Vishwavidyalaya'. Rector Prof Sanjay Kumar and chief guest and V-C of Sampurnanand Sanskrit University (SSU) Prof Bihari Lal Sharma flagged off the formal beginning of the foundation day tableaux. These tableaux showcased the features, diversity and rich heritage of BHU along with the story of achievements and development of university in various fields. A total of 30 tableaux were taken out. The grand tableaux passing through Malaviya Bhawan presented a glimpse of the union of Pratichi and Prachi in various fields in



A colourful foundation day procession being taken out at BHU in Varanasi on Monday.

'Mahamana ki Bagiya' (BHU), highlighting the growing prestige of the university. In the tableaux availability of a more holistic and effective treatment method by combining Ayurveda and modern medicine, connecting the Indian knowledge tradition with modern knowledge system and science, use of modern innovation in traditional agriculture and development of agriculture through innovation, the role of BHU in realising Mahamana's thought of providing modern education to students along with traditional knowledge, BHU's contribution in preserving and promoting various forms of knowledge, providing a positive and favourable environment to students and encouraging inclusiveness in accordance with Mahamana's thought, historical heritage and pride journey of the university etc were presented on

the main stage. were present. The students of Central Hindu Girls School performed Saraswati Vandana dance and depicted the historical works of the school, while Central Hindu Boys School presented a tableau on Space Mission, University Kulgeet and Maha Kumbh-2025. Ranveer Sanskrit Vidyalaya underlined the need for the philosophy of Gita in the present times through Vedpaath. The students of Mahila Mahavidyalaya staged a drama presentation on 'Vikas Bhi Virasat Bhi' in their tableau and displayed the role of women in developed India along with heritage. The Faculty of Sanskrit Vidya Dharma Vigyan displayed environmental protection, education of celestial events through oriental studies. The tableaux of various departments of the Institute of Medical Sciences (IMS) showed the ocean of

Ayurvedic medical knowledge and Dental Science created awareness about dental hygiene through street plays. The Faculty of Law explained through a short drama that the new form of law is helpful in empowering women. The Institute of Science showed India's growing steps in the semiconductor sector with the churning of the ocean and artificial satellite. Faculty of Veterinary Science displayed dog training, research on Kadaknath chickens and bird conservation etc. The University Sports Board suggested ways to stay healthy through the Zumba pyramid, hockey and other sports. Various dance postures were displayed through Sangeet Mahakumbh in the tableau of the Faculty of Performing Arts. The Student Welfare Cell also presented its tableau, showing the commitment of BHU to provide mental and psychological support along with academic and professional guidance to the students for their all-round development. This tableau was displayed for the first time. The Indian Institute of Technology-BHU displayed a beautiful tableau of golden drone and Ram Temple. The Institute of Management Studies, South Campus, Institute of Environment and Sustainable Development, National Service Scheme, Vedic Science Centre, Horticulture Department Unit also presented tableaux with captivating and important messages.

Couple killed as car rams into truck

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

An elderly couple was killed while four others were seriously injured when their uncontrolled car suddenly rams into a truck from behind near Bara Jod on Kanpur-Etawah highway under Akbarpur police station area of Kanpur Dehat on Monday early morning. Police rushed to spot and sent all the six injured people to the district hospital where the elderly couple was declared dead by the doctors. The other four injured are undergoing treatment there. Karauni (65) of Baroda under Mahuwa police station Dausa (Rajasthan) along with Matri Devi (60), son Vijendra (40), daughter-in-law Guddi Devi and Santram (45) was going to Prayagraj to take a bath in the Maha Kumbh. Early on Monday morning, car driver Jagmohan (25) of Maukhed, under Bejuwada police station Dausa, dozed off near Bara Jod and lost control over the vehicle as a result of which it rams into the truck. On information of passers-by, police rushed to the spot and sent the injured to the district hospital where Kirauni Lal and his wife Matri Devi were declared dead by the doctors. Station House Officer (SHO) Satish Singh said bodies had been sent for an autopsy. On receipt of complaint, further action will be initiated in the matter, he said. Meanwhile in another incident over a dozen people were injured when an uncontrolled Roadways bus, after hitting an auto, rams into a stationary dumper under the Sajeti police station area in Ghatampur circle on Monday morning. Police sent all the injured to the community health centre (CHC) by an ambulance. After the first aid, seriously injured passengers were referred to the district hospital in Kanpur. Additional Regional Manager of UPSRTC also rushed to the spot and took stock of the situation. Police restored the traffic by the damaged vehicles to the side of the road. A probe is on to ascertain cause of the incident.

Devotees take holy dip in Ganga

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Thousands of devotees took a holy dip in Ganga river on the auspicious occasion of Basant Panchmi here on Monday. Due to the continued rush of devotees from Maha Kumbh the local administration had maintain effective security arrangements and impose traffic and other restrictions. The festival was celebrated with religious fervour in Shri Kashi Vishwanath Dham and other places. Basant Panchmi was also celebrated in Sampurnanand Sanskrit University (SSU). Vice-Chancellor Prof Bihari Lal Sharma worshipped Goddess Saraswati with Vedic rituals. The V-C prayed to Goddess for the progress of the university and nation. The Lalit Kala department of Mahatma Gandhi Kashi Vidyapith (MGKV) also celebrated the festival and the students gave musical presentations of devotional songs. The activists of Namami Gange celebrated the festival by paying obeisance to nature with the Vedic students of Maharishi Yogi Veda Vigyan Adhyayan Peeth. The aarti of Maa Saraswati, the presiding deity of knowledge, Maa Ganga, Lord



