



Delhi CM Rekha Gupta speaks during a felicitation programme organised to mark International Women's Day at Jawahar Lal Nehru Stadium PTI

Mahila Samridhi Yojana gets green signal in Delhi

RAJESH KUMAR ■ New Delhi

Rekha Gupta-led BJP government in Delhi on Saturday approved the 'Mahila Samridhi Yojana' a welfare scheme aimed at providing monthly financial assistance of ₹2,500 each to poor women, with a Budget allocation of ₹5,100 Crore. Opposition Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) slammed the delay in fulfilling the promise made in the run up to the Assembly elections last month. Announced on International Women's Day, the decision was taken at a Cabinet meeting chaired by the Chief Minister Rekha Gupta. The scheme will be overseen by a committee of three ministers led by Gupta. It is estimated that 20-25 Lakh women will benefit from the scheme. The formal announcement was made by BJP National President JP Nadda at an event organised by the BJP Mahila

Morcha at Jawaharlal Nehru stadium to mark the Women's Day after the Delhi Cabinet meeting at Delhi Secretariat. The Delhi government, in a statement following the announcement, said a committee of three ministers Parvesh Sahib Singh Verma, Kapil Mishra and Ashish Sood has been formed for implementation of the scheme. The committee will also decide the criteria and other things of the scheme. The scheme will leverage advanced technology to ensure transparency, efficiency, and seamless disbursement of financial benefits. Aadhaar-based e-KYC will be used. The application process is linked to the Aadhaar numbers of the applicants. Eligible applications are required to provide details such as name, location, address and bank account linked with the Aadhaar card, along with information about family members.

"This initiative is a step towards fulfilling our promise to the women of Delhi. By providing direct financial assistance, we are ensuring economic security, greater independence and empowerment for women across the city. This scheme is not just a financial benefit but a commitment to building a stronger, more self-reliant community of women in Delhi," it added. The eligible beneficiaries should be the residents of Delhi and should be between the ages of 18-60, with a family income less than ₹3 Lakh per annum and are non-tax payers. The scheme cannot be availed by government employees or any individual already getting financial help from other schemes run by the government like widow pension, old age pension or any similar assistance. **Continued on >> P2**

India agreed to cut tariffs 'way down': Donald Trump



Prime Minister Narendra Modi during a meeting with US President Donald Trump at the White House in Washington PTI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New York/Washington

US President Donald Trump said that India has agreed to cut its tariffs "way down" as he reiterated his claim that the country charges America massive tariffs that make it difficult to sell products there. "Our country, from an economic standpoint and financial standpoint and a trade standpoint, has been absolutely ripped off by almost every country in the world," Trump said in remarks from the Oval Office on Friday. "Canada, Mexico and then you just go right down the line. India charges us massive tariffs, massive, you can't even sell anything into India. It's almost, it's almost restrictive. It is restrictive. We do very little business inside," he said. "They've agreed, by the way, they want to cut their tariffs way down now because somebody's finally exposing them for what they've done. And the same thing with China, same thing with a lot of other countries, and the EU has been a terrible abuser of this country," Trump

added. Trump's comments came following Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal's visit to the US for trade talks with his counterpart Howard Lutnick. This was the third time this week that Trump has criticised the high tariffs charged by India. On Thursday, Trump said India is a very high-tariff nation and reiterated that reciprocal tariffs on countries that impose levies on American goods will kick in on April 2. In his address to the joint session of Congress on Tuesday, the first of his second term in the White House, Trump criticised the high tariffs charged by India and other countries and termed them as "very unfair". Addressing lawmakers from the US Capitol, Trump announced that reciprocal tariffs will kick in next month. In the past, Trump has called India a "tariff king" and a "big abuser". Last month, during a joint press conference with Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the White House, Trump said that India has "been very strong on tariffs". **Continued on >> P2**

Death penalty for forced conversion in Madhya Pradesh

GIRISH SHARMA ■ Bhopal

In a move that has intensified political debates and ideological clashes, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav has vowed to introduce the death penalty for those found guilty of forced religious conversions. The announcement, made on International Women's Day, underscores the BJP's escalating campaign against what it terms 'love jihad', a controversial narrative alleging a conspiracy to convert Hindu women under the pretense of marriage. "Our government is committed to protecting our daughters from forced conversions. Such individuals have no right to live in society. Through the Religious Freedom Act, we are working towards introducing the death penalty for those guilty of such crimes," Yadav declared, making it clear that his administration intends to take stringent action against religious conversions deemed coercive. The Congress, has strongly criticised the move, with party MLA Arif Masood accusing the BJP of exploiting religious sentiments and selectively targeting minority communities. "Is the government trying to alter the very essence of the Indian Constitution? If forced conversion is a concern, the law should apply equally to all religions. However, BJP's pattern of targeting a particular community is evident. There are multiple cases of missing girls from various religious backgrounds in Bhopal alone, yet the focus remains singularly on Muslims," Masood argued. Legal experts and civil rights activists have also raised concerns over the proportionality of the proposed punishment. While the existing Madhya Pradesh Religious Freedom Act, enacted in 2021, already imposes strict penalties including up to 10 years imprisonment and an ₹50,000 fine the proposed amendment could set a precedent for capital punishment in cases of religious conversion, a move that has little legal precedent in democratic societies. **Continued on >> P2**

Elderly woman's flight journey turns into nightmare

RAJESH KUMAR ■ New Delhi

What should have been a routine journey for an 82-year-old woman turned into a nightmare at Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA) in Delhi. In a tragic incident, the elderly passenger, the widow of a decorated Lieutenant General, landed in the ICU after suffering a brain stroke, following a fall at Terminal 3, after she was allegedly denied a wheelchair which was pre-booked with Air India. She is being treated for potential brain bleeds. The victim's granddaughter, Parul Kanwar, alleged that no first aid was administered at the airport and that, after eventually being provided with a wheelchair, her grandmother was allowed to board the flight with a bleeding lip and head injuries. The family now says she has been in the ICU for two-days, with the left side of her body showing signs of weakness. The incident happened on March 4 at the Delhi airport, and the passenger later boarded the flight to Bengaluru. Family alleged when a wheelchair was arranged by the airliner it was too late and passenger boarded without a medical check-up. The flight crew provided ice packs and alerted the Bengaluru airport medical team, where she was given two stitches upon arrival. Family has lodged complaints at DGCA and Air India and awaiting action. Air India responded amid public outrage and claimed that at no point was the wheelchair or any assistance denied to the passenger. Issuing a detailed statement after investigating the incident, Air India on Saturday said the family members accompanying the passenger had reported at the PRM (Person with Reduced Mobility) desk located near Air India's ticketing office less than 90 minutes before the scheduled time of departure to request for a wheelchair. "Due to the unprecedented peak demand at that hour, a wheelchair could not be made available within the 15 minutes that the passenger's relatives spent waiting for it," the airline said, adding that the claims of having waited for an hour for the wheelchair are baseless. On their own accord, the passenger decided to walk along with those accompanying her. She unfortunately suffered a fall in the airport premises. Upon noticing the incident, officials of the Delhi Airport, as well as the airport doctor immediately attended to her. "Upon reaching Bengaluru, the guest was escorted by our staff for further medical attention. At no point was the wheelchair or any assistance denied. Air India's staff cooperated with the guests through their journey. We have reached out to the guest's family and pray for her wellbeing," the airline said.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the launch of development works in Navsari, Gujarat PTI

Women empowerment is soul of India: PM Modi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Ahmedabad

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said his government has given topmost priority to women's safety and framed stricter laws and rules to prevent crimes against them, besides making a provision for capital punishment to those indulging in heinous crimes like rape. The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), which replaced the colonial-era criminal law (Indian Penal Code), has strengthened the legal provisions related to women's safety and made filing of complaints easier and delivery of justice faster, he said. Addressing a huge gathering at Vansi

Borsi village in Navsari district of Gujarat on International Women's Day, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that India is walking on the path of women-led development for rapid progress of the country. A security cover comprising only women police personnel was deployed at the event to mark International Women's Day. "When a girl returns (home) late, her parents ask questions. But they don't do the same when a boy comes late... They should do it. In the past decade, we have given women's safety the highest priority, and in order to prevent crimes against them, we have made stricter rules and laws," the PM said. **Continued on >> P2**

Holi infused with political colours in Aligarh, Sambhal

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ Lucknow

Amid the row over Holi celebrations in two important cities of Uttar Pradesh — Aligarh and Sambhal — the State administration is keeping a strict vigil as the issue gained political traction, with BJP MP Satish Gautam declaring, "No one can stop anyone from celebrating Holi inside Aligarh Muslim University (AMU). If any Hindu student faces trouble, I am there to help." Gautam insisted that no permission was required for Holi celebrations anywhere. When asked about the potential conflicts, he made a strong remark, saying, "Agar koi mar peet karega to usay oopar pahuncha diya jaiga." The Sambhal local administration has urged both Hindus and Muslims to respect each other's sentiments and also appealed to people to avoid forcibly

applying colours on those who do not wish to participate in the Holi celebrations. The controversy erupted after the administration slotted a time distribution for the celebrations of Holi after which the Namaaz can be offered. AMU finds itself at the centre of a debate as Holi celebrations return to the campus amid controversy. Following demands from Hindu students and political pressure, the AMU administration has announced that Holi can be celebrated "freely" at the Non-Resident Students Centre (NRSC) Hall on March 13 and 14. The controversy erupted when a right-wing group accused the University of denying Hindu students permission to hold a 'Holi Milan' function on campus, even as institutions like Jamia Millia Islamia (JMI) allow Holi celebrations. **Continued on >> P2**

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Women police take charge of security at PM's event

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

Over 1.5 Lakh women gathered in a Gujarat village for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'Lakshpati Didi' programme on Saturday, around 2,500 female police personnel took charge of security, ensuring the mega event proceeded smoothly.

In the first such initiative in the country, the entire security cover for the event venue at Vansi Borsi village in Navsari district was provided by only women police officers and constables to mark International Women's Day. Their male peers were deployed for parking and traffic management services, said officials.

Women police personnel were in charge of security at every step during the programme right from Modi's arrival at the helipad till the conclusion of the event during which Modi addressed a sea of women, interacted with beneficiaries of the 'Lakshpati Didi' scheme and felicitated them with the Lakshpati Didi certificates.

Women police personnel have made the security arrangements for the Lakshpati Didi programme, said Additional DGP Nipuna Torwane, who supervised the work of the all-women team. "Since this is a very high-level programme, all precautions have been taken for its security. From constabulary to higher-ranking officials



Prime Minister Narendra Modi interacts with 'Lakshpati Didis' in Navsari in Gujarat

have been making arrangements, carrying out rehearsals and giving point-to-point briefings over the security arrangements for the last three days," she said.

As many as 2,145 women police constables, 61 women inspectors, 187 women sub-inspectors, 19 women deputy superintendents of police, 5 women superintendents of police, and a deputy inspector general-rank official handled the security from the front, officials said.

An official release quoted State Minister of State for Home Harsh Sanghavi as say-

ing that the decision to make women in charge of security at such a high-profile event would be a milestone not only in Gujarat but in the entire country in policing and law and order.

"This initiative will give a strong message to the world on International Women's Day and it will also convey how women play an important role in making Gujarat a safe and secure state," Sanghavi added. The minister said this would be a historic initiative in India concerning law and order.

Three civilians found dead near waterfall in Kathua

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ Jammu

A fresh wave of terror gripped the remote hilly area of Lohai Malhar in Billawar tehsil of Kathua district on Saturday soon after the recovery of dead bodies of three civilians, including a young boy near a waterfall.

The dead bodies were spotted with the help of drone cameras in the upper reaches of Billawar during massive combing and search operations launched by the joint team of security forces in the area.

So far, security forces have not ruled out the role of suspected foreign terrorists behind these civilian killings.

According to police the civilians identified as Varun Singh (15), son of Chamel Singh, a resident of village Dehota, Yogesh Singh (32), son of Shori Lal and Darshan Singh (40), both residents of Marhoon, went missing while they were heading to a marriage function in Lohai Malhar area on Thursday.

This is the second such incident since February 16 in the region where dead bodies of civilians have been recovered by the security forces under mysterious circumstances.

Two civilians, Shamsher (37) and Roshan (45), were found dead on February 16 in Kohag village, Billawar,

after venturing there to collect wood. Senior Superintendent of Police, Kathua district Shobhit Saxena Saturday said, "Yes, the bodies have been sighted in the upper reaches, but it will take a couple of hours to get a clear picture of what exactly happened to them."

The local villagers in the area are feeling insecure following repeated incidents of civilian killings belonging to a Hindu community.

Earlier on Friday, BJP MLA Satish Sharma from Billawar brought up the issue of missing civilians in the Lohai Malhar area during the assembly session. Leader of the Opposition Sunil Sharma also spoke to Inspector General of Police Jammu range to ascertain the whereabouts of the missing civilians.

To coordinate the ongoing search and combing operations senior officers of the Jammu and Kashmir police and army were rushed to the spot. Since last year, the upper reaches of Kathua district are witnessing incidents of terrorist violence.

In July 2024, five soldiers were ambushed by the foreign terrorists near Macchedi area of Kathua. Additional forces were rushed to the area to plug the gaps and strengthen the security grid to prevent such targeted strikes.

Maharana Pratap, Veer Shivaji our national heroes, not Akbar or Aurangzeb: Yogi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Noida

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Saturday said that "our ideals and national heroes" are Maharana Pratap, Veer Shivaji and Guru Govind Singh, not Akbar or Aurangzeb. "Akbar can never be a hero. Be it Akbar or Aurangzeb, their mentality towards Hindus was the same. They hatched many conspiracies to trample the eternal tradition of India," he said.

He was speaking after unveiling the statue of Veer Shiromani Maharana Pratap at Dadri. CM Adityanath said that only a warrior who fights an army of millions with 20 thousand soldiers can be "our true hero." "Haldighati gave the status of a national hero to Maharana Pratap and forced Akbar to kneel down by taking back the lost areas of Mewar in his lifetime," the chief minister added. He also praised Maharana Pratap's horse Chetak. "The devotion of his horse Chetak was also amazing. Even today, people respect the soil of Haldighati as a pilgrimage." He stressed, "The present generation cannot get a new inspiration. They get inspiration from the character, life and personality of national heroes such as Maharana Pratap, Chhatrapati Shivaji and Guru Govind Singh.

"These national heroes should be respected in all circumstances. Those who cannot give respect to these national heroes are the victims of deformity and need treatment. They need treatment because without respecting them, the present generation cannot move forward nor get inspiration." Speaking about the Maha Kumbh, he asserted, "...Rumours also did not stop people from visiting the Maha Kumbh. They also spread rumours that the water is polluted, but 'behta paani aur ramta jogi kabhi ashuddh nahi hota' (flowing water and wandering ascetic can never be impure)."

Meanwhile, the Uttar Pradesh chief minister, who visited Barsana in Mathura on Friday, said, "Rangotsav of Brajhooni surprised foreigners that there is no discrimination in India, everyone is drenched in colours together." Adityanath said that new sources of faith and livelihood are opening up.

"Our culture is becoming the basis of our prosperity. Along with the blessings of Shri Ram, Shri Krishna, Mahadev, Maa Ganga and Maa Yamuna, now the blessings of Maa Lakshmi are also showered on UP," said Adityanath.

The CM also inaugurated and laid the foundation stone of 97 development projects worth ₹1,467 Crore for Gautam Buddha Nagar from the public meeting venue itself. The CM inaugurated a government degree college, a 100-bed hospital, and announced plans to build ITI and stadium.

Delhi police busts cricket betting racket, arrests three

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

Delhi Police's Crime Branch has allegedly busted a well-organised illegal cricket betting racket operating in Delhi's Karampura area, arresting three people and recovering more than ₹22 Lakh an official said on Saturday.

The accused have been identified as Manish Sahani (42), Yogesh Kukreja (31) and Suraj (24), he said. "A raid led to the arrest of three suspects who were found betting on the South Africa-New Zealand Champions Trophy semi-final match, which took place in Lahore, Pakistan, on March 5," DCP (Crime) Aditya Gautam said. Several betting-related equipment and cash, were confiscated during the raid, including ₹22.62 Lakh deposited in different accounts. One laptop, 9 mobile phones, one LED TV, an assistant sound box used for voice recordings and multiple notepads and betting slips were also recovered, he added. The raid was conducted following a tip-off about a betting syndicate run by Sahani and an investigation was launched.

"On March 6, a well-coordinated raid was conducted in Karampura. Manish acted as the key organiser, operating independently without middlemen. He used voice recordings to document conversations with bettors and managed financial transactions through both bank accounts and cash dealings," the DCP said.

MoHUA minister inaugurates DMRC-Udaan children home

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

Union Minister of State, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA), Tokhan Sahu, inaugurated the DMRC-Udaan Children Home near Dilshad Garden Metro Station in a virtual mode. Constructed by the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC), it is designed to provide a safe, nurturing, and enriching environment, and caters to destitute girls aged 5 to 18 years.

DMRC built the 'Udaan Children Home' and formally transferred it to Salaam Baalak Trust.

