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Uttarakhand avalanche: 32 rescued amid bad weather

Sanjay Kumar Dehradun, Feb 28: Uttarakhand avalanche: The army and the authorities in Uttarakhand's Chamoli on Friday rescued 32 of the 57 Border



Roads Organisation (BRO) workers who were trapped under snow after an avalanche hit the high-altitude village of Mana. The rescue and relief operations were impeded by inclement weather. The avalanche buried a camp of the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) between Mana and Badrinath. 57 people were buried under the snow; 32 have been rescued so far. Mana is situated three kilometres from Badrinath, a key religious tourism spot. It is the

last village on the India-Tibet border at a height of 3,200 meters. After the avalanche, the road leading to the accident site was blocked due to snow and rain. Multiple teams of rescuers battled tough terrain, heavy snow and rain to reach the trapped workers. The rescue operations were halted due to bad weather and the impending danger of more avalanches, reported PTI, citing sources. It will restart when the weather improves, they added. After the avalanche hit the camp, two mild avalanches hit the area after which the rescue operation was deferred. The site where the accident took place is vulnerable to avalanches during winter. The head of Mana village told PTI that in the past, this camp used to get shifted to Badrinath during winter. The camp was not shifted this time due to scant snowfall. Uttarakhand CM Pushkar Singh Dhami said helicopters could not be pressed into the rescue operation because of bad weather. "Rescue mission is underway.

Modi, Von der Leyen set target for concluding India-EU FTA within 2025

Simmi Kaur Babbar New Delhi, Feb 28: Prime Minister Narendra

Modi and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen on Friday threw their weight behind the ambitious goal of finalising an India-EU free trade agreement (FTA) within the year, against the backdrop of economic churn due to the trade policies of the Donald Trump administration. The two leaders unveiled other measures to intensify cooperation between India and the European Union (EU), ranging from a proposed security and defence partnership and a new space dialogue to closer collaboration on artificial intelligence (AI) and the interoperability of digital public infrastructure. Von der Leyen is in India with 22 members of the 27-strong EU College of Commissioners for the first such visit to a non-European nation since she got a fresh mandate last year, reflecting the desire in Brussels to substantially upgrade ties with New Delhi. She arrived in India hours after US President Donald Trump said he would hit goods made in the EU with 25% tariffs, exacerbating European concerns about Washington's unpredictable trade policies. "We have directed our teams

to conclude a mutually beneficial bilateral free trade agreement by the end of this year," Modi told a joint media interaction with Von der Leyen, speaking in



Hindi. Von der Leyen acknowledged the difficulties associated with finalising the trade deal, negotiations for which began in 2007, were suspended in 2013, and then revived in 2022. The two sides will hold the tenth round of talks in Brussels during March 10-14. She said the two leaders tasked their teams to build

on the momentum in economic ties - two-way trade in goods was worth 120 billion in 2024 - and "finalise our free trade agreement before the end of this year". She added: "We are expecting a lot of our trade negotiators, we told them they should surprise us. Now more than ever, the geopolitical context asks for decisive action." Modi said a bilateral blueprint had been prepared for collaborating in trade, investment, technology, green growth, security and mobility of professionals, and the two sides are moving forward on investment protection and geographical indication (GI) agreements. "We have agreed on increasing cooperation in semiconductors, AI, high performance computing and 6G. We have also decided to initiate a space dialogue," he said. The two sides will conduct joint research on EV batteries and green hydrogen, and take concrete steps to drive the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) so that it serves as an "engine of global commerce, sustainable growth and prosperity", he said. While delivering a speech before her talks with Modi, Von der Leyen said the two sides are exploring a security and defence partnership to jointly counter common threats such as cross-border terrorism, cyber-attacks and attacks on critical infrastructure.

Pushback from South on Hindi, delimitation grows

New Delhi, Feb 28: Karnataka chief minister Siddaramaiah on Thursday added to the growing clamour around the impending delimitation of Lok Sabha seats while his Tamil Nadu counterpart MK Stalin upped the ante over the emotive issue of Hindi language, fuelling the controversy on two contentious issues that have the potential to widen the chasm between India's northern and southern regions. In a series of posts in Kannada, Siddaramaiah hit back at Union home minister Amit Shah, who had dismissed the row a day ago and said no southern province will suffer a reduction in their parliamentary representation. "The Union home minister Amit Shah's statement that he will not allow injustice to be done to the southern states during the delimitation of constituencies is not credible. It is tainted with malicious intent to create confusion in the southern states," he said on X. His strong comments came just hours after Tamil Nadu chief minister Stalin fired a salvo at the Centre, saying the southern state will not allow the "imposition" of the Hindi language and vowed to protect Tamil and its culture. "We will oppose Hindi imposition. Hindi is the mask, Sanskrit is the hidden face," he said in a series of posts that appeared to refer to a 2017 article on the connection between Hindi and many northern Indian dialects published in Mint newspaper.

Atishi to Delhi assembly speaker on suspension of 21 AAP MLAs

Navdeep Singh Sahni New Delhi, Feb 28: Delhi assembly

leader of opposition Atishi on Friday wrote to speaker Vijender Gupta, calling the suspension of 21 Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) MLAs an "injustice to opposition". New Delhi, India - Feb. 27, 2025: LoP in Delhi Assembly Atishi along with AAP MLAs stages a protest outside the Legislative Assembly after not being allowed to enter the Assembly in New Delhi. "I am writing this letter with great pain and sorrow. The biggest strength of democracy is its fairness and equality. But whatever happened in the Delhi Assembly in the past few days is not only an injustice to the opposition MLAs but also a severe blow to democratic values," ANI quoted Atishi's letter. She further alleged that "no action" was taken against any MLA from the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). "On 25 February 2025, during the address of Lt Governor, MLAs of the ruling

party raised slogans of 'Modi-Modi,' while the opposition MLAs raised slogans of 'Jai Bhim,' respecting the views of Baba Saheb



Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar. It is very unfortunate that no action was taken against any MLA of the ruling party, but 21 MLAs of the opposition were suspended from the House for 3 days for raising the slogan 'Jai Bhim,'" the former Delhi chief minister claimed. Atishi further said that the "injustice did not

stop" here, adding, "Yesterday when the suspended MLAs were going to protest peacefully in front of the statue of Gandhiji present in the assembly premises in a democratic way, they were stopped 200 meters before the gate of the assembly and were prevented from entering the assembly premises." Atishi said that this is an "insult" not only to the MLAs but also to the mandate given by the people. "You are the guardian of this assembly. It is the duty of the guardian to do equal justice to all the MLAs, whether they are from the ruling party or the opposition. I urge you to protect the democratic values and ensure that no MLA is deprived of his constitutional rights," she added. On Tuesday, 21 AAP MLAs, including Atishi, were suspended for disrupting LG's inaugural address by raising slogans against the alleged removal of portraits of B R Ambedkar and Bhagat Singh from Chief Minister Rekha Gupta's office in the assembly.

Prashant Kishor's swipe at Nitish Kumar ahead of Bihar elections

ST Correspondent New Delhi, Feb 28: Kishor, counting on his party, Jan

Suraaj, to leave a mark in the elections, also revealed plans for a rally in April ahead of upcoming polls later this year. Political strategist-turned-activist Prashant Kishor on Thursday predicted that Bihar chief minister Nitish Kumar's Janata Dal (United) would fail to secure even a single seat in the upcoming elections, saying that veteran leader is "physically tired and mentally retired." Prashant Kishor criticised Nitish Kumar's ability to retain power despite shifting political alliances Prashant Kishor criticised Nitish Kumar's ability to retain power despite shifting political alliances. The remark comes in the lead-up to the highly anticipated Bihar assembly elections set for later



this year. Prashant Kishor's Jan Suraaj Party is also likely to contest for the first time in these polls. Kishor, banking on Jan Suraaj Party to make a significant impact in the polls, also announced plans for a rally in April, claiming it would "break all records in terms of turnout," news agency PTI reported. Speaking to reporters in Patna, he criticised Nitish Kumar's ability to retain power despite shifting political alliances, saying, "Nitish Kumar has managed to hold on to the seat of power while switching alliances. This enables him to be the CM even if the JD(U) has a small number of seats." Nitish Kumar parted ways with the BJP in 2013, only to return four years later after briefly aligning with the RJD from 2015 to 2017. In 2022, he once again switched sides to join the RJD-led Mahagathbandhan but returned to the NDA last year. Kishor, criticising Nitish's frequent political shifts, urged voters to put an end to the cycle. "To break this cycle, and to ensure that the arrow (JD(U)'s poll symbol) does not float with the lotus (BJP) nor burn bright with the lantern (RJD), I appeal to the people that they vote in a manner that the JD(U) does not win even one seat. Only then would we get rid of the chief minister who is physically tired and mentally retired," he said. The former JD(U) national vice president also accused the BJP of "enjoying power while using Nitish Kumar as a mask" and alleged that Wednesday's cabinet expansion, just six months before the elections, was driven by the intention of "loot of public money and assuaging some estranged castes.