Bhaskar (Sun) and nature was performed on the banks of Ganga at Scindia Ghat. The spring season was welcomed with the worship of Maa Saraswati. Regional coordinator and Municipal Corporation's Swachhata Brand Ambassador Rajesh Shukla said Basant Panchmi is a festival to take inspiration from nature and to enjoy life. "Basant Panchmi is the time when changes can be seen in weather, crops, food, clothes. This is also the right time to pray to nature", he said. Poonam Shukla and a large number of devotees participated in the event. Besides, a cleanliness drive was carried out at Ghaighat on the occasion under the joint aegis of Namami Gange Ganga Vihar Manch, 137 CETF 39 Battalion Ganga Task Force and

Municipal Corporation. Under the leadership of Namami Gange Ganga Vihar Manch's district coordinator Shivam Agrahari and Ganga Task Force's Subedar Devendra Basnet, devotees were made aware from Namam Ghat to Gaighat. Through loudspeakers, people were continuously motivated for safe bathing and clean Ganga. They communicated with the group of devotees who had come from many states, including Rajasthan and Uttarakhand. Apart from this, musical aarti of Maa Ganga was performed. The women members of the team performed aarti on the banks of Ganga wearing yellow clothes. Bhim Singh, Rashmi Sahu, Shalini Goswami, Renu Acharya, Renu Jaiswal, Usha Gupta, Praveen Yadav, Ratan Sahu and others were present.

Seven devotees hurt in mishap

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Seven devotees were injured in a road accident near Kathauli village on Mirzapur-Prayagraj road in the Meja area here on Monday morning. The car of Ajay Kumar Agarwal and his family members, who were coming for Kumbh Snan after visiting Maa Vinidhyasini collided with

the car of devotees returning from Kumbh Snan. On receiving information about the incident, the locals immediately reached the spot and took out the passengers trapped in the vehicles. Meja Road Chowki in charge Ankush Kumar, S-1 Lallan Singh and constable Vikas Kumar reached the spot and took all the injured to a hospital. The

injured included Ajay Kumar Agarwal, Sushma Agarwal, Jigyasa Agarwal, Supriya and Mohan Agarwal. Chowki in charge Ankush Kumar said the injured are undergoing treatment in and are out of danger. Meanwhile three people, who were injured in a road accident on Sunday near

Budawa village under Ghurpur police station area on Prayagraj-Rewa highway, succumbed to their injuries on Monday. The SHO said that the trio was immediately rushed to a private hospital where they breathed their last while undergoing treatment on Monday morning. The bodies were sent to mortuary for an autopsy.

Knp Metro: Elevated track construction progressing rapidly

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

After completing the track construction work on both lines (up-line and down-line) from Motijheel to Kanpur Central Station under Corridor - 1 of the Kanpur Metro Rail Project (from IIT to Naubasta), the track construction work on the approximately five-km-long Baradevi-Naubasta elevated section is now progressing rapidly. The welding of rails from Baradevi to Naubasta in the said section has been completed.



After welding the rails for about five kilometres on both lines, the work of casting slabs underneath is now being advanced. Once the slab casting is completed, the track construction work for this section will be finished. Expressing his satisfaction with the progress, Managing Director of

Uttar Pradesh Metro Rail Corporation Limited (UPMRC), Sushil Kumar, said, "The welding process of Rails from Baradevi to Naubasta station under the five-km (approximately) long Baradevi-Naubasta elevated section is now complete. Platform casting and the erection of Pre-Engineered Buildings (PEB) structures, or the roofs of the platforms of all the five stations of this section have also been finished. Currently, along with track construction, the building of technical rooms is underway. System installations across various departments are being carried out simultaneously to save time. I am pleased with the dedication and coordinated effort of our team and contracting agencies to meet our goals in a well-planned manner."

Homestays, guest houses inspected



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

To ensure that the devotees coming to Kashi during the ongoing Maha Kumbh are provided accommodation in hotels, paying guest houses, homestays and guest houses at reasonable rates, are not charged excessive money under any circumstances and do not face any kind of trouble etc. a comprehensive investigation is being conducted on the instructions of District Magistrate S Rajlingam by forming three teams of other departmental officers concerned under the leadership of magistrates.

Additional City Magistrate (First) Shantanu Kumar Sinsinwar conducted a surprise inspection of dozens of paying guest houses, homestays and guest houses in Bhelapur, Sonarpur, Assi, Bhadaini etc areas and instructed the operators to display the rate list under all circumstances and not to charge excessive money from the devotees. He expressed strong objection to many guest house operators not displaying the rate list and warned them do so immediately and added that strict action will be taken if such things were found during the second inspection.

Rare documents, photos & models of locomotives displayed in exhibition

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

To mark the 100 glorious years of electric traction in Indian Railways, a three-day special exhibition was organised by the Electrical department of Banaras Locomotive Works (BLW) at Surya Sarovar premises which was inaugurated on Monday by General Manager (GM) Naresh Pal Singh by cutting the ribbon. The exhibition showcases rare historical documents, photographs and models of locomotives depicting the journey of 100 years of electrification. Interactive infographics display gives glimpses of 100 years of electric loco journey and information about future railway technologies. The GM felicitated the winners of essay, drawing and quiz competitions organised for BLW employees and their families. He also felicitated the nominated employees from each department by presenting them souvenir coffee mugs for their services. In his address, Singh said the journey of 100 years of electric traction in Indian Railways is not just a technological advancement but a historic step towards sustain-



General Manager NP Singh inaugurating an exhibition at BLW in Varanasi on Monday.