The NGO is well recognised for its extensive work with street children, offering comprehensive care, education, healthcare, and skill development to ensure these young individuals have the opportunity to build a brighter future. It has also been managing Children's home for boys at Tis Hazari. Speaking on the occasion, Sahu, expressed his appreciation for the initiative, stating, "On the occasion of International Women's Day, I am pleased that DMRC and Salaam Baalak Trust have come together to create a secure and nurturing home for girls. This initiative will provide them with safety, education, and a strong foundation for a promising future. It is commendable that this home will support young girls who have faced immense hardships at an early age. With this initiative, they can now dream without fear."

The DMRC Girls Home, spread over an area of 3,142 square meters, has been designed to ensure the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of its residents.



DMRC-Udaan Children Home near Dilshad Garden metro station

Key features of the facility include, four dormitories with a capacity of 96 beds, a dedicated dormitory for differently-abled children with ten beds, an eight-bed medical room with an attached washroom, and a sick room for specialised care.

Four spacious classrooms, a fully equipped computer lab, a dedicated

library, and an activity hall for extracurricular activities such as dance, theatre, and martial arts and a large dining hall accommodating 50 children at a time, an adjacent well-equipped kitchen, and a ration store for monthly provisions.

The premises are under CCTV surveillance, and the building is earthquake-resistant with fire safety provisions.

India agreed to cut tariffs 'way down': Donald Trump

Continued from >> P1 "I don't blame them, necessarily, but it's a different way of doing business. It's very hard to sell into India because they have trade barriers, very strong tariffs," he had said.

India on Friday said it is looking at deepening trade ties with the United States including by reducing tariff and non-tariff barriers under a bilateral trade agreement.

During Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the US last month, both sides announced plans to negotiate a mutually beneficial, multi-sector Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA),

External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said in New Delhi.

Commerce Minister Goyal was in the US and met his counterparts and the two governments are in the process of advancing discussions on a multi-sector bilateral trade pact, he said.

"Our objective through the Bilateral Trade Agreement is to strengthen and deepen India-US two-way trade across the goods and services sector, increase market access, reduce tariff and non-tariff barriers, and deepen supply chain integration between the two countries," Jaiswal added.

Death penalty for forced conversion in Madhya Pradesh

Continued from >> P1 The move aligns with similar legislative efforts in other BJP-ruled states, such as Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat, which have implemented stringent anti-conversion laws. Maharashtra, under Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis, has also constituted a panel to explore additional measures to curb forced religious conversions.

Critics argue that such legislative measures serve as political tools to reinforce Hindutva narratives ahead of upcoming elections. With the BJP aggressively pursuing a hardline stance on religious identity, these laws resonate with a section of its core voter base but have sparked fears of misuse and communal polarisation.

The push for capital punishment in forced conversions is expected to face significant legal scrutiny. India's Supreme

Court has consistently held that the death penalty should be reserved for 'rarest of rare' crimes, typically involving heinous acts of violence. Introducing such a measure for religious conversion, an act that can involve complex questions of personal choice, persuasion and social pressure, could trigger a constitutional challenge.

Furthermore, the law stipulates that individuals seeking to convert must notify the district administration 60 days in advance. This requirement, critics argue, places unnecessary restrictions on personal freedom and contradicts Article 25 of the Indian Constitution, which guarantees the right to freely profess, practice and propagate religion.

While the BJP projects this move as an effort to protect vulnerable individuals

from coercion, the opposition sees it as part of a broader pattern of targeting religious minorities.

Historically, BJP governments have framed issues of religious conversion and interfaith marriages through the lens of national security and cultural preservation, a strategy that has yielded electoral dividends in the past.

As Madhya Pradesh inches closer to the next round of state elections, Yadav's hardline stance is likely to be a key talking point.

Whether this proposed amendment ultimately withstands legal scrutiny or ends up as an electoral maneuver remains to be seen. However, one thing is certain—the debate over religious freedom versus state intervention in personal choices is far from over.

Mahila Samridhi Yojana gets...

Continued from >> P1 On the occasion, the Chief Minister said BJP has fulfilled the promise we had made to Delhi's sisters in our Sankalp Patra (manifesto) under the Mahila Samridhi Yojana.

AAP leader and Gupta's predecessor Atishi launched a scathing attack, accusing the new Delhi government of failing to deliver on its election promise before International Women's Day. She called the Prime Minister Narendra Modi's guarantee a "jumlā" and alleged that the saffron party had misled voters. The Leader of Opposition claimed that instead of starting disbursements, the government has only formed a four-member committee.

Women empowerment is soul of India: PM Modi

Continued from >> P1

"My government changed the law to introduce capital punishment for heinous crimes like rape," he said. To ensure swift justice in serious crimes against women, the government has set up fast-track courts, he said, adding that around 800 courts have been approved across the country, most of which are now operational. "The newly implemented Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, which wiped out the colonial law, further strengthened provisions related to women's safety. A separate chapter has been added in it to address crimes against women and children in new criminal laws," he said.

Victims facing delay in justice was a common grievance earlier. But in order to address this, the new law mandates that charges in cases of heinous crimes, like rape, be framed within 60 days and verdicts delivered within 45 days, he added. The new laws allow for e-FIRs to be filed from anywhere, making it easier for the police to take immediate action. Under the provision of zero FIR, any woman can file an FIR at any police station if she faces atrocities, the Prime Minister said. The police

can now record the statements of rape victims through audio-visual medium, which has been legally recognised, he added.

"A time-frame of seven days has been fixed for doctors to forward medical reports, providing significant assistance to the victims," he said. Underlining that the new provisions in the BNS are already showing results, Modi recalled charges were framed in a gang-rape case in Surat within 15 days of the incident and the culprits were sentenced to life imprisonment within a few weeks.

Modi said blessings of women were his greatest strength and protective shield. "I am the wealthiest person in the world. My statement will raise hackles of some listeners. But I will reiterate that I am the wealthiest person in the world not in terms of money, but because of the blessings from cores of mothers, sisters and daughters. These blessings are my greatest strength, capital and protective shield," Modi said.

Respecting women is the first step towards the development of society and the nation. India is now walking on the path

of women-led development for the rapid progress of the country, Modi said. "Our government places utmost importance on 'samman' (honour) and 'suvidha' (facilities) for women. We built thousands of toilets and gave dignity to women. Our government brought in stringent law against Triple Talaq and saved lives of lakhs of Muslim women from being destroyed," the PM said.

He stressed the need to empower women from rural parts. "(Mahatma) Gandhiji used to say that the country's soul lies in its villages. I would like to add that women are the soul of our rural areas, and the soul of rural India resides in empowerment of rural women," Modi said.

Our government has prioritised women's rights and opportunities, he said. India has become the world's fifth-largest economy, with the foundation of this economic progress laid by millions of women. Rural economy has played a significant role in this achievement, Modi said.

Over 10 Crore women are running more than 90 Lakh Self-Help Groups (SHGs) across the country, with over 3 Lakh SHGs operating in Gujarat alone.

The government is committed to increasing the income of these millions of women, aiming to make them 'Lakshpati Didis', he said.

The PM added that around 1.5 Crore women have already become 'Lakshpati Didis', and the government aims to make a total of 3 Crore women 'Lakshpati Didis' in the next five years, he said. The Lakshpati Didi scheme was launched by the Union government in 2023 and recognises women members of SHGs, who have an annual income of at least ₹1 Lakh from agriculture, animal husbandry, and small industries, as 'Lakshpati Didis'.

Before addressing the programme, the Prime Minister engaged in 'Prerna Samvaad' interaction at Vansi Borsi village with a group of 'Lakshpati Didis', who shared their experiences. Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel and Navsari MP CR Paatil were also present there. During the Navsari programme, the PM disbursed ₹450 Crore in financial assistance to more than 2.5 Lakh women from over 25,000 SHGs.

Holi infused with political colours in Aligarh, Sambhal

Continued from >> P1 The demand for Holi celebrations was led by student leader Akhil Kaushal, who requested permission to hold an event at NRSC on March 9. However, AMU officials pointed out that university board examinations were scheduled that day, and March 10-12 were working days. Subsequently, NRSC Provost Professor Brij Bhushan Singh clarified that March 13 and 14—both holidays—were suitable for Holi celebrations.

"I think it would not be appropriate if any student comes and plays Holi on the campus on March 10, March 11 and March 12 as these are working days and there will be classes... March 13 and March 14 are holidays and everyone is welcome to play Holi," Singh said.

While AMU maintains that Holi has always been celebrated informally on campus, political tensions have escalated. Local Congress leader and former Aligarh MLA Vivek Bansal accused the BJP of manufacturing controversy, stating, "Holi was always played at AMU. Why is the BJP trying to disturb communal harmony?"

AMU spokesperson Professor Vibha Sharma echoed this sentiment, saying, "The University has a tradition of celebrating all festivals. Special permission has never been required."

However, a senior AMU official recalled last year's incident when exter-

nal elements entered the campus despite a denial of permission and allegedly harassed female students. "We have since become cautious," the official noted.

The controversy also raises a larger question - if Jamia Millia Islamia, another central university with a Muslim-majority student body, permits Holi celebrations without restrictions, why was AMU's stance initially different? BJP spokesperson Rakesh Tripathi questioned, "Why was there silence when Holi was not celebrated at AMU? Why was it restricted in the first place?"

While in Sambhal, Uttar Pradesh Minister Gulab Devi on Saturday played down the remarks of a circle officer that Holi comes only once a year, whereas the Jumma Namaaz takes place 52 times a year and said in a democracy, everyone is entitled to an opinion.

The secondary education minister, who is the MLA from the Chandausi Assembly constituency (reserved for Scheduled Castes) in Sambhal district, also said all communities should celebrate their festivals together and maintain peace and order.

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav asked, "If officials who should not differentiate between people embracing each other on Holi and Eid speak negatively, how will harmony be protected under the rule of the divisive BJP?"

Nadda credits women for BJP's victory in Assembly polls

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

BJP national president JP Nadda on Saturday thanked women for the victory of the saffron party in the Delhi Assembly polls, saying it would have been impossible without their blessings and support.

Addressing a Mahila Diwas program hosted by the Mahila Morcha of the party at Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, Nadda said the BJP, under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has ensured women's empowerment in various fields. "I thank the women of Delhi for playing a big role in forming BJP's government in Delhi. This victory was not possible without their support and blessings," Nadda said, greeting the women on International Women's Day.

The Delhi Cabinet has approved an allocation of ₹5,100 Crore for implementing the Mahila Samridhi Yojana, under which women in the national capital will receive ₹2,500 each per month, he announced at the event.

He congratulated the women of Delhi over the approval of the scheme and asserted that the work for women's empowerment has now begun in the national capital.

Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta and other senior leaders were also present at the event.

"It has been BJP's policy to promote women and their empowerment. We are marching ahead with the aim of women-led development."

"The vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat and Viksit Bharat is not possible until we create self-confidence among the women of the country," Nadda said.

The BJP national president asserted that the party has the maximum number of women MPs in both the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha.

In 13 BJP-ruled states, there is now one Chief Minister and two Deputy Chief Ministers who are women, he said.

On the occasion of International Women's Day, all arrangements, including tents, sound systems, hall decoration, stage management, catering, and media coordination, were handled entirely by women teams.

He stated that the Prime Minister has worked for women's empowerment through various initiatives, believing that no country can progress if its women are not honoured and respected.

He noted that BJP's commitment to women's empowerment is reflected in its leadership with two female Deputy Chief Ministers in other states and now a woman Chief Minister in Delhi. This is only possible in the BJP.

Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, addressing the gathering, said the BJP has



BJP national president JP Nadda along with Delhi CM Rekha Gupta

PIONEER PHOTO

risen above symbolism under the Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership and empowered women through various initiatives.

"If Nirmala Sitharaman will present the budget of the country, Rekha Gupta will

present the Budget of Delhi," she said, asserting that the BJP has worked to ensure that women leaders in the party rise to the highest decision-making positions.

"Such courage to take this significant decision could only be shown by the BJP.

There could be no greater honour shown to women," she stated, citing her appointment as Chief Minister of Delhi.

Gupta promised to fulfill every commitment made to the women of Delhi, including building pink toilets and estab-

lishing One-Stop Centers for women in distress. She expressed gratitude for the overwhelming support and appreciation she has received since her appointment and credited the BJP's courage and vision for this historic step.

Gupta asserted that her government will work for the holistic empowerment of women and their well-being.

"We will work for the safety and prosperity of the women in Delhi," she said, adding that one-stop centres at the district level will be set up to provide help to women, including police assistance, legal counseling and more.

She highlighted plans for enhancing women's safety, including increasing the number of pink police stations, Pink PCR vans, and deploying more women constables.

She also announced the construction of One-Stop Centers for women facing harassment and pink public toilets across the city.

She also asserted that the BJP government will fulfill all the promises it made to the people in the party's Sankalp Patra for the recent Assembly polls.

Delhi BJP President Virendra Sachdeva also extended his wishes on Women's Day and expressed hope that the double-engine government would accelerate Delhi's development, which has been stalled for the last 10 years.

BJP hails 'Mahila Samridhi Yojana'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

The BJP leaders have hailed the decision to approve the 'Mahila Samridhi Yojana'. Senior BJP leader and Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh hailed the Delhi government's decision to launch the Mahila Samridhi Yojana of giving ₹2,500 financial assistance to poor women.

"I congratulate PM Modi and CM Rekha Gupta that before coming to this event her Cabinet approved the ₹2,500 per month Mahila Samridhi Yojana for women in Delhi," he said.

BJP MP from South Delhi, Ramvir Singh Bidhuri has congratulated the Delhi BJP government for implementing the Mahila Samridhi Yojana and demanded an apology from the Leader of Opposition Atishi for spreading lie for the past few days.

Bidhuri said that the BJP government has fulfilled two big promises of its manifesto within a fortnight.

Ramvir Singh Bidhuri said, "On behalf of the manifesto committee, we congratulate the BJP government for this great work. Prime Minister Narendra Modi had promised the women of Delhi that the Mahila Samridhi Yojana will be implemented on March 8 and as per Modi ji's guarantee, this scheme has been implemented."

BJP National General Secretary Dushyant Kumar Gautam slammed



Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh

government formation as the party is committed to fulfill all the promises made before the assembly elections.

Sachdeva attacked the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) over its failure to fulfill promises of transferring ₹1,000 to the women of Punjab.

Hitting back, Sachdeva said, "Instead of asking us for a day's account, Atishi should answer us about the ₹1,000 for those 37 months. The government has been formed in Punjab for 37 months—where is the money? There is an AAP government there; why don't you speak on that? Why is Arvind Kejriwal acting dumb, and why doesn't Bhagwant Mann speak on this? Why don't you speak after announcing ₹1,000 for the sisters of Punjab?"

Further attacking AAP leaders, he added, "It has only been a few days since our government was formed, and governments do not run with urban Naxalism. Governments run by rules and law. Our Chief Minister and our ministers are looking after the work."

The BJP had made the ₹2,500 per month promise a key part of its campaign for the Delhi Assembly polls held in February, surpassing the AAP offer of ₹2,100 per month.

The strategy paid off as the saffron party secured a sweeping victory, winning 48 of the 70 seats and returning to power in Delhi after a gap of more than 26 years.

AAP, Congress criticise BJP for missing welfare promise, calls it PM's 'jumla'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and Congress on Saturday launched a scathing attack on the BJP-led Delhi government, accusing it of failing to deliver on its election promise of providing ₹2,500 per month to women before International Women's Day.

Criticising the BJP-led Delhi government, the Leader of Opposition Atishi called Prime Minister Narendra Modi's guarantee a "jumla" and alleged that the saffron party had misled voters.

"The women of Delhi are waiting to see ₹2,500 messages on their phones. The BJP government has proved that Prime Minister Narendra Modi lied to them. I am sure, like this promise, all others will also be proven false," Atishi said at a press conference.

However, the Leader of Opposition claimed that instead of starting disbursements, the government has only formed a four-member committee.

Earlier in the day, referring to a poll promise by the BJP, Leader of Opposition Atishi on Saturday said that women in Delhi are waiting for ₹2,500 to be credited to their accounts.

In a video on X, Atishi said, "During election campaign, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had promised ₹2,500 to



Leader of Opposition Atishi addresses press conference in New Delhi

Delhi Congress president Devendra Yadav also came down heavily on the BJP government saying as expected, the BJP Government in Delhi backed out of its election promise of giving ₹2,500 to every woman in Delhi under the 'Mahila Smriti Yojna' scheme to empower women residents of the Capital, which it had promised to implement on International Women's Day on March 8.

Yadav said Delhi Government would give this amount only to a limited number of women with very strict qualifying criteria, which in effect, will benefit less than 10 per cent of the over 71 Lakh women voters in the Capital, who had overwhelmingly supported the BJP in the Assembly elections. He said that the Chief Minister also did not make any mention about providing cooking gas cylinder for ₹500 with prices of every daily use item soaring to sky high. Ahead of the Delhi Assembly elections, Prime Minister Modi had assured that once the BJP government was formed, the scheme would be approved in the first cabinet meeting, and funds would start reaching women's accounts by March 8 (Women's Day).

Earlier in the day, Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta announced that the state cabinet had approved the Mahila Samridhi Yojana, allocating ₹5,100 Crore for its implementation.

