



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.

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".

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 coerced. 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.

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, Paraul 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 Borsli 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.

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.

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Bokaro Steel Plant celebrates International Women's Day

R SHARMA : BOKARO

Bokaro Steel Plant (BSL) celebrated International Women's Day on March 8 with a grand event at its Learning & Development Center. The program saw enthusiastic participation from women employees and was attended by BSL director in-charge Birendra Kumar Tiwari, Bokaro Ladies Committee president Anita Tiwari, and executive directors C R Mahapatra (works), S Rangani (finance & accounts), Rajshree Banerjee (human resources), Vikas Manwani (mines), C R Mishra (materials management), and Anish Sengupta (projects). Also present were chief medical officer & head of Bokaro General Hospital Dr. B B Karunamay, senior officers, members of the Ladies



Committee, and a large gathering of women employees.

The event began with a safety pledge and a tradition-

al lamp-lighting ceremony. Addressing the gathering, B K Tiwari praised the contributions of women employees,

emphasizing their role in BSL's growth and excellence. Executive director (human resources) Rajshree Banerjee

also extended her best wishes.

As part of the celebration, 27 women employees were recognized for their contributions, along with winners of various competitions. Long-serving employee Geeta Devi and newly appointed ACT employee Isha Kumari were also honored.

A fashion show and cultural performances by women employees, the Ladies Committee, and children from Shishu Sadan Kilkari added vibrancy to the event. The program was conducted by public relations officer Ravi Sinha, with award announcements by assistant general manager (HR) Dr. Nanda Priyadarshini, and concluded with a vote of thanks by general manager (learning & development) Neeta Ba.

The Untapped Glow: India's Booming Clean Skin Business and the Startup Opportunity



BY RACHNA TIWARI

India's beauty landscape is undergoing a profound transformation. The era of heavy, multi-layered skincare routines is fading, giving way to the rise of the "clean skin" movement—an approach that prioritizes simplicity, transparency, and gentle, effective ingredients. This shift is not just a passing trend but a lucrative business opportunity, particularly for innovative startups looking to make their mark.

The movement is already visible in the success of brands like Wow Skin Science, which has leveraged natural ingredients and minimalist formulations to capture a growing audience. The surge of brands focusing on high-quality, ingredient-conscious skincare reflects a deeper consumer awareness. Millennials and Gen Z consumers, in particular, are increasingly discerning about what they apply to their skin. They demand transparency, ethical practices, and products that deliver results without the inclusion of harsh chemicals.

Key Trends Driving the Clean Skin Revolution

- Sustainable Practices: Eco-conscious consumers prefer brands that emphasize sustainable packaging and ethical sourcing.
- Emerging Players and Market Potential

- Several brands exemplify the diversity and dynamism of India's clean skincare market:
 - Earth Rhythm: A pioneer in "farm-to-face" skincare, this brand emphasizes ethically sourced ingredients, sustainable formulations, and eco-friendly packaging, resonating with conscious consumers.
 - Plum Goodness: Targeting younger demographics, Plum Goodness offers vegan and cruelty-free skincare with vibrant branding and affordable pricing. Their strong digital marketing and influencer collaborations have fueled significant growth.
 - The Ayurveda Co. (TAC): Combining Ayurvedic wisdom with modern science, TAC markets traditional Indian herbs in contemporary, easy-to-use formats, appealing to both domestic and global audiences.

- Mamaearth: Initially focused on toxin-free skincare and hair care, Mamaearth has expanded its offerings while excelling in community-building and consumer engagement through digital platforms.
- Startup Opportunities in the Clean Skin Sector

- For aspiring entrepreneurs, the clean skin movement presents vast opportunities. Here's how startups can differentiate themselves:
 - Niche Product Development: Addressing specific skin concerns—such as pollution-induced damage or highly

sensitive skin—by formulating clean, targeted solutions.

- Direct-to-Consumer (D2C) Models: Leveraging e-commerce and social media to build direct customer relationships, ensuring trust and transparency.
- Personalized Skincare: Using technology to offer tailored skincare solutions based on individual skin types and concerns.
- Regional Ingredient Sourcing: Showcasing the unique botanicals and natural resources available across India to create distinct, authentic products.
- Education and Community Building: Establishing thought leadership through informative content and fostering a community around clean skincare values.
- Building a Successful Clean Skin Brand

- While the market potential is undeniable, success in this space demands more than just a compelling product. Startups must focus on:
 - Rigorous Research and Development: Ensuring formulations are scientifically backed and safe for long-term use.
 - Authentic Storytelling: Clearly communicating the brand's mission and commitment to clean skincare in a transparent manner.
 - Building Trust: Establishing credibility through third-party certifications, customer testimonials, and strategic influencer collaborations.
 - Effective Digital Marketing: Utilizing social media, content marketing, and influencer partnerships to amplify reach and engagement.

- The Future of Clean Skincare in India
- The Indian clean skin market is primed for disruption. By embracing innovation, transparency, and a customer-centric approach, startups can carve out a significant share of this rapidly expanding sector. More than just a business opportunity, this movement empowers consumers to make informed choices and adopt a healthier, more sustainable skincare routine. For aspiring entrepreneurs, the future isn't just bright—it's glowing.

WITH A CAREER SPANNING TEN YEARS, THE WRITER HAS SOLIDIFIED HER EXPERTISE IN HR, ENTREPRENEURSHIP, AND INNOVATION ECOSYSTEM DEVELOPMENT. SHE IS A PRINT AND RAMP MODEL WHO WAS ALSO FEATURED IN VOGUE AND GLADRAGS MAGAZINES.

She's Not Just Working—She's Creating a Legacy



BY SUMAN RASTOGI

Her child is learning—not through lectures, but through watching her. They learn that responsibilities are not burdens but a part of life. They learn to pack their own bags, handle little mishaps, and solve problems on their own. They realize that happiness comes not just from being cared for but from learning to care for themselves. Each time they see her manage work and home with a quiet determination, they absorb the lesson that life is about showing up, about giving your best, about moving forward no matter what.

A little boy who watches his mother return home after a long day, still smiling, learns that strength is not about never getting tired, but about pushing through with a full heart. A young girl who sees her mother contribute to society, work with dignity, and still find time for her family, grows up knowing that she too can shape her own path. The resilience, the self-reliance, the "never-say-die" spirit—these are not things she teaches; these are things she lives, and in doing so, she passes them on.

She may not be there for every single school drop-off, every evening game, or every little moment. But she is there in a far greater way—in the values she instills, in the confidence she builds, in the strength she nurtures. And one day, when her child faces a challenge and does not back down, when they step into the world with courage, when they find joy in their own work and independence, they will realize where it all began.

And in that moment, she will know—she was never just working. She was preparing them for life.

THE WRITER IS CHIEF MANAGER (HR) AT CMPDIL, RANCHI. VIEWS ARE PERSONAL.

Talented women honoured on International Women's Day



PNS : JAMSHEDPUR

In a grand celebration of International Women's Day, social organisation, Aagaaz organised a special felicitation ceremony in Bistupur, where five accomplished women from the city were honoured for their remarkable contributions in various fields. Former MLA of Baharagora, Kunal Sarangi, graced the occasion as the chief guest, alongside Central Sikh Naujawan Sabha President Sardar Amrik Singh and social worker Chanchal Bhatia.