able development of railways and energy-efficient transportation. "We are committed to 100 per cent electrification which we hope to achieve by 2025. BLW has always played a leading role in railway electrification. Starting with two electric locomotives in 2017, we have the distinction of manufacturing 2,250 electric locomotives till date. We are com-

mitted to adopting energy-efficient and environment-friendly technologies in the future as well", he said, adding that this exhibition will inspire us to take new resolutions towards the green future of Indian Railways. Principal Chief Electrical Engineer (PCEE) Sushil Kumar Srivastava said Indian Railways is one of the largest railway net-

works in the world, which is today moving towards complete electrification. "Completing 100 years of electric traction in Indian Railways is like a milestone. This journey has led us towards an energy-efficient and environment-friendly transport system. We are proud that we are committed to achieving the target of net zero carbon emission by 2030", he said. In the end, Deputy Chief Electrical Engineer (Mechanical) SK Singh proposed the vote of thanks. Principal Chief Materials Manager (PCMM) Rajneesh Gupta, Principal Chief Mechanical Engineer (PCME) Vivekshel, Principal Chief Engineer (PCE) Vinod Kumar Shukla, Principal Chief Security Commissioner (PCSC) Mohd Nurul Hoda, Principal Chief Personnel Officer (PCPO) Janardan Singh, Chief Vigilance Officer (CVO) Ankur Chandra, Deputy General Manager (DyGM) Anuj Katiyar, vice-president, secretary and other members of Women's Welfare Organisation, senior railway officers, employees, students and others were present in large numbers.

Challenging case of dRTA managed successfully

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

The Regency Health, Department of Paediatrics, has successfully managed a rare and challenging case of Distal Renal Tubular Acidosis (dRTA) in a young child from Hardoi. Aditya (Name Changed), diagnosed with this condition after suffering from symptoms of bilateral bowing of legs, growth failure and polyuria, is now symptomatically better and on the path to improved health.

For two years, Aditya had been treated for vitamin D deficiency, a common cause of rickets and bowing of legs in children. However, further evaluation at Regency Health revealed dRTA, a less common but significant cause of these symptoms, which is often missed due to lack of awareness. The treatment included lifelong alkali and potassium replacement therapy, coupled with regular monitoring and adjustments to manage frequent hypokalemia, a known complication of the disease. "Distal Renal Tubular Acidosis, if

left untreated, can impair a child's growth and development and may lead to renal failure. Timely diagnosis and management are essential for preventing long-term complications and ensuring better outcomes," said Dr Neha Agarwal, consultant paediatric, Endocrinologist at Regency Health. "Aditya has shown significant improvement with resolved acidosis and noticeable symptomatic relief. Regular blood gas and electrolyte monitoring, along with growth assessments, will be crucial for his continued well-being", she said. Regency Health emphasises the importance of awareness in diagnosing rare causes of rickets such as renal tubular acidosis. Early intervention not only improves growth outcomes but also prevents severe complications like nephrocalcinosis or kidney failure. The case serves as a vital reminder for healthcare professionals to consider rare diagnoses when common treatments fail to show results.

Dr Basu selected as member of eLife's Global South Committee

Varanasi (PNS): Dr Chandana Basu, currently working in Centre for Genetic Disorders (CGD), Institute of Science, BHU has been selected as the member of Global South Committee of eLife, one of the prestigious science journals. Dr Basu, joins the committee steered by 10 outstanding scientists from Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, and Latin America. Dr Basu will be representing the Indian sub-continent. The main aim of this Global South Committee is to promote open science by increasing awareness of open publishing and review practices, bring more visibility and support researchers. promote transparency, collaboration and inclusivity and improving the opportunities for the Global South researchers. Furthermore, the idea of having representations from each continent is to bring insight and diverse range of expertise and address the challenges

faced, thereby improving the opportunities of researchers of the Global South. Dr Chandana is a geneticist, working on using human genetic variation as a tool to understand biological traits, adaptation and diseases. She said "I thank eLife for this opportunity and this platform will help me to work for higher visibility of researchers of Global South, promote open science which is the need of the hour and inspire more girls in STEM" Prof Rajiva Raman, Founder Coordinator, CGD, BHU said "It is heartening to know that Dr Chandana has been selected to the Global South committee of eLife. It speaks highly of Chandana's academic caliber and her commitment to carrying science to the society at large. I am confident, as a member of the eLife committee, Dr Chandana will contribute to promoting inclusivity and transparency in science"

NTPC Auraiya distributes blankets



NTPC Auraiya HoP Abhay Kumar Srivastava distributing blankets to the underprivileged community.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

In an effort to support the underprivileged communities during the winter season, the NTPC Auraiya distributed blankets under its CSR initiative. The distribution drive covered the Etawah Lok Sabha constituency and the project-affected villages of

Jamuha, Baisundhara, Kainjari, and Purwaha, ensuring warmth and comfort to the needy. The initiative took place in the presence of Head of Project (HoP), NTPC Auraiya, Abhay Kumar Srivastava, and President, Jagriti Mahila Mandal, Anupama Srivastava. Their participation strengthened NTPC's

commitment towards community welfare and social responsibility. Head of HR Tanmoy Dutta, Manager (HR) Alok Adhikari and Officer (CSR) Janet Fernandes, were also present. INSPECTED: JCI national president Ankur Jhunjunwala inspected the under-construction Mangal Bhavan at Brijendra Swarup Park. Accompanied by JCI Kanpur Industrial president Pranit Agarwal and other members, he described the project as a boon for the under-privileged and lower income group. Meanwhile, Pranit Agarwal has again been elected the President of JCI Kanpur Industrial for 2025. In a grand swearing in ceremony, JCI national president Ankur Jhunjunwala, Mayor Pramila Pandey, local legislators and other eminent industrialists were present.