Women are society's backbone, says Delhi CM



Rekha Gupta attends 'Equality Walkathon' organised by Fortis Hospital in Shalimar Bagh

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Saturday said women are the backbone of society and are contributing tirelessly to healthcare and education.

Speaking at an Equality Walkathon organised by Fortis Hospital Shalimar Bagh on International Women's Day, she reiterated the government's commitment to the

'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao' campaign, stressing that empowering women through education and healthcare was key to the overall societal growth.

The Chief Minister said, "Women are the backbone of our society, contributing tirelessly across diverse fields be it healthcare, education, business, or public service."

"They should prioritise their health and

overall well-being. Together, let us build a future where gender equality is not just a goal but a lived reality," she added.

Gupta said, "We started the 'Save the Daughter' campaign, and today, we have reached the 'Empower the Daughter' campaign. We must focus on making daughters self-reliant. There should be no difference between sons and daughters. As a father figure, Narendra Modi has given great respect to this daughter, and I am thankful for it. If we provide someone with good health, consider their life improved," Rekha Gupta added.

The Chief Minister also praised Prime Minister Narendra Modi for uplifting women through the Ujjwala Yojana, adding, "Today, with the double-engine government in Delhi, we are providing excellent healthcare services in all Delhi hospitals. Government hospitals should have good facilities so that people do not need to rush to private hospitals. Thousands of Jan Aushadhi Centers have been opened across India."

Gupta also stressed the need for providing better educational opportunities as well as health and well-being to women, which can help them march forward in their lives.

"Reiterating the government's message of 'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao, Beti Badhao', I would like to say that the society must progress by prioritising the education of

daughters - not just for their academic growth, but also for their overall well-being," said the Chief Minister, while also highlighting the need for the national Capital to get good health services.

"Delhi should become the most developed health hub in the country. Every citizen should get convenient medical services, and no one should be deprived of the right treatment," she said.

Highlighting women's vital contributions across fields, she urged them to prioritise their health and well-being. "Together, let us build a future where gender equality is not just a goal but a lived reality," she added.

The walkathon, which saw the participation of around 400 people, aimed to promote gender equality and equal opportunities for women.

Themed 'Accelerate Action for Gender Equality', the event featured banners and placards advocating women's rights.

A 'Women's Empowerment Programme' was also held, featuring a panel discussion with doctors on women's health challenges, workplace equality, and inclusive growth.

Earlier Gupta interacted with people at her residence as they gathered to meet and greet her.

People gathered at her residence and extended their wishes by giving small plants and bouquets.

Newly elected MLAs' orientation program rescheduled to March 18

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

The orientation program for newly elected MLAs has been rescheduled to March 18.

The two-day program will be inaugurated by Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla and will serve as a crucial learning platform for the newly elected representatives.

Earlier, Delhi Assembly Speaker Vijender Gupta met Lok Sabha Speaker and formally invited him to inaugurate the program.

The orientation program aims to familiarise MLAs with legislative procedures, parliamentary conduct, and governance practices.

Through interactive sessions, expert discussions, and knowledge-sharing forums, the program will equip them with

essential insights into their roles and responsibilities, ensuring their effective participation in the legislative process.

Speaking about the initiative, Speaker Gupta emphasised the importance of preparing legislators for their responsibilities.

He stated, "This orientation program is designed to empower newly elected MLAs with the necessary knowledge and skills to function effectively in the Assembly. It will help them understand parliamentary procedures, legislative drafting, and the significance of constructive debates."

The rescheduled orientation program will be held on March 18 and 19, marking a significant step toward strengthening the democratic and legislative framework of the Assembly.

NCRTC celebrates Women's Day with engaging programs

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

To mark International Women's Day, the National Capital Region Transport Corporation (NCRTC) on Saturday organised a series of engaging programs across the Namoo Bharat corridor and its headquarters, recognising the invaluable contributions of women to society.

Women and girl students actively participated in these activities, making the celebration both meaningful and memorable. On this occasion, the women's coach of Namoo Bharat trains was decorated with balloons, creating a festive atmosphere. Women passengers enjoyed interactive quiz games, with winners receiving gifts from NCRTC.

To add a touch of delight, chocolates were distributed to all female travelers, who expressed their appreciation for the thoughtful gesture.

Meanwhile, women employees operating Namoo Bharat trains celebrated the day by cutting a cake at the Crew Control Center at Sahibabad station.

At Ghaziabad Namoo Bharat station, national and international medal-winning

athlete Dr Richa Sood graced the event as the chief guest. According to the NCRTC's press statement, Richa shared insights into her journey in the world of sports, her academic achievements and her strategies for overcoming challenges.

The students also enjoyed a ride on the Namoo Bharat train alongside Dr Sood, making the event even more special.

The celebrations continued at NCRTC headquarters, Gati-Shakti Bhawan, INA, Delhi, where Shalabh Goel, MD NCRTC personally met with women employees and commended their contributions.

He remarked, "Women are not just the backbone of NCRTC and the Namoo Bharat Project, but also key to building a sustainable and progressive future. Their dedication enables us to provide an accessible, comfortable, fast, safe and reliable transport system that enhances the quality of life for millions of women. We honour and appreciate their hard work not just on International Women's Day, but every day."

The event also featured activities such as a poster-making competition on gender equality and the "Master Chef of NCRTC" contest.

Delhi's only woman traffic inspector advocates for equality

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

Monica stands tall as the only woman traffic inspector among her 49 other male peers in Delhi police, ready to take up challenges that come her way while discharging her duty on the streets of the national capital.

Monica believes that the emotional quotient that women bring to the table helps them solve people's queries and problems more efficiently.

Five years into her service, a colleague allegedly slammed her for asking for leave because her daughter was sick. "Why do you want equality when you can sit at home and cook for the family?" he said.

However, she made it her mission to not let these things get to her and took up many challenging roles, including that of an inspecting officer (IO) in northeast Delhi, where she handled more than 250 cases of POCOS and rape.

She claimed she was pregnant when she was handling these cases and had to visit court regularly.

"Some would be generous enough to offer me to sit. However, many times I used to stand throughout the day while handling such sensitive cases. But I did it because

becoming a mother made me realise how important the work that I am doing is. If I can't bear the thought of my child or daughter being in pain, how can I let anyone else's children go through the same," she added. Monica also added that she owed her career to the support of the three men in her life - her husband, father and younger brother - who helped her become financially independent and empowered.

"While there are people who do not understand women and their problems, men in my life have always pushed me to stand on my own feet. My father motivated me to join the services and become independent. My brother always supports me in all my decisions and my husband helps me in the household as much as possible, so I can do my duty without

any worries," she said.

However, she admits the police department has a lot to work on so that more women can serve the nation without having to go through any additional trouble. She recalls it was hard to find a female washroom in events till three years ago.

"They used to make one washroom, which male inspectors used and one for officers. We would have to hold it or go somewhere far. It was only after the complaints by women officers that changes started to come and they made one more for us with a female signboard on it," she said. She also explained how menstruating officers are unable to speak about their problems to their peers or superiors as they are mostly male and the lack of basic amenities create more disadvantages.

Enhance female workforce for economic growth: Murmu

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

President Droupadi Murmu on Saturday underscored the need for increased participation of women in the workforce as the country moves towards becoming the world's third-largest economy.

Speaking on the occasion of International Women's Day at a national consultation organised by the Women and Child Development Ministry, Murmu emphasised that providing equal opportunities in education and employment is crucial for achieving this goal.

"As India progresses towards becoming the world's third-largest economy, the participation of women in the workforce must increase at the same pace," she said.

She stressed that a "self-reliant, independent and empowered woman" is key to building a 'Viksit Bharat'.

"The vision of a Viksit Bharat is our collective aspiration and we must work together to achieve it," she said, urging everyone to support women at every step towards self-reliance and success. Highlighting the contributions of Indian women, Murmu said, "Our daughters are making immense contributions in realising the dream of a Viksit Bharat."

It is imperative that society provides them with an even better environment to progress. She called for creating a society where every girl and boy feels safe and is free to make independent life choices without fear. "We must build an ideal society where no child, be it a son or daughter, hesitates to travel alone or live independently at any time," she said, adding that a culture of respect for women will foster a progressive social environment and enhance national confidence.

On the challenges women face in balancing work and family, Murmu questioned the perception that women may be less committed to their jobs due to childcare responsibilities.

"Is not society responsible for the well-being of the children who will shape our



Droupadi Murmu speaks during inaugural session of 'Nari Shakti Se Viksit Bharat' in New Delhi PTI

future?" she asked. She emphasised that a mother's effort in raising responsible citizens should be recognised and respected rather than seen as a limitation.

"A mother, through her dedication, can shape her children into ideal citizens," she said. President Murmu marked 50 years of International Women's Day celebrations, acknowledging the remarkable progress of women in this period.

"There is no doubt that women have made unprecedented strides over the last five decades. My own journey from a modest background in Odisha to Rashtrapati Bhavan is a testament to the opportunities for equality and social justice available to women in India," she said. She expressed confidence that examples of successful women would continue to multiply. She commended the government's continued efforts toward women's empowerment, highlighting initiatives like the 'Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam', which provides reservation for women in Parliament and state assemblies.

"This is a historic step towards women's political empowerment," she said. The President also spoke about economic empowerment schemes such as self-help groups and the 'Lakshmi Didi' programme that aim to enhance financial independence among women.

"The Namo Drone Didi scheme is another example of how women are being equipped with technical skills and financial stability," she said. Murmu called for a collective shift in mindset, emphasising that women and men are equal partners in progress. "In our tradition, both Shiva and Shakti hold equal importance one cannot exist without the other. If one wheel of a chariot does not function properly, how will the chariot move forward?" she said. She urged society to recognise and support women's potential. "Whenever we have honoured the talent of women, they have never disappointed us," the President said.

and there has been a substantial increase in the number MBBS and MD seats, along with a rise in the training of paramedic and nursing staff.

Nadda said the Union government will add 75,000 seats in the medical sector, with 30,000 seats already created last year. The health minister noted that HTA India resource centres are spread over 19 states and these serve as an important mechanism for priority setting and have helped immensely in achieving various health goals, such as for tuberculosis (TB) detection, optimising healthcare costs and incorporating evidence-based data in national health programmes.

On the occasion, Nadda released several key resources, including the Open Real-Time PCR Kit for Diagnosis of Pulmonary Tuberculosis (Quantiplus MTB FAST Detection Kit developed by Huwel Lifesciences), the HTA Technologies Compendium, the HTA Costing Database as well as the Patent Mitra initiative.

"With the launch of these flagship initiatives, our country is taking a significant leap towards supporting our innovators. This platform is designed to provide crucial support to scientists, researchers

and institutions, ensuring that their ground-breaking works are protected through patents and made available to the public through seamless technology transfer," he said. Nadda also highlighted that the "Medical Education Patent Mitra" initiative of the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) aligns with the Med Tech Mitra initiative, a testament of the ICMR's commitment to advancing medical innovation.

He concluded his address by saying that HTA helps in reinforcing the Centre's commitment to providing inclusive, affordable, equitable and accessible healthcare for all. "HTA will play an important role in the realisation of Viksit Bharat by 2047, as envisaged by our prime minister," he said. The event was organised by the Department of Health Research (DHR), Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India, in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO) India Country Office and the Centre for Global Development (CGD).

This year, the theme of the symposium was "Bridging Evidence to Policy: Health Technology Assessment for Affordable Healthcare".

Nadda emphasises on comprehensive healthcare

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

Health Minister JP Nadda on Saturday said the Centre is focused on providing healthcare that is preventive, curative, palliative and rehabilitative. Inaugurating the third "International Symposium on Health Technology Assessment (ISHTA 2025)" at Bharat Mandapam here, Nadda emphasised the vision and commitment of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in strengthening India's healthcare system and ensuring accessible and affordable healthcare for all.

He highlighted the critical role of Health Technology Assessment (HTA) in advancing evidence-based policymaking to build an efficient, equitable and high-quality health system, aligned with the goals of Universal Health Coverage (UHC).

Nadda highlighted that the "government is focused on providing healthcare, which is preventive, curative, palliative and rehabilitative". He informed that the Centre has laid an emphasis on primary, secondary as well as tertiary healthcare. He noted that 22 state-of-the-art AIIMS have been established till now

Congress urges Centre to address Trump's tariff claims in Parliament

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

Congress on Saturday asked Prime Minister Narendra Modi to take Parliament into confidence on United States (US) President Donald Trump's claims that India has agreed to cut its tariffs.

The Opposition party's general secretary, communications, Jairam Ramesh asked whether the interests of Indian farmers and manufacturers are being compromised. "Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal is in Washington DC to talk trade with the Americans. Meanwhile, President Trump says this," he said in a

social media post.

US President Donald Trump said India has agreed to cut its tariffs "way down" as he reiterated his claim that the country charges America massive tariffs that make it difficult to sell products there. "What has the Modi Government agreed to? Are the interests of Indian farmers and of Indian manufacturing being compromised? The PM must take Parliament into confidence when it resumes on March 10," Ramesh said. Both houses of Parliament will meet on Monday as the second part of the budget session resumes. In the video shared by Ramesh, Trump is heard saying, "Our country, from an econom-

ic standpoint and a financial standpoint and a trade standpoint, has been absolutely ripped off by almost every country in the world Canada, Mexico, and then you just go right down the line."

"India charges us massive tariffs. You can't even sell anything in India. It is restrictive. We do very little business inside. They've agreed. By the way, they want to cut their tariffs way down now because somebody is finally exposing them for what they've done," Trump goes on to say in the clip.

Trump has been threatening several countries with reciprocal trade tariffs ever since he assumed charge as US President.

Army Chief highlights 'high degree of collusivity' with China and Pakistan

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

In a veiled reference to China and Pakistan, Army Chief General Upendra Dwivedi on Saturday said there is a "high degree of collusivity," which must be accepted. "What it means, as far as I am concerned, the two-front threat is a reality," he said regarding proximity between China and Pakistan.

During the session, he fielded a broad range of questions about the army's preparedness for the future, lessons from ongoing conflicts, the situation in Bangladesh, and at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) and the Line of Control. "Now, the second thing that you have brought out is collaboration or the relationship between our western neighbour and Bangladesh."

"As far as I am concerned, since I have said that the epicentre of terrorism is in a particular country, they have a relationship with any of my neighbouring country, I should be looking worried, because as far as I am concerned, the terrorism route can be used from that country also, which is my major concern as of today," General Dwivedi said, when asked about reports suggesting growing proximity between Pakistan and Bangladesh.

The General said it was "too early" to take a call on the role of Bangladesh, where a change in government may bring about a change in the relationship between it and India.

"Because as far as I am concerned, I am very clear, the present military to military relationship is very strong. And, we exchanging note on regular basis, to avoid any kind of a misgiving," he added.

He was also asked how the Indian Army looked at the Pakistan-China equation. "What we have to understand is that. We have to be very clear that there is a high degree of collusivity, which we must accept."

In terms of the virtual field, it's nearly 100 per cent, in terms of physical, I would say most of the equipment there is of Chinese origin," the Army Chief said.

"So, this is the situation as of today, as far as collusivity is concerned. What it means, as far as I am concerned, the two-front threat is a reality for me," he said. In January 2021, the then Army Chief General MM Naravane too said that when it comes to Pakistan and China, "the threat of collusivity cannot be wished away."

General Dwivedi also spoke about the situation along the LAC in eastern Ladakh since the Special Representative-level (SR-level) meeting in December 2024, following an agreement that was finalised between the two countries last year. I think assassins' mace has lived through its life. It may not be more relevant today. And, if you see, as far as the terrain of the Himalayas is concerned, the terrain plays a very favourable role as far as India is concerned.

"The second issue is, you may have

superiority in anything, but what is important is at the point of application, are you able to amass that kind of resource application, strength and the impact which is required," he said. "I think that way, Indian Army is adequately poised to take care of that," he said.

The Army Chief, however, called for "coexistence, cooperation and coordination" to opine it was not good for the countries to engage in a war.

"Is the war in interest of both the countries? The answer is no. So, what we are looking at is, how can we harmonise. The situation as of today, and manage it till the diplomatic situation come out," he said.

The last Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China Border Affairs (WMCC) and SRs meeting took place in December.

After that, the foreign secretary again went to China to witness a "lot of positive signalling" from both sides.

The next Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China Border Affairs (WMCC) meeting should be taking place soon, he said.

On a query on the Depsang and Demchok areas, the General said the second and third rounds of patrolling have taken place, and both sides are cooperating with each other.

"We inform each other, there is no issue at all. Grazing, which was required to be carried out, has been opened up. Whenever there is some kind of a difference, they immediately contact each other resolve the issue and get over it," he added.

On the current situation along the Line of Control (LOC), the Army Chief said that since 2018, terrorist-related incidents were down by 83 per cent, as has recruitment been.

The downfall of Amarnath yatris has increased to five Lakh, he said.

He said that 60 per cent of terrorists neutralised by Indian armed forces last year were of Pakistan origin.

Of the remaining in the valley and south of Pir Panjal, about 80 per cent are Pakistani terrorists, he added.