India criticises secrecy in UNSC listing rejections, calls it a 'disguised veto'

Tejinder Kaur Babbar New Delhi, Feb 28: India's UN envoy

P Harish, at a debate on working methods, stressed the urgent need for reform in the 15-member UNSC and its functioning on Thursday. Underlining the need for more transparency in workings of the UN Security Council's subsidiary bodies, India said details about rejecting or putting on hold requests to blacklist terror entities are not made public and are the exclusive preserve of a select few, calling it a "disguised veto". Highlighting specific areas regarding the Council's working methods that call for urgent reforms, India's Permanent Representative at the UN, Ambassador P. Harish, said there needs to be more transparency in the workings of the subsidiary bodies of the UNSC. India's Permanent Representative at the UN Ambassador P. Harish spoke at the Inter-Governmental Negotiations Plenary - Cluster Debate on Working Methods here Thursday and under-

scored the need for urgent reform of the 15-nation Security Council and its working methods - from more transparency in the working of the subsidiary bodies to implementation of peace-keeping mandates. "The demand in this Chamber for reforms is loud and clear. This call gains greater significance at a time when the world is expressing apprehensions at the ability of the United Nations to deliver, to meaningfully intervene on issues of key importance to humanity in different parts of the globe, particularly in the realm of peace and security - which remains the core mandate of the Council," Harish said. Highlighting specific areas with regard to working methods for the Council that call for urgent reforms, Harish said there needs to be more transparency in the working of the subsidiary bodies of the Council. Citing a specific example, he said, "While decisions on listing are made public,

details pertaining to rejection or putting on technical hold of listing requests are the exclusive preserve of a select few.



This is indeed a disguised veto." India has repeatedly voiced concern over the manner in which the Council's subsidiary bodies such as the 1267 Al Qaida Sanctions Committee operate while dealing with requests to blacklist terror enti-

ties and individuals. Delhi has drawn the attention of the world body to the fact that genuine, evidence-based listing proposals for globally sanctioned terrorists are blocked without giving any due justification, saying this is uncalled for and smacks of double speak when it comes to the Council's commitment in tackling the challenge of terrorism. On various occasions in the past, the Council's veto-wielding member China, an all-weather friend of Pakistan, has placed holds and blocks on bids by India to list Pakistan-based terrorists. India lamented that while an overwhelming number of Member States acknowledge that reforms are indeed an imperative, there has been practically no progress along this direction. "We have had numerous discussions and debates. We speak passionately but we continue to be where we are," the Indian envoy said.

BJP's Suvendu Adhikari accuses TMC govt of manipulating voters' list in WB

Naresh Malhotra Kolkata, Feb 28: The Trinamool

Congress (TMC) government in West Bengal has enrolled thousands of infiltrators from Bangladesh and Myanmar as voters, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Suvendu Adhikari alleged on Friday. This comes a day after chief minister Mamata Banerjee accused BJP of manipulating voters' lists in the districts with help from Election Commission of India (ECI) before the 2026 assembly polls. "Banerjee made baseless allegations and insulted Gyanesh Kumar, the new Chief Election Commissioner. I wrote to him today, urging action against her. We also sent a separate letter to Nirvachan Sadan, Delhi saying there are more than 73,00,000 fake voters in Bengal," Adhikari said after meeting officials at the EC's Kolkata office. "Shab Sheikh, a member of the Bangladeshhi terror outfit Ansarullah Bangla Team had a voter ID card issued in Bengal when Assam police arrested him from Murshidabad last year. He claimed to have cast his vote in two elec-

tions. This proves my point," he added. Addressing TMC workers in Kolkata on Thursday, Banerjee said that Gyanesh



Kumar was "handpicked as he served as principal secretary of the cooperation department under the (Union) home minister." Banerjee, without naming Amit Shah and Kumar in her speech, said, "An agency has done the manipulations online. It is

called Association of Brilliant Minds and there is another agency called India 360. Their people have contacted data entry operators who work for ECI. They have enrolled people from other states against the voter card details of local residents." Adhikari hit back saying, "No agency has sent people to Bengal. The chief minister made wild allegations." TMC state vice-president Jay Prakash Majumdar said Adhikari's allegations have put his own party in the crosshairs. "By claiming that thousands of Bangladeshis and Rohingyas from Myanmar have infiltrated into Bengal, Adhikari has raised questions on the role of the Border Security Force (BSF) that is controlled by the Centre," said Majumdar. Majumdar added, "Also, enrolling voters is the job of the ECI. If two people are being enrolled against the same voter ID number then the role of ECI should come under scanner. This online enrolment is part of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Digital India project."

Rahul Gandhi asks PM Modi to fill NCSC vacancies urgently

New Delhi, Feb 28: Rahul Gandhi

demanding that NCSC vacancies are filled urgently so that the commission can continue protecting the interests of Dalits. Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Friday accused the Narendra Modi-led NDA government in the Centre of undermining the rights of Dalits by leaving job posts vacant in the National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC). In a critique of the government, the Congress leader posted on social media to express his concerns about the failure to fill the ongoing vacancies, calling it a clear reflection of the BJP's

"anti-Dalit mindset." Congress MP Rahul Gandhi demanded that these vacancies be filled urgently so that the commission can continue protecting the interests of Dalits. "Look at another proof of the anti-Dalit mindset of the BJP government! The National Commission for Scheduled Castes, which protects the rights of Dalits, has been deliberately neglected - two of its key posts have been lying vacant for the last year," Gandhi said in a post in Hindi on X. The commission is a constitutional institution and weakening it is a direct attack on the constitutional and social rights of Dalits, he added. "This commission is a constitutional institution - weakening it is a direct attack on the constitutional and social rights of Dalits. If not the commission, then who will listen to the voice of Dalits in the government? Who will take action on their complaints?" Gandhi asked. The National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC), which plays a pivotal role in safeguarding the social, educational, and economic rights of Scheduled Castes, is currently headed by Kishor Makwana.



NEWS BOX

Seven held in Bengaluru for murder of rowdy-sheeter

BENGALURU. Seven people, including two rowdy-sheeters, were arrested for the brutal murder of 38-year-old rowdy-sheeter Hyder Ali early on Sunday near Garuda Mall, in the Ashoknagar police station limits. An old rivalry is being cited as the reason for the murder.

The arrested have been identified as Nayyaz Pasha alias Naju, who has eight cases against him in Ashoknagar police station; Darshan, Raheed, and Waseem, all residents of Bengaluru; Rizwan, a rowdy-sheeter from Shivamogga; and Mateen and Saddam, also from Shivamogga.

According to the preliminary investigation, Pasha, the prime accused in the case, hatched a plot with his gang to kill Ali. There had been a long-standing enmity between Pasha and Ali, with both making multiple attempts to kill each other over the years. The investigation also revealed that both had been attacked twice by rival gangs in the past.

Around 1.30 am on February 24, Pasha, along with his gang, executed their plan. They divided themselves into two groups, one which tracked Ali's movements and the other which waited near the football stadium. As Ali was heading home with a friend after a party at a pub on Church Street, a few bikers followed him.

As he neared Garuda Mall, a car intercepted his bike, and the gang pounced on him. They first stabbed him and then brutally assaulted him with lethal weapons, the police said, adding that a special team was formed under the Cubbon Park Sub-Division Assistant Commissioner of Police to investigate the case. The police further said that four accused were detained on Tuesday and questioned, leading to the arrest of three more suspects.

Make family courts child-friendly, says child rights panel

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM. Family courts should be made 'child-friendly' taking into account the huge physical, mental and emotional stress that children accompanying their parents undergo during the hearing of divorce petitions, the state child rights commission has recommended. The recommendation forms part of a study undertaken by the commission on the problems faced by children of couples undergoing divorce proceedings and the condition of family courts in the state. The study analysed in detail the condition of 120 children between the age of six and 18 whose parents are involved in divorce proceedings in the 35 family courts across the state.

The study report was submitted to Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan by commission chairperson K V Manojkumar on Thursday. "While deciding on the custody and protection of children, arguments between parents in front of them put the children under a lot of mental stress. The setting up of child-friendly family courts can address this problem to a large extent," the report suggested.

The report has also proposed collection of a specific amount from both parents (petitioners and respondents) for creation of a welfare fund to be utilised for the health, education and other needs of children during the course of hearing of the divorce petition. The District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) should be empowered to utilise the funds for the children's welfare. Such an arrangement assumes special significance in the case of children who face physical or mental challenges.

Lingaraj mishap: Questions raised on use of excess ghee

BHUBANESWAR. Even as the Lingaraj temple administration has decided to examine the circumstances that led to the accidental fall of a servitor while carrying the Mahadeepa atop the shrine during Maha Shivaratri, the Samartha Nijog on Thursday alleged that excess ghee in the ceremonial lamp was the reason behind it.

The seriously injured servitor Yogendra Samarth, in his mid-50s, is under treatment. Yogendra, who has been changing flags and lifting Mahadeepa atop the Lingaraj temple since the last three decades, fell down while climbing the shrine with the holy lamp on Wednesday.

Before carrying the Mahadeepa, he had climbed atop the temple twice to fix the flag during Sabana Mela darshan. This is for the first time such an accident took place during Maha Shivaratri celebration at the 11th century temple.

As per the temple rules, it is the temple administration that provides 200 to 250 ml ghee for the Mahadeepa which is prepared by a Mekap sevayat. Instead of using the amount provided by the temple administration, the sevayat concerned added more ghee donated by servitors as an offering for wish fulfilment.

"In the past, Yogendra had sustained severe burn injuries from the hot ghee flowing down the Mahadeepa. We have been requesting the servitors concerned to use only the amount of ghee given by the temple administration but in vain. Yesterday too, Yogendra said that his hand slipped because of ghee," said secretary of Samartha Nijog Prashant Samarth.

He added that the government should think of providing health insurance to servitors who take up sevas of Lord Lingaraj that are risky in nature. The Mekap servitors, however, refuted the allegation.

Suchitwa Mission promotes green protocol for Attukal Pongala

Devotees participating in pongala are encouraged to avoid plastic completely and carry steel plates, glass bottles and cloth bags for carrying things.

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM. In a first-of-its-kind initiative to promote green protocol during Attukal pongala, which is slated to be held on March 13, the Suchitwa Mission and the district administration has jointly launched intensive door-to-door campaign - 'suchitwa pongala, punya pongala' - in the district. The campaign has been launched to sensitise the public on eco-friendly ways to reduce waste generation during pongala, focusing on promoting green protocol for waste management during the festival, which is attended by lakhs of devotees.