Parliament: Opposition seeks accountability from Government on Maha Kumbh tragedy

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Rajya Sabha on Monday witnessed uproar from the treasury benches after Leader of Opposition (LoP) and Congress president Mallikarjun 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 Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar conducts proceedings of the House as LoP Mallikarjun Kharge speaks during the Budget session of Parliament, in New Delhi

Kumbh," he said, leading to the 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

appeal to you as one of senior most leaders of this country, if you put a figure in thousands I can only appeal to your conscience," 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 to 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 on Monday witnessed 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 Mela was not struck by a

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 double-engine 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 Purushendra 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 Tharoor for allegedly defaming and tarnishing his reputation. The BJP leader

filed the defamation case over Tharoor's purported statements during an 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 Sabha election from Thiruvananthapuram, Tharoor won by over 16,000 votes, against Rajeev 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 Human Rights Trust (KOHUR) on March 24. KOHUR, represented by advocate Prashant Bhushan,



sought a court-monitored SIT probe into the alleged 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. "The state is gradually 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 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 of 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 than 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 the involvement of the state machinery in violence against the Kuki Zo community. He said the clips had "disturbing 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 thereafter centrally orchestrating the large-scale

murder, destruction and other forms of violence against the Kuki dominated areas in Manipur". "Petitioner is praying for a 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

team of officers of 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 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

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann said people 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 roadshows in Adarsh Nagar and Shalimar Bagh to support AAP candidates Mukesh Goel and Bandana Kumari. "Today is the last day of the election campaign, and February 5 will be your last



day to decide which party to bring to power," said Mann. "On one side, there is a party that supports education, women's upliftment, and development; on the other

side, there is a party that engages in misconduct." "I don't know about 'Achhe Din' but the Aam Aadmi Party will surely bring honest and better days," Mann said referring to BJP's

widely known poll slogan that was first used during the 2014 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 and results will be declared on February 8.

BJP leader Kiran Choudhry slams Opposition

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP) leader Kiran Choudhry on Monday criticized Opposition parties, saying they are bereft of ideas and trying to build a false narrative against the Modi government, 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



from Haryana. 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. 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.

Gurugram Police arrest accused in model assault case

STAFF REPORTER ■ GURUGRAM

A man 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. Meanwhile, 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.

WHO warns of 85 per cent rise in cancer cases in south-east Asia by 2050

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The 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. Ahead of World Cancer Day



on February 4, she said, "On this year's World Cancer Day themed 'United by Unique', which is a reminder of the collective commitment against cancer, WHO acknowledges every patient's unique experiences and the value of people-centred care delivered

jointly by healthcare providers, families, friends and community". The WHO South-East Asia Region reported 2.4 million new cases of cancer in 2022, including 56,000 children, and 1.5 million deaths. "Among all the WHO regions, our region had the

highest number of cancers of lips and oral cavity, uterine 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 last few years, she said

the countries in the region have made notable progress in cancer control. Six countries have dedicated national plans for cancer control, and two countries have included cancer as part of national NCD plan to strategically guide cancer 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 the 'Cancer Anywhere' program, Thailand has adopted universal health coverage approach to cancer management. Eight

countries have introduced nationwide Human Papillomavirus vaccination. Global initiative for childhood cancer is being implemented in ten countries through a regional network of institutions, she said. Seven countries have operational population-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 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 for 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 percent required for elimination of cervical cancer as a public health problem," she said.



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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

As India continues its journey toward energy transition and sustainability, the role of nuclear power has become increasingly vital. The Union Budget 2025-26, presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, earmarked Rs 20,000 crore 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.



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PICTALK



People fly kites at the annual Basant Panchmi festival in Amritsar

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



MANISH SINGHAL

Micro, Small and Medium 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 promises an ongoing supply of skilled labour.

As of January 2025, India has over 159,000 recognised startups, securing its place as the



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 through Government 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 consider setting up units in identified clusters to create an ecosystem that manufactures world-class toys while pro-

THE DIRECT TAX BENEFITS PROVIDED IN THE BUDGET WILL BOLSTER 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 north-east region which needs more economic opportunities. The direct tax benefits provided in the Budget will bolster 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. 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. Missions promoting pulse cultivation, and fruit and vegetable cultivation are bound to improve agricultural practices, infrastructure,

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 hurdles and encourage more units to be set up. (The writer is Secretary General, ASSOCHAM, views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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



India 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 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

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

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

The human touch in AI: Why we anthropomorphise machines

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

In an era increasingly defined by artificial intelligence (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 human-like 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



attribute human characteristics 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 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 may forget they are interact-

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 reasoning. 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. 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)



BIJU DHARMAPALAN



FIRST COLUMN

A PARENTING GUIDE FOR THE DIGITAL AGE

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



SHAINY SHARMA

The 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/guardians 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 fast-paced 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



stress. Above all, what matters the most is the art of discipline. With instant gratification becoming a norm in the digital age, parents/guardians must realise that these generations will grow up in an AI-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 impact of tariffs: Global shifts and the US dilemma



ATUL SEHGAL

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



The 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 as 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 manufacturing 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-



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

tution of WTO and GATT through which this stagnation hit the economies of the developed countries that sought a revival of high trade and growth. However, the advent of China and its rapid rise on the world economic horizon changed the scenario dramatically and rather unexpectedly. The controlled tariff regime and its regulation under the GATT were greatly leveraged by China through a unique model of economic growth based on high borrowing, mega-scale production and export focus.

While all the above was going on, even the Chinese economic model began to falter because it was unsustainable, being heavily debt and export-dependent. The stagnating economies of Europe and many other countries sought to revive growth through tariffs. Tariffs are basically import duties enabling higher costs of landed goods imported from specific countries. The agreed tariffs under GATT helped the developed countries to grow, albeit to a small degree because of the limitations imposed by demographic factors and technological obsolescence, besides the economic blizzard unleashed by China.

The result of the above developments was that in the last 5-10 years, countries have become increasingly protective and insular in their trade practices and have started putting tariff barriers to protect and bolster their domestic industries.

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-

ry scenarios, absorption or 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 production due to the high cost of services and labour, the US economy is presently not in a favourable position to compete for international exports of lower-end 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.

If the USA chooses to abolish 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 counter-tariffs on the USA after the US imposed tariffs strengthens further the above possibility.