The organization, through its initiative 'Aagaaz Dwar,' identified and recognized five exceptional women for their outstanding achievements: Priya Kumari - A young entrepreneur and owner of two successful restaurants in the city. Priya Mahali - An international archer who has won multiple gold and silver medals. Preeti Sagar - A theatre artist and news anchor known for her impactful storytelling. Pinky Yadav - A sports teacher at Loyola School who overcame numerous struggles to achieve her dream. Rajni Upadhyay - A committed blood donor with 50 donations and five platelet donations to her credit. Kunal Sarangi presented mementoes and prizes to the honorees, appreciating their dedication and perseverance. The distinguished guests present at the event were also felicitated by the organization with shawls as a token of respect. In his address, Kunal Sarangi extended his heartfelt wishes to all women on International Women's Day, emphasizing that every day is a celebration of women's contributions. "Women today have created a distinct identity for themselves across all fields, from sports to politics, through their hard work and abilities," he remarked. The program was skillfully conducted by the founder president of Aagaaz Sansha, Inderjit Singh. The event also saw the participation of notable individuals including Harmeet Kaur of Aagaaz, Simran Bhatia of Hindu Ekta Manch, Kumareswari Upadhyay, Jagpreet Singh JD, Manish Kewat, Rajdeep Singh, Jagjit Singh, Amanjot Singh Lal, and Satwinder Singh, among others.

SAIL unveils Its first Green Building, redefining sustainability

PNS : RANCHI

Centre for Engineering and Technology (CET), the inhouse consultant of SAIL, implemented SAIL's first green certified building at SAIL Satellite Township, Ranchi. This building was inaugurated by Amarendu Prakash, Chairman, SAIL, in the august presence of functional Directors of SAIL namely VS Chakravarthy, Dir(Commercial); AK Tulsiani, Dir(Finance); KK Singh, Dir(Personnel); BK Tiwari, Dir. Incharge(Bokaro); MR Gupta, Dir(Tech.,Prof. & Raw Materials); Alok Verma, Dir. Incharge(Rourkela). This is a significant milestone in the company's commitment to environmental sustainability.

The occasion was hosted by Shrawan Kr. Verma, ED, CET. Also it was graced by Anup Kumar, ED(Safety), VedPrakash, ED(Digital) & Sandip Kr. Kar, ED(RD&IS)

This building known as the Ispat Executive hostel (IEH), is a 30 year old building which has been revamped to minimize its carbon footprint, showcasing SAIL's dedication to reducing its environmental impact. The building's innovative design and features ensure optimal energy efficiency, water conservation, and waste management.



IEH has received a silver rating certificate from Indian Green Building Council (IGBC) under IGBC Green Existing Buildings O&M rating system. Key Features of the Green Building are:

1. Rooftop 40kWp Solar PV system for clean energy.
2. Rainwater harvesting to conserve roof top rainwater by recharging into the ground.
3. High-performance energy-efficient lighting.
4. Lush gardens and landscaping to promote biodiversity.
5. Proper ventilation and air purification systems.

These features align with global sustainability goals, therefore supporting a greener, healthier and more sustainable future. During inauguration Sri Prakash expressed that the green building represented a significant step forward in SAIL's sustainability journey & all are committed to reducing the environmental footprint and promote eco-friendly practices in the steel industry. He put forth his vision for looking into prospects of getting Green Building certification for existing buildings across the SAIL plants, offices & cities as well. While appreciating team CET he urged them to assist plants as a consultant in such endeavours.

ESIC, RSB Global hold Awareness Session on 74th Foundation Day



PNS : JAMSHEDPUR

The Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) and RSB Global Plant 1, Gambhariya, organized a special awareness session on Saturday as part of the 74th ESIC Foundation Day and Special Service Fortnight, observed from February 24 to March 10.

The session, attended by more than 500 workers,

aimed to enhance awareness about ESIC services and strengthen coordination between employers and employees. ESIC Commissioner Pranay Sinha, Regional Director Rajiv Ranjan, and senior officials Abhishek Kumar and Sanjay Kumar addressed the gathering in the presence of the HR department and senior leadership of RSB Global. Sinha acknowledged RSB

Global as a key partner, with over 3,000 employees insured under the ESIC scheme. He highlighted ESIC's efforts to improve healthcare services and announced plans to establish a medical college in Ranchi to enhance medical facilities for insured workers and their families.

As part of the foundation day celebrations, ESIC is conducting various initiatives, including preventive health check-up camps, cleanliness drives, awareness programs, and special campaigns to ensure medical equipment functionality. Efforts are also being made to expedite the settlement of pending claims and bills.

RSB Global's HR team and senior leadership expressed gratitude to ESIC officials and reaffirmed their commitment to employee welfare. They emphasized continued collaboration with ESIC to improve healthcare services for workers. The session provided a platform for constructive dialogue, reinforcing the shared commitment of ESIC and RSB Global toward employee well-being.

Hemant Govt ignoring problems of Dalits and tribals: Nayak



PNS : RANCHI

Central Vice President of Tribal and Indigenous Janadhikar Manch cum former MLA candidate Vijay Shankar Nayak today said that the Hemant Soren led government is playing with the feelings of Dalit and tribal society by not showing interest in the problems.

Nayak was responding to the demand of the tribal soci-

ety of removing the ramp from the fly over at the main gate of Siram Toli. He further said that it is a shame for the government that the tribal society is constantly coming out to seek solution of the issue. The effect of the movement is that Minister Chandra Linda and Khizari MLA Rajesh Kachhap also inspected the site, as well as the Executive Engineer of Ranchi Division of the Road Construction Department was called at the site and explained everything and was given instructions.

Linda and Kachhap met Chief Minister Hemant Soren and informed about the sentiments of the tribal society and assured to remove the ramp from the flyover at any cost by February 24, which has not yet happened. This proves that this government ignores the sentiments of tribal society. Nayak further said that the government has described the announcement of the establishment of the Scheduled

Castes Advisory Council on the lines of the Scheduled Tribes Advisory Council, which appears an eyewash for Dalit society. He further said that for four years, Scheduled Castes Commission in Jharkhand has not been formed by the government, during the tenure of Raghuvar Das, its first president Shiv Pujan Ram was made, after the end of his tenure, the post of president has been vacant for four years, but till date, any action towards its formation has not been taken. Due to non-formation of commission, exploitation of these classes in the state has increased the incidence of oppression and development has been blocked in all their areas and they are also being denied justice. Nayak has requested the Chief Minister of the state to work to take personal interest in solving the problems of the Dalit tribal society, otherwise the results will not be good.

Minister SP Yadav appreciates Adani Foundation's efforts at KGBV event

PNS : GODDA

On the occasion of International Women's Day, a grand felicitation ceremony was organized by Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV) at the Godda Nagar Bhavan. The event was graced by Minister for Industries, Labour & Training, Sanjay Prasad Yadav as the chief guest. Also present were former Chairperson of Godda Municipal Council, Kalpana Devi, Deputy Development Commissioner (DDC), Smita Toppo, and Adani

Foundation's Regional Head, Jayant Mohanty. The program commenced with the lighting of the ceremonial lamp, followed by a welcome address by Jayant Mohanty, where he highlighted the renovation work undertaken by the Adani Foundation in KGBVs and the subsequent improvements in the quality of education. He emphasized how the foundation is committed to strengthening school infrastructure while ensuring quality education and holistic development for students. Speaking on the occasion,

DDC Smita Toppo remarked, "For women, every day is a struggle. Education is the only weapon through which they can conquer all challenges in life." Kalpana Devi also stressed the importance of girls' education, calling it the most crucial task for society. Minister Sanjay Prasad Yadav, in his address, praised Adani Foundation's CSR initiatives and assured all possible support for the students of KGBVs. He emphasized the collective responsibility of society and the government in promoting girls' education. As part of the program, top-per-

forming students from all nine KGBVs in Godda were felicitated with a cheque of ₹10,000 each. The event was attended by District Council Member Raghvendra Singh, social workers Tilak Jha and Kaushal Yadav, Adani Power officials Subrata Debnath and Abhimanyu Anand, along with Adani Foundation representatives Santosh Kumar Singh, Archana Sinha, Sumit Sagar, Abhay Verma, and associates Preeti Yadav, Sanju Mishra, and Pankaj Ram. The Adani Foundation has successfully carried out reno-

vation and upgradation work across nine KGBVs in Godda, namely Godda, Sundarpahari, Pathargama, Mahagama, Thakurgangti, Basantrai, Podayhat, Boarijor, and Mehrama. Key initiatives include: School infrastructure renovation and beautification. Establishment of smart classrooms and modern teaching facilities. Installation of RO water coolers for safe drinking water. Upgradation of kitchens and improved meal facilities. Provision of sports kits and uniforms to promote extracurricular activities and Construction of pathways, gates, stages, and BALA paintings to enhance the school environment. These efforts have significantly impacted students' educational outcomes. The pass percentage for Class 10 students in KGBVs improved from 46.65% in 2018 to an impressive 99.14% in 2023.