Haritha Karma Sena members have been roped in for household-level awareness drives. An official of the District Suchitwa Mission said that the Haritha Karma Sena members are not only educating the public on waste generation and disposal but also informing the citizens on the green guidelines to be followed while offering pongala. The mass campaign is underway across all 73 panchayats,



municipalities and corporation in the district. Devotees participating in pongala are encouraged to avoid plastic completely and carry steel plates, glass bottles and cloth bags for carrying things. "The entire district will be monitored by Haritha Karma Sena members and they are already on the field for waste collection. They are going from house to house and sensitising the public that, if any non-biodegradable waste is generated, it

should be responsibly handled. Instead of discarding it carelessly, it should be handed over to Haritha Karma Sena members," the official added.

Besides this, other voluntary organisations and groups distributing food and water to the devotees during the festival should also adhere to the green protocol. In a first, the Suchitwa Mission has also launched a special awareness campaign at all major temples in the district. "We have already spoken to the authorities of many temples to help sensitise the devotees. People from across the district will gather to offer pongala and such awareness will help a lot. Also, they can follow these protocols during temple events," the official added. The official said that directions have been given to all district offices under Suchitwa Mission to launch similar campaigns across the state. The Suchitwa Mission is also planning to document the campaign.

Despite residents' opposition, Chennai corporation to go ahead with Kodungaiyur incinerator plant

Around 6,150 tonnes of solid waste is being collected by the Greater Chennai Corporation from Zone 1 to 15.

CHENNAI. Despite opposition from Kodungaiyur residents, the corporation on Thursday adopted a resolution at the council meeting to implement the waste-to-energy incinerator plant in the area.

The project will cover an integrated waste processing facility at Kodungaiyur including the waste to energy incinerator, material recovery facility, Bio-CNG plant, and composting centre and carried out in a DBFOT model.

Around 6,150 tonnes of solid waste is being collected by the Greater Chennai Corporation from Zone 1 to 15. When 90% waste is segregated and sent for recycling at various solid waste processing facilities in Chennai, the other non-segregated waste is being transported to



the landfill. The GCC plans to use these non-recyclable and burnable waste for processing of waste to energy plants that turns waste into usable energy, such as heat or electricity. G

Sundarrajan from Poovulagin Nanbargal said, "The GCC's move to install an incinerator despite the opposition is unfair and undemocratic. North Chennai is already polluted and this move will cause significant health issues to the public." During the council meeting, A Theerthy, Ward 22 councillor, also raised safety concerns for the employees at the GCC's Bio-CNG plant at Manali where an employee died in a fire. In response, GCC Commissioner J Kumaragurubaran said the corporation has set up a consultant to inspect and submit a report in a week.

The GCC also adopted a resolution to shut down around 168 micro composting centres and 137 material recovery facilities.

KIIT assures students' safety on campus following death of Nepali girl

BHUBANESWAR. The KIIT University on Thursday said it has initiated a series of measures for students' safety and to ensure that academic activities are not hampered owing to the Nepalese student death and unrest in its wake. University officials have reiterated their focus on student safety, institutional stability, and academic continuity. "We remain committed to ensuring a safe and uninterrupted learning environment for all students," a university spokesperson said.

While initial concerns were raised regarding the impact of the recent incidents, the university administration stated that classes, research, and institutional activities remain on track. The situation on campus is stable with students



attending their courses and ongoing academic sessions continuing as scheduled, the spokesperson said. In the last 10 days, several national and international events have been hosted at KIIT. These include the

East Zone Inter-University Cricket championship, which saw participation from 70 universities and 1,600 players and officials. Two international academic conferences - the 2nd international workshop on dam safety and the international conference on recent advances in nanomedicine - brought together over 500 delegates each, including researchers, academicians, and industry experts.

KIIT also welcomed more than 60 international academic leaders over a 10-day period, including delegations from Harvard University, Japan, and other institutions, who participated in interactions with students and faculty.

This apart, the university also hosted the Association of Indian Universities' Central Zone Vice-Chancellors' meet, officials said.

Water tanker demand in Hyderabad rises 60 per cent as summer begins early

According to official sources, the Water Board supplies around 545 million gallons of water (MGD) per day with additional water sourced from groundwater reserves.

HYDERABAD. With temperatures soaring earlier than expected this year (February, 2025), the demand for water tankers in Hyderabad has already increased by 60% compared to February 2024. As groundwater is depleting, officials anticipate a further surge in demand during the peak summer season from March to May.

From February 1 to 24, over 1.44 lakh water tankers were booked through Metro Customer Care (MCC), HMWSSB mobile app, IVRS (customer care) and other platforms, compared to 87,700 during the same period last year. The highest number of tanker bookings comes from areas under HMWSSB divisions like Manikonda, Durgam Cheruvu, Kukatpally, S R Nagar, Nizampet, Hafeezpet, Saheb Nagar and others.

According to official sources, the Water Board supplies around 545 million gallons of water (MGD) per day with additional water sourced from groundwater reserves. Water consumption usually rises by about 15%

during summer. However, authorities assure that there is no water shortage in Hyderabad as major reservoirs — Osmansagar, Himayatsagar, Manjira, Singur, Krishna and Godavari — have adequate water storage. Further, the



Water Board has taken necessary steps to ensure uninterrupted supply of water. For this summer, HMWSSB will continue to provide 545 MGD upto ORR. However, certain areas experiencing significant groundwater depletion — Asifnagar, Shaikpet (Division-3), Banjara Hills, Jubilee Hills, SR Nagar, Fatch Nagar, Erragadda (Division-6),

Moosapet, Bhagyanagar, Kukatpally, Hasmathpet (Division-9), Madhapur, Kondapur, Gachibowli, Ayyappa Society (Division-15), Hyderabad, Budwel, Attapur (Division-16), Miyapur, Chandanagar (Division-17), and Manikonda, Kismathpur, Jalpally (Division-18) — are being closely monitored.

To prevent any disruptions in supply, HMWSSB has ramped up its tanker services by deploying additional staff at filling stations, ensuring uninterrupted pumping operations, reducing turnaround time and increasing the number of tanker trips as needed.

There are more than 966 registered tankers under HMWSSB, with the majority having a 5,000 litres capacity followed by 10,000 litres and above. The board has more tankers at its disposal this year compared to last summer, ensuring that most requests are fulfilled within the Service Level Agreement (SLA) timeframe.

India's largest cargo terminal opens at KIA

Historically, we have less than 20 domestic freighter cargo aircraft in India today which is shockingly low, considering how big the country is and the air cargo market is.

BENGALURU. India's largest domestic cargo terminal has been launched recently at the Kempegowda International Airport by its operator Bangalore International Airport Limited (BIAL) along with air cargo major Menzies Aviation.

"This is the largest Greenfield Domestic Cargo Terminal (DCT) in terms of designed capacity. This 2,45,000 square feet state-of-the-art facility signifies a major milestone in the airport's cargo handling capabilities by offering enhanced infrastructure and streamlined processes to meet the growing demands of the domestic market," said an official release.

Spanning over 7 acres, the DCT features a peak

handling capacity of approximately 360,000 metric tonnes, with a potential to expand to 400,000 metric tonnes. "With around 42 truck docks, more than 400 specially designed cargo bins, conveyors aligned with X-ray machines, approximately 30 build-up and breakdown stations, along with real-time data capture using 40 handheld terminals and self-service kiosks for agents, the facility will ensure seamless cargo movement while reducing turnaround times," it said.

Briefing the media, Satyaki Raghunath, Chief Operating Officer, BIAL said, "This is a dedicated domestic cargo facility which is why it is so unique. Air cargo from a



domestic perspective has become very important. Historically, we have less than 20 domestic freighter cargo aircraft in India today which is shockingly low, considering how big the country is and the air cargo market is. There is potential.

Builders use 'black magic' to stall BBMP action

Residents claim that builders who constructed illegal six-storey structures with over 40 tenements without approvals, are responsible for the act.

BENGALURU. In a shocking incident, three bamboo trees were cut in Basavanapura, KR Puram, allegedly as part of a tantrik ritual aimed at obstructing BBMP action against unauthorised constructions.

According to residents, builders who received notices from the (BBMP) resorted to occult practices in an attempt to counter complaints against them. Silver and copper foil sheets with engraved notes were wrapped around the base of a tree, before they were chopped from the middle.

Residents claim that builders who constructed illegal six-storey structures with over 40 tenements without approvals, are responsible for the act. "In August 2024, 19 buildings in KR Puram sub-division received demolition notices under Section 356 of BBMP Act.

However, some engineers helped owners secure court stays, which were misused to complete and sell these under-construction flats. With mounting pressure from BBMP officials to take action, builders have resorted to superstitious methods like black magic, including chopping bamboo trees," alleged a Basavanapura resident. The matter was escalated to Mahadevapura BBMP Range Forest Officer Chidanand I.B, who confirmed that officials had inspected the site.

The thin silver and copper foil sheets contained inscriptions in Telugu stating, "The bamboo tree on the opposite side has to be cut." Additionally, the sheets bore names such as Reddamma, Jyothsna, Naidu and Devaprasad, along with some text in Urdu and Telugu.

"The work appears to have been done in Kalakada Mandala Pileru Assembly, Andhra Pradesh. Some names listed on the sheets belong to people residing in this area. It is now up to the BBMP to investigate and take action against those responsible," said a resident.

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Advocate Pooja Bhaskar Sharma

Premium homes without basics: Water supply inadequate, power infra crumbling in Gurgaon DLF 1, say residents

Gurgaon. As summer approaches, families living in DLF-1's bungalows, valued in crores, start filling up buckets of water. This exercise, an annual one, is done to ensure they don't run out even if supply takes a hit. Which it often does, they said. "There is severe water scarcity here in the summer. Many times, we pay private tankers to get water. They also charge higher prices because of high demand. The irony is that there is a shortage of water supply in the summer, and flooding during the monsoon. I don't understand why we need to fight for basic needs," Sangeeta Singh (42), a homemaker who lives in a three-storied house there.