"So, there is no let up as far as western adversary is concerned," the Army Chief General Upendra Dwivedi said.

All the same, the general batted for "friendly relations" with the neighbour and peace in that country, as well as its transformation from the "epicentre" of terrorism to a stable nation. He added, "I keep saying, we are always prepared. We will be assertive, but we'll be only aggressive in case we are forced to." On the role of women in the army, the General said, "Yesterday, only I have given the sanction for the Territorial Army to induct women. And we want this number to increase. Changes that you will see will be gradual." On the Agnipath scheme, the Army Chief Upendra Dwivedi said, "Let me assure the countrymen that this scheme is proving to be a great success. Creme de la creme coming to us."

PM's social media features extraordinary women

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

Marking International Women's Day, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's social media handles were taken over by a group of extraordinary women who have excelled in diverse fields, from chess to science to rural entrepreneurship and financial empowerment to accessibility and inclusive development.

Each of them shared their journeys, highlighting the power of India's 'Nari Shakti' and the strides being made towards a more inclusive and empowered nation.

Scientists Elina Mishra and Shilpi Soni highlighted the importance of women's participation in science, urging more women to pursue careers in nuclear and space technology.

"India is the most vibrant place for science, and thus, we call upon more women to pursue it," they wrote. Mishra, a nuclear scientist, has worked on projects involving proton accelerator technology and medical applications for remote healthcare.

Soni, a space scientist with ISRO for 24 years, has contributed to over 35 communication and navigation missions, including India's indigenous space technology advancements. Anjee Agarwal, an advocate for universal accessibility, called for a stronger push towards a more inclusive India under the 'Sugamya Bharat' initiative. "Let's ensure that every woman, every individual, can navigate their life with dignity and independence," she posted.

With over three decades of experience, Agarwal has led accessibility audits and policy advocacy efforts to improve infra-

how her venture, Madhopur Farmers Producer Company Limited, has created livelihood opportunities for hundreds of women in her village.

"The women working with me are not just earning a living but also gaining confidence and self-respect. Economic independence strengthens women's social status," she posted. With the recent announcement of a Makhana Board, she is now exploring opportunities in makhana (fox nut) production to expand rural entrepreneurship.

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Prime Minister Narendra Modi PTI

structure for persons with disabilities. Ajaita Shah, founder and CEO of Frontier Markets, delivered a message on financial empowerment and rural entrepreneurship for women.

"A financially empowered woman is a confident decision-maker, independent thinker, architect of her own future, and a maker of modern India!" she said. She emphasised technology's role in women's financial inclusion and skilling, highlighting the 'Meri Saheli' app as a tool supporting rural women entrepreneurs.

After their messages, PM Modi reflected on their inspiring journeys. "Since morning, you've all seen inspiring posts by extraordinary women sharing their own journeys and inspiring other women. These women belong to different parts of India and have excelled in different areas, but there's one underlying theme the prowess of India's Nari Shakti."

Their determination and success remind us of the boundless potential

women hold. "Today and every day, we celebrate their contributions in shaping a Viksit Bharat," he said in a post on X. PM Modi, in his Women's Day message, paid tribute to 'Nari Shakti' and reaffirmed his government's commitment to women empowerment through various schemes and programmes. "We bow to our Nari Shakti on #WomensDay! Our government has always worked to empower women, reflecting in our schemes and programmes."

Today, as promised, my social media properties will be taken over by women who are making a mark in diverse fields!" he posted on X before handing over his social media account for the day. This is not the first time the prime minister has taken such an initiative.

In 2020, on Women's Day, he handed his social media accounts to seven women achievers, giving them a global platform to inspire others.

Planned disruption not appropriate for democratic values: Lok Sabha Speaker

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Jaipur

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla said on Saturday that consensus and dissent are the strengths of democracy, but planned disruption in Assemblies and Parliament are not appropriate for democratic values. Birla reiterated that Legislative institutions must become centers of discussion and dialogue to ensure accountability to the public. He was addressing public representatives and other dignitaries at the launch of the 'Constitution Club of Rajasthan'.

The event was also attended by Chief Minister of Rajasthan Bhajanlal Sharma, Speaker of Rajasthan Vidhan Sabha Vasudev Devnani, Union Minister of State for Agriculture, Bhagirath Choudhary, MPs, MLAs and other dignitaries. Lok Sabha Speaker remarked that the Constitution Club is not just a building, but a platform to guide democratic discourse, thoughtfulness, and policy-making. He added democracy is not confined to elections but advances through continuous dialogue and consensus.

Birla hoped that the club will elevate policy-making and good governance to new heights. He mentioned that the concept of the Constitution Club in Delhi was conceived in 1947 during the drafting of



Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, Rajasthan CM Bhajanlal Sharma at the launch of Constitution Club of Rajasthan in Jaipur PIONEER PHOTO

the Constitution where the need for a platform for informal discussions and policy dialogues was felt. Birla noted that the Constitution club in Rajasthan will also become a key center for democratic dialogue and debate, providing legislators with an opportunity to openly discuss ideas, policies and governance.

Observing that the Constitution of India is not just a compilation of laws,

but a guide for the entire world, Birla said that over the past 75 years, many transformative changes have occurred under its guidance.

Saying that meaningful dialogue and healthy debates must take place in Parliament and Assemblies, Birla underlined that personal allegations and deliberate disruptions are against the core spirit of democracy.

World's first commercial space satellite launched

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

The world's first commercial space surveillance satellite, capable of tracking objects as small as five centimetres orbiting the Earth, was commissioned on Saturday as it captured images over South America, the Bengaluru-based start-up Digantara said. Digantara had launched the space surveillance satellite Space Camera for Object Tracking (SCOT) on January 14 aboard SpaceX's Transporter-12 rocket. The satellite started operations on Saturday. "Space just ran out of hiding spots," the start-up said in a post on X.

In a statement, the company said the SCOT satellite achieved first light on Saturday and its inaugural image while passing over South America a breathtaking view of Earth's limb, with the city of Buenos Aires glowing against the planet's curvature.

"SCOT's first image is more than a technical milestone, it's a symbol of our team's resilience and unwavering commitment to safeguarding Earth's orbits for generations to come," said Digantara CEO Anirudh Sharma.

Need to filter out those Congress leaders who work for BJP, says Rahul Gandhi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Ahmedabad

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Saturday said there was a need to filter out leaders and workers from his party who were working for the BJP and warned of strict action, even removals.

Addressing party workers on the second day of his two-day Gujarat visit, the party's first job was to separate two groups of Congress workers and leaders ones who carry the party ideology in their hearts and stand with the public and the others who were cut off from the public, "half of whom are with the BJP".

Rahul's visit to the state is focused on the 2027 Assembly polls, for which he has hinted at a major overhaul in the party's state unit and assured a strong plan to defeat the BJP. "There are two types of people in the Gujarat Congress leadership and among workers. Those who are honest with people, fight for them, respect them and have the ideology of the Congress in their heart. And the others who are cut off from the people sit far away, do not respect them, and half of whom are with the BJP," he said.

The Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha said the party's first job should be to filter these two groups, even if it means taking strict action of removing people. Till the two groups are separated, the people of Gujarat will not believe in the party, he said.

"For our district, block presidents and senior leaders, the party should find a place in their hearts. They should carry Congress in their blood. Put the issue of



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi addresses party workers and pre-civil elections candidates in Ahmedabad

winning and losing the elections aside. As soon as we do that, the people of Gujarat would like to join our organisation, and we will open the door for them," said Rahul.

He claimed that the people of the state are trapped, and the diamond, textile and ceramic industry is in shambles. "Look at farmers of Gujarat. They are screaming for a new vision. The vision of the last 20-25 years has failed, and Congress can provide this vision easily. But this is not possible unless these two types of people are filtered," he said.

He said Gujarat wants to move forward but is unable to see the way ahead, and the Congress is unable to show it the way. "I am not speaking out of shame or fear, but I want to put this before you - we are unable to show Gujarat the way," Gandhi said. He pointed out that Congress has been out of power in Gujarat for over three decades, and whenever he visits the state, the discussions revolve around elections. "But the question is not about elections. Unless we fulfil our responsibilities, the people of Gujarat will not let us win the elections. And we should not ask

the people to give us the government till we fulfil our responsibilities. The day we have fulfilled our responsibilities, I can guarantee that all the people of Gujarat will support us," he said.

Rahul said Congress has not been able to fulfil expectations Gujarat had from its leaders for the last 30 years. Gujarat gave the Congress its original leadership, way of thinking, fighting and living in Mahatma Gandhi, he said.

"Without Gandhi, Congress would not have been able to get independence for the country," he said, adding that Sardar Patel, one of the five greatest leaders of the Congress, also hailed from Gujarat. He said there is no shortage of leaders in Congress at the district, block, and senior levels, but "they are chained".

"Our leaders, including me, will have to go amidst the people of Gujarat, listen to their voices, what they expect from me, what we can do for them - for their education, health, and future. We are here to listen to you," Rahul said.

He said the party could come to power in the state if it manages to increase its vote share by 5 per cent, citing the example of Telangana, where it managed a 22 per cent increase in the vote share. The upcoming All India Congress Committee (AICC) session is scheduled to be held in Ahmedabad on April 8 and 9. It will be held in the state after 64 years.

In the 2022 Gujarat assembly elections, the Congress won only 17 of the 182 seats in the state. However, the party's strength in the House dropped to 12 after the resignation of five MLAs.

Over 100 cadets, including 24 women graduate from OTA



Cadets celebrate during their passing out parade at the Officers Training Academy in Chennai on Saturday

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Chennai

Over 100 officer cadets, including women were commissioned into the Indian Army on Saturday, at the end of a passing out parade held at the Officers Training Academy (OTA). A spectacular military parade at the revered Parneswaran Drill Square of OTA marked the passing out ceremony of officers of Short Service Commission and equivalent courses, a Defence press release said.

"A total of 133 Officer Cadets and 24 Officer Cadets (Women) were commissioned into various Arms and Services of the Indian Army, embodying the spirit of duty and sacrifice. Additionally, Five Foreign Officer Cadets and Seven Foreign Officer Cadets (Women) from five Friendly Foreign Countries successfully completed their training, fostering

bonds of camaraderie and cooperation across international borders," it said.

The Passing Out Parade was reviewed by Lieutenant General Johnson P Mathew, Chief of Integrated Defence Staff, New Delhi. He also presented the sword, OTA gold medal and other awards to various cadets.

"The Reviewing Officer, in his address, lauded the Officer Cadets and OTA staff for their exemplary achievements, exhorting the newly commissioned officers to uphold the cardinal military values of 'Selfless Service to the Nation' and steadfast pursuit of excellence in all endeavours," the release said.

Following the parade, the Pipping Ceremony symbolised a solemn vow as the newly commissioned officers pledged allegiance to the Constitution of India and committed to safeguard the nation at all costs, it added.

ED seizes business jet at Hyderabad Airport in Ponzi Scam Case

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Hyderabad

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has seized a business jet parked at the Hyderabad airport as part of a money laundering investigation against a Hyderabad-based company and its promoters who allegedly duped numerous investors in a ₹850 Crore Ponzi 'scam', official sources said on Saturday.

The money laundering case stems from a Cyberabad police FIR against Falcon Group (Capital Protection Force Pvt Ltd), its CMD Amar Deep Kumar and some others, the sources said.

It is alleged that the Falcon Group "collected" ₹1,700 Crore from investors for high returns through a "fraudulent" invoice discounting investment scheme.

₹850 Crore, out of the total funds, was re-paid leaving a total of 6,979 investors unpaid, according to the sources.

Kumar, the sources said, fled the country using this jet. He or his company could not be contacted immediately for a response on the charges. Officials from the ED's Hyderabad office found that the 8-seater business jet 'N935H Hawker 800A' (owned by a company of Kumar) landed at the Rajiv Gandhi International airport located in the Shamshabad area on Friday.

A search of the jet, purchased for about \$1.6 Million (about ₹14 Crore) in 2024, was conducted by ED officials on Friday under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) and they also recorded the statement of the crew and some "close associates" of Kumar present there, the sources said.

The ED sought a general declaration about the jet's movement from the Customs department after which it was found that Kumar along with another person left the country onboard the said aircraft on January 22.

Cyberabad Police has arrested the vice president and director of the company as part of its investigation, the sources said.

Arunachal tribes' calls for restraint amid tension over freedom of religion law rules

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Itanagar

The Arunachal Indigenous Tribes' Forum (AITF) has appealed to people to restrain themselves, amid prevailing tension over the framing of rules under a state's law relating to the freedom of religion.

AITF, an apex body of organisations of indigenous tribes, claimed that protests, including hunger strikes by members of the Arunachal Christian Forum (ACF) and rallies by the Indigenous Faith and Cultural Society of Arunachal Pradesh (IFCSAP) recently, threaten peace and development in the state.

The Arunachal Pradesh Freedom of Religion Act (APFRA), 1978, has been a contentious issue, particularly among Christian groups. The IFCSAP and the state government argue that the law is crucial to preserving indigenous culture and faith, whereas the ACF contends that it discriminates against Christians.

The AITF has appealed to "political parties, ACF, IFCSAP, and the public to refrain from making provocative statements that could escalate tensions". It encouraged all stakeholders to engage constructively in the rule-framing process by providing inputs through appropriate discussions.

The indigenous tribes' forum also urged the state government to circulate the draft rules for public feedback to ensure a participatory approach.

The Gauhati High Court had, in September last year, directed the state government to frame rules under Section 8 of the Arunachal Pradesh Freedom of Religion Act (APFRA), 1978, within six months. As the budget session of the 8th Legislative Assembly commenced in Itanagar, the Christians forum staged a massive protest in Borum on Thursday.

More than 20,000 Christians from across the state gathered to oppose the implementation of APFRA, which has

remained dormant for 46 years. Arunachal Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) general secretary and spokesperson Kon Jirjo Jotham reaffirmed the party's commitment to protecting the rights of minorities, including Christians and indigenous people.

"The BJP government should initiate a dialogue between the Arunachal Christian Forum and other stakeholders to resolve the issue amicably," Jotham urged. He emphasised that any attempt to undermine secular and democratic values would be strongly opposed.

Additionally, AITF announced plans to form a consultative committee to study the draft rules and gather inputs from community-based organisations through a joint consultative forum (JCF).

"The committee will seek inputs from community-based organisations and deliberate on the matter through the JCF for wider consultation," AITF general secretary Tapi Tai said.

Bihar to constitute 'task force' to eradicate child marriages

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Patna

The Bihar government has decided to constitute a state-level 'task force' headed by the chief secretary to monitor action taken by authorities to prevent and eradicate child marriages in the state. According to the National Family Health Survey (NFHS)-5, Bihar has the second-highest rate of child marriage in the country, following West Bengal.

The report said 40.8 per cent of women in the state get married before turning 18. However, only 19 cases were registered under the provisions of the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act (PCMA) between 2020 and 2024.

"We are working on a focused intervention to curb child marriage in communities and geographical areas with a higher prevalence of the practice. The Bihar government has decided to constitute a state-level 'task force' to monitor the actions taken by authorities to prevent and eradicate child marriages in the state," chief secretary Amrit Lal Meena said on Saturday. Police and other agencies have

been instructed to effectively handle cases related to the PCMA and take strict action against those involved in such illegal practices, he added.

"The task force will regularly monitor the actions taken in this regard," he said.

The state government is implementing a multipronged strategy to combat child marriage, which includes stricter enforcement of the law, empowering girls through education, and raising awareness through JEEVIKA (the state-level women's socio-economic empowerment programme), he said. Additionally, the government has introduced a 35 per cent reservation for women in government jobs and 50 per cent reservation at all levels in Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRI) and Urban Local Bodies (ULB), the chief secretary added.

"Economic empowerment and girls' education are key pillars of our strategy to reduce child marriage. Establishment of high schools in all gram panchayats and the budget announcement for setting up degree colleges in each block will significantly contribute to reducing child marriages. We are also in the process of creating a separate cadre of officers to pre-

vent and handle child marriage cases. These officers, appointed at sub-division and district levels, will be called "Child Marriage Protection Officers," Meena added.

Echoing a similar view, Harjot Kaur Bamrah, additional chief secretary of the social welfare department and chairman-cum-managing director of the Women and Child Development Corporation (WCDC), said, "Under the leadership of Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, the state government is taking several initiatives to prevent child marriage and empower women. These initiatives include the creation of a state-level task force and a separate cadre of officers dedicated to addressing child marriage cases."

She added that detailed guidelines are being framed to ensure effective coordination between the Special Juvenile Police Unit (SJPU) and Child Marriage Prohibition Officers (CMPO) to tackle child marriages in the state.

"The integration of legal enforcement with community-based awareness programmes is essential to preventing child marriages in Bihar," Bamrah emphasised.

Missing girls from Kerala's Tanur found in Maharashtra, man held

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Malappuram (Kerala)

A youth was taken into custody on Saturday in connection with the case of two girl students gone missing from Tanur a couple of days ago and were later found in Maharashtra, police said. Rahim Aslam, a native of Edavanna and a suspect in this case was detained upon his arrival here from Mumbai on Saturday morning.

Police officials stated that they would interrogate him and if he was found to have been involved in the case he would be formally arrested.