Government committed to preserve culture of tribals: CM

Offers prayers on the occasion of Baha Parv, pays homage to Guru Gomke

PNS : JAMSHEDPUR

The grand festival of nature worship, 'Baha Parv,' was celebrated with devotion and enthusiasm in the city on Saturday. Chief Minister Hemant Soren and MLA Kalpana Soren marked the occasion by offering prayers with traditional rituals at the Sarna worship site, Jaherthan, located in Shastrinagar, Kadma. The ceremony was attended by a large number of devotees and community members who gathered to pay homage to nature and seek blessings for the well-being of the state.

Baha Parv, a significant festival for the tribal communities, symbolizes reverence for nature, gratitude for a good harvest, and prayers for prosperity. The rituals at Jaherthan were conducted with deep spiritual fervor, reflecting the deep-rooted cultural traditions of the region. The Chief Minister, in his address, highlighted the importance of preserving



Chief Minister Hemant Soren with his wife and MLA Kalpana Soren offers prayers at Jaherthan on the occasion of Baha Parv at Jamshedpur on Saturday. PNS

indigenous traditions and maintaining harmony with nature. He emphasized that such festivals strengthen the social fabric and instill a sense of unity among the people.

During the event, the

Chief Minister also paid tribute to the legendary Guru Gomke Pandit Raghunath Murmu by garlanding his statue. Pandit Raghunath Murmu, the revered scholar and social reformer, played a crucial role in the promo-

tion of the Santali language and script. Honoring his contributions, Soren reiterated the government's commitment to preserving and promoting tribal languages, customs, and heritage. MLA Kalpana Soren also



Chief Minister Hemant Soren with his wife and MLA Kalpana Soren, MP Joba Manjhi, Ministers Deepak Birua and others occasion of Baha Parv at Jamshedpur on Saturday. PNS

expressed her deep respect for tribal traditions and highlighted the role of women in preserving cultural values. She emphasized the need for empowering

tribal communities through education, skill development, and sustainable livelihood opportunities. She assured that the government is committed to the welfare

of every section of society, especially the marginalized and underprivileged. The event saw the participation of several tribal leaders, community elders, and cul-

tural performers who showcased traditional music and dance, adding vibrancy to the celebrations. The atmosphere was filled with rhythmic beats of traditional instruments, creating an aura of devotion and joy. Devotees offered prayers, sang folk songs, and performed customary rituals to seek the blessings of nature deities.

Speaking on the occasion, Soren reiterated his government's focus on the welfare of tribal communities and the preservation of their rich heritage. He urged the youth to take pride in their roots and actively contribute to the progress of society. The festival concluded with a sense of collective gratitude and hope for a prosperous future. Baha Parv, a symbol of ecological harmony and cultural pride, once again reinforced the deep connection between the tribal communities and nature. The celebrations in Jamshedpur served as a reminder of the importance of tradition, unity, and sustainable coexistence.

NTPC DGM shot dead in Hazaribag

PNS : RANCHI

Deputy General Manager (DGM) of the National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC), Kumar Gaurav, was shot by unidentified attackers in Hazaribag district on Saturday. He was struck in the back and immediately taken to the hospital, where doctors declared him dead. The incident occurred around 9:30 AM near Fataha in the Katkamdag police station area of Hazaribag. Hazaribag Superintendent of Police (SP) Arvind Kumar Singh stated that police teams are conducting raids to apprehend those responsible. According to sources, Kumar Gaurav was posted at NTPC's Keradari office and was heading to work when he was ambushed and shot. He sustained severe injuries and succumbed before receiving medical care. A resident of Bihar's Nalanda district, Gaurav Kumar was responsible for coal dispatch, a crucial and sensitive role in the mining sector. The attack took place between Hazaribag and Barkagaon, an area where a similar incident occurred nearly two years ago. At that time, the General Manager of Ritwik Company was killed in a targeted attack. Following this recent killing, fear has spread among NTPC officials. Several NTPC projects are underway in the Barkagaon and Keradari regions, requiring frequent site visits by officers. As a result, employees and officials now feel increasingly unsafe in the region. Notably, criminal groups frequently demand extortion money from mining companies and their employees in this area. Given Gaurav Kumar's responsibility for coal dispatch, the murder may be linked to such extortion activities. The police are actively investigating the case and searching for the culprits. Reacting to the incident BJP State President and Leader of Opposition Babulal Marandi targeted the state government and said that the criminals' morale is high after Chief Minister Hemant Soren threatened to affect the coal business by giving provocative statements. He said that even after the murderous attack on a coal businessman in Ranchi on March 7, the police did not become alert. Ultimately, the criminals took the life of a young promising officer. He said that in Jharkhand, thousands of trucks of coal are being stolen every day from the areas of Dhanbad, Bokaro, Ramgarh, Hazaribag, Chatra under the protection of the "government system", the money recovered from which is being distributed from top to bottom.

CM participates in concluding ceremony of Home Guards and Fire Services Sports Competition 2025

PNS : RANCHI

Chief Minister Hemant Soren today attended the closing ceremony of Jharkhand State Home Guard Corps and Fire Service Sports Competition-2025 organized at Central Training Institute, Home Guard Corps, Dhurva Ranchi as the Chief Guest. On this occasion, he said that today in this closing ceremony, male and female participants of Home Guard Corps and Fire Service demonstrated better skills through sports and parade.

The CM said that the personnel of Home Guard Corps and Fire Service cadre work as an integral part of the state government. Be it city or remote rural area, your activities continue continuously everywhere. All of you are engaged in serving the common people step by step with the state government.



Chief Minister Hemant Soren inspects a parade on the occasion of the closing ceremony of Jharkhand State Home Guard Corps and Fire Service Sports Competition-2025 organized at Central Training Institute, Home Guard Corps, Dhurva in Ranchi on Saturday. PNS

Soren said that this is not just a program or sports competition but a moment of enthusiasm and morale boosting for you as well as the personnel of the entire cadre. The Chief Minister said that in today's busy routine, people often live in a state of stress, but through such competition or pro-

gram, even if for a short time, they get stress-free and enjoy this competition. Sports have great importance in life. Sports, songs, music are important for people of all ages.

The CM said that the sports competition was successfully organized in this campus through the Home

Guard Corps and Fire Service Cadre. All of you are concluding the competition by making better coordination with each other, it is a matter of great enthusiasm, excitement and happiness.

On this occasion, the CM extended his heartfelt congratulations and best wishes to the players of Home Guard Corps and Fire Service Cadre who participated in this sports competition from different districts of the state. On the occasion, the Chief Minister awarded the winners and runners-up participants of various games.