Savita Choudhary, another resident of DLF-1, said, "Water is the major issue in our ward because there is a gap between demand and supply. Residents have to pay hefty charges to get supply from private tankers during peak summer months."

DLF-1 is part of ward 23, which also includes Sector 28, Chakkarpur village, Maruti Vihar and Saraswati Vihar. "Pipelines in DLF-1 were laid in the 1980s and are four inches wide. In other

areas, pipelines are six inches wide. With increasing population, demand is more. Water shortage is worse in E and A blocks. People end up using potable water for construction, which is a complete waste. There are no checks. And growing commercialisation of the residential area is further worsening the situation," said Dhruv Bansal (45) a jeweller who lives in an independent house in the area.

Bansal said power outages were also common because electricity infrastructure was outdated. "During summer, one transformer malfunctions every day because of overloading. Most of the people who live in this ward are among the highest taxpayers of Haryana. Still, there are no civic amenities here," he added. Residents said they hope the March 2 civic election will resolve some of their problems. "Water scarcity and power load problems are annual issues that last 2-3 months every time," said Harmohinder Kaur, another DLF-1 resident.

Asked about voters' concerns, Rama Rani Rathi, an independent candidate who is contesting from ward 23, said she will



push for digging up a reservoir to store rainwater. "The water distribution systems inside all the colonies in the ward and Chakkarpur have to be checked and upgraded to prevent leakage to ensure adequate and equitable supply of water to all residents. Underground water tanks have to be built in many areas. I was able to cut through the bureaucratic roadblocks and get Maruti Vihar and Saraswati Vihar connected to the master water pipeline and get a water tank constructed," Rathi, a former councillor, said. Traffic, all the way Residents of Sector 10A, Khandsa Road and Kadipur village live close to arterial roads of the city, but this

connectivity is a bane, instead of a boon, for them. Traffic, especially during the rush hours, makes it difficult for them to commute anywhere else to and from the city. "Sometimes, it takes me over half an hour to cover just 0.5 kilometres from Hero Honda Chowk to the Sector 10A market because of traffic jams," said Ramesh Kumar Sector 10A and the areas around it are part of ward 10. Rajesh Bansal, who has been living in the sector for years, said traffic volume rapidly increased after the Basai flyover was built and linked to the newly built Dwarka Expressway. "The stretch before Basai flyover, between Hero Honda Chowk and Umang Bhardwaj Chowk, is in a bad condition too. It is repaired, but it takes no time for potholes to return," he said. Sunil Choudhary, another resident, said people's demands from the next councillor were "basic". "Roads with no potholes. A drainage network that is adequate. Timely garbage collection and crackdown on illegal construction," he said, listing out residents' expectations.

BJP mayor candidate can't speak for herself, says Congress nominee in Gurgaon

Gurgaon: Congress mayoral candidate Seema Pahuja has labelled her BJP rival Rajrani Malhotra as a "dummy" candidate saying the latter remained silent throughout the manifesto release event on Wednesday, suggesting her limited role. During a public meeting in the city on Wednesday late evening, Pahuja, a two-time councillor, said the BJP put forward an "inexperienced and dummy candidate". "If the mayoral candidate isn't given a chance to speak, how will she manage the council? Only someone with experience and knowledge of the city's situation can run the council effectively. The BJP candidate lacks political experience

MCG ramps up checks, fines sanitation agencies for erratic waste pickup in Gurgaon

Gurgaon. As the city gears up for the Swachh Survekshan assessment, MCG has started conducting checks and imposing fines on sanitation contractors. This week, the civic body issued penalties totalling Rs 7.4 lakh to four sanitation firms operating in the city. The Swachh Survekshan survey will commence after the declaration of results of civic polls on March 12.

The fines were imposed after discovering piles of rubbish scattered in areas under these contractors' responsibility. Moreover, the inspection team found that workers employed by these agencies were

burning waste as a disposal method. "These agencies were penalised for three reasons: one is garbage was found dumped on the roadsides in their jurisdiction, sweeping was not done in their areas, and waste was set on fire. There is a provision of penalty in the agreement we signed with them, as per which we calculated the penalty amount. We will continue to hold these inspections, and if their work is found unsatisfactory, they will be penalised again," said an MCG official.

On Feb 17, the MCG imposed a penalty of Rs 1.12 lakh on a sanitation agency for

failing to maintain cleanliness in Zone 4. While the field assessment for the Swachh Survekshan rankings is scheduled between Feb 15 and March 31, the implementation of the model code of conduct in the city and other municipal corporations means the survey will commence after March 12.

The assessment team will visit various localities based on established criteria and collect public feedback. The city put up its worst show in the last Swachh Survekshan rankings released in Jan 2024. It finished 140 out of 446 cities, the lowest since the rankings were instituted in 2016.

Mother, girl (3) die in collision on KMP away in Gurgaon

Gurgaon. A 32-year-old homemaker and her three-year-old daughter died after a truck struck them on the KMP Expressway on Sunday morning. The woman's husband and elder daughter suffered grievous injuries in the accident, which occurred near Dhulawat village in Nuh. Rajesh Singh, who works with a private firm in Manesar, was headed for his hometown in UP's Firozabad with his family

when he stopped his motorcycle near Dhulawat village to answer nature's call. Bikes and two-wheelers are not allowed on the expressway, where vehicles hurtle down at 80-100kmph. Tragedy struck when Sumitra and her younger daughter Shivanya were returning to the parked bike to resume their journey. "A truck approaching from Panchgaon hit them before ramming into our parked motorcycle. My

wife and younger daughter suffered critical injuries to their head and died on the spot," Rajesh said in his complaint. Rajesh and their elder daughter Prachi (5) were taken to a nearby hospital by passersby. Doctors said their condition was stable. Sub-inspector Digvijay Singh of Sadar Tauru police station said the truck driver

abandoned the vehicle and fled after the accident. "We have seized the truck and are working to identify and apprehend the driver," he said. A case was filed

against the truck driver for causing death due to negligence

NAME CHANGE
I, HIRAMANI GUPTA, MOTHER OF ANGEL CHAUHAN, R/O, 70C, FIRST FLOOR, R. NO. 1 MAIN MARKET, GARHI, NEW DELHI-110065, DECLARE THAT I HAVE CHANGED MY MINOR DAUGHTER'S NAME TO ANGEL GUPTA FOR ALL FUTURE PURPOSE.

PUBLIC NOTICE
It is for general information that I, MOHD NIZAMUDDIN S/O MOHD SALEM R/O 525/5, CHHOTA BAZAR, SHAHDARA, NORTH EAST DELHI, DELHI-110032 declare that name of mine and my minor daughter have been wrongly written as NIZA-MUDDIN and ROZI in my minor daughter namely ROSY SHEIKH aged 12 year in her school record. The actual name of mine and my minor daughter are MOHD NIZAMUDDIN and ROSY SHEIKH, respectively which may be amended accordingly.

NAME CHANGE
I, GIRISH KUMAR GAUR S/O BHANU PRAKASH SHARMA R/O H. NO. 14984, STREET, ALBELBI NAGAR EXTENSION, SHAHDARA, EAST DELHI, DELHI-110032 HAVE CHANGED MY NAME GIRISH KUMAR GAUR TO GIRISH KUMAR FOR ALL FUTURE PURPOSES.

NAME CHANGE
I, MANGU KUMAR S/O MANOHAN SINGH R/O 336 A, Gali No. 12, Josthi Road, Karol Bagh, central Delhi-110005 have changed the name of my minor daughter from Pihu Saini to Mishka Saini for all future purposes

NAME CHANGE
I, PINKY MAYTI D/O Durga R/O VZ 530 F/F Nangal Raya Chawla Book Depot New Delhi - 110046 Have changed my name to Pinky Maty for all future purposes.

NAME CHANGE
I, PUSHKA KUMARI W/O SANTOSH KUMAR residing at POCKRT-A 645 PHASE-2 JJ COLONY MADANPUR KHADAR DELHI-110076 have changed my name to PUSHKA PRAJAPATI for all future purpose.

NAME CHANGE
I, A. JOTHISWARI Mother of J.C. 441878M Rank-SUB Name-S MANJANDAN presently residing at P.O. TELHI, SHOLAGIRI, KT-SR KRISHNAGIRI, TAMIL NADU-635117, have changed my name from A. JOTHISWARI to JOTHEESWARI SUBRAMANIAN for all future purposes vide Affidavit dated 28/02/2025 before Notary Public, Delhi.

NAME CHANGE
I, KULDEEP S/O MANGE RAM DANGI R/O HNO-3172, GALI NO-4, SAINIK COLONY, SECTOR-49, FARIDABAD-121001, HARYANA HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO KULDEEP DANGI FOR ALL FUTURE PURPOSE.

NAME CHANGE
I, J.C. 443012W Rank-NB/SUB Name-RAMANARAO PATNANA residing at 4-11, PATNANA STREET, NIVEGAM VILLAGE, KOTTURU-MANDALAM, DIST-SRIKAKULAM, ANDHRA PRADESH-524657 have changed my minor daughter's name from MONIKA PATNANA to PATNANA MOUNIKA for all future purposes vide Affidavit dated 28/02/2025 before Notary Public, Delhi.

NAME CHANGE
I, LAKSHMI PATNANA Wife of J.C. 443012W Rank-NB/SUB Name-RAMANARAO PATNANA residing at 4-11, PATNANA STREET, NIVEGAM VILLAGE, KOTTURU-MANDALAM, DIST-SRIKAKULAM, ANDHRA PRADESH-524657 have changed my name from PATNANA LAKSHMI for all future purposes vide Affidavit dated 28/02/2025 before Notary Public, Delhi.