Given this, the best course of action for the US would be to link 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)

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

Variety. 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

forming a palette that should symbolise coexistence. However, rather than being embraced as a natural manifestation of diversity, this spectrum has historically been distorted into a hierarchy. The darker shades, unfairly positioned at the bottom, contrast starkly with the privileges afforded to the lighter tones at the top. This stratification of color has shaped life experi-

ences, often determining opportunities, treatment, and social perceptions. India, with its rich cultural and genetic diversity, encapsulates nearly the entire range of this scale. To the global eye, Indians and their South Asian neighbours fall in the middle—brown. This stain of brownness seeps beyond national borders, appearing across continents where South Asians have migrated and settled. However, unlike colors on a painter's palette, which blend to create new shades, human societies tend to resist seamless integration. Instead, racial identities remain dissonant, sometimes even immiscible. The concept of being "white-washed" is one such manifestation of this resistance—an observation aimed at those who adopt

Western customs, implying a dilution of their native culture under the influence of whiteness. South Asians, however, have long held a deep connection to their cultural roots. Even in foreign lands, communities of brown-skinned individuals 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

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 individuals experience racism in South Asian countries as well. Whether rooted in resentment from the colonial past, an ingrained inferiority complex, or sheer ignorance, racism in India and other parts of the

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)

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 Ulaia, a relatively new militant group, has allied with Jamatul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB). These 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. 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 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. Additionally, Pakistani 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 Murshidabad, Malda, Birbhum, Nadia, South 24 Parganas, and North Dinajpur. It has been revealed that Bangladeshi terror masterminds, who frequently

cross the border into India, are engaged in indoctrinating local youth, particularly schoolchildren in various madrasas. The Kolkata Police's Special Task Force (STF) is investigating these 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 added. 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 open for 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 Kejrival's residence, accusing him of neglecting the river's worsening condition. Maliwal said the Yamuna is "on a ventilator" while Kejrival enjoys a luxurious lifestyle and challenged the AAP chief to take a dip in the Yamuna. Maliwal accused Kejrival 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



got us detained by the police." She further criticised Kejrival'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. Kejrival had no answers. If he continues betraying the women of Purvanchal, Chhathi Maiya's curse will be upon him." Maliwal also slammed Kejrival for his unfulfilled promises regarding the

cleaning of the Yamuna river, recalling his earlier vows. "Kejrival 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 Kejrival must focus on serving her, not on political gains. He should stop being a 'liquor broker' and start acting like the son of Yamuna."

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 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 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. 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.

Bandi Sudhakar slams BJP, AAP



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Telangana Congress 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

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 anti-development AAP and BJP parties, and support the Congress party.



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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A Delhi court has acquitted six persons in a 2020 Delhi riots case, raising doubts over the testimony of two key police witnesses regarding identifying the accused. Additional sessions judge Pulastya Pramachala was

hearing the case registered by Gokalpuri Police Station against the accused persons. According to the prosecution, the six accused were part of a riotous mob that committed arson, theft and mischief by fire or explosives across various properties and shops in Gokalpuri on February 25,

2020. In an order dated January 24, the court said the prosecution relied upon two key prosecution witnesses, assistant sub-inspectors, Vanvir and Jahangir, to establish the identity of the accused persons but they were examined only in December 2020. "This delay in examining these

two police officials, who were 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 said.

Terror attack leaves 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 sleeping and found him (ex-serviceman) in a pool of blood". Manzoor Ahmad Wagay had received gunshot injuries in his abdomen. The relative said I first took him to a nearby army camp located in the Behibagh and from there I rushed him to GMC, Anantnag where he succumbed to his injuries. Close relatives, assembled in the house of Manzoor Ahmad Wagay to attend his last rites, claimed he retired from active services about two years ago and was running a business in the area to support his family. He was the sole bread earner in the family. On January 20, 2025, a soldier of the Indian Army Swr Pangala Kartheek laid down his life during a fierce gunfight with a group of hiding terrorists in the Gujjarpatari area of Sopore in North Kashmir's Baramulla district.

India's Chandrika Tandon shines at...

From page 1

The Prime Minister also congratulated her on 'X'. Modi wrote, "Congratulations to @chandrikatandon on winning the Grammy for the album Triveni. We take great pride in her accomplishments as an entrepreneur, philanthropist and of course, music! It is commendable how she has remained passionate about Indian culture and has been working to popularise it. She is an inspiration for several people." Some other winners were Album of the Year - COWBOY CARTER, Beyoncé, Song of the Year - "Not Like Us," Kendrick Lamar, Best Rap Album - Alligator Bites Never Heal, DoeChii. The year 2025 marked the 67th edition of the biggest musical awards night of the world and was echoed with applause.

Rupee all time low

From page 1

The Rupee continued to face pressure due to sustained foreign fund outflows and the broad strength of the American currency in the 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 Saturday, according to exchange data. Meanwhile, India's forex reserves increased USD 5.574 billion to USD 629.557 billion in the week ended January 24,

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 rate is applicable to the currency.

Neeraj Pandit gang members encountered in Palwal

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

absconding in the deadly attack that took place in Maheshpur village on the night of January 19, they said. Two people, including a sarpanch, were shot in the attack. After firing, the miscreants fled from the spot in a car and police are seeking their arrest, police said. 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 signalled 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 team in retaliation gave a

warning and opened fire in self-defense and both the miscreants got injured after getting bullet shots. They were rushed to the hospital where doctors declared them dead, he added. Two country made pistols, three live cartridges used by the miscreants in the crime and the car used in the crime on January 19 have also been recovered, said police. "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 criminals belong to the Neeraj 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," he added.

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 that we have faced is that we have not been able to tackle the problem of unemployment. Neither the UPA government nor today's NDA government has given a clear-cut answer to the youth of this country about employment," he said. Through his social media posts, Jaishankar accused Rahul Gandhi of making 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 abroad," he stated.