On this occasion, Additional Chief Secretary Avinash Kumar, DG Home Guard Corps and Fire Service Anil Palta, ADG Training Priya Dubey, Zonal IG Ranchi Akhilesh Jha along with senior officials of the concerned departments, police personnel and other dignitaries were present.

Women from various women's groups meet MLA Kalpana Soren

PNS : RANCHI

Women from various groups met MLA Kalpana Soren today at the Chief Minister's Residential Complex on Kanke Road, Ranchi. On this occasion, Kalpana Soren extended hearty congratulations and best wishes to all the women of the state on International Women's Day. The women informed her about some of their demands and feelings through a memorandum. On the occasion, Kalpana Soren while addressing the women present said that under the leadership of Chief Minister Hemant Soren, the state government is constantly trying to make the women of Jharkhand educationally, socially and economically empowered and self-reliant.

Kalpana Soren said that soon the amount of "Jharkhand Mukhyamantri Mainiya Samman Yojana" will be sent to the bank accounts of women by the state government. She said that many ambitious schemes are being run for the all-round development of women in the state.

Kalpana Soren said that under the leadership of CM Hemant Soren, work is being done to give the women of the state their rights. Kalpana Soren said that day by day Jharkhand is moving in a positive direction. The state government has closely seen the



Women of various organisations meet Gandey MLA Kalpana Soren on the occasion of Women's Day in Ranchi on Saturday. PNS

sacrifice, struggle and suffering of the women of the state, the Chief Minister wants that happiness should always be visible on the faces of the women here. She said that the state government is trying to solve every problem of women, everyone is being provided an opportunity for social justice. Kalpana Soren said that women empowerment will become the basis for the creation of a developed Jharkhand. She said that the full cooperation of all you women has been received in the formation of a sensitive and strong government in the state. Your own Abua government is moving forward by giving respect to the women of the state in

every field. Kalpana Soren once again gave hearty congratulations and best wishes to all the women on International Women's Day. Women of various groups present on the occasion also expressed their gratitude to MLA Kalpana Soren. The women told Kalpana that the work being done by the state government for the welfare of women power here under the leadership of Chief Minister Hemant Soren is quite commendable and praiseworthy. The sensitive and determined efforts of the state government towards the women of Jharkhand have become exemplary across the country.



Shaswat Institute of Teacher's Education, Hutup, Ormanjhi, felicitated two successful women Manisha Sai, President Lions Club of Ranchi Femina and Psychologist Anshu Mala Karn, Member Bai Kalyan Samiti, Ranchi, on the occasion of International Women's Day on Saturday. PNS

BJP creating own political safe zone through delimitation: JMM

PNS : RANCHI

Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM), on Saturday, attacked Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) led Central Government for on-going delimitation of parliamentary seats and the State Assembly seats. The party said that BJP is increasing the numbers of parliamentary seats in Hindi belt compared to other states for its own political safe zone through the delimitation.

Addressing a press meet at the party headquarter in the State Capital JMM General Secretary cum Spokesperson Supriyo Bhattacharya said that the BJP led Central Government is by its malign intention trying to create a safe zone for future through the ongoing delimitation. It has not published the Census report of 2011 which has completed and the Central Government is holding the delimitation on Census of 2001.



JMM General Secretary Supriyo Bhattacharya addresses media persons at the party office in Ranchi on Saturday. PNS

"Almost all seats changed their demographic equation in these years. The last delimitation was held in 2008 on the basis of 2001 Census and then Delimitation Commission of India decided that the next delimitation would be held in 2026. We can easily under-

stand by the example of Jharkhand that what it was in 2001 and now it is completely changed," said Bhattacharya. The part General Secretary alleged that through the delimitation BJP is trying to weaken South India and North-East India and East

India's representation in the parliament. "As per information we are getting the seats parliamentary seats will increase in Uttar Pradesh from 80 to 143, in Bihar from 40 to 79, in Madhya Pradesh from 29 to 52, in Maharashtra from 48 to 76, in Gujarat from 26 to 43, in Rajasthan from 25 to 50, in Andhra and Telangana from 42 to 52 and in West Bengal from 42 to 60," he added. Bhattacharya said that on March 22 Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, MK Stalin called a meeting in which Chief Minister, Hemant Soren, West Bengal Chief Minister, Mamta Banerjee and other Chief Ministers will be attended on this issue. "It is completely a conspiracy to prevent tribal, local, people from Schedule Caste and minorities from politics of Centre. During the meeting the leaders will brainstormed on how to prevent the Central Government on its malign agenda," he added.

Women's Day celebrated at NABARD Jharkhand RO

PNS : RANCHI

International Women's Day was celebrated at NABARD Jharkhand Regional Office at Khelgaon Housing Complex, Ranchi, highlighting the remarkable contribution of rural women entrepreneurs and self-help groups (SHGs), artisans and FPOs. Minister for Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Government of Jharkhand Deepika Pandey Singh was present on the occasion as the chief guest. The other dignitaries present included Padma Shri awardee Chami Murmu, Environmentalist, Bibha Singh, Chairperson, Jharkhand State Cooperative Bank, Shikha Chowdhary, Regional Manager, Bank of Maharashtra and women entrepreneurs, artisans and FPO members from all over Jharkhand. Addressing the guests and participants present, Gautam Singh, GM, NABARD emphasised on the organisation's commitment towards women's empowerment through financial inclusion, capacity building and livelihood enhancement programs. Singh also highlighted NABARD's initiatives in promoting women-led enterprises and ensuring their sustainable growth in rural Jharkhand. Padma Shri awardee Chami Murmu, a pioneer in environmental conservation and women's empowerment shared her inspiring journey.

Women's Day celebrated at PVUN Patratu

RANCHI : International Women's Day was celebrated with great enthusiasm and dignity at PVUN Township on Saturday. On this occasion, renowned speaker Dr Samidha Pandey took an inspirational session

on the topic "Discover the Real You", in which women were motivated to recognize their true capabilities and become self-reliant. The program started with lighting of lamps, after which GM (O&M) Devdeep Bose, GM (P) Anupam Mukherjee and GM (FM) Manish Khetarpal shared their views on the importance of Women's Day and the role of women in our lives. Head of C&M Department Sangeeta Dash and President of Swarakha Mahila Samiti addressed the gathering. At the end of the program, President of Swarakha Mahila Samiti, Rita Singh distributed water bottles among the women workers of the plant and interacted with them.

International Women's Day Celebrated at BAU

RANCHI : International Women's Day was celebrated in an atmosphere of joy and dignity at Birsa Agricultural University (BAU), Ranchi on Saturday. In this programme, the Vice Chancellor of the University, Dr. SC Dubey was present as the Chief Guest. Along with this, Dr Sushil Prasad (Dean, Animal Husbandry), Dr Alok Pandey, Dr BK. Jha (Coordinator, NSS), senior professors, students and other dignitaries also attended the program. The special guest of the program, Saranya Muralidharan, who came specially from Mumbai, provided guidance to the students about higher education opportunities abroad and career building.

18,70,567 cases settled in National Lok Adalat

A National Lok Adalat was organised by Jharkhand State Legal Services Authority across the State of Jharkhand under the aegis of National Legal Services Authority on March 8. This National Lok Adalat was on all matters. A total number of 18,70,567 cases were disposed of and an amount of Rs 8,08,50,28,598 was settled across the State in the National Lok Adalat. In the Jharkhand High Court 35 cases were disposed of on the occasion.

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.

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

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".

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."

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.

Chess grandmaster R Vaishali, farmer-entrepreneur Anita Devi, nuclear scientist Elina Mishra, space scientist Shilpi Soni, accessibility advocate Anjee Agarwal, and rural entrepreneur Ajaita Shah took over Prime Minister Modi's social media accounts on International Women's Day.