NORTHERN RAILWAY TENDER NOTICE

Invitation of Tender through E-Tendering (E-Procurement Systems)

N.L.T. No.	116, 117, 118, 119, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128-
	2024-25-W4V

1. Name of work with its location			
116	Provision of Gang Rest shelters in the section of DEN-IV on DL-BTI section	Similar Nature of work:	Construction of building/Quarters
117	Raising of parapet wall and strengthening of approaches of bridge, providing inspection steps at bridges in the section of ADEN/ROK under DEN-IV.	Similar Nature of work:	Any Civil Work Other Than Track work
118	Raising of parapet wall and strengthening of approaches of bridge, providing inspection steps at bridges in the section of ADEN/JHL.	Similar Nature of work:	Any Civil Work Other Than Track work
119	Dewatering of section at various location between LC-12 and LC-18 in the section of ADEN/ROK under DEN-IV.	Similar Nature of work:	Any Civil Work Other Than Track work
121	Repairing of water pipe line at NRW, TUN, KZH under Jurisdiction of DEN-IV.	Similar Nature of work:	Any Civil Work Other Than Track work
122	Repair to Road surface, water arrangement and speed breakers at various level crossings in the section of ADEN/JHL under DEN-IV.	Similar Nature of work:	Any Civil Work Other Than Track work
123	Repair to Road surface, water arrangement and speed breakers at various level crossings in the section of ADEN/Jind under DEN-IV.	Similar Nature of work:	Any Civil Work Other Than Track work
124	Repair to structural members work of RCC structure of through the various process of chemical anchoring for cracks are worn out surface and treatment of all reinforcement with an anti carbonating coat protection and drilling hole in RC using rotating cutting tool up to a proficiency under ADEN/JHL.	Similar Nature of work:	Construction/repairs of Reinforced Cement Concrete over Head Tanks/RCC framed structure
125	Repair to structural members work of RCC structure of through the various process of chemical anchoring for cracks are worn out surface and treatment of all reinforcement with an anti carbonating coat protection and drilling hole in RC using rotating cutting tool up to a proficiency under ADEN/JHL.	Similar Nature of work:	Construction/repairs of Reinforced Cement Concrete over Head Tanks/RCC framed structure.
126	Repair to structural members work of RCC structure of through the various process of chemical anchoring for cracks are worn out surface and treatment of all reinforcement with an anti carbonating coat protection and drilling hole in RC using rotating cutting tool up to a proficiency under ADEN/ROK.	Similar Nature of work:	Construction/repairs of Reinforced Cement Concrete over Head Tanks/RCC framed structure.
127	Improvement in yard drainage by way of construction of precast drain etc. in the section ADEN/ROK.	Similar Nature of work:	Any Civil Work Other Than Track work
128	Raising of parapet wall and strengthening of approaches of bridge, providing inspection steps at bridges in the section of SSE/W/JHL.	Similar Nature of work:	Any Civil Work Other Than Track work

2. Approx. Cost of Work			
116	₹ 9,21,38,057.84	117	₹ 1,99,99,537.42
118	₹ 1,99,99,978.65	119	₹ 74,93,672.64
121	₹ 99,99,809.84	122	₹ 74,99,859.27
123	₹ 74,99,857.47	124	₹ 99,98,640.63
125	₹ 99,98,640.63	126	₹ 70,34,250.86
127	₹ 1,25,00,068.39	127	₹ 1,99,99,825.54
128	₹ 70,34,250.86		

3. Earnest Money Deposit			
116	₹ 9,21,38,057.84	117	₹ 2,50,000.00
118	₹ 1,99,990.00	121	₹ 2,50,000.00
122	₹ 1,50,000.00	124	₹ 2,00,000.00
125	₹ 2,12,500.00	127	₹ 2,50,000.00
126	₹ 2,12,500.00	128	₹ 1,40,700.00

4. Completion Period of Work			
116	12 Months	117	09 Months
118	12 Months	119	09 Months
121	09 Months	122	09 Months
123	09 Months	124	06 Months
126	06 Months	127	12 Months
128	09 Months		

5. Date and Time for Submission of Tender and Opening of Tender			
Upto 15.00 hrs on 25.03.2025	Opening of tender at 15.00 hrs. On 25.03.2025.		

6. Website particulars notice board location complete details of tender can be seen and address of the office from where the tender form can be purchased etc.

Above tender available on IREPS site i.e. www.ireps.gov.in

No.: 128-W/280/0ET/2024-25/W-V/NT-116, 117, 118, 119, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128 Date: 28.02.2025 656/2025

NAME CHANGE
I, No 4481067H Nk. Harpal Singh is legal father of Jashanpreet kaur presently residing at VPO-Ghanaur Khurd, Teh-Dhuri, Distt - Sangur, State-Punjab, PIN-148024 have changed my daughter name Jashanpreet kaur to Jashanpreet kaur for all future purposes that both name Jashanpreet kaur and Jashanpreet kaur pertain to one and the same person.

PUBLIC NOTICE
Information is given to general public at large that our client Mr. Ritik Goyal is the owner of Freehold Commercial Plot, Shop No. 7 on Ground Floor, without its roof/terrace rights, area measuring 9.29 Sq. Mtrs., Built-up property bearing No. M.C. No. 181/225, Situated at Gali Kunjas, Katra Mashroo, Dariba Kalan, Chandni Chowk, Delhi-110006. By virtue of Sale Deed executed by Mr. Dinesh Gupta S/o Mr. Kailash Chand Gupta in favour of Mr. Ritik Goyal S/o Mr. Satya Prakash, in the chain Documents below mentioned documents not available i.e. (1) Death Certificate & SMC of Late Mr. Hari Ram, (2) Death Certificate & SMC of Late Mr. Rajaram, (3) Death Certificate & SMC of Late Mr. Prem Chand Sharma, (4) Death Certificate & SMC of Late Mr. Bishamber Dayal Sharma, (5) Death Certificate & SMC of Late Mr. Puran Chand, (6) Death Certificate & SMC of late Mr. Om Prakash, (7) Death Certificate & SMC of Late Mr. Tej Ram, (8) Death Certificate & SMC of Late Mr. Chander Bhan, & (9) Death Certificate & SMC of Late Mr. Rajender Parshad now our client is declaring that any other Person does not have any right over the said property, which is going to be financed by Ujjivan Small Finance Bank Ltd, Branch: Noida U.P. If any person(s) have any objection(s) or claim(s) with respect to the right, title or interest in the Said Property then contact us within 14 days from the date of Publication of this notice and/or the same to the undersigned if found by anyone. Thereafter no claim shall be entertained.

NORTHERN RAILWAY E-TENDER NOTICE
Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineering and Traction Distribution, DRM's Office, State Entry Road, New Delhi for & on behalf of President of India, invites open tender for the under noted work:

1	Name of Work with its location	Design, supply, erection, testing & commissioning of 25 KV OHE modification work required under ROBS/FOBBS interconnection with Running of DSDC Trains over Delhi Division.
2	Approx. Cost of work	Rs. 2,37,26,550.04/-
3	Earnest Money Deposit	Rs. 2,68,600/-
4	E-Tender Bid Online Submission Period	11.03.2025 (00.00 Hrs.) to 25.03.2025 (15.00 Hrs.)
5	E-Tender Bid Submission End Date & E-Tender Open Date & Time	25.03.2025 (15.00 Hrs.)
6	Fund Allocation	Capital (PH-16)
7	Website particulars where complete details of tender documents can be seen	www.ireps.gov.in

E-TENDER No.: 31D-TRD-NDLS-2024-25 Dated : 27.02.2025 647/2025

NORTHERN RAILWAY NOTICE FOR E-TENDER
Office of CMS Divl. Hospital, N. Rly, Delhi

Name of the work with location	Rate contract of vendors (firms/distributors/chemist shops) in Local Purchase to supply of Medicines, Surgical Items & Consumables, etc. at Northern Railway Divisional Hospital, Delhi as well over all Health units of Delhi division (situated in Delhi NCR area, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh).
Approximate estimate cost for 02 (two) years	Rs. 5,59,27,704.00 (Rs. Five crore fifty-nine lakh twenty-seven thousand seven hundred forty four)
EMD to be deposited	Rs. 5,59,280/- (Rs. Five lakh fifty-nine thousand two hundred eighty only)
Completion period of the work	Two (02) years from the date of award of work which is extendable maximum up to 06 months.
Date & Time for submission & opening of online bid & Place	19.03.2025 (Wednesday) up to 13:00 hours and opening at 13:30 hrs same day at office of Northern Railway Divisional Hospital, Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Marg, Delhi-110006
Online tender is to be submitted	www.ireps.gov.in Tender No. NRDHLI-LP-2425A
Validity of offer	90 days from the date of opening of tender

Non-deposition of earnest money will result in the tender being canceled without notice. Bidders will be able to submit their original/revised bids only till the last date and time. Bids are to be submitted online only. Manual bids/offers are not permitted against this tender, and any manual offer received will be ignored. To participate in the e-tender system, tenderers are required to register with Indian Railways e-Procurement system at site www.ireps.gov.in. Necessary changes, corrigendum/addendum, if necessary, will be posted on this website only.

No. 43-Med/NRDHLI/PR(ETAIL)/ADU/2025 Dated 27.02.2025 657/2025

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

NAME CHANGE
I, KOTTAGADI LAXMAMMA Mother of No-262153BN Rank-SEP Name-KOJESH SINGH DAHYA residing at D-2, CHARCH ROAD, GREEN AVENUE SPRING VALLEY, VASANT KUNJ, NEW DELHI-110070, declare that name of mine and my father has been wrongly written as RAJIBR SINGH and AMIR SINGH in my ADHAR CARD NO - 7882 5611 5779. The actual name of mine and my father are RAJIBR SINGH DAHYA and AMIR SINGH DAHYA, which may be amended accordingly

NAME CHANGE
I, KULDEEP S/O MANGE RAM DANGI R/O HNO-3172, GALI NO-4, SAINIK COLONY, SECTOR-49, FARIDABAD-121001, HARYANA HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO KULDEEP DANGI FOR ALL FUTURE PURPOSE.