Jaishankar dismissed Rahul Gandhi's claim that the Indian government sent him to the US to secure an invitation for Prime Minister Narendra Modi to attend Donald Trump's swearing-in ceremony. "Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi deliberately spoke a falsehood about my visit to the US in December 2024. I went to meet the Secretary of State and NSA of the Biden Administration. Also, to chair a gathering of our Consuls General. During my stay, the incoming NSA-designate met with me," Jaishankar said in his rebuttal in a social media post.

BJP moves

From page 1

Sonia Gandhi triggered a controversy after she had referred to President Murmu 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. "The President was getting very tired by the end...She could hardly speak, poor thing," the former Congress chief was heard saying in clips in what appeared to be a reference to how long the

Privilege against Sonia

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 Narendra Modi also 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

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 Gandhi had said.

GRAP III revoked

From page 1

Noting a downward trend in the AQI 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. CAQM further said construction and Demolition project sites etc. which have

been issued specific closure orders on account of violations/ non-compliances of 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 to the citizen charter under Stages II and I of the extant schedule of GRAP," it said.

Trump plans to cut US funding to South Africa over land law

AP ■ 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 policies, 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 treating certain classes of people VERY BADLY." In South Africa, Trump wrote, a "massive Human Rights VIOLATION, 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 investigation of this situation has been completed!" The South African government 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 use 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 commitments." South Africa is a major beneficiary 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.

China reiterates threat to retaliate against US tariffs

AP ■ TAIPEI (TAIWAN)

US 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 surpluses and illegal border crossings by migrants from across the globe. Here is what Beijing says about it:



What has been China's reaction so far? China has reiterated its threat to take "necessary countermeasures 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 relationship." China says the US action violates World Trade Organisation rules and has vowed to bring a case before the body that governs global commerce. The Ministry of Public Security on Sunday made near identical charges and the Commerce Ministry also issued a closely worded statement. **Who does China say is to blame?** Trump accuses China of allowing the production of fentanyl,

which is then made into tablets in Mexico and smuggled into the US, which records some 70,000 overdose deaths from the drug annually. China says the US must hold itself to account instead of "threatening other countries with arbitrary tariff hikes," the Foreign Ministry said. "The United States needs to view and solve its own fentanyl issue in an objective and rational way... (China) is one of the world's toughest countries on counter-narcotics both in terms of policy and its implementation." Experts say China executes an unknown number of people each year for smuggling drugs, but domestic drug use is relatively low. The Ministry of Public Security statement said the US has not reported any fentanyl precursor seizures originating in China since Beijing began to take legal action. **What other issues may be having an impact on the dispute?** China's enormous trade deficit with the US, which reached nearly USD 1 trillion last year, has been a constant target of Trump's complaints. Tariffs would make Chinese goods more expensive for US consumers, who will ultimately have to pay a significant part of the cost of importing everything from toys to clothing. China's vital export market could be impacted if US consumers decide to "buy American." The Chinese domestic economy has failed to respond to a range of government-backed stimuli, while foreign infrastructure projects and other major government initiatives that add to the country's already high public debt threaten more economic stagnation. That is already starting to derail Chinese President Xi Jinping's push to overtake the US in key economic and political indicators, threatening his ultimate ambition to conquer the island republic of Taiwan and assert 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 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 hold them accountable for their nationals who enter the US outside the law.

North Korea slams Rubio for calling it 'rogue' state

Seoul (AP): In its first direct criticism of the Trump administration, North Korea lashed out at US Secretary of State Marco Rubio for calling it a "rogue" state and warned Monday that such "coarse and nonsensical remarks" will never contribute to US interests. The statement is the latest in a series of North Korean signals that it will maintain its tough stance on the US for now, though Trump has said he's intent on reaching out to its leader Kim Jong Un 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 US 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.

Trump 'agreed' USAID should be shut down: Musk

AP ■ WASHINGTON

The US Agency for International Development is on the cusp of being shuttered, according to 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 said that he spoke in detail 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 in it," 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 US official told The Associated Press on Sunday. Musk's 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 Voorhes 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

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 federal workers, cut programs and slash federal regulations. USAID, whose website vanished Saturday without explanation, has been one of the federal 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 Secretary of State Marco Rubio have imposed an unprecedented freeze on foreign assistance that has shut down much of USAID's humanitarian, development and security programs worldwide — compelling thousands of layoffs by aid organizations — and ordered furloughs and leaves that have gutted the agency's leadership and staff in Washington. The US is by far the world's largest donor of humanitarian aid, with USAID administering billions of dollars in humanitarian, development and security assistance in more than 100 countries. Peter Marocco, a returning political appointee from Trump's first term, was a leader in enforcing the shutdown. USAID staffers say they believe that agency outsiders with visitors badges asking questions of employees inside the Washington headquarters are members of Musk's DOGE team. Democratic Sen. Elizabeth Warren said in a post on Sunday that Trump was allowing Musk to access people's personal information and shut down government funding. "We must do everything in our power to push back and protect people from harm," the Massachusetts senator said, without giving details.

Denmark PM seeks support from EU partners

AP ■ BRUSSELS

Denmark's prime minister insisted on Monday that Greenland is not for sale and called for a robust response from her European Union partners 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 territory of Denmark, a long-time US ally. Last month, Trump left open the possibility that the American military might be used to secure Greenland, as well as the Panama Canal. "We need Greenland for national security purposes," he said. Frederiksen said she has "great support" from her EU partners on the fact "that everybody has

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. "They are already there and they can have more possibilities," she said, underlining that Denmark itself can also "scale up" its security presence. "If this is about securing our part of the world, we can find a way forward," Frederiksen said. Last week, her government announced a roughly 14.6 billion kroner (nearly \$2 billion) 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

ing the governments of Greenland and the Faeroe Islands to "improve capabilities for surveillance and maintaining sovereignty in the region."