Vaishali, who has been playing chess since the age of six and is the sibling of grandmaster Pragnanandhaa, encouraged young girls to follow their dreams. "Playing chess has been a learning, thrilling, and rewarding journey for me. But there is more. I want to give a message to all the women out there, especially the young girls Follow your dreams, no matter the hurdles. Your passion will power your success," she wrote from Modi's account on X. She also emphasised family support, acknowledging her parents and brother for their encouragement.

Bihar's Anita Devi, a farmer-entrepreneur, shared her journey of self-reliance and rural empowerment. She narrated

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.

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 'Suganya 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-



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

PTI

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

PTI

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

PTI

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".

They also condemned "policies of starvation" that they said aim to push Palestinians to leave. The OIC also reinstated Syria as a member of the grouping.

Syria was removed from the OIC in 2012 over then-President Bashar Assad's brutal crackdown on opposition protests. After some 14 years of civil war, Assad was ousted in December by Islamist-led insurgents who since have created a transitional government.

The ceasefire that began in mid-January brought a pause in Israel's campaign of bombardment and ground offensives in Gaza aimed at destroying Hamas after its October 7, 2023 attack on southern Israel.

The ceasefire's first phase saw the release of 25 Israeli hostages held by militants in Gaza and the bodies of eight others in exchange for the freeing of nearly 2,000 Palestinians imprisoned by Israel.

But an intended second phase of the deal — meant to bring the release of remaining 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.

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

Train No. 14212		STATIONS		Train No. 14211	
ARR.	DEP.			ARR.	DEP.
---	17:40	New Delhi		10:00	---
21:30	21:35	Agra Cantt.		03:40	05:45
22:23	22:25	Dholpur Jn.		02:10	02:12
23:03	23:05	Morena		01:30	01:32
23:45	---	Gwalior Jn.		---	01:00

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

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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 (54 of 2002) (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 on 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: 13.03.2025
Amount of Demand Notice: Rs. 8,34,002.93/- as on 13.03.2024

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, Akash Deep S/o Late Shri S. P. Singh R/o Plot No. 1532, First Floor, Sector 5, Vasundhara, Ghaziabad, UP, confirm that my name is Akash Deep but in passport it is mentioned as Akash Deep Singh, I declare that both the names are of the same person for all purposes.

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 Khurd, Dist- Kushinagar, U.P.- 214402, have changed my daughter's name from Kumari Saumaya Rao to Reshu Rao, vide affidavit dated 08/03/2025 before Notary Public Delhi.

PD(1650)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 Vindu, 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 Bhosale Minakshi Ramesh to Bhosale Meenakshi Ramesh, vide affidavit dated 08/03/2025 before Notary Public Delhi.

PD(1653)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(1654)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(1655)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(1656)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(1657)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(1658)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(1659)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.

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	
Train No. 06529	STATIONS	Train No. 06530	Trips
ARR.	DEP.	ARR.	DEP.
---	19:00	Sir M. Visvesvaraya(T)	08:15
01:35	01:40	Varanasi	22:10
06:40	---	Gorakhpur	17:00

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., Kadir 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, Aunihar Jn., Mau Jn., Belthara Road, Bhatni Jn. & Deoria Sadar Stations.

08760/08761 Durg - Hazrat Nizamuddin-Durg Holi Special Train (Weekly)		02 Trips	
Train No. 08760	STATIONS	Train No. 08761	Trips
ARR.	DEP.	ARR.	DEP.
---	10:45	Durg	13:50
11:00	---	Hazrat Nizamuddin	12:30

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	
Train No. 02981	STATIONS	Train No. 02982	Trips
ARR.	DEP.	ARR.	DEP.
---	21:00	Sogaria	13:10
04:55	---	Hazrat Nizamuddin	06:00

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	
Train No. 05092	STATIONS	Train No. 05091	Trips
ARR.	DEP.	ARR.	DEP.
---	19:50	Kasganj	10:55
03:40	03:45	Sitapur	02:55
14:20	---	Chhapra	16:50

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, Mallani, 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	
Train No. 05303	STATIONS	Train No. 05304	Trips
ARR.	DEP.	ARR.	DEP.
---	04:30	Gorakhpur	17:45
07:50	07:55	Ayodhya Cantt.	14:10
19:15	---	Mahbubnagar	22:10

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 Pratargh 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	
Train No. 05325	STATIONS	Train No. 05326	Trips
ARR.	DEP.	ARR.	DEP.
---	19:00	Gorakhpur	20:00
22:00	22:05	Ayodhya Dham Jn.	17:30
06:50	---	Lokmanya Tilak(T)	10:20

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.

04145/04146 Subedarganj - Delhi Jn. - Subedarganj Holi Special Train (Weekly)		06 Trips	
Train No. 04145	STATIONS	Train No. 04146	Trips
ARR.	DEP.	ARR.	DEP.
---	21:35	Subedarganj	19:40
08:55	---	Delhi Jn.	09:30

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	
Train No. 02275	STATIONS	Train No. 02276	Trips
ARR.	DEP.	ARR.	DEP.
---	21:35	Subedarganj	19:40
08:55	---	Delhi Jn.	09:30

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	
Train No. 07715	STATIONS	Train No. 07716	Trips
ARR.	DEP.	ARR.	DEP.
---	14:00	Charlapalli	23:30
05:00	---	Gorakhpur	08:00

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	
Train No. 01013	STATIONS	Train No. 01014	Trips
ARR.	DEP.	ARR.	DEP.
---	22:30	Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj(T)	13:30
05:30	---	Banaras	08:00

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	
Train No. 01015	STATIONS	Train No. 01016	Trips
ARR.	DEP.	ARR.	DEP.
---	22:30	Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj(T)	00:40
05:40	05:50	Varanasi	20:00
10:30	---	Mau Jn.	17:00

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.

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 Ding Liren 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.



The Power of HER Plates

Celebrating the women in food, shaping flavours, traditions, and the future of cooking with passion, says TEAM AGENDA

CHEF MANSI'S CULINARY JOURNEY

Hailing from Lucknow, the cultural heart of Awadh, **Mansi Kapoor** grew up surrounded by a rich culinary heritage where diverse communities contributed unique flavours and traditions. Coming from the UP Khatri community, traditionally strict vegetarians who exclude even onions and garlic, she was raised with a deep respect for food. However, the influence of close friends and a shared love for cooking led her family to embrace a more diverse range of culinary experiences, broadening their appreciation for flavours beyond their own traditions. Her passion for food is deeply rooted in her family's love for hospitality. She learned to cook alongside the women in her household, who instilled in her the belief that cooking is not just about following recipes but about pouring one's heart into every dish. Whether preparing a simple dal or an elaborate zafrani biryani, she believes that good food requires patience, care and attention to detail. As a home chef, Mansi remains committed to personally preparing every dish she serves, following



traditional recipes without compromise. She strongly believes in the philosophy of "sahaj pake so meetha hoye", meaning slow-cooked food is the most flavourful, embracing a methodical and mindful approach to cooking. By using fresh, seasonal and local ingredients, she ensures that every meal she prepares is not just nourishing but also a sensory delight. Her culinary talents have been widely recognised at food festivals and her Awadhi tables, hosted at her home, have received high praise from renowned connoisseurs. Mansi's dedication to preserving and celebrating authentic flavours makes her a true ambassador of Awadhi cuisine.