NAME CHANGE
It is for general information that I, RAJIBR SINGH DAHYA son of AMIR SINGH DAHYA residing at D-2, CHARCH ROAD, GREEN AVENUE SPRING VALLEY, VASANT KUNJ, NEW DELHI-110070, declare that name of mine and my father has been wrongly written as RAJIBR SINGH and AMIR SINGH in my ADHAR CARD NO - 7882 5611 5779. The actual name of mine and my father are RAJIBR SINGH DAHYA and AMIR SINGH DAHYA, which may be amended accordingly

[NAVEEN KUMAR VERMA] Advocate F-211, sector-3 Vaishali Ghaziabad Uttar Pradesh-201010, Contact at 09958871432

News box

Vehicle theft gang busted in Gurgaon, 12 bikes, van & SUV seized

Gurgaon. Police busted a vehicle theft gang and recovered 12 stolen bikes, a van, and an SUV from their possession. The accused were inside a car without a plate when the crime branch team reached the spot and nabbed Paramjeet alias Gyani, Pawan alias Pony of Rohtak, and Mahesh from Sohna; Prem of Badi village in Bhiwani; and Majlis alias Sappi, a resident of Sahasra village in Bharatpur district of Rajasthan. Police also recovered a pistol and two live rounds, along with stolen vehicles from their possession. Based on the complaint of ASI Amilal, a case was registered under relevant sections of the BNS and the Arms Act against the accused on Wednesday. During the interrogation, police found out that the seized Scorpio vehicle was stolen from Delhi. Apart from this, the accused also disclosed that they committed a bike theft in Nuh and have stolen 11 bikes in Gurgaon," police spokesperson Sandeep said. Police found that Paramjeet has four cases of assault, attempted murder, and theft registered against him in Rohtak, Bhiwani, and Bahadurgarh. Pawan has six cases of theft against him in Rohtak, Bhiwani, and Jhajjar. Prem has seven cases of attempted murder, arms act, and cheating in Bhiwani, Rohtak, Panipat, and Fatchabad, and Mahesh has three theft cases against him in Nuh, the police spokesperson added.

Paradiso RWA writes to DTCP, wants company to pay rent for families that vacated flats in Gurgaon

Gurgaon. Homeowners of Chintels Paradiso in Sector 109 have sought urgent intervention of the district town planner (enforcement) to ensure execution of rent payment orders issued by the district administration. In a letter to town planner (enforcement) Amit Madholia, RWA members said the developer has failed to comply with official directives mandating rent payments to displaced residents. President of the association Rakesh Hooda said, "The residents, who vacated their unsafe flats following good orders, are struggling to manage temporary accommodations without the promised financial support from the builder." Meanwhile, a spokesperson for the developer said, "The welfare of our residents remains our top priority, as they are part of our extended family. In line with the Hon'ble Supreme Court's order, Chintels was directed to pay rent from the start of reconstruction. While construction will take a few more months to begin due to procedural requirements, we have already started rent payments on humanitarian grounds. We are fulfilling our rental commitments to over 140 eligible residents and have settled buyback agreements with around 160 homeowners. Claims from individuals not receiving rent are from those without formal agreements or those with ongoing court cases. Earlier, the district administration had issued directions to compensate homeowners of six towers (D, E, F, G, H and J) of the first phase and three towers (A, B, and C) of the second phase.

A total of 41 homeowners — 25 from first phase towers and 16 from second phase towers — have formally chosen Option II (reconstruction) of the compensation plan and submitted requests for rent payments. These appeals were emailed to the builder, with copies marked to the district town planner, deputy commissioner and additional deputy commissioner. However, residents claim the builder has not responded or initiated the payments, pushing them into financial distress. In the letter, RWA urged the district town planner to intervene and ensure compliance. Their demands include authorities to engage with the builder to enforce the directive, all pending payments, including arrears, to be cleared by March 7, 2025 and action if rent payments are not made by the deadline. In Sept 2024, the district administration committee had decided that 130 homeowners of five unsafe towers — D, E, F, G, H — will get rent compensation at Rs 15/sqft per month from Jan 2025.

Minutes after daughter-in-law drops woman on KMP, truck mows her down

Gurgaon. A 48-year-old woman was run over by a truck on Wednesday afternoon, just minutes after her daughter-in-law dropped her on KMP Expressway in Farrukhnagar to take a ride back home to Panchgaon. Cops said the daughter-in-law was waiting nearby when the truck hit Savita and dragged her under its wheel for ten metres before coming to a halt. The truck's driver abandoned the vehicle and fled the spot. Savita, a homemaker from Chandla Dungarwas in Panchgaon, was visiting her son and daughter-in-law in Bangrola on Wednesday. Around 3.30pm, Savita's daughter-in-law Reeta dropped her on the speedway at Jhund Sarai village in Farrukhnagar. "A family member, Ramesh, was supposed to pick up Savita near Jhund Sarai on KMP Expressway and drop her home. Reeta had parked her scooter nearby and was waiting next to it when a truck coming from Jhajjar hit Savita," Sunder Singh, Farrukhnagar ASI, said on Thursday. Savita was rushed to the Sector 10 Civil Hospital, where doctors declared her dead. "We have seized the truck. We are trying to identify and arrest the accused truck driver," the ASI said. Reeta filed a complaint against the unidentified truck driver and an FIR was registered under sections 106 (causing death due to negligence) and 281 (rash driving on a public way) of BNS on Wednesday night. Another hit-&-run crash

A day earlier, a 49-year-old labourer died after he was run over by a bike near MG Road metro station. Police said Sanjay Chaudhary, who was working at Chandralok market in DLK-4, was going towards the metro station to get back to his home in Aya Nagar on Tuesday night. He was crossing the road around 8pm when the biker hit him. "Chaudhary suffered a head injury. Co-workers who were with him shifted him to a nearby hospital, where he succumbed to the injury hours later," sub-inspector Lakhpat of MG Road Police Post said. The biker drove off after the crash. "We managed to identify the bike's registration number. We will identify and arrest him," the SI said.

NEWS BOX

Earthquake of magnitude 6.1 strikes Nepal, tremors felt in Bihar

world. An earthquake with a magnitude of 6.1 struck Nepal early on Friday, causing tremors felt across the Himalayan region. Tremors were also felt in Patna, Muzaffarpur and nearby areas of Bihar.

The earthquake struck around Bhairab Kunda of the Sindhupalchok district in Nepal at around 2.35 am, according to news agency Reuters. The German Research Centre for Geosciences measured the earthquake at a magnitude of 5.6, while India's National Centre for Seismology estimated it at 5.5. However, it was not immediately clear whether multiple quakes had occurred. A 6.1 magnitude earthquake is considered strong and can cause significant damage, especially near the epicentre, including the shaking of buildings and the formation of cracks. The extent of Friday's seismic activity is yet to be ascertained, and no reports of damage or casualties have been reported so far.

"It shook us from our sleep strongly. We rushed out of home. People have now returned back to homes. We have not received any report of damage or injuries so far," Ganesh Nepali, a senior Nepali official told Reuters. People shared videos online showing buildings and ceiling fans shaking due to the earthquake in Patna. An X user mentioned that the tremors lasted for a "good 35 seconds." "Felt a strong earthquake in Patna, Bihar. Everything was shaking but no visible damage so far," another user, Nikhil Singh, wrote. In January this year, a series of six earthquakes struck Tibet's Himalayan region, with the strongest measuring 7.1 magnitude, claiming over 125 lives.

Pop star Sabrina Carpenter expands 'Short n' Sweet' tour — New North American dates revealed

UPDATED Sabrina Carpenter is gearing up for another thrilling leg of her Short n' Sweet tour, which will bring her music to fans across the U.S. and Canada. The pop star has added multiple concerts in five major cities, performing several times at each venue toward the end of the year. The pop singer has lined up a string of concerts in five key cities, performing several times at each venue towards the end of the year. The tour will begin in Pittsburgh at PPG Paints Arena on October 23-24. Carpenter will then move to New York City for three nights at the legendary Madison Square Garden on October 29, 31, and November 1. She will then proceed with consecutive shows at Nashville's Bridgestone Arena on November 4-5 before heading to Toronto's Scotiabank Arena for two performances on November 10-11. The tour will wrap up in Los Angeles, where she will perform for three consecutive nights at Crypto.com Arena on November 20, 22, and 23.

Carpenter's tour will include Amber Mark, Ravyn Lenae, and Olivia Dean on some dates as supporting acts. This is a follow-up to her record-breaking 2024 North American tour, where she performed 33 sold-out shows in the United States and Canada.

'We don't need to talk': Heated confrontation between Jordan Schultz & Ian Rapoport at NFL combine

UPDATED Jordan Schultz of FOX Sports and Ian Rapoport of NFL Media engaged in a verbal confrontation on Wednesday afternoon at a Starbucks inside the JW Marriott in Indianapolis. Multiple witnesses confirmed the incident that took place during the NFL Scouting Combine.

What Led to the Confrontation?

According to NBCSports, Rapoport was speaking with an agent when Schultz approached him and said, "We need to talk." Rapoport dismissed the request, responding, "We don't need to talk." That response sparked a heated exchange. Witnesses say Schultz accused Rapoport of something unknown, which Rapoport viewed as unfounded. The two then stood face to face as Schultz allegedly said, "If you have anything to say to me, say it to my face," followed by, "If this continues, we're going to have a problem."