The missing girls were located near Lonavala in Maharashtra on Thursday night and are currently in police safety. They are expected to be brought back by noon, police said.

Following legal formalities, including recording their statements and presenting them before the Child Welfare

Committee, the girls will be handed over to their parents, police added.

A police team from Kerala was dispatched to Maharashtra on Friday to bring them back.

The girls were handed over to the Kerala police team, which includes women officers, and they are on their way to Tanur after completing all formalities, police said. The exact reason behind their travel to Maharashtra remains unknown, police added. TV channels aired footage of the girls visiting a hair salon after reaching Panvel in Maharashtra.

Both students studying Class 12 in a government higher secondary school, had left home on Wednesday to attend an examination but never appeared for it, police had stated earlier. Their school teachers informed their families, prompting them to file a missing complaint with Tanur police. During the investigation, police traced the girls' mobile phone locations to Maharashtra.

Peace march stopped in Manipur by security forces

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Imphal

A peace march conducted by a Meitei body was stopped in Manipur's Imphal West district on Saturday as the programme coincided with the government's initiative to resume inter-district bus services to ensure free movement of people, police said.

Security forces stopped the procession, taken out by the Federation of Civil Society Organisations at Sekmai, some 18 km from Imphal, and asked the organisers to join the government's free movement initiative.

Members of the Meitei body insisted that free movement means travel by anybody and demanded that they be allowed to go in the vehicles arranged by them. "If they (volunteers) wanted to participate in the free movement initiative, they may go through the vehicles arranged by the government," a police officer said.

Federation of Civil Society Organisations President T Manihar said, "The purpose of the march is to bring peace in the state. If the government is not in a position to allow the free movement of the public, what is the need for making the announcement?"

The inter-district bus services resumed on Saturday after Union Home Minister Amit Shah had recently directed security forces to ensure free movement of people on all routes in Manipur from March 8 and also called for strict action against those creating obstructions.

Chairing a meeting to review the security situation of the northeastern state, he said the Centre remains fully committed to restoring lasting peace in Manipur and is providing all necessary assistance in this regard.

This was the first such meeting held after the imposition of the President's rule in the northeastern state, which has been witnessing ethnic violence since May 2023.

Over 250 people have lost their lives in the violence.

Maha Kumbh ends: 869 families still in search for lost loved ones

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ Prayagraj

The Maha Kumbh has ended. The grand spectacle of faith, where millions gathered to cleanse their sins in the sacred waters, has faded into memories. But for 869 families, the echoes of separation still linger in the air.

Their loved ones came to Prayagraj with them-only to vanish into the endless waves of the crowd.

The lost and found center in the Kumbh Mela area, once bustling with desperate voices and hopeful eyes, now stands eerily quiet. Posters of missing people flutter in the soft breeze, their faces staring blankly at the passersby. Some of these papers have rewards scrawled across them, as if money could bridge the unbearable distance between families.

One such face is that of Gyarsa Mali. His son, Dhanvesh, still clings to hope. The last he heard of his father was when he set out from home to take a holy dip in the Sangam.

Somewhere between the chaotic railway station and the sacred waters, he dis-



Devotees gather during Maha Kumbh Mela in Prayagraj in Uttar Pradesh

appeared. "We haven't left Prayagraj since he went missing," Dhanvesh says over the phone. "He must be here. He has to be here. We even made a video, asking him to come back." His voice breaks, carrying the weight of days spent searching, waiting, and whispering prayers into the wind.

A few steps away on the same wall there is another poster, it reads-Preeti Kishore. A 45-year-old woman from Bihar, she came with her husband, Dr Neeraj Pankaj, on February 20. A moment of separation in the crowd, a slipping hand in the surge of devotees, and she was gone. "I searched everywhere," Dr Pankaj says, his voice tired, hollow. "Somebody told me many lost people end up in Chitrakoot. So, I went there too. But there's still no sign of her." His words carry a desperation that only those who have lost someone in a sea of millions can understand.

Ajay Pandey, a 60-year-old man, was last seen at Naini railway station on February 16. He had come to Prayagraj with his family for the sacred bath.

But in the journey back, the crowds

swallowed him whole. Now, his family pleads with folded hands, asking strangers, authorities-anyone-to help them find the missing piece of their lives.

And then there's Rekha Dwivedi. Unlike the others, she was found. But no one came to take her back.

Now abandoned, she spends her days in a shelter home in Araali, watching the door, waiting for a son who will never return. Her husband, a well-known figure in Prayagraj, has turned away. Her sons, settled and secure, refuse to let her back into their homes. For them, she is an old chapter they do not wish to re-read.

The Maha Kumbh saw over 66 Crore pilgrims in 45 days. A lost and found center was set up to reunite separated families, and for many, it worked. More than 35,000 missing people were registered, and most were reunited.

But for those 869 families still searching, still hoping-the festival has not yet ended. It lingers in their grief, in their restless nights, in the silent prayers they whisper into an indifferent sky.

Muslim nations reject Trump's call to empty Gaza Strip

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Deir Al-Balah Foreign ministers from Muslim nations on Saturday rejected calls by US President Donald Trump to empty the Gaza Strip of its Palestinian

population and backed a plan for an administrative committee of Palestinians to govern the territory to allow reconstruction to go ahead. The foreign ministers gathered in the Saudi city of Jeddah for a special session of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation to address the situation in Gaza, at a time when the 7-week-old ceasefire between Israel and Hamas has been thrown into doubt. In a statement put out Saturday, the gathering threw its support behind a plan to rebuild Gaza put forward by Egypt and backed by Arab states, including Saudi Arabia and Jordan, aimed at countering Trump's call. The OIC groups 57 nations with large Muslim populations.



Without specifically mentioning Trump, the ministers said they rejected "plans aimed at displacing the Palestinian people individually or collectively... as ethnic cleansing, a grave violation of international law and a crime against humanity".

KIND ATTENTION: RAIL PASSENGERS!

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

TEMPORARY EXTENSION OF INTERCITY EXPRESS UPTO GWALIOR

For the convenience of rail passengers, Railways have decided to extend the service of Train No. 14212/14211 New Delhi - Agra Cantt. Intercity Express upto Gwalior on temporary basis. Train No. 14212 New Delhi - Agra Cantt. Intercity Express will terminate at Gwalior and Train No. 14211 Agra Cantt. - New Delhi Intercity Express will originate from Gwalior from 13.03.2025 to 17.03.2025 as per details mentioned below :-

Extension of Train No. 14212/14211 New Delhi - Agra Cantt. - New Delhi Intercity Express upto Gwalior

Table with columns for Train No., ARR., DEP., STATIONS, and Train No. 14211. It shows the schedule for the extension of the New Delhi - Agra Cantt. - New Delhi Intercity Express to Gwalior.

Temporary Stoppage at Ajhai Station

Temporary stoppage for one minute of train no. 12279/80 New Delhi-Virangana Lakshmbai Jhansi (Daily), 18237/38 Korba-Amritsar (Daily), 18477/78 Puri-Yog Nagari Rishikesh (Daily) and 14211/12 Agra Cantt.-New Delhi Intercity Express (daily), will be provided from 29.03.2025 to 06.04.2025 at Ajhai Station.

For detailed information, please call RailMadad Helpline No. 139 or visit enquiry website: www.enquiry.indianrail.gov.in

RailMadad Helpline No. 139 Visit RailMadad website: www.railmadad.indianrailways.gov.in Download RailMadad app.

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CLIX HOUSING FINANCE LIMITED

Registered Office: Aggarwal Corporate Tower, Plot No. 23, 5th Floor, Govind Lal Sikka Marg, Rajendra Place, New Delhi-110008

POSSESSION NOTICE (Appendix IV) Rule 8(3)

Whereas the Authorized officer of CLIX HOUSING FINANCE LIMITED (Clix), a Housing Finance Bank Company under the National Housing Bank Act, having its registered office Aggarwal Corporate Tower, Plot No. 23, 5th Floor, Govind Lal Sikka Marg, Rajendra Place, New Delhi-110008, under the provisions of the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (SARFAESI Act) (hereinafter referred to as "Act") and in exercise of the powers conferred under Section 13(2) of the Act read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rule, 2002 issued a Demand Notice to the following borrowers and co-borrowers to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The borrower/Guarantor having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under sub-section (4) of Section 13 of the Act read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 as per under mentioned Date. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of "CLIX" and interest other charges thereon. The attention of the Borrower is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured asset.

Name & Address of Borrower/Co-Borrower: 1. Amit Kumar Chaurasia S/O Sant Lal Chaurasia, 2. Anita Chaurasia W/O Amit Kumar Chaurasia, Both At - A-356, Budh Nagar, JI Colony, Indrapuri, I.A.R.I. Central Delhi-110012, Sr No. 1 Also At - Ulf-3 A-133 Rail Vihar Loni, Ghaziabad-201014, 3. Friendz Ice Cream & Kullfi, 2-42 1st Floor, Loha Nand Naraina, New Delhi-110028

Demand Notice Dated: 19.11.2024, Date of Possession: 08.03.2025 Amount of Demand Notice: Rs. 8,34,002.93/- as on 13.11.2024

Details of Property: A Residential Plot No. A-133 And Kharsa No. 348 In Flat No. Ulf-3 Back Side Lig Without Roof Rail Vihar Sadullabad, Tehsil Loni District Ghaziabad. Area 83.61 Sq. Mt. On Which The Said Flat Is Constructed: East: Plot No. A-134, West: Road 30 Ft, North: Plot No A-132, South: Road is 30 Feet Wide

Date: 06.03.2025, Place: Delhi Authorised Officer, CLIX HOUSING FINANCE LIMITED

THE PIONEER CLASSIFIEDS

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Bindu Devi, Mother of- No.14856557W NK/MT Sunil Kumar Yadav, R/o- Vill- Jungle Jainul Abpin/Jainpur (Tola Kajipur), PO- Jainpur, PS- Gulariha, Dist- Gorakhpur, U.P.- 273306, have changed my name from Bindu Devi to Bindu, vide affidavit dated 08/03/2025 before Notary Public Delhi.

PD(1647)A I, Neha Garg W/o Naveen Garg R/o CU 96 Pitampura Delhi 110034 have changed my name Neha Bansal to Neha Garg for all purposes.

PD(1648)C I, No.15433614H HAV/NA Bhosale Ramesh Angad, R/o-Vill- Sonimoha, PO- Chondi, Teh- Dharur, Dist- Beed, Maharashtra- 431124, have changed my daughter's name from Harshda to Bhosale Harshda Ramesh, vide affidavit dated 08/03/2025 before Notary Public Delhi.

PD(1649)C I, No.16012223M HAV Praveen Rao, R/o- Vill- Parsauni Makundha, PO- Parsauni Khur, Dist- Kushinagar, U.P.- 274402, have changed my daughter's name from Kumari Saumaya Rao to Reshu Rao, vide affidavit dated 08/03/2025 before Notary Public Delhi.

PD(1651)C I, hitherto known as Shweta Chaufla D/o Anil Kumar Chaufla W/o Rajesh Kumar, R/o- D2A/41C, Janak Puri, West Delhi, Delhi - 110058, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Shweta Kumar, for all purposes.

PD(1652)C I, Bhosale Minakshi Ramesh, W/o- No.15433614H HAV/NA Bhosale Ramesh Angad, R/o-Vill- Sonimoha, PO- Chondi, Teh-Dharur, Dist-Beed, Maharashtra- 431124, have changed my name from Harshda to Bhosale Harshda Ramesh, vide affidavit dated 08/03/2025 before Notary Public Delhi.

PD(1653)C I, Bindu Devi, Mother of- No.14856557W NK/MT Sunil Kumar Yadav, R/o- Vill- Jungle Jainul Abpin/Jainpur (Tola Kajipur), PO- Jainpur, PS- Gulariha, Dist- Gorakhpur, U.P.- 273306, have changed my name from Bindu Devi to Bindu, vide affidavit dated 08/03/2025 before Notary Public Delhi.

KIND ATTENTION RAIL PASSENGERS!

MORE HOLI FESTIVAL SPECIAL TRAINS-2025

In order to clear extra rush of passengers during the upcoming Holi Festival, Railways have decided to run the following additional Holi Festival Special Trains as per details given below :-

06529/06530 Sir M. Visvesvaraya (T)-Gorakhpur-Sir M. Visvesvaraya (T) Holi Special Train (Weekly) 04 Trips

Table for 06529/06530 Sir M. Visvesvaraya (T)-Gorakhpur-Sir M. Visvesvaraya (T) Holi Special Train (Weekly) 04 Trips. Shows stations and times.

Days of run : 06529 Ex. Sir M. Visvesvaraya(T) on 10.03.2025 & 17.03.2025 (Monday) and 06530 Gorakhpur on 14.03.2025 & 21.03.2025 (Friday).

Composition: 1st AC, 2 Tier AC, 3 Tier AC, Sleeper & General. Stoppages: Tumkur, Arsikere Jn., Kador Jn., Davangere, Haveri, Shree Siddharoodha Swamiji Hubballi Jn., Dharwad, Belagavi, Ghatprabha, Miraj Jn., Satara, Pune, Daund Chord Line, Manmad Jn., Bhusaval Jn., Khandwa Jn., Rani Kamalapati, Bina Jn., Virangana Lakshmbai Jhansi, Orai, Pokhrayan, Govindpuri, Prayagraj Jn., Gyanpur Road, Banaras, Aunrihar Jn., Mau Jn., Belthara Road, Bhatni Jn. & Deoria Sadar Stations.

08760/08761 Durg - Hazrat Nizamuddin-Durg Holi Special Train (Weekly) 02 Trips

Table for 08760/08761 Durg - Hazrat Nizamuddin-Durg Holi Special Train (Weekly) 02 Trips. Shows stations and times.

Days of run : 08760 Ex. Durg on 09.03.2025 (Sunday) and 08761 Ex. Hazrat Nizamuddin on 10.03.2025 (Monday)

Composition: 3 Tier AC, Sleeper & General. Stoppages: Raipur Jn., Uslapur, Pendra Road, Anuppur Jn., Shahdol, Umaria, Katni Murwara, Damoh, Saugor, Virangana Lakshmbai Jhansi, Agra Cantt. & Mathura Jn. Stations

02981/02982 Sogaria - Hazrat Nizamuddin-Sogaria Holi Special Train (Bi-Weekly) 04 Trips

Table for 02981/02982 Sogaria - Hazrat Nizamuddin-Sogaria Holi Special Train (Bi-Weekly) 04 Trips. Shows stations and times.

Days of run : 02981 Ex. Sogaria on 13.03.2025 & 15.03.2025 (Thursday, Saturday) and 02982 Hazrat Nizamuddin on 14.03.2025 & 16.03.2025 (Friday, Sunday)

Composition: 2 Tier AC, 3 Tier AC, Sleeper & General. Stoppages: Sawai Madhopur Jn., Gangapur City, Hindaun City, Bayana Jn., Bharatpur Jn., Mathura Jn. & Palwal Stations

05092/05091 Kasganj-Chhapra-Kasganj Holi Special Train (Bi-Weekly) 10 Trips

Table for 05092/05091 Kasganj-Chhapra-Kasganj Holi Special Train (Bi-Weekly) 10 Trips. Shows stations and times.

Days of run : 05092 Ex. Kasganj from 10.03.2025 to 24.03.2025 (Mon, Thu) and 05091 Ex. Chhapra from 11.03.2025 to 25.03.2025 (Tue, Fri)

Composition: 1st AC, 2 Tier AC, 3 Tier AC Economy, Sleeper & General. Stoppages: Soron Shukar Kshetra, Ujhani, Badaun, Bareilly Jn., Bareilly City, Izzatnagar, Bhojpur, Pilibhit, Purnapur, Malliani, Gola Gokaranath, Lakhimpur, Gonda, Basti, Khalilabad, Gorakhpur, Kaptanganj, Padrauna, Tamkuhi Road, Thawe, Gopalganj, Ratan Sarai, Dighwa Dubauli & Mashrak Jn. Stations.

05303/05304 Gorakhpur-Mahbubnagar-Gorakhpur Holi Special Train (Weekly) 08 Trips

Table for 05303/05304 Gorakhpur-Mahbubnagar-Gorakhpur Holi Special Train (Weekly) 08 Trips. Shows stations and times.

Days of run : 05303 Ex. Gorakhpur from 09.03.2025 to 30.03.2025 (Sunday) and 05304 Ex. Mahbubnagar from 10.03.2025 to 31.03.2025 (Monday)

Composition: 3 Tier AC, 3 Tier AC Economy, Sleeper & General. Stoppages: Khalilabad, Basti, Mankapur, Ayodhya Dham Jn., Ayodhya Cantt., Sultanpur, Maa Belha Devi Dham Pratappur Jn., Prayagraj, Govindpuri, Orai, Virangana Lakshmbai Jhansi, Rani Kamalapati, Itarsi, Nagpur, Chandrapur, Balharshah, Sirpur Kagaz Nagar, Bellampalli, Ramagundam, Kazipet Jn., Malkajigiri, Kacheguda, Umdanagar, Shadnagar & Jadcherla Stations.