ZAFRANI PHIRNI

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 litre full-cream milk
- 60g basmati rice
- 150g granulated sugar
- A pinch of saffron
- ½ tsp cardamom powder
- 1 tsp kewra water (optional)
- 10 almonds, blanched and finely chopped
- 10 pistachios, sliced
- Rose petals for garnish (optional)

METHOD:

- Wash and soak the rice for about 30 minutes. Drain and grind it into a semi-coarse paste.
- Soak the saffron in 2 to 3 tsp of warm water.
- Heat the milk in a saucepan or karahi, then add the cardamom powder, slivered almonds and saffron.
- Bring the milk to a boil, then

- lower the flame. Gradually add the rice paste while stirring continuously to prevent lumps.
- Cook until the rice is fully cooked and the mixture thickens.
- Add sugar and stir until it dissolves completely.
- Mix in the kewra water for a fragrant touch.
- Pour the phirni into pre-soaked earthenware bowls (sakoras) or

- glass serving dishes.
- Garnish with sliced pistachios and rose petals.
- Refrigerate for at least an hour before serving chilled. A slow-cooked delicacy infused with saffron and cardamom, Mansi's Zafrani Phirni is a perfect celebration of traditional Awadhi flavours, offering a rich, creamy and aromatic treat.

RANGO KE GUBAARE : A PALETTE OF TRADITION

BY TEAM AGENDA

Recipes by Chef Ashu Chugh, Executive Chef, Jaypee Greens Golf Resort, Greater Noida
Servings: 4

INGREDIENTS

- ½ cup rava, 1 ½ tbsp whole wheat flour, 1 tbsp gram flour
- Salt, pepper, red chilli powder, fennel powder, baking soda
- 1 tsp oil, water as needed, oil for frying
- 50g fried makhana, 100g moong sprouts, 100g boiled potatoes
- 20 mini bhalle (optional), chopped onions, tomatoes, green chillies, green apple
- 200g yoghurt, 4 tsp blueberry compote, 4 tsp green & tamarind chutneys
- Black salt, cumin powder, chaat masala, red chilli powder
- 8-10 papdi, sev, 4 tsp pomegranate arils, coriander

INSTRUCTIONS

- **Make Dough:** Mix flours, spices, oil and water into a firm dough. Rest 30 mins.
- **Fry Kachori:** Roll into discs, fry until crisp and golden.
- **Assemble:** Break the top, fill with sprouts, potatoes, bhalle, onions, apple.
- **Top & Serve:** Add yoghurt, chutneys, spices, crushed papdi, sev, pomegranate and coriander. Serve immediately. A crunchy, tangy Holi special delight!



A CLASSIC HOLI TREAT BURSTING WITH FLAVOUR

BY TEAM AGENDA

Recipes by Chef Amardeep Singh Bhatia, Executive Chef, Jaypee Siddharth

INGREDIENTS

- 1 kg refined flour, 1 kg khoya
- 50g each cashew nuts, pista, almonds
- 5g green cardamom, 20g fennel seeds
- 100g coconut powder, ghee as required
- Sugar syrup as required

METHOD

- Mix flour, ghee, and water to form dough. Knead and rest for 10-15 minutes.
- Cook khoya, sugar, dry fruits, coconut, and cardamom until thick.
- Prepare a sugar syrup by boiling 2 cups of sugar with 5 cups of water.
- Roll out small dough balls into thin circles.
- Fill with the khoya mixture, fold, and seal edges.
- Fry in ghee until golden brown.
- Drain excess oil and serve warm or at room temperature.



CHEF NISA YIMTHONG'S CULINARY JOURNEY

Chef **Nisa Yimthong** boasts an impressive professional history that spans continents and has left an indelible mark on esteemed establishments worldwide. Her odyssey began as a junior sous chef at Bangkok's revered Blue Elephant Thai Restaurant, where she honed her craft. She ascended through prestigious roles, including Chef de Partie at the Dusit Thani Hotel and Junior Sous Chef at the Bolan Thai Restaurant in Bangkok.

Chef Nisa's journey took her to international opportunities, where she showcased her culinary prowess at esteemed establishments such as the Sukhothai Hotel in Bangkok and the Leela Palace in Chennai. Her expertise truly blossomed during her first stint at Shangri-La Eros New Delhi, where she wowed diners with her exceptional skills in the realm of Thai cuisine at Tamra. This journey led to her assuming the esteemed role of Chef de Cuisine Thai at Intercontinental Century City Chengdu in China, solidifying her reputation as a true maestro of gastronomy.

Adding depth to her culinary mastery is Chef Nisa's educational foundation; she holds a bachelor's degree in hotel management from Suan Dusit Rajabhat University in Thailand. Her expertise extends beyond traditional culinary offerings, encompassing the intricate art of fruit and vegetable carving, creative food presentation, and innovative menu development. Her unwavering commitment to cleanliness and hygiene underlies her steadfast pursuit of culinary excellence.

Colorful Swirl Mathri

- 200 gms Maida
- 75 ml Refine oil
- 2gm Ajwain
- 2gm Red food colour
- 2gm Green food colour
- 2 gm Baking soda
- 2 gm Salt



METHOD:

- In a bowl mix the flour, salt, carrom seeds and salt and mix it properly
- Add the oil to the flour mix and incorporate it nicely using a little warm water and knead it to a tight and smooth dough without ant granules
- Divide the dough into 3 equal portions and add the red and green food coloring each to two portions and knead it properly so that the colour gets incorporated in each dough.
- To give equal colour roll out separately all 3 doughs into thin sheets and place it on top of each other according to the colours you want in your swirl and roll it out like cigar.
- Roll carefully into a cigar shaped roll brushing a little water at the end so that it sticks properly.
- Finally cut the roll into thin slices
- Meanwhile heat the refine oil for frying in a wok, fry the dough slices 5-6 together in a medium sized wok for 5-6 minutes in medium low flame till they are cooked properly.



EMBRACING THE SPIRIT OF HOLI SWEETNESS

BY TEAM AGENDA

Holi is a festival of colours, but it's also a festival of flavours. It's the time when kitchens fill with the aroma of saffron, cardamom and slow-cooked khoya, as families come together to prepare festive treats. The first bite of a perfectly crisp Rango ke Gubaare, breaking into a rich, nutty filling or the cool, spiced embrace of Thandai Rasmalai, soaked in saffron-infused milk, these are the tastes that make Holi special. Each sweet carries a story of tradition, celebration and the simple joy of sharing, making Holi as much about food as it is about colours.



By Chef Vaibhav Bhargava - Consultant Chef, Food Stylist and Entrepreneur

Chenna Rasmalai Thandai

- A delightful fusion of saffron-infused chenna, served in chilled thandai.
- Preparation Time: 20 minutes
- Cooking Time: 2 hours
- Total Time: 2 hours 20 minutes
- Course: Dessert
- Cuisine: Indian
- Servings: 4

Thandai Recipe

- INGREDIENTS:
- Milk - 250ml
- Water - 1500ml
- Sugar - 375g
- Fennel seeds (saunf) - 7g

- Cardamom powder - 3g
- Almonds - 15g
- Pistachios - 15g
- Skinned watermelon seeds - 15g
- Poppy seeds - 7g
- Rose water - 3g
- Whole peppercorns - 3g
- Dried or fresh rose petals - 50g

METHOD:

- Soak the almonds, pistachios, and watermelon seeds for 3-4 hours, then drain and grind them into a fine paste.
- Lightly roast the cardamom, fennel seeds, and peppercorns, then grind them into a fine powder.
- In a pan, bring the milk to a boil. Add saffron and sugar, then let it cool to room temperature before refrigerating.
- Once chilled, mix in the ground nuts

- and spice powder.
- Add rose petals and rose water for a fragrant finish. Your Thandai is now ready.
- Rasmalai Recipe

INGREDIENTS:

- Milk - 1000ml
- Refined flour - 5g
- Granulated sugar - 500g
- White vinegar (for curdling milk) - 60ml
- Water - 1500ml

METHOD:

- Dilute the vinegar with 2-3 cups of water.
- Bring the milk to a boil and slowly add the diluted vinegar. Stir until the milk curdles and forms soft chenna.
- Add 2-3 cups of water and ice cubes to

- cool it down, then strain to remove any vinegar traces.
- Drain excess water by placing the chenna in a muslin cloth and hanging it for 2-3 hours.
- Knead the chenna until smooth, then mix with refined flour to form a soft dough.
- Shape the dough into small dumplings.
- Prepare a sugar syrup by boiling 2 cups of sugar with 5 cups of water.
- Add the dumplings to the boiling syrup and cook for 5-10 minutes. Your Rasmalai is ready.
- Assembly - Thandai Rasmalai
- Squeeze the excess syrup from the Rasmalai.
- Submerge them in the chilled Thandai.
- Garnish with nuts and serve elegantly.