It would include three new Arctic naval vessels, two additional long-range surveillance drones and satellite capacity, 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

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 European steel and 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."

B'desh abode of communal harmony, says Yunus

AP ■ SANTORINI (GREECE)

Dhaka (PTI): Bangladesh belongs to all of its citizens and is a safe place for all people regardless of religion or caste, Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus has said, as he greeted members of the Hindu community in Santorini, Greece. Hindus in Bangladesh celebrated Saraswati Puja on Monday amid traditional enthusiasm, festivity and religious fervour. In a message on Sunday, Yunus said Bangladesh is an abode of communal harmony. "For thousands of years, people of all religions have been living together in this country irrespective of caste, colour and religion," he said. "The country belongs to all of us and is a safe place for all people regardless of religion or caste," he added. Yunus took over as the country's interim leader after a student-led uprising last year forced former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to flee to India on August 5, ending her 15-year rule. The interim government "has been relentlessly working to improve the fate of all irrespective of race, religion, and caste and ensure their equal rights," Yunus said. The goddess Saraswati is a symbol of truth, justice, and the light of knowledge, he said.

Schools closed, emergency crews deployed on volcanic Greek island. Spike in seismic activity raises quake concerns

AP ■ DAMASCUS (SYRIA)

Schools were closed and emergency 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 26-member 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 cars. Crescent-shaped Santorini is a premier tourism destination with daily arrivals via commercial flights, ferries, and cruise ships. The island draws more

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 mean it will happen," he said during a weekend briefing. "Sometimes, the way the situation is reported, those reports may contain exaggerations... so people should stay calm."

At least 19 killed, mostly women, in car bomb blast in northern Syria

A car bomb exploded on the outskirts of a northern 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.

Sitharaman encourages states to approach Finance Commission on tax concerns

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

With southern states voicing concerns over 'unfair' tax money devolution, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has said the states have to engage and highlight their concerns with the 16th Finance 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.

In an interview with PTI, Sitharaman said the central government does not decide



on the devolution formula. The devolution of taxes is made in accordance with the recommendations of the Finance Commission and the aggrieved southern states should approach the panel

for change in parameters. "It is for the states to engage with the Finance Commission to express their concerns about the parameters based on which the tax devolution principles

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

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.

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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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 way that it meets international standards. Also, the new law has been made concise, as old 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 years.

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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's manufacturing sector growth started the year 2025 on a strong footing and touched a six-month high in January, fuelled by the steepest upturn in exports in nearly 14 years, a monthly survey said on Monday.

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 Pranjal 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.

Going forward, companies turned more optimistic about

output prospects, with nearly 32 per cent of firms forecasting growth and just one per cent expecting a reduction.

According to panel members, buoyant underlying demand, better customer relations, favourable economic conditions and marketing efforts all bode well for growth prospects.

Robust sales gains and upbeat forecasts prompted companies to recruit additional workers at the start of the fourth quarter of this fiscal year.

"The employment PMI suggested robust job creation in 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," Bhandari noted.

On the price front, cost pressures retreated to their weakest in 11 months, but selling prices rose solidly amid buoyant demand.

The survey further noted that capacity pressures among manufacturers in India remained mild. Underlying data showed that strong job creation in recent months enabled companies to stay on top of their workloads, the survey said.

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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India 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 simple, ensuring competitiveness of Indian

industry and simplifying the tax regime.

"Now the average customs rate in India has come down 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 industry representatives. The 10-nation bloc ASEAN countries are Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. The exercise was also important for dispelling the

narrative of developed countries like the US that India has one of the highest 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

direction. The government has 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.

This rationalisation is 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 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.

BharatPe CMO Parth Joshi resigns to launch new venture



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Parth 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

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 Saturday.

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. Rallying for the fifth 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 safe-haven demand," Jateen Trivedi, VP Research Analyst of Commodity and Currency, LKP Securities, said.

Hindustan Media Ventures posts Q3 net profit at ₹18 Crore

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

The company had posted a loss after tax of ₹0.82 Crore in the October-December period a year ago, according to a regulatory filing by HMVL, the publisher of Hindi daily Hindustan. Its revenue from operations rose eight per cent to ₹197.47

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 December quarter against ₹4.18 Crore in the corresponding quarter.

Agriculture industry hails Budget as bold play for revitalising rural India

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Experts and farmers on Saturday welcomed the 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 agri-entrepreneurs, ensuring inclusive growth across the agricultural sector. It is encouraging that the

government is leveraging India's demographic dividend to engage rural youth in agricultural activities," he said. "Hybrid seed varieties should be included in the National Mission on High-Yielding Seeds. Also, reinstating the 200 per cent income tax deduction for R&D would be crucial for attracting private investment," Ajai Rana, chairman of the Federation of Seed Industry of India and CEO and MD, Savannah Seeds emphasised. He praised the Budget's focus on advancing research and seed innovation. He highlighted the National Mission on

High-Yielding Seeds and the Mission on Cotton Productivity as key policy reforms that would significantly benefit the seed industry. However, some expressed concerns over unmet expectations. Dr. KC Ravi, Chief Sustainability Officer of Syngenta India, noted the absence of long-standing demands, including GST rationalisation and an extension of the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme to the agrochemicals sector. "The Jan Vishwas Bill 2.0 is a welcome reform, but we hope similar trust-based governance is extended to the crop protection industry," he remarked.

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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A large contingent of investors from four European nation bloc European Free Trade 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

commitment of USD 100 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.

Goyal said EFTA 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 -

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 (EU). 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.

Cooperative renaissance through Tribhuvan Sahkari University Bill, 2024



BINOD ANAND ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's commitment to 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 Samridhi" (Prosperity through

Cooperation) by equipping professionals with the skills necessary to enhance innovation and efficiency in cooperative enterprises. The cooperative sector is vital to India's socio-economic structure, providing livelihoods to millions. 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 is going to be the blend of

ancient wisdom with modern education aligns with Modi's vision of a self-reliant and culturally enriched India.