05325/05326 Gorakhpur-Lokmanya Tilak(T)-Gorakhpur Holi Special Train (Bi-Weekly) 08 Trips

Table for 05325/05326 Gorakhpur-Lokmanya Tilak(T)-Gorakhpur Holi Special Train (Bi-Weekly) 08 Trips. Shows stations and times.

Days of run : 05325 Ex. Gorakhpur from 11.03.2025 to 22.03.2025 (Tuesday, Saturday) and 05326 Ex. Lokmanya Tilak(T) from 13.03.2025 to 24.03.2025 (Thursday, Monday)

Composition: 3 Tier AC, Sleeper & General. Stoppages: Khalilabad, Mankapur Jn., Prayagraj Jn., Govindpuri, Orai, Virangana Lakshmbai Jhansi, Bina, Rani Kamalapati, Khandwa Jn., Bhusaval Jn., Nasik Road, Igatpuri, Kalyan Jn. & Thane Stations.

For any kind of information and detailed time-table etc., passengers are requested to contact RailMadad Helpline No. 139 or may visit Indian Railways website https://enquiry.indianrail.gov.in or NTES App.

04145/04146 Subedarganj - Delhi Jn. - Subedarganj Holi Special Train (Weekly) 06 Trips

Table for 04145/04146 Subedarganj - Delhi Jn. - Subedarganj Holi Special Train (Weekly) 06 Trips. Shows stations and times.

Days of run : 04145 Ex. Subedarganj on every Thursday from 13.03.2025 to 27.03.2025 and 04146 Ex. Delhi Jn. on every Friday from 14.03.2025 to 28.03.2025

Composition: 1st AC, 2 Tier AC, 3 Tier AC, 3 Tier AC Economy, Sleeper & General. Stoppages: Fatehpur, Govindpuri, Etawah, Tundla & Aligarh Stations.

02275/02276 Subedarganj - Delhi Jn. - Subedarganj Holi Special Train (Weekly) 08 Trips

Table for 02275/02276 Subedarganj - Delhi Jn. - Subedarganj Holi Special Train (Weekly) 08 Trips. Shows stations and times.

Days of run : 02275 Ex. Subedarganj on every Monday from 10.03.2025 to 31.03.2025 and 02276 Ex. Delhi Jn. on every Tuesday from 11.03.2025 to 01.04.2025

Composition: 3 Tier AC, Sleeper & General. Stoppages: Fatehpur, Govindpuri, Etawah, Tundla & Aligarh Stations.

07715/07716 Charlapalli-Gorakhpur-Charlapalli Holi Special Train (Weekly) 02 Trips

Table for 07715/07716 Charlapalli-Gorakhpur-Charlapalli Holi Special Train (Weekly) 02 Trips. Shows stations and times.

Days of run : 07715 Ex. Charlapalli on 10.03.2025 (Monday) and 07716 Ex. Gorakhpur on 12.03.2025 (Wednesday)

Composition: 2 Tier AC, 3 Tier AC, Sleeper & General. Stoppages: Kazipet, Manchiyal, Sirpur Kagaznagar, Balharshah, Chandrapur, Nagpur, Rani Kamalapati, Bina, Virangana Lakshmbai Jhansi, Orai, Pokhrayan, Kanpur Central, Lucknow, Barabanki, Gonda Jn. & Basti Stations.

01013/01014 Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj(T)-Banaras-Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj(T) Holi Special Train (Weekly) 02 Trips

Table for 01013/01014 Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj(T)-Banaras-Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj(T) Holi Special Train (Weekly) 02 Trips. Shows stations and times.

Days of run : 01013 Ex. Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj(T) on 13.03.2025 (Thursday) and 01014 Ex. Banaras on 15.03.2025 (Saturday)

Composition: 2 Tier AC, 3 Tier AC Economy, Sleeper & General. Stoppages: Dadar, Thane, Kalyan, Igatpuri, Nasik Road, Manmad Jn., Jalgaon, Bhusaval Jn., Khandwa Jn., Itarsi Jn., Jabalpur, Katni Jn., Satna Jn., Manikpur Jn. & Prayagraj Chheoki Stations

01015/01016 Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj(T)-Mau Jn.-Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj(T) Holi Special Train (Weekly) 02 Trips

Table for 01015/01016 Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj(T)-Mau Jn.-Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj(T) Holi Special Train (Weekly) 02 Trips. Shows stations and times.

Days of run : 01015 Ex. Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj(T) on 12.03.2025 (Wednesday) and 01016 Ex. Mau Jn. on 14.03.2025 (Friday)

Composition: Sleeper & General. Stoppages: Dadar, Thane, Kalyan, Igatpuri, Nasik Road, Manmad Jn., Jalgaon, Bhusaval Jn., Khandwa Jn., Itarsi Jn., Jabalpur, Katni Jn., Satna Jn., Manikpur Jn., Prayagraj Chheoki, Jaunpur & Aunrihar Jn. Stations.

05203/05204 Muzaffarpur Jn.-Anand Vihar(T)-Muzaffarpur Jn. Holi Exp. Spl. Train (Bi-Weekly) 02 Trips

Table for 05203/05204 Muzaffarpur Jn.-Anand Vihar(T)-Muzaffarpur Jn. Holi Exp. Spl. Train (Bi-Weekly) 02 Trips. Shows stations and times.

Days of run : 05203 Ex. Muzaffarpur Jn. from 10.03.2025 to 31.03.2025 (Monday, Thursday) and 05204 Ex. Anand Vihar(T) from 11.03.2025 to 01.04.2025 (Tuesday, Friday)

Composition: 3 Tier AC, Sleeper & General. Stoppages: Hajipur Jn., Sonpur, Patliputra Jn., Danapur, Ara Jn., Buxar, Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Jn., Prayagraj Jn. & Govindpuri Stations.

05565/05566 Saharsa Jn.-Sirhind Jn.-Saharsa Jn. Holi Express Special Train (Weekly) 06 Trips

Table for 05565/05566 Saharsa Jn.-Sirhind Jn.-Saharsa Jn. Holi Express Special Train (Weekly) 06 Trips. Shows stations and times.

Days of run : 05565 Ex. Saharsa Jn. from 16.03.2025 to 30.03.2025 (Sun) and 05566 Ex. Sirhind Jn. from 18.03.2025 to 01.04.2025 (Tue).

Composition: 3 Tier AC, Sleeper & General. Stoppages: Sirni Bakhtiyarpur, Mansi Jn., Khagaria Jn., Hasanpur Road, Samastipur Jn., Darbhanga Jn., Kamtaul, Janakpur Road, Sitamarhi Jn., Baigaria, Raxaul Jn., Narkatiaganj Jn., Bagaha, Gorakhpur Jn., Sitapur Jn., Moradabad Jn., Saharanpur Jn., Yamuna Nagar Jagadhri, Ambala Cantt. & Rajpura Jn. Stations

hostages and a lasting truce and full Israeli withdrawal from Gaza — has been thrown into doubt.

Israel has balked at entering negotiations over the terms of the second phase.

Instead, it has called for Hamas to release half its remaining hostages in return for an extension of the ceasefire and a promise to negotiate a lasting truce. Since Sunday, Israel has barred all food, fuel, medicine and other supplies from entering Gaza for some 2 million people, demanding Hamas accept the revised deal.

At the same time, Trump has called for Gaza's population to be resettled elsewhere permanently so that the United States can take over the territory and develop it for others. Palestinians have rejected calls to leave.

The ministers at the OIC gathering supported an Egyptian-backed proposal that an administrative committee replace Hamas in governing Gaza.

The committee would work "under the umbrella" of the Palestinian Authority, based in the West Bank. Israel has rejected the PA having any role in the Gaza Strip, but has not put forward an alternative for post-war rule in the territory.

Under the ceasefire, Israeli forces have pulled back to a zone along Gaza's edges. Early Saturday, an Israeli strike killed two Palestinians in Gaza's southernmost city of Rafah, the Palestinian Health Ministry said. The Israeli military said it struck several men who appeared to have been flying a drone that entered Israel from Gaza.

Israel's military offensive has killed over 48,000 Palestinians in Gaza, mostly women and children, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, which does not say how many of the dead were militants.

The campaign was triggered by Hamas' October 2023 attack, in which militants killed some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, inside Israel and took a total of 251 people hostage.

Most have been released in ceasefire agreements or other arrangements. Hamas is believed to still have 24 living hostages and the bodies of 34 others.

Public at large is hereby informed that my client, Smt. Anand Kaur W/o Sh. Dinesh Singh Shekhawat R/o S-3/180, Near Mangal Bazar Road, Swam Park, Mundka, West Delhi - Delhi 110028, has passed away. I, the undersigned, disinherited her unmarried son Yash Raj Shekhawat (aged about 23 years), Aadhar Card No.435170216355 from her entire movable & immovable properties for and in lieu of my client, disapproved out of control, fallen in bad habits and pernicious towards my client. My client has also severed and disconnected all her relations with him. If anyone deals with her abovesaid son, he/she/they may do so at their own risk, cost and consequences. My client shall not be responsible to anybody for the acts, deeds and misdeeds of her abovesaid son. N.S. YADAV ADVOCATE CHAMBER, 507, Western Wing, Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi-110054

Public Notice: In the Court of Ms. Tarunpreet Kaur, ACJ/CCJ/ARC (South East) SAKET COURTS, NEW DELHI. SS-188/2024 ARVIND KISHEN MALHOTRA VS STATE AND ORS.

WHEREAS on application U/s 372 of the Indian Succession Act, 1925 has been made by ARVIND KISHEN MALHOTRA successor of LATE. SH. CDR GURDEV KRISHEN and LATE SMT. NIRMAL KRISHEN for grant of Succession Certificate in respect of debts/securities of deceased.

And whereas the said applicant shall come for hearing on 27.03.2025 at 10.00 A.M. Therefore the public at large is hereby given notice if any person has objection to the grant of succession certificate in favour of the said applicant, he may appear and file objections in writing, in person or through duly appointed pleader, on the said date and time.

Given under my hand and seal on 05.03.2025. (MS. TARUNPREET KAUR) ACJ/CCJ/ARC (South East) Room No. 203, Second Floor SAKET COURTS NEW DELHI

AD REM LEGAL SOLUTION Ch. No. 760 - Dwarika Court Sector-10, Dwarika, New Delhi-75 Mobile :- 9899013918

Public Notice: Know to all that my client Sh. Bhagwat Singh Pawar owner of the PLOT No. 71 & 72 A, AREA 433 SQ.YDS., KHARSA NO.105/23, VILLAGE PALAM, VISHWAS PARK IN BLOCK-GULTAN NAGAR, NEW DELHI-110059 and Sh. Bhagwat Singh Pawar purchase property from Smt. Somwanti Devi W/o Late. Pitam Singh dated 25/09/2024 to this effect has been lodged in P.S. Crime Branch, Delhi. Any person(s) claiming any right, interest, having any objection or found in possession of original documents, may write/contact with above named person at above Address/Phone No.9717788065 within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice. The person claiming any right, interest, objection with respect to this property, can personally inform or write to Deputy Director (Housing) or Director (Housing) Delhi Development Authority, Vikas Sadan, New Delhi-110023.

Public Notice: Know to all that my client Sh. Ravinder Kumar & 2. Smt. Seema Goyal S/o. Harish Choudhary & Mr. Harish Choudhary who are the legal heirs of Late Mr. Pitam Singh, deceased, measuring 400 (200x100x100) sq. yards out of Kharsa No. 565, situated in the residential colony Kaveri Rajdhani Enclave, Village-Faridkotpur, Pargana and Tehsil-Loni District Ghaziabad, U.P., through three separate Sale Deed dated 28.10.2020 which was executed by Late Mr. Pitam Singh, deceased, Document No.9235, 9236 & 9237 in Book No. 1, Vol No. 2022, on Pages No. 131-156, 157-182, 183-208, on dated 31.08.2021, SR-Loni, and intend to mortgage against the financial assistance from UGRO Capital Limited That, Mr. Vinod Kumar, Mr. Sanjeev Singh, Mr. Bablu and Mr. Anil Kumar Choudhary & Mr. Harish Choudhary in respect of subject property, duly registered as Document No.9235, 9236 & 9237 in Book No. 1, Vol No. 2022, on Pages No. 131-156, 157-182, 183-208, on dated 31.08.2021, SR-Loni, and intend to mortgage against the financial assistance from UGRO Capital Limited That, Mr. Vinod Kumar, Mr. Sanjeev Singh, Mr. Bablu and Mr. Anil Kumar Choudhary & Mr. Harish Choudhary in respect of subject property, duly registered as Document No.9235, 9236 & 9237 in Book No. 1, Vol No. 2022, on Pages No. 131-156, 157-182, 183-208, on dated 31.08.2021, SR-Loni, and intend to mortgage against the financial assistance from UGRO Capital Limited That, Mr. Vinod Kumar, Mr. Sanjeev Singh, Mr. Bablu and Mr. Anil Kumar Choudhary & Mr. Harish Choudhary in respect of subject property, duly registered as Document No.9235, 9236 & 9237 in Book No. 1, Vol No. 2022, on Pages No. 131-156, 157-182, 183-208, on dated 31.08.2021, SR-Loni, and intend to mortgage against the financial assistance from UGRO Capital Limited That, Mr. Vinod Kumar, Mr. Sanjeev Singh, Mr. Bablu and Mr. Anil Kumar Choudhary & Mr. Harish Choudhary in respect of subject property, duly registered as Document No.9235, 9236 & 9237 in Book No. 1, Vol No. 2022, on Pages No. 131-156, 157-182, 183-208, on dated 31.08.2021, SR-Loni, and intend to mortgage against the financial assistance from UGRO Capital Limited That, Mr. Vinod Kumar, Mr. Sanjeev Singh, Mr. Bablu and Mr. Anil Kumar Choudhary & Mr. Harish Choudhary in respect of subject property, duly registered as Document No.9235, 9236 & 9237 in Book No. 1, Vol No. 2022, on Pages No. 131-156, 157-182, 183-208, on dated 31.08.2021, SR-Loni, and intend to mortgage against the financial assistance from UGRO Capital Limited That, Mr. Vinod Kumar, Mr. Sanjeev Singh, Mr. Bablu and Mr. Anil Kumar Choudhary & Mr. Harish Choudhary in respect of subject property, duly registered as Document No.9235, 9236 & 9237 in Book No. 1, Vol No. 2022, on Pages No. 131-156, 157-182, 183-208, on dated 31.08.2021, SR-Loni, and intend to mortgage against the financial assistance from UGRO Capital Limited That, Mr. Vinod Kumar, Mr. Sanjeev Singh, Mr. Bablu and Mr. Anil Kumar Choudhary & Mr. Harish Choudhary in respect of subject property, duly registered as Document No.9235, 9236 & 9237 in Book No. 1, Vol No. 2022, on Pages No. 131-156, 157-182, 183-208, on dated 31.08.2021, SR-Loni, and intend to mortgage against the financial assistance from UGRO Capital Limited That, Mr. Vinod Kumar, Mr. Sanjeev Singh, Mr. Bablu and Mr. Anil Kumar Choudhary & Mr. Harish Choudhary in respect of subject property, duly registered as Document No.9235, 9236 & 9237 in Book No. 1, Vol No. 2022, on Pages No. 131-156, 157-182, 183-208, on dated 31.08.2021, SR-Loni, and intend to mortgage against the financial assistance from UGRO Capital Limited That, Mr. Vinod Kumar, Mr. Sanjeev Singh, Mr. Bablu and Mr. Anil Kumar Choudhary & Mr. Harish Choudhary in respect of subject property, duly registered as Document No.9235, 9236 & 9237 in Book No. 1, Vol No. 2022, on Pages No. 131-156, 157-182, 183-208, on dated 31.08.2021, SR-Loni, and intend to mortgage against the financial assistance from UGRO Capital Limited That, Mr. Vinod Kumar

Ravi Shastri picks India as favourites against New Zealand

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Dubai

Former India head coach Ravi Shastri has picked India as the favourites in Sunday's Champions Trophy summit clash against New Zealand but pointed out that the advantage will be minuscule, given that the Black Caps are a formidable side.

India, who have played all their matches here, stormed into the final with an all-win record, and defeated Australia in the semifinal.

New Zealand, who finished second behind India in Group A after losing their league match, secured their spot in the final with a one-sided win over South Africa in the second semifinal in Lahore. "If there is one team that can beat India, it's New Zealand," Shastri said in 'The ICC Review'. "So India start as favourites but only just," he said referring to the final, which will be a rematch of the 2000 Champions Trophy title clash, where New Zealand triumphed by four wickets in Nairobi.

The 62-year-old, who has seen both teams evolve over the years, picked four players from the New Zealand squad

who could make a difference in the high-stakes final.

He singled out Rachin Ravindra, calling him "immensely talented", Kane Williamson for his "stability and calmness like a saint", and captain Mitchell Santner, whom he described as an "intelligent" leader who can influence the game alongside Glenn Phillips, who could be the X-factor for the team.

Shastri also highlighted Virat Kohli's current form as a potential game-changer, while also acknowledging Williamson's ability to seize crucial moments.