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!



YOUR WEEK AHEAD



MADHU KOTIYA



ARIES March 21-April 19

Everything is flowing smoothly in your life right now, with long-held aspirations coming to fruition. There's a sense of peace and harmony that surrounds you, making it a perfect time for celebration. However, you seem to be holding back your emotions, perhaps due to past hurts, which might prevent you from experiencing deeper connections. As the week progresses, consider this an opportune moment to foster closer relationships with your family and embrace the abundance of blessings that life offers. This could lead you toward the peace and happiness you seek. If there are any familial tensions, now is the time to actively work towards reconciliation. By the week's end, anticipate receiving something you've hoped for. Consider engaging in charitable activities or visiting spiritual places, which reflects your kind and generous nature.

Lucky number 11 | Lucky colour Plum
Lucky day Thursday



LEO July 23-Aug 22

Significant transformations are on the horizon, shifting the dynamics from favorable to less favorable conditions and vice versa. During this period, you might face concerns over diminishing finances or business, prompting doubts about past decisions. However, your inclination toward optimism will encourage you to await the outcomes patiently. Shifts in your career, residence, or family structure are likely, signaling a period of upheaval. Embracing these shifts can propel you toward a mindset characterized by greater personal liberation. You are keen on forging new connections or achieving success in entrepreneurial ventures. Your choices and actions will play a crucial role in shaping these endeavors. Your vibrant and dynamic personality shines through in both professional and social circles, marked by your reliability, innovation, and vivacity.

Lucky number 5 | Lucky colour Tan
Lucky day Wednesday



SAGITTARIUS Nov 22-Dec 21

This week finds you embracing strength and gaining control over your emotions, positioning you to seize various opportunities. Balancing influence and emotional resilience is key, as self-mastery leads to broader influence over your surroundings. Your disciplined approach helps you navigate life's challenges effectively, making you a dependable source of guidance for your family and peers. Your advice is valued by all, reflecting your ability to maintain a clear perspective without allowing emotions to cloud your decisions. As the week progresses, expect a burst of inspiration to ignite a new creative venture. This fresh insight might come unexpectedly, guiding you towards innovative ideas. Additionally, the week may culminate with uplifting news or a joyful event, adding a celebratory note to your achievements.

Lucky number 7 | Lucky colour White
Lucky day Saturday



TAURUS April 20-May 20

The week begins with the challenge of managing various demands, fostering teamwork, and ensuring progress while maintaining balance. Trust in your abilities and rise to the occasion. Recall times when you successfully navigated through competing priorities—balancing personal, professional, and financial responsibilities while maintaining wellness. You understand the rhythm of action and patience. By midweek, stay vigilant against misleading ambitions. Pay attention to potential hazards in your environment, such as accidents or safety concerns at home or work. Address these risks promptly. As the week closes, a sense of fulfillment emerges. Your financial endeavors or business investments are likely to yield significant rewards, leaving you satisfied with the outcomes.

Lucky number 8 | Lucky colour Saffron
Lucky day Saturday



VIRGO Aug 23-Sep 22

You are on the brink of achieving long-term financial stability and prosperity. The outlook for your economic growth looks promising, with potential gains through unexpected sources, including gifts or inheritances. Commitment in relationships may deepen, symbolized through meaningful gestures that signify long-term bonds. It's crucial now to maintain a practical approach; success will come from diligent effort rather than idle daydreaming. To enhance focus and productivity, consider incorporating practices like meditation into your routine, allowing you to view challenges with fresh perspectives. As the week concludes, you will find yourself in a leadership position, demonstrating authority and providing guidance. Your experience will be invaluable to others as you inspire and instill confidence, embodying a figure of respect and loyalty.

Lucky number 10 | Lucky colour Teal
Lucky day Thursday



CAPRICORN Dec 22-Jan 19

Significant transformations are on the horizon for you. You may find yourself on the winning side of a legal dispute or decision. This period marks a fresh beginning where previous obligations are resolved, allowing you to move forward unburdened. It's time to leave behind old challenges and embrace new opportunities, setting the stage for a clean slate. The conflicts that once tested your resolve are now behind you, paving the way for a phase of accomplishment. There's potential for your dedication and effort to be acknowledged and celebrated. Take this as a confirmation that you're on the correct path. Move forward with optimism and assurance, as the achievements you've worked towards are within reach and your contributions are likely to be acknowledged widely.

Lucky number 13 | Lucky colour Brown
Lucky day Tuesday



GEMINI May 21-June 20

This week, you may find yourself filled with ambitious desires ranging from achieving financial stability, enjoying a harmonious home life, to seeing your family thrive. The urge to realize these goals swiftly could lead you to momentarily overlook other important duties. It's crucial to strike a balance in your endeavors to turn your aspirations into reality. Taking a pragmatic approach and focusing on practical steps rather than getting lost in daydreams will serve you well. As the week progresses, expect opportunities that could enhance your financial standing, such as making valuable connections, discovering new projects, or stumbling upon potential job offers. By the week's end, you might experience a sense of self-sacrifice, prioritizing the needs and ambitions of others above your own.

Lucky number 19 | Lucky colour Scarlet
Lucky day Sunday



LIBRA Sep 23-Oct 22

This week holds the promise of many positive developments in your life. You are in a robust state, both in terms of health and financial stability. At work, you've reached a level of expertise where you're applying your accumulated knowledge effectively in practical scenarios. Your superiors have taken note of your skills and are entrusting you with significant projects that will further hone your abilities. Your determination is at its peak, empowering you to tackle challenging tasks successfully. It's also a favorable period for strengthening bonds with friends, as your confidence and decisiveness remove any room for doubt. Additionally, your dedication and resilience are setting a powerful example for your children, inspiring them to admire and emulate your qualities. You're poised to be an influential figure for both your peers and family this week.

Lucky number 6 | Lucky colour Peach
Lucky day Monday



AQUARIUS Jan 20-Feb 18

You possess a natural charisma and an ability to persuade others with your eloquent communication. Your insight and self-assurance are tools you effectively utilize for constructive purposes. This is the moment to translate your aspirations into tangible goals, and thoughts into definitive actions. If setbacks have recently occurred, you now have the opportunity to transform these experiences into triumphs. Unexpected opportunities for new beginnings might arise, such as the development of a new friendship, welcoming a child, or finding deeper joy and fulfillment in an existing relationship. Your kind and empathetic nature often seeks harmony. Though occasionally you might find yourself feeling variable due to your deep connection with the emotional and spiritual realms, your perceptive abilities allow you to understand the core of any matter clearly.

Lucky number 8 | Lucky colour Sky Blue
Lucky day Wednesday



CANCER June 21-July 22

This week, you may find yourself increasingly drawn to deepening personal connections, whether that's cultivating a new relationship or strengthening an existing one. Trusting your intuition is crucial now, as it guides you to align more closely with your true self. The theme of unconditional love is prominent, suggesting significant moments such as forming new bonds, engagements, or celebrating unions might be particularly meaningful during this period. Engaging in activities that challenge you physically or mentally could also be appealing, allowing you to test and surpass your previous limits. However, you might also encounter some disagreements or competitive scenarios that could disrupt your peace. It's important to seek common ground and foster a sense of balance in interactions, striving for mutual understanding and compromise to mitigate any extremes.