Rapoport asked Schultz to step back, but Schultz reportedly repeated the warning before eventually stepping away.

NFL Security gets involved

The situation was reported to NFL Security, which gathered statements from multiple witnesses. Rapoport declined to comment, but Schultz later acknowledged the confrontation via text to ProFootballTalk (PFT), saying:

"It really isn't anything too much. Ian Rapoport and I had a verbal confrontation. It lasted a little over a minute. Multiple agents and reporters were nearby. Rapoport was the one who called security shortly after, but it never escalated further." Schultz also disputed the number of expletives in the account, later claiming he did not use profanity. The altercation stems from Schultz's report earlier this week that Rams quarterback Matthew Stafford met with Raiders minority owner Tom Brady in Montana. Rapoport later downplayed the report, describing the meeting as a coincidence rather than an intentional recruiting effort. Schultz, however, stood by his reporting.

Tensions between the two reporters are clearly high, so it remains to be seen whether this confrontation is a one-time incident or the beginning of a larger feud. Either way, the exchange added unexpected drama to a business-focused week at the NFL Scouting Combine.

Zelensky, Trump to meet at White House for deal on US access to Ukraine's rare minerals

The extraordinary turnaround caps a week of frantic international diplomacy centered on Washington, as Kyiv seeks to shore up support despite Trump's recent pivot towards Russia.

WASHINGTON. A week ago Donald Trump branded Volodymyr Zelensky a dictator. On Friday he will host the Ukrainian president at the White House and sign a deal granting Washington access to Ukraine's rare minerals. The extraordinary turnaround caps a week of frantic international diplomacy centered on Washington, as Kyiv seeks to shore up support despite Trump's recent pivot towards Russia. Trump upended years of US policy on Ukraine two weeks ago when he spoke to Russian President Vladimir Putin and started talks on ending the three-year-old war—without Kyiv. He also alarmed allies as he appeared to turn on Zelensky, berating him as a "dictator

without elections" and blaming Ukraine for Russia's February 2022 invasion.

But Trump's tone has softened in recent days after visits by French President Emmanuel Macron and British Prime Minister Keir Starmer. "I have a lot of respect for him," Trump said of Zelensky on Thursday.

"We're going to get along really well."

Trump also backtracked on the "dictator" broadside he launched on social media at Zelensky last week—a jibe he had previously refused to retract even as he declined to call Putin a dictator too.

"Did I say that? I can't believe I said that," Trump responded when asked about the Zelensky comment by journalists during a meeting with Starmer.

The dictator outburst was sparked in particular by Zelensky's initial rejection of the deal to give Washington preferential access to Ukrainian natural resources, including oil, gas and rare earth metals.

Zelensky demanded US security guarantees as part of any deal but Trump has refused to give any commitments. "Dig, dig, digging"

Trump, a billionaire real estate tycoon, insisted the deal was necessary for Washington to recoup the billions of



dollars it has given Ukraine in military and other aid. Finally, Zelensky relented and agreed to come to the White House to sign it. The deal would give the United States a share in much of Ukraine's mineral wealth. "We'll be dig, dig, digging" for Ukraine's resources, Trump told reporters Thursday. Few details of the minerals deal have emerged. Zelensky told reporters this week

that it would act as framework for broader deals. Further discussions between US and Ukrainian officials would determine the nature of security guarantees for Ukraine and the exact sums of money at stake in the accord, he said. But Trump has repeatedly refused to commit to any guarantees. Britain and France have both offered peacekeepers in the event of a deal to end the Ukraine war but say there must be a US "backstop" — including American intelligence and possibly air power. The US president told Starmer Thursday he was "open to many things" in terms of security guarantees but that he wanted to get a Russia-Ukraine deal in place first. Trump added that there had been a "lot of progress" towards a deal but then added: "It'll either be fairly soon or it won't be at all." US and Russian officials met on Thursday in Istanbul in a new round of talks. Putin and Trump said after their February 12 phone call that they had agreed to meet personally — but they have not finalized any meeting yet.

Russian tourist dies after being attacked by sharks in Philippine diving spot, another drowns

MANILA. Two Russian tourists died when they were swept away by strong undercurrents while scuba diving in waters south of Manila, with one believed to have drowned and the other attacked by sharks, a Philippine coast guard official said Friday.

Two other Russian tourists managed to swim back safely to their dive boat Thursday off Verde Island, a popular diving destination in the province of Batangas, Philippine coast guard provincial commander Capt. Airlan Lapitan said. The four Russian tourists traveled by boat to the waters off Verde Island from the nearby town of Puerto Galera in Oriental Mindoro province with a Filipino dive instructor. While



diving, the five were swept away by strong undercurrents, Lapitan said.

Two of the Russians managed to surface with the dive instructor but the two other Russians, who were identified as Ilia Peregudin, 29, and Maksim Melekhov, 39, went missing. The dive instructor and other divers in the area,

along with Philippine coast guard personnel, immediately launched a search, according to Lapitan. Melekhov was found unconscious at sea an hour later and was declared dead by doctors in a Batangas hospital, he said. "The other Russian diver was found while being attacked by sharks. His right arm, unfortunately, had been severed and the sharks were moving around him," Lapitan

told The Associated Press. "They somehow managed to pull him away." An investigation is underway and the coast guard will meet provincial officials to discuss ways to prevent such deadly incidents at Verde Island and other dive spots, Lapitan said.

Vatican says Pope Francis continues to improve but his prognosis remains guarded

ROME. Pope Francis continued to improve from double pneumonia Thursday, the Vatican said, working from his hospital room and going to his private chapel to pray, though doctors said he needs more days of "clinical stability" before they revise their guarded prognosis. The 88-year-old pope, who had part of one lung removed as a young man, was able to begin alternating high-flow supplemental oxygen, delivered by a nasal tube, with a mask in a sign of his improved respiratory condition, the Vatican said in a late update.

For the second day in a row, doctors avoided saying Francis was in critical condition. But they said that given the complexity of his lung infection, "further days of clinical stability are needed" before they revise their prognosis and decide he is out of danger. Francis has been in Rome's Gemelli hospital since Feb. 14 after a bout of bronchitis worsened.

He has shown steady, albeit slight improvements since a respiratory crisis and kidney trouble over the weekend sparked fears for his life. The improvements, as he nears the two-week mark on Friday, beat back speculation of an imminent death, resignation or conclave and signaled that he was still very much in charge.

Upcoming calendar in question

Nevertheless, his near-term upcoming

calendar of events was being changed: The Vatican cancelled a Holy Year audience scheduled for Saturday, and it remained to be seen if Francis would skip his Sunday noon blessing for the third week in a row. Longer term, Ash Wednesday loomed on the horizon March 5, the start of the church's



Lenten season leading up to Holy Week and Easter, which this year falls on April 20. In past years, when Francis has battled bronchitis and influenza in winter, he has had to cut back his participation in Ash Wednesday and Holy Week events, which call for the pope to be outdoors in the cold leading services, participating in processions and presiding over prayers in the solemn period in which the faithful commemorate Christ's crucifixion and resurrection.

Skip backward 5 seconds

Israel and Hamas have begun negotiating next phase of Gaza ceasefire: Egypt

KHAN YOUNIS. Negotiations between Israel and Hamas on the next phase of the Gaza ceasefire began Thursday, Egypt said, averting a collapse ahead of Saturday's expiration of the agreement's first phase.

Officials from Israel, Qatar and the United States started "intensive discussions" on the ceasefire's second phase in Cairo, Egypt's state information service said.

"The mediators are also discussing ways to enhance the delivery of humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip, as part of efforts to alleviate the suffering of the population and support stability in the region," its statement said.

Phase 2 talks are meant to negotiate an end to the war, including the return of all remaining hostages in Gaza who are alive, and the withdrawal of all Israeli troops from the territory. Return of remaining deceased hostages would happen in Phase 3. According to Israel, there are 59 remaining hostages — 24 of whom are still believed to be alive. It will be difficult to reconcile a deal with the war objectives of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin

Netanyahu, who has called for dismantling Hamas' governing and military capabilities. After suffering heavy losses in the war, Hamas has nonetheless emerged intact during the ceasefire, and the group says it will not give up its weapons. Hours before talks began, an Israeli official said the country would not withdraw from a strategic corridor in the Gaza Strip as called for under the ceasefire, a refusal that could severely complicate negotiations with Hamas and key mediator Egypt at a sensitive moment for the fragile truce. Overnight, Hamas released the remains of four hostages in exchange for over 600 Palestinian prisoners, the last planned swap of the ceasefire's first phase.

U.S. President Donald Trump's Mideast envoy, Steve Witkoff, was expected in the region in the coming days. "Blatant violation" An Israeli official, speaking on condition of anonymity in line with regulations, said the army needed to remain in the so-called Philadelphia corridor, on the Gaza side of the border



with Egypt, to prevent weapons smuggling. Hamas said any Israeli attempt to maintain a buffer zone in the corridor would be a "blatant violation" of the ceasefire agreement. Hamas says that sticking to the agreement is the only way for Israel to secure the release of dozens of hostages still held in Gaza. Israel was supposed to begin withdrawing from the Philadelphia corridor on Saturday, the last day of the first phase, and complete it within eight days. There was no immediate comment about the corridor from Egypt, which is opposed to any Israeli presence on the Gaza side of its border. Remains of four

hostages identified The remains released Thursday were confirmed to be those of Ohad Yahalomi, Itzhak Elgarat, Shlomo Mantzur and Tsachi Idan, according to the Hostages and Missing Families Forum, which represents families of the captives. Hamas confirmed that over 600 prisoners had been released overnight. Most were detainees returned to Gaza, where they had been rounded up after the Oct. 7 attack and held without charge on security suspicions. Israel releases dozens of women and teenagers. Dozens of Palestinian teenagers as well as women detained by Israel in Gaza were released Thursday back to hugs and tears from their loved ones. The teenagers looked gaunt and skinny as they disembarked from Red Cross buses in the southern town of Khan Younis. Many fell into the arms of relatives, who spent days waiting for them after Israel held up their release last weekend to protest what it called cruel treatment of hostages by Hamas during their releases. Women cried and hugged the boys.