"Now (on) current form, Kohli. When these guys get hot and you let them get their first 10 runs, then they're trouble. Whether it's Williamson, whether it's Kohli," Shastri said.

"So from New Zealand, I would say Williamson. To an extent, Ravindra, he is a fabulous young player."

"But these guys when they smell the coffee and you let them, in a final, get to that 10-15, then they are doubly dangerous," Shastri said.

Ravindra, at just 25, has already accumulated five centuries in ICC 50-over



tournaments — the youngest to achieve the feat. "I just like the way he moves in the

crease," Shastri said. "There's an element of fluency, which is fabulous to see. He's either forward, he's back, he'll cut, he'll

sweep it, play the quicks well and he's got a very good temperament.

"You don't get hundreds in big tournaments like this just like that. You've got to have something up your sleeve, and I think he's immensely talented."

Apart from his batting prowess, former skipper Williamson's leadership and calm demeanour make him a vital asset for New Zealand in the final.

The veteran has been in red-hot form with scores of 81 against India and 102 in the semifinal versus South Africa.

"He's very stable and there's an element of calmness, a no-nonsense element about him the way he goes about his job," Shastri said.

"He's like a saint, a sage, just sitting, meditating. Lot of people look at the big shots, I look at the way he moves in the crease. There is an element of fluency.

"Joe Root when he's batting at his best. He's forward, back. Kohli (as well). When people move in the crease, the footwork is sound.

"It's a joy to watch. And then with their experience, their talent, the volume of runs they've got, doesn't matter what format they play," added Shastri.

Shastri also made special mention of Santner, who has impressed in his first ICC event as New Zealand captain.

"He's an intelligent man. And I think this captaincy suits him," Shastri said. "It just adds that edge to him as a batter, as a bowler, as a cricketer."

"So I think it's a smart move by New Zealand opting for that and just the way he goes about his job, like I said, he's a good reader of the game, is an intelligent bloke and should be there for some time for New Zealand."

Shastri also didn't hold back his admiration for Phillips' ability to turn a match around single-handedly as he also picked him as one of the Player-of-the-Match contenders alongside India's Axar Patel and Ravindra Jadeja.

"Player of the Match, I would go for an all-rounder," he said in The ICC Review. "I'll say Axar Patel or Ravindra Jadeja from India."

"From New Zealand, I think that Glenn Phillips has something up. He might just show flashes of brilliance in the field. He might come and smash a cameo of 40, 50 and probably surprise you by taking a wicket or two."

IOC president sees 'new world order' ahead of LA Olympics



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Lausanne

Thomas Bach says he feels a rare calm in his final weeks as IOC president even as a "new world order" gains speed ahead of the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics.

Bach led the International Olympic Committee through two locked-down Games in a global pandemic and several affected by Russian doping and military aggression, among other crises.

His successor will be elected March 20 and inherit an IOC financially secure with future Olympic hosts that today look stable and reliable.

Still, the biggest event for the next IOC president — the LA Summer Games — could yet challenge Bach's faith in the Olympics' power to unite the world in peaceful competition and mutual acceptance.

"We have a new world order in the making, and this making... will not happen without rumbling," Bach said this week, without criticising US President Donald Trump.

Signature Bach policies have been gender parity and inclusive acceptance of all 206

national teams, plus refugee athletes. Political neutrality is an ideal Bach clings to even as Trump has warned of denying visas to athletes based on the government's gender interpretations.

"I am also convinced that President Trump and his administration will fully support the Olympic Games," Bach told The Associated Press in a rare interview at IOC headquarters.

"He likes sport, so there I don't see a risk." The American people, Bach added, "appreciate and love that the Games are about sport but they are about more than sport. They will want to welcome the athletes from all over the world."

The IOC has defended female boxers Imane Khelif and Lin Yu-ting — the Paris Olympic gold medalists. Both had been disqualified from the 2023 world championships run by the Russian-backed International Boxing Association, which said they failed eligibility tests.

"These two women boxers have been born as women, they have been raised as women, they have competed as women and nobody ever claimed even that they are transgender," Bach said in AP's

interview. "What happened there was a Russian-led misinformation campaign which then distorted the truth, the facts and now we have this unfortunate situation that these two athletes are considered to be transgender. But. They. Are. Not."

Before the Paris Olympics, Bach warned of "deeply disturbing" trends, including "narrow self-interests trumping the rule of law."

"What I see is very heated discussion in the United States," Bach told the AP. "But this is for the citizens of the United States to have. Our values are very clear and on those values the Olympic Games are based."

Pandemic and Russian doping

Bach's presidency since 2013 saw two Games impacted by Covid-19; one shadowed by Korean political tensions; several affected by Russian doping and military aggression; and one almost imploded with a chaotic local organising team in Rio de Janeiro that pulled the IOC into vote-buying allegations.

"I'm experiencing the first period during my presidency where I do not have an existential problem of the Olympic Games or the Olympic Movement on my desk," Bach said. The 71-year-old German lawyer and 1976 Olympic gold medalist in fencing leaves office in June. "I am fit and very happy in great health."

Future commercial deals

A key decision early in Bach's presidency was extending NBC's broadcast rights in the U.S. Through 2032. Renewing or finding a new partner is a big decision for the next president. Bach suggested a free-to-air network is important.

"You can say of streaming. They are paying such a lot of money, let's go for streaming." But what does it mean for our values? Bach said. "The Olympic Games has to be accessible to everybody and not only the

ones that can afford it. This balance you have to find."

Diplomatic skills

Bach and predecessor Jacques Rogge were Olympic athletes who rose to represent the IOC with various heads of state.

"That is one of the privileges as IOC president is that you get everybody on the phone," Bach said. "I haven't experienced any situation where somebody would have said, I am not interested to talk." The late Henry Kissinger "gave very valuable advice" in real-world diplomacy.

Spy target?

Bach's potential as a future Olympic leader was clear from 1981 when he and Sebastian Coe, a candidate to succeed him, helped represent athletes at a key IOC meeting in Baden-Baden, West Germany. He later worked for Horst Dassler and Adidas who reportedly were monitored for the Stasi, East Germany's secret police.

Asked if there was a Stasi file on him, Bach said, "Not that I knew. I cannot imagine." Bach had warm relations with Russian President Vladimir Putin during the 2014 Sochi Winter Games. Bach and the Olympics have been targets of Russian misinformation, cyber attacks and deep fake videos during the past decade of sanctioning the state-backed doping scandal and fallout from the invasion of Ukraine.

Cleaning up voting

Bach's legacy includes changing how hosts are picked. No more blockbuster contests vulnerable to vote-buying.

"The atmosphere was just not clean, not sober. It put the whole credibility of the IOC in doubt." There were no allegations of wrongdoing in how the French Alps, Brisbane and Salt Lake City were selected as hosts of the Olympics from 2030-2034.



Javed Akhtar ask Shami to not pay attention to criticism

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Dubai

Days after cricketer Mohammed Shami was criticised for not observing roza (fast) in the month of Ramzaan during the ICC Champions Trophy (CT) semi-final match against Australia, veteran lyricist Javed Akhtar voiced his support for the bowler asking him to pay no attention to "reactionary bigoted idiots".

Shami, who is part of the Indian squad for the ongoing ICC Champions Trophy tour, was spotted consuming an energy drink as the match was underway in Dubai on Tuesday.

After the visual of the lead pacer went viral on social media, the national president of the All India Muslim Jamaat, Maulana Shahabuddin Razvi Bareilvi, said Shami had committed a sin by not fast-

ing during the Islamic holy month of Ramzaan. Akhtar, known for openly voicing his opinions, advised the cricketer to ignore all the negativity and praised his performance in the game.

Shami saheb, do not give a damn to those reactionary bigoted idiots who have any problem with your drinking water in a burning afternoon at a cricket field in Dubai.

"It is none of their business. You are one of the great Indian team that is making us all proud My best wishes to you and our whole team," he wrote in an X post on Friday.

India emerged victorious in Tuesday's match, becoming the first team to qualify for Sunday's final. The Men in Blue will fight it out with New Zealand to claim the Champions Trophy for the third time (2002 and 2013).

I'm open to all formats, but classical chess brings excitement: Gukesh



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

Unfazed by the evolving chess landscape, reigning world champion D Gukesh is open to compete in all formats but asserted that while freestyle chess brings excitement, the classical chess, with its rich history, will always hold the greatest significance.

With two distinct sets of chess enthusiasts emerging — one supporting freestyle and the other the showing loyalty to classical — concerns have been raised about a potential split in the sport. Gukesh, who beat Ding Liren to become world champion last year, sees no reason for division.

"I do not think much about it. Freestyle is exciting, and I'm happy to play it. But it's too early to say where it's going. We have had just two serious tournaments in freestyle so far," he said at the 'India Today Conclave 2025'.

"I wish freestyle becomes big, but I don't see it taking over standard chess. The history and legacy of classical chess give it more value. The World Championship cycle still holds the biggest importance for now."

"Freestyle is a great addition to classical, rapid, and blitz. But yeah, we just have to see how it works. I'm open to all," said Gukesh who has confirmed his participation for the Paris leg of Freestyle Chess Grand Slam Tour slated from April 7-14 World No 1 Magnus Carlsen, Gukesh are

among the top 12 GMs who have confirmed participation for the Paris leg boasting a prize purse of \$750,000.

German rising star Vincent Keymer won the first Grand Slam in Weissenhaus.

Parents do not have to think about money anymore

Gukesh's rise to the top was anything but easy. Just a few years ago, his family relied on the generosity of friends to support his international tournament expenses.

"I remember my parents' friends sponsoring me to play tournaments abroad. It was quite difficult at that time, and we had a lot of help from very, very nice and selfless people. Now, the last year was financially very good for us," he recalled.

The change in circumstances has brought relief not just to him, but more so to his family, he added.

"I think it means a lot to me that my parents don't have to think about money anymore. We can lead a comfortable life, not struggle like before." With 13 Indian players in the top-100, Indian chess is experiencing an unprecedented boom post-COVID 19. Gukesh credits much of this to the legendary five-time former world champion Viswanathan Anand.

"One of the biggest contributions, without a doubt, is what Vishy sir has been doing. Not just his achievements and inspiration, but also his efforts through the WestBridge Anand Chess Academy."

French soccer to have 'WO=MAN' written on jerseys to mark International Women's Day

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Paris

Every player in the top two divisions of men's soccer in France will have "WO=MAN" written on the back of their jerseys instead of their names this weekend.

The French league initiative, centred around International Women's Day on Saturday, started on Friday with Toulouse's home game against Monaco, which finished 1-1. The initiative was continuing on Saturday and Sunday with the other teams in Ligue 1 and Ligue 2 as part of the league's fight against sexism.

"The message resonates as a strong statement," the LFP said in a statement. "Highlighting the importance of gender equality, not only on the field, but also in the stands."

LED panels around the pitches will display "WO=MAN" at all games and official match balls have the motto written on them. Match broadcasters DAZN and beIN SPORTS will raise awareness with halftime messages.

Making stadiums safer for women The French league has been working all season to make stadiums safer for women in conjunction with three organisations — The Foundation for Inclusive Sport, Her Game Too and Colossus with feet of Clay — and with six pilot clubs: Toulouse, Rennes and Auxerre in Ligue 1 and Metz, Paris FC and Troyes in Ligue 2.

Among the measures in place are a system for reporting sexual and gender-based violence and a support and protection procedure in case of incidents, including post-incident monitoring.

Anouh Morel, the director of Her Game Too in France, has liaised with clubs to have female ambassadors inside stadiums on matchdays, when they help to promote inclusivity, equality and diversity.

"We create a supportive atmosphere for all fans and raise awareness of the campaign through fan engagement,



social media, and community outreach," Morel told The Associated Press. "We also make sure that safe zones are ready (in stadiums)."

Her Game Too has seven ambassadors in Ligue 1 and three in Ligue 2. They wear visible pins and distribute flyers. Morel knows what a distressing matchday experience feels like. In April last year, she and other female Paris Saint-Germain supporters endured "abusive" body searches while entering Barcelona's stadium for a Champions League match.

"We work to ensure that football matches are a safe and welcoming environment for all fans, especially women," Morel told The AP. "Sexism and abuse are not tolerated."

Government backs project

Lise Ducrocq, the LFP communications and corporate brand manager, first came up with the WO=MAN motto.

"It's very inspiring to be part of such a big project led by a woman," Morel said. "All the clubs were very excited."

French sports minister Marie Barsacq attended the game and held up the jersey, surrounded by girls.

No discussion on Rohit and Kohli's retirement: Gill

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Dubai

Speculation is rife on the ODI future of skipper Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli after the Champions Trophy (CT) but vice captain Shubman Gill on Saturday said the Indian dressing room is not discussing retirement of the two modern-day greats.

Kohli and Rohit are still batting strong in the format but it is being discussed in cricketing circle that if India wins the Champions Trophy, both the batters or at least one can call time on his career.

"There is no talk about retirement in the dressing room, now," Gill said during the pre-match press conference ahead of the Champions Trophy final against New Zealand on Sunday. Gill feels privileged to be a part of "best batting line-up" but said the depth in their order allows the top three to express themselves freely.

"This is the best batting line up I am part of. Rohit is one of the best openers (in the world) and Virat, we need not tell about him. But our team has depth in batting and that allows the top order to bat with bit more freedom," Gill, India's most prolific 50-over batter in the last two years, said.

On the match front, Gill is aware of the huge pressure on them to win the trophy but exuded confidence that they will come up trumps unlike 2023 ODI World Cup which they lost to Australia.

"We are all excited for the final. Last time we could not win the 50 over World Cup but we are determined to win this time," he said.

The prolific ODI batter believes that the team that handles pressure on big day will win the blue riband trophy.

"There will be big match pressure. But whichever team deals with pressure will win the final. We just need to take it like any other match, and good teams will do that. We have played four matches here and done well, so there is no added pressure on us."

HER Name Belongs on the Label

PHOTOS: PANKAJ KUMAR

On Women's Day, we celebrate the fearless women in fashion, breaking barriers, redefining style, and empowering generations with every stitch, says SAKSHI PRIYA

PAYAL JAIN: RESILIENT VISION

Have you ever felt the need to fight for your space in a male-dominated industry?

Fashion offers freedom, yet top brands are still led by men. As in finance or banking, women must work harder to prove their worth. Early on, I knew I needed a strong voice and identity. Inclusivity, sustainability, and craft revival have been my focus, especially supporting women artisans. Success and failure have shaped me, and I wouldn't change a thing.

If you designed an outfit symbolising women's journey in fashion, what would it look like?

My work would tell a story of purpose, strength, faith, and transformation. It would celebrate craftsmanship, bridging tradition and the struggles women face in a man's world. My retrospective Soul of a Woman interprets a woman's facets—her struggles, emotions, and triumphs. I see myself as an artist creating textile sculptures, not just outfits. I've worked with natural textiles, handcrafted by women artisans, repurposed into new forms—just like a woman standing tall through every setback.

Has the industry evolved for women, or does the glass ceiling remain?

The industry has evolved. There are more women in leadership, shaping trends and brands. But the glass ceiling still exists. While more women take charge, greater inclusivity is needed for diverse voices. True progress requires an inclusive, unbiased work culture where women have not just a seat but an equal voice in shaping the future.

What has been your most defining career moment?

Curating Soul of a Woman, a retrospective of my three-decade journey, was a powerful moment. Seeing my work come together, telling stories of craft



and sustainability, was humbling. It's no longer just about my label—it's about connecting craftsmanship, sustainability, and design. That's when I truly felt I had made a difference.

What's one piece of advice you would give to young women entering this industry?

To young women entering the design world, I would strongly advise to have a voice that is unique to you

and your design language, to stay true to your aesthetic and vision, never underestimating the power of hard work, commitment, faith and resilience. Stay grounded in your values, keep pushing boundaries, and above all, never lose sight of the joy and art in fashion, and the very reason you chose this as a career path!



Fashion is often seen as a world of glamour, but behind the shimmering fabrics and runway lights lies a space built stitch by stitch, fight by fight. Unlike industries where power is openly contested, fashion subtly shapes narratives, dictating not just style but identity.

Speaking to Payal Jain, Dolly J, and Rina Dhaka, it's clear that success is about talent and persistence. They stepped into a field where men historically controlled the business, yet instead of pushing against a system, they built their own. They transformed fashion into a canvas for empowerment, where clothes become statements of strength, identity, and evolution. Their stories remind us that fashion is resilience threaded into every design, a reflection of those who refused to be stitched into the background.

DOLLY J: REDEFINING CONFIDENCE

Did you ever feel the need to prove yourself, and how did you navigate that space?

Fashion is not about gender—it's about vision, craftsmanship, and the ability to create something timeless. I never saw it as proving myself in a male-dominated space; I saw it as making my mark in an industry that values creativity above all. My focus has always been on refining my craft, pushing boundaries, and delivering designs that speak for themselves.

As a woman, was there a moment in your career when you faced resistance or doubt just because of your gender? How did you turn that into motivation?

Fashion is one of the most expressive industries, where talent dictates success, not gender. Challenges exist for everyone, but I've never allowed any label to limit my potential. Instead of focusing on resistance, I've always channelled my energy into my work—because at the end of the day, design excellence speaks louder than any bias.