Lucky number 12 | Lucky colour Silver
Lucky day Monday



SCORPIO Oct 23-Nov 21

This week finds you feeling fulfilled and content, both emotionally and financially. You naturally excel in roles that involve offering support and healing, always ready to lend a sympathetic ear or a helping hand. Your innate purity and appealing essence draw people to you effortlessly. You possess a remarkable ability to understand the motivations and behaviors of those around you. Plans may materialize to pass on your accumulated wealth, which could include tangible assets or invaluable wisdom that impacts lives more profoundly than mere financial wealth. As the week concludes, you'll find joy in the deepening of personal connections, witnessing the blossoming and stabilization of significant relationships, celebrating the joyous union of kindred spirits.

Lucky number 18 | Lucky colour Mint
Lucky day Friday



PISCES Feb 19-March 20

This week, those of you who are adept at strategic planning may find yourselves navigating opportunities for financial gain. These could arise from diligent efforts or unexpected sources like inheritances. Remember, this period isn't about emotional rewards but managing material assets wisely. Without careful handling, there's a risk of either squandering resources or becoming overly cautious to the point of hoarding, which could lead to frustration and disappointment. It's crucial to harness your innate ability to transform and manifest your desires. Strive to find a balance between potential and actual creation. Additionally, this is an excellent time to focus inward, utilizing your abilities to enrich and transform your personal growth and self-realization.

Lucky number 2 | Lucky colour Dark Pink
Lucky day Friday

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THOUGHTFUL INSIGHTS



Ananda Tirtha Dasa

Meditation, for instance, has emerged as the foundation of tech-driven spirituality, with tools like AI-powered 'gurus'

The journey toward spiritual awakening is quietly evolving. Traditional practices like meditation, once rooted in serene retreats and ancient texts, are now finding a new home in the digital age. Modern technology has enabled centuries-old traditions to be reimagined for a generation often weighed down by disconnection and overwhelm.

Smartphones, often seen as drivers of distraction, are being redefined as tools for self-discovery. From guided meditations to mindfulness reminders, technology is making it easier to pause and find moments of calm in our hectic lives. Yet, this intersection of the digital and meditative invites reflection: can technology truly deepen our connection to meditation, or does it risk reducing it to surface-level routines?

Meditation, for instance, has emerged as the foundation of tech-driven spirituality, with tools like AI-powered 'gurus' and wearable biofeedback devices that transform the practice into a measurable and personalized experience.

At its heart, meditation is a timeless practice of reconnecting with ourselves and the Divine within us. It's about stripping away the filters that color our perception of reality, much like removing tinted glasses to see the world as it truly is. In an age where noise and distraction often dominate, meditation offers much-needed clarity.

It helps us refocus on what truly matters, allowing the mind to settle and rediscover

its innate peace. Technology often serves as a natural entry point to this process for younger generations, especially those immersed in the digital landscape.

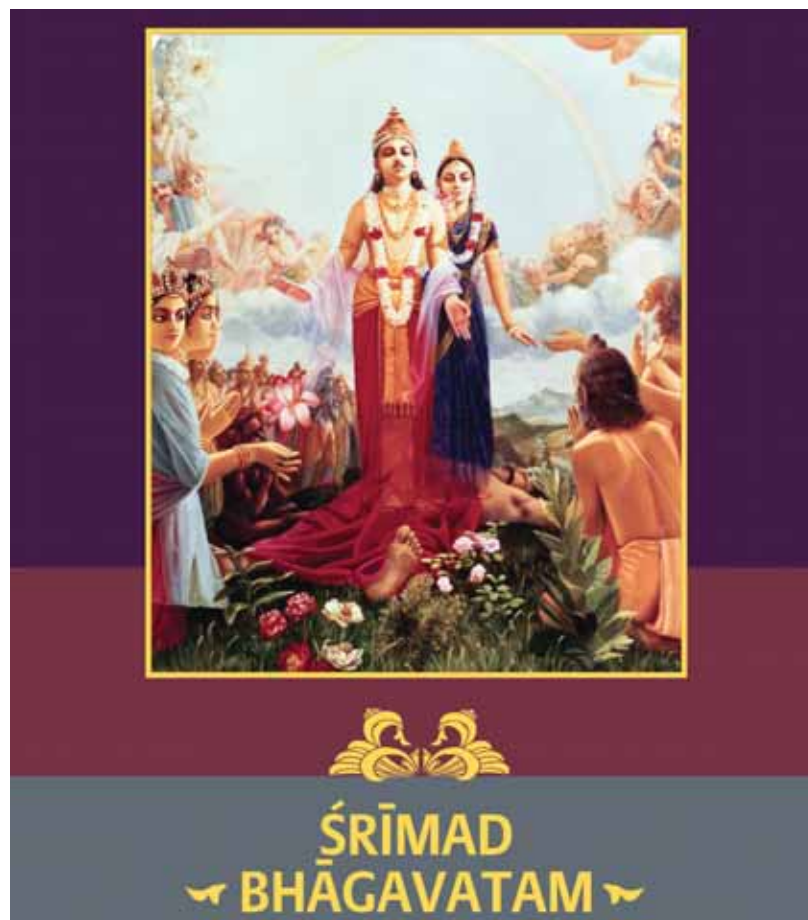
Apps and guided meditations allow people to begin exploring practices that might otherwise feel intimidating. But the journey doesn't end there. When understood, meditation invites us to go beyond momentary calm and explore the essence of who we are.

This deeper potential is echoed in the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita, where Arjuna compares controlling the mind to controlling the wind, an effort that requires incredible strength, patience, and grace. To navigate this challenge, Vedic scriptures recommend mantra meditation, especially chanting the Hare Krishna Maha Mantra, as a powerful method to calm our restless minds and connect with the Divine, transcending the temporary worries of life.

Another compelling example is Dhruva Maharaj, a young prince who, after facing rejection from his stepmother and fueled by ambition for power, initially sought a greater kingdom.

However, guided by his mother, he turned to Lord Narayana within his heart and practiced deep meditation. With his sincere devotion and focus, Dhruva met the Divine, and his worldly desires faded away. What once seemed important (power and revenge) lost its value and felt trivial, like broken pieces of glass. Instead, he discov-

Can SpiriTech Redefine Meditation to the Next Gen?



ered the priceless diamond of divine grace and enlightenment - a clear understanding of true fulfillment found in service and devotion.

Dhruva's journey shows that meditation can lead to significant personal transformation, which can heal our pain, shift our priorities, and help us find fulfillment that surpasses any material goals. The blending of tradition with today's technology that allows us to achieve this, or 'SpiriTech' as we can call it, is not about replacing ancient wisdom with gadgets.

Instead, it's about creating a partnership. Technology offers access and immediacy, while traditions bring depth and meaning. Together, they offer a new pathway that feels relevant yet remains deeply rooted in timeless truths. While technology cannot replicate the profound depth of traditional practices, it can act as a guide. SpiriTech provides an opportunity to pause and reconnect in a world of distractions.

Ultimately, the tools are just that - tools. The real journey is within. And for those willing to take that journey, the rewards are immeasurable.

Ultimately, the tools are just that - tools. The real journey is within. And for those willing to take that journey, the rewards are immeasurable. Embrace the ease technology offers, but remember the essence lies in inner stillness.

The author is the Trustee of ISKCON & CEO of Bhaktivedanta Book Trust