The curriculum will 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 sectors such as dairy, fisheries, agriculture, banking, and marketing, the university will streamline cooperative education. Tribhuvan Sahkari University

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 multi-disciplinary approach to cooperative growth. Moving beyond the traditional MSP model, the university will help cooperatives adopt market-driven solutions and self-sustaining 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 economy, and their prosperity

is critical for national self-reliance.

The university also has a long-term 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. By advancing Sustainable 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

cooperative education, positioning cooperatives as key drivers of economic and social transformation. It will conduct research on global cooperative models, blockchain in cooperatives, and strategies to enhance cooperative entrepreneurship through mentorship and funding initiatives. The 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.

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

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.



GURU NANAK DEV UNIVERSITY STUDENTS SHINE AT NATIONAL BOTANICAL FESTIVAL



AMRITSAR: A group of Master's students of M Sc Botany from the Department of Botanical and Environmental 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.

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 overcome 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 shoot-off to finish ninth and out of contention for the eight-shooter final.

Ravinder topped the qualification with 584, while Sarabjot finished second with 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 Jonathan's biggest achievement in the senior category after the Bengaluru teenager won the 10m air pistol mixed team (junior



gold and bronze in the youth category. "I'm thrilled with this win.

Competing against such talented shooters who have represented India at the

highest level makes this victory even more meaningful. Today was my

day, and I'm proud of how it all came together," Antony said.

Punjab's Sift Kaur Samra secured gold in the women's 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 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 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, 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 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 permanent transfer for 40 million pounds (\$50 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

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 63-year-old goalkeeper 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," he said. "It's the same 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.

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 scorching 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



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 series against England and is

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 dug-out. The scans showed a fracture.

Samson, who came into the T20I series after a stupendous run against Bangladesh and

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 an away series against Bangladesh in August.



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 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.

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 Atwal regularly 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 because to me, it's significant, right? Everything takes baby steps. And obviously, the international place to enter the league is important to do that," he pointed out.

"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.

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 Lewandowski scoring a second-half winner as the 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 second-placed 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.

Alaves said Conechny sustained a head trauma and was expected to spend the night in the hospital.

VALENCIA REBOUNDS FROM EMBARRASSING LOSS

Second-to-last Valencia rebounded from 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.

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 November.

Fourth-placed Athletic Bilbao missed a chance to move even closer to the top three after a 2-2 draw at ninth-placed Real Betis.

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

PTI ■ LONDON

After a recent uplift in their results, 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 Saint-Germain in the

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 revelled 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 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

UNITED LOSS

On the day locally born striker Marcus Rashford edged closer to a departure from Old Trafford, Manchester United lacked a cutting edge up front in the loss to Crystal Palace.

And there was more bad news

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 first 13 home games in the Premier League this season and that hasn't happened 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 under Amorim.

"It is difficult to play here because we want to please our fans," Amorim said. "This season is going to be like that, I said it since the first day."

RELIEF FOR POSTECOGLOU AS TOTTENHAM WINS

United dropped to 13th in the standings and was just one point and two points ahead of Tottenham, which won 2-0 at

Brentford to end a four-match losing run in the league and ease some pressure on manager Ange Postecoglou.

Vitaly Janelt scored an own-goal at a corner to put Tottenham ahead at halftime and Pape Sarr added the second goal in the 87th.

"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 Ellersborg 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.

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-

break. "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 age. "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 tiebreaker, Praggnanandhaa 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. 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.



Bevan inducted to Cricket Australia's Hall of Fame

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Former batter Michael Bevan, widely regarded as one of the greatest ODI finishers who displayed impeccable game awareness and mastered difficult run chases with minimal risk, has been inducted to Cricket 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. During his career that ran from 1994 to 2004, Bevan exemplified maximum returns at minimum risk, and was a genius in keeping the 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 one-day 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,

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) the principles that I used," he added the owner of 67 unbeaten ODI knocks who struck 46 half-centuries and six hundreds in the format. He could never really replicate that success in Tests and Bevan said he accepted that the traditional form was not really meant for him quite early. Bevan played only 18 Tests. He made his debut in 1994 and played the five-day game only till 1998. "I wasn't ready to play Test cricket. I had my own demons," he said. 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 attain new levels of excellence." 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 weird," he said of his career.

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 T20I here, describing 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. "Yeah, (we are) obviously 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



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 said. "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 brilliant innings and sometimes you want to credit

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 them down to 240 after the start they got," Buttler said. 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 55. "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, you 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. "Like I said, you either get quite close in games like this and surprise yourselves or it doesn't work but, no, we certainly won'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. Buttler said he wouldn't want England to change their style of play after a 1-4 series loss to India. "We've had our moments actually in all the games bar the first one probably and today. We had moments in Chennai, Pune and obviously the game we won in Rajkot," he said. "As we get more experienced, more committed to the style 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.



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 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 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.

The tour in Mumbai included trophy's visits to the Wankhede Stadium, Shivaji Park, the Gateway of India, Carter Road, historic Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus, and Bandstand among other locations. 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, Bengaluru Palace, Freedom Park, KR Market, Town Hall, St Mary's Basilica, M Chinnaswamy Stadium, Church Street and Vidyarthi Bhavan.

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

PTI ■ MUMBAI

India head coach Gautam 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 just-concluded 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-risk, high-reward cricket.

And these guys have adopted 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 the 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

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

and economy rate of 7.66. 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. On the 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-of-the-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 Test century at the MCG, 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-of-the-Year award. It marked his first Australian Cricket Award, with Hazlewood taking 30 wickets at just 13.16 in Tests against the West Indies, 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, all-rounder 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 years 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 Year, while Ellyse Perry and Jess Jonassen shared the WBBL Player of the Tournament award.

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