How do you ensure that your designs give women a voice in an industry where men have traditionally set the rules?

My designs are created for those who value artistry, craftsmanship, and self-expression. It's never been about following rules set by anyone—it's about redefining them. Every piece I create is meant to empower the wearer, making them feel like the truest, most confident version of themselves.

What changes do you hope to see for women in fashion in the next decade?

Fashion is evolving into a space



where creativity is the only measure of success. The future should not just be about "equal representation" for women but about ensuring that talent—regardless of gender—is recognised and nurtured. I hope to see an industry where the focus is solely on innovation, originality, and craftsmanship.

If you could share one piece of advice with young women looking to make their mark in a male-dominated industry, what would it be?

Don't look at industries as "male-dominated", look at them as spaces where pioneers, dreamers, and innovators thrive. If you have the passion, the skill, and the vision, nothing can stand in your way. Focus on mastering your craft, staying true to your creativity, and letting your work do the talking.

RINA DHAKA: FEARLESS VISION

What was the biggest challenge you faced as a woman in fashion, and how did you overcome it?

When I started in fashion, there were few reference points to learn from. Initial resources were mostly archival—vintage textiles, antique jewellery, cinema costumes. Early on, I relied on old PCs and historical clothing to understand design. Eventually, I discovered Indian museums as a valuable resource for learning and inspiration. But what truly shaped me was working closely with artisans, understanding their craft, their techniques. As my understanding grew, creating became easier.

Do you feel fashion today empowers women more than before, or do societal expectations still shape how women dress?

After seeing the Oscars and the Vanity Fair party, I understand that boldness is real now. When I began working, I was called 'Dare-Bare Dhaka.' Looking back, what I once considered bold is now wearable fashion. But empowerment, in my view, is not about revealing choices—it's about acceptance. True empowerment is allowing women to dress as they choose, free from judgment.

How has your creative vision evolved from your first collection to now?

My early years were shaped by studying historical fashion, museum archives, and cinema cos-



umes. But over time, direct interactions with artisans gave me a deeper, more hands-on understanding of craftsmanship. Today, my work blends those influences, tradition, heritage, and modernity.

If you had to describe the journey of women in fashion through one design element, what would it be and why?

If I had to find a common thread, it might be shoes; the way women walk forward, step by step. Footwear symbolises progress, movement, and the journey women have taken to claim their space in the industry.



ABHINETRI'S AS BOLLYWOOD DIVAS: Ruling THE SILVER SCREEN

After tough times in Bollywood, acceptance of films without male superstars shows growing appreciation for female talent, writes ABHI SINGHAL

I have been a binge-watcher for many years now. I love watching web series, movies, short films, and anything and everything with a story. To be honest, the genres excite me like nothing else. I am a cinema lover. Watching films evolve all these years is the most beautiful change of acceptance I have seen. With this change, I talk about the entry of female-led films on the silver screen being the hit.

Also, with that, the stories of movies have become female-centric, breaking taboos and barriers that play a huge part in shaping society.

From films having just male protagonists to films only led by female actors, it has been a journey of hardships and flops for the actors. Women have also faced criticism and backlash on the roles they play. An

example of the same is Deepika Padukone. Be it Padmavati, due to the culture of her role, Rani Padmavati, or be it Fighter, where she was criticised for her costume in the film, it has always been hard for women.

There have been web series bashed by the audience like Heeramandi: The Diamond Bazaar for the showcasing of women as tawaifs and at the red light areas.

But over time, scenarios have changed many misconceptions, and the audience has started to accept films with women protagonists and even films that don't have a male superstar. The journey of female-centric films in Indian cinema is ongoing. While challenges remain, the progress made is undeniable. The increasing number of impactful female-led stories reflects a change.

THE SHIFT: FROM PERIPHERAL TO PROTAGONIST

FASHION (2008): Priyanka Chopra's portrayal of Meghna Mathur, a small-town girl going through the cutthroat world of modeling.

QUEEN (2013): Kangana Ranaut's Rani was a revelation. Rani's journey from a heartbroken bride to an independent woman struck a chord with viewers, proving that a female-led film could be a massive commercial success.

NH10 (2015): Anushka Sharma's production and performance in NH10 offered a raw and gritty portrayal of a woman fighting for survival.

NEERJA (2016): Sonam Kapoor's acting as Neerja Bhanot, a flight attendant who sacrificed her life to save passengers. This film highlighted the courage and heroism of an ordinary woman, proving that female-led stories could be powerful and impactful.

HICHKI (2018): Rani Mukerji again, this time as Naina Mathur, a teacher with Tourette syndrome. This movie displayed that women can be strong role models.

VEERE DI WEDDING (2018): The film, starring Kareena Kapoor Khan, Sonam Kapoor Ahuja, Swara Bhasker, and Shikha Talsania, celebrated female friendship and challenged societal expectations of women.

GANGUBAI KATHIAWADI (2022): Alia Bhatt's powerful performance as Gangubai, a brothel madam who fought for the rights of sex workers, was a testament to the changing landscape of Indian cinema.

DARLINGS (2022): Alia Bhatt and Shefali Shah's film explored domestic violence with a dark comedic twist, keeping all the responsibility to themselves.

MRS. CHATTERJEE VS NORWAY (2023): Rani Mukerji, starring, brought to light the struggles of an immigrant mother without a male actor in any sort of lead.

CREW (2024): This very recent film starring Tabu, Kareena Kapoor Khan, and Kriti Sanon is a comedy about flight attendants, showing that women can carry a comedy film.



Get in touch at vivacity@dailypioneer.com



The Pioneer AGENDA

"If they don't give you a seat at the table, bring a folding chair"
— Shirley Chisholm

SHE is a daughter, a mother, a wife, and a leader. From sacrifices at home to commanding spaces once deemed unimaginable, women have done it all. Every woman's life is a symbol of already fought societal norms, unbreakable strength, unshattractive confidence and living grace. SHE is a force, a beacon and change, writes
ABHI SINGHAL

कोई सीता, कोई राधा
कोई झांसी की रानी
हर रूप में नारी ने
दुनिया है संभाली।।



WAAH WOMANIYA!

Me being a woman have always heard and read that for HER the sky is the limit, but SHE, in every role and everytime knows that the limit doesn't stop at the sky.

The Durga Incarnates

Despite being nature's greatest marvel, women have long been denied the respect and autonomy they deserve. Forced to navigate paths imposed by others, many Indian women have dared to challenge these norms, rewriting the rules and forging their destinies. They dare, they challenge societal norms. Here are a few of them who have excelled and made their mark despite all odds in different fields that were a taboo.

KIRAN BEDI: THE FIRST WOMAN IPS OFFICER

As India's first female IPS officer, she broke barriers in a male-dominated force, transforming challenges into opportunities. Her journey from towing the Prime Minister's car for illegal parking to reforming Tihar Jail, demonstrates how determination and the right support can overturn deep-seated biases. Raised in an environment where education and independence were encouraged, she never let societal expectations define her aspirations. "Any girl child who is loved by her parents and given the vision and resources to realise her potential is ready to take on the world. As I was," says Kiran Bedi.

But entering a profession dominated by men was not without its challenges. The biases and prejudices were apparent. "The prevailing biases and prejudices inspired me to question them. And prove them wrong. Which I did. It gave me a sense of achievement" she added.

NIDHI SALGAME: THE OFF-ROADER MAKING HER PATH

Nidhi Salgame, founder of Wander Beyond Boundaries, exemplifies excellence in a field where skill matters more than gender. An accomplished off-roader and explorer, Nidhi has overcome stereotypes and judgment by letting her actions speak for themselves. Nidhi says, "You just have to prove yourself again and again. I faced judgment, and immense stereotyping. I had to prove myself twice over, just for people to acknowledge my skills. That's not a burden any man would carry, yet it was placed on me. But in the end, actions speak louder than words." She further added that the outdoors does not judge you by gender. The machine doesn't treat you differently. It is a leveler. And that's what makes it so liberating. Her journey has never been about fitting into stereotypes or shattering them, it has been about mastering what she does and doing it exceptionally well.

In off-roading extreme overland expeditions, capability is the measure of success.

POOJA SHARMA: AN ACTIVIST WHO DEFIED TRADITIONS

A social activist who turned personal tragedy into a mission of dignity. After witnessing her brother's untimely death, she vowed to honour those forgotten by society. Defying long-held traditions that barred women from performing last rites, Pooja armed herself with knowledge from ancient scriptures and has since bestowed dignity on over 5,000 unclaimed bodies. In a society where women are excluded from cremation grounds, Pooja stood as a lone warrior.

When she attempted to perform the last rites, temple priests blocked her path. "I started reading the Vedas, our scriptures, the Shiv Puran, the Garud Puran. Nowhere it is written that women cannot perform last rites" said Pooja.

Armed with knowledge, she fought against centuries-old beliefs and proved that religion did not forbid women from giving dignity to the departed. Together, these women embody a spirit that transcends societal constraints. They remind us that while rules may exist, they do not define the power of a woman, the true force of creation, resilience, and change.

BIDISHA MUKHERJEE: BREAKING BARRIERS IN GOVERNANCE AND TOURISM

Entering the IAS amid a traditionally male realm, she now leads initiatives at the Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board that empower women and promote sustainable tourism. Her work proves that when women lead, they not only participate but they redefine the landscape. Under her leadership, initiatives like women-run hotels, such as Amatas, have not only created economic independence for women but also reshaped the tourism landscape in Madhya Pradesh.

"The desire to create meaningful change led me from teaching to public administration. While the gender imbalance in governance was a challenge, I saw it as a chance to redefine norms." said Bidisha. Her initiatives have set new benchmarks, proving that when women are given platform, they don't just participate they lead.

— BY DIVYA BHATIA

Now you don't have to picture such women, you can also see them behind the wheels of the massive DTC buses, their presence a powerful symbol that defies the notion that such roles are for men.



Kiran Bedi



Bidisha Mukherjee



Nidhi Salgame



Pooja Sharma



Kalpana Chawla



Sarla Thakral



Sania Mirza



Bachendri Pal



Sushmita Sen

WOMEN WHO SCRIPTED HISTORY

Kalpana Chawla's journey to space was an example to her extraordinary intellect and courage. She became an icon, inspiring countless young women to pursue careers in STEM fields. Her dedication to exploration and scientific advancement left an indelible mark on the world. During the wonders that she did, her life was tragically cut short but her legacy continues to propel humanity's quest for knowledge.

Sarla Thakral, in 1936, became India's first female pilot. At 21, she flew a Gypsy Moth, defying societal norms. Her courage shattered barriers, inspiring generations. Her achievement symbolised female empowerment, proving women's capabilities in traditionally male-dominated fields. Her legacy is one of resilience and pioneering spirit.

Sania Mirza's victory in the 2005 WTA Hyderabad Open doubles title was a watershed moment for Indian tennis. She shattered glass ceilings, proving that Indian women could excel in international sports. Her powerful serves and unwavering spirit inspired a generation of aspiring athletes. Mirza's success not only elevated Indian tennis but also empowered women to pursue their dreams.

Bachendri Pal's ascent of Everest in 1984 etched her name into history. With unflinching determination, she conquered the world's highest peak, inspiring generations of Indian women. Her courage shattered barriers, proving that no summit is too high to reach. Pal's achievement is a testimony to the strength and resilience of women and a beacon of hope.

Sushmita Sen's victory at Miss Universe 1994 transcended beauty pageants. She became a symbol of grace and intelligence, showcasing the modern Indian woman to the world. Her poise and eloquence captivated audiences, shattering stereotypes and empowering young girls to dream big. Sen's triumph was a moment of national pride, highlighting India's evolving identity on the global stage.

Dipped in Colours

On Holi, every splash of colour is a moment of love, laughter and celebration, says **SAKSHI PRIYA**

Rang barse bheege chunar wali, rang barse..." a song that instantly reminds everyone of Holi, bringing back memories of laughter, colours and streets filled with celebration.

This timeless Bollywood song has become the soundtrack of the festival, capturing its playfulness and joy. Whether it is Amitabh Bachchan's deep baritone or Ranbir Kapoor's youthful energy, cinema has long celebrated.

As Holi approaches, the streets fill with music, laughter and a riot of colours begins. Holi as a time of revelry. People come together, smearing each other with colours, dancing and setting aside their worries for a day. "Bura na maano, Holi hai!" becomes the anthem, inviting everyone to join in the fun.

Beyond the festivities, Holi holds deep cultural and religious significance. It symbolises the victory of good over evil, with the *Holika Dahan* on the eve of Holi marking this victory. The festival also signifies the arrival of spring, a time of renewal and joy. While Holi is celebrated across India in different ways, the traditions of *Braj*, especially in Mathura, Vrindavan, Barsana and Nandgaon, are among the most vibrant and unique.

HOLI IN VRINDAVAN

A short distance from Barsana and Nandgaon, Vrindavan is home to one of the most visually stunning Holi celebrations. Here, Holi is an expression of devotion.

At the Banke Bihari Temple, the celebrations begin days in advance, with priests and devotees showering each other with gulaal and flower petals. Unlike the lively Lathmar Holi, the atmosphere here is more devotional. The temple doors open and the deity of Krishna is brought closer to the devotees, as if participating in the celebrations. Pilgrims sing bhajans, dance in joy and immerse themselves in a Holi that is deeply spiritual.

I also spoke to Ananya Patel, who experienced Holi in Vrindavan for the first time. "It was about colours, it felt like

a blessing," she said. "The temple was packed, but there was this beautiful sense of harmony. When the petals started falling from above, it was almost surreal. Everyone around me had their hands raised, singing, completely lost in the moment. It was Holi, but in the purest, most peaceful form." As locals and visitors immerse themselves in a tradition that has been carried forward for generations. One of the most mesmerising aspects of Vrindavan's Holi is the Phoolon Ki Holi, the Holi of flowers, where instead of coloured powders; fragrant flower petals fill the air. The sight of thousands of petals raining down in the temple premises is breathtaking, a serene contrast to the more boisterous celebrations outside.

WOMEN STOOD READY WITH STICKS IN HAND, THEIR FACES FILLED WITH EXCITEMENT. THE MEN FROM NANDGAON, LAUGHING AND TEASING, WILLINGLY WALKED INTO THIS PLAYFUL BATTLE. IT WASN'T AGGRESSION, IT WAS PURE JOY

Lathmar Holi

Holi in Barsana and Nandgaon, two villages in Uttar Pradesh, is unlike anywhere else. Here, the festival takes on a unique and playful form known as Lathmar Holi, where women chase men with sticks while the men protect themselves with shields. It is a spectacle that draws thousands

of visitors each year, blending tradition with festivity in a way that is both energetic and deeply rooted in local culture.

Curious about what it feels like to experience Lathmar Holi firsthand, I spoke to Aneesh Sharma, a traveller who recently visited Barsana during the festival. "The moment we entered the village, it felt like stepping into a different world," he recalled. "Women stood ready with sticks in hand, their faces filled with excitement. The men from Nandgaon, laughing and teasing, willingly walked into this playful battle. It wasn't aggression, it was pure joy."

He described the sounds of dhols filling the air as colours flew in every direction. "At one point, I just stood there watching. The energy was surreal. One of the men near me held up his shield, pretending to be terrified of the women approaching him, and everyone burst into laughter. It's a Holi unlike anything I had ever seen before."

THE SIGHT OF THOUSANDS OF PETALS RAINING DOWN IN THE TEMPLE PREMISES IS BREATHTAKING, A SERENE CONTRAST TO THE MORE BOISTEROUS CELEBRATIONS

A week before the main Holi celebrations, men from Nandgaon visit Barsana. As they enter the village, they are welcomed with colours, teasing and, most famously, stick. The women of Barsana, dressed in traditional attire, await them with lathis (sticks) in hand, ready to chase them away in a playful mock battle. The men, armed with shields, try to dodge the blows, but many willingly surrender, laughing and embracing the spirit of the festival.

The next day, the women of Barsana visit Nandgaon, continuing the celebration on the men's home ground. The entire event is accompanied by traditional folk songs and the beating of dhols, with chants of "Shri Radhe!" and "Jai Kanha!" filling the air.

While it may seem intense to an outsider, Lathmar Holi is all in good fun, a symbolic exchange rather than a true battle. It represents the spirited playfulness that defines Holi in this region, where joy, music and community come together in a festival unlike any other.



A FESTIVAL THAT BRINGS PEOPLE TOGETHER

Holi is a festival of colours, it is a festival of unity. Whether it is the playful combat of Lathmar Holi, the devotional celebration in Vrindavan or the modern citywide festivities, Holi breaks down barriers. For one day, differences fade away and people come together in laughter and celebration.

In a world often divided by differences, Holi serves as a reminder

of shared joy and togetherness. The act of applying colour on someone is a playful gesture; it is an acceptance, a moment of unity. Strangers become friends, old grievances are set aside and for those few hours, life is lived in its most carefree and joyous form.

So, as Holi nears, whether you celebrate with lathis in Barsana, bhajans

in Vrindavan or Bollywood beats in your own city let the spirit of the festival take over. Dance freely, laugh without restraint and embrace the colours of Holi with open arms.

Bura na maano, Holi hai!