Is New Orleans on the brink of a Fiscal crisis City officials disagree

UPDATED. Earlier this month, when New Orleans Mayor LaToya Cantrell announced that she intended to renege on a \$20 million settlement with the Orleans Parish School Board, she said the city couldn't afford it.

The settlement with the school board was brokered last fall by the New Orleans City Council and Cantrell's own top deputy, Chief Administrative Officer Gilbert Montano. It would have ended yearslong litigation over the fees the city collected on property taxes intended for schools and provided an infusion of money for the cash-strapped district. But City Attorney Donesia Turner said that the settlement wasn't a done deal because the mayor hadn't been actively involved and, further, that it would be too costly for the city. This was later echoed by Chief Financial Officer Romy Samuel. "The city's financial positioning has taken a major shift," Samuel said at a special meeting to discuss the school board settlement on Feb. 11. "Budgetary obligations, the continued rise in inflation accompanied by unexpected expenditures beginning in 2025 and various other factors have weighed heavily on the city's operating costs." The about-face from the city's executive leadership caught both the school board and the council by surprise. The council had approved the deal with Montano's apparent approval and without any objection from Cantrell's office. And Cantrell had just signed a 2025 city operating budget that was more than \$200 million higher than the one she approved for 2024. Now, councilmembers — and even a top official within Cantrell's administration — are pushing back on the mayor's claims, saying that the city is not only able to afford the school board settlement but also is prepared to handle the budgetary challenges heading its way. "This is something that's been manufactured, and is now trying to be reverse-engineered to explain where we are," said Councilmember Joe Giarrusso, who chairs the budget committee. "And I am extraordinarily troubled that we're going to hold the city captive for the next month or two because we're saying we don't have any money and we can't move forward." Cantrell's office, which has been criticized for a lack of transparency around budgeting and other matters, did not respond to requests for comment on this story.

"The transparency is so bad around this stuff" It's no secret that the city of New Orleans has faced a slate of potential challenges since the year began. First, following a New Year's Day attack on Bourbon Street in the French Quarter, the city had to drastically ramp up its security — replacing old, insufficient bollards with new ones to better block high-speed vehicles, bringing in the National Guard to patrol high-traffic areas and even hiring a homeland security expert to evaluate their security plans — all in preparation to host a series of tourist-heavy events from the Super Bowl on through the rest of the Mardi Gras season.

NEWS BOX

Former Gannavaram MLA Vallabhaneni Vamsi sent to judicial remand after three-day custody

VIJAYAWADA. Former Gannavaram MLA and YSRCP leader Vallabhaneni Vamsi Mohan was sent to judicial remand at Vijayawada district jail on Thursday after completing three days in police custody. Patamata police had arrested Vamsi Mohan from his residence in Gachibowli, Hyderabad, and presented him before a Vijayawada court last week. The court granted three days of custody, rejecting a ten-day request. On Thursday, police sought ten-day custody for two more accused. Following a special SC and ST court's order, Central Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP) K Damodhar interrogated Vamsi and two others—Lakshmiipati and Sivaramakrishna Prasad—over allegations of abducting and threatening complainant Mudunuri Satyavardhan in the Gannavaram TDP office attack case. Police presented CCTV footage and call records as evidence. Investigators provided separate questionnaire to the accused, but police sources said Vamsi did not cooperate, prompting plans for another custody request. He allegedly admitted to meeting former CM YS Jagan Mohan Reddy in Tadepalli on February 12. Meanwhile, a fresh case was registered on a complaint by Jasthi Murali Krishna, who alleged land grabbing. The CID filed a PT warrant petition for Vamsi's custody, with arguments set for Monday. The court denied Vamsi's request for preferred cellmates and ordered periodic health checks.

Private firms to handle upkeep of Marina, four other beaches



CHENNAI. The Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC) is all set to privatise the cleaning and maintenance of five beaches, including the Marina and the Elliot's, at a cost of Rs 11.64 crore for a contract period of one year. Maintenance of Srinivasapuram, Thiruvanniyur and New beaches are also to be privatised. The Marina, which spans 250 acres, is one of the most visited beaches in Chennai, collecting an average waste of around 5.5 tonne to 7 tonne every day.

Speaking to TNIE, a senior GCC official said while the zones in which these five beaches are located are covered by Urbaser Sumeet, its scope of work extends only up to the service road and does not include the beach. As a result, the beaches have been left uncleaned except during special occasions when cleaning is carried out with the assistance of Urbaser or Chennai Enviro Solutions Private Limited along with a few of GCC's own staff. With the privatisation, workers will be equipped with vehicles for beach combing. The GCC is also taking measures to regulate unauthorised shops. Beach captains and marshals will be given point of sale machines to levy spot fine for littering. They will also be equipped with walkie-talkies.

"We believe this privatisation will help clean the beach completely by June or July. The beaches will be maintained regularly from then on," the official said.

Tamil Nadu releases new policy for care of homeless people with mental illness

CHENNAI. Chief Minister MK Stalin on Thursday released the state policy for Care of Homeless Persons with Mental Illness and Implementation Framework - 2024, brought out by the Health and Family Welfare Department, as part of the government's commitment to delivering quality services to this vulnerable segment of society. The proposed policy framework delineates the service provided to Homeless Persons with Mental Illness (HPWMI) into four stages -- rescue and acute care, intermediary care, long term care, and social integration. The policy proposes a standard operating procedure (SOP) to be followed in rescue operations. When a rescuer finds any person to be homeless and suspects mental illness, he shall inform the nearest police station and assist the cops in rescue operation. The police with or without the assistance of NGOs should take the person concerned to a government medical college hospital or headquarters hospital for admission. Medical assessment should be done. The medical officer in-charge shall arrange for assessment of mental health. The policy states that if the person doesn't have mental illness, then the psychiatrist should inform the police for reunion with the family, or if the person has mental illness and is severely ill, he/she should be treated at the medical college hospital itself. The policy also details what should be done if the person is below 18 years, woman or pregnant and a victim of crime. The HPWMI after discharge from acute psychiatric care shall be transferred to Emergency Care and Response Centre (ECRC) for intermediary care. The duration of the stay should be 12 months or until union with the family, whichever is earlier.

Odisha CM asks depts to spend 85 per cent of budget funds by March-end

The chief minister also asked the ministers to immediately examine the expenditure proposals and make necessary approvals.

BHUBANESWAR. Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi on Thursday asked ministers to ensure expenditure of at least 85 per cent of the funds earmarked for different department in the 2024-25 budget, by the end of the current financial year. The total 2024-25 budget amount was '2.65 lakh crore. Reviewing the expenditure of various departments at Lok Seva Bhawan here, the chief minister said the expenditure was 81 per cent of the total budget of '2.3 lakh crore in 2023-24. While acknowledging that there were problems in spending in 2024-25 due to elections and the new government taking charge, he said expenditure of many departments has been satisfactory so far. However, at least 85 per cent of the budget should be spent by making full use of the remaining one month's time, he advised.

The chief minister also asked the ministers to immediately examine the expenditure proposals and make necessary approvals. He directed that the pending payments under various welfare schemes should be released immediately as per rules. Stating that programme expenditure and capital expenditure are the most important parts of the budget, Majhi said these will generate employment and boost economic growth.



The chief minister said Odisha's capital expenditure was 6.1 per cent of its Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP), which is the

highest in the country. "Our goal is to increase economic activity in the agrarian economy as well as other sectors. This requires extensive infrastructure development," he emphasised.

The meeting was informed that the expenditure of the departments of Agriculture, Fisheries and Livestock, Health, Water Resources, Works, Disability and Social Justice, Supplies and Cooperatives was comparatively better than others. The chief minister directed other departments to increase expenditure by the fiscal-end. Among others, minister for Rural Development, Panchayati Raj and Drinking Water Rabi Narayan Naik, minister for Housing and Urban Development Krushna Chandra Mahapatra, minister for School and Mass Education Nityananda Gond, minister for Transport Bibhuti Bhusan Jena, and minister for Fisheries and Livestock Gokulananda Mallik attended the meeting.

Telangana scraps 15 per cent non-local quota in Higher education

HYDERABAD. The Telangana Higher Education department has issued orders reserving 85% of the seats in all higher education institutions — government or private higher education and technical institutions—for locals. Government Order 15 (GO 15), issued by Education Department Secretary Yogita Rana on Thursday, says that 85% of the seats in all higher education institutions will be reserved for local candidates in the Osmania University (OU) area, while the remaining 15% will be unreserved. The GO makes it difficult for non-local students to get admission in the 15% unreserved seats as they will also have to compete with the local candidates. The GO revises the "region-wise reservation of seats" to "admission to 85% of seats for local candidates of the OU area". This implies that candidates from Andhra Pradesh will no longer be eligible for local reservations in colleges in Telangana. The GO says that candidates who can claim seats in the 15% unreserved category should have resided in the state for a total period of 10 years (excluding periods of study outside the state), or either of their parents should have resided in the state for a total period of 10 years (excluding periods of employment outside the state).

Kerala court grants bail to BJP leader P C George in hate speech case

The Erattupetta police had registered a case against George for allegedly making remarks that could incite religious hatred.

KOTTAYAM. Former legislator and senior BJP leader P C George was granted bail on Friday by the Judicial First Class Magistrate Court in Erattupetta in a hate speech case. 74-years-old George was granted bail, citing health reasons, despite objections raised by the prosecution and the complainant in the case. On February 24, George was remanded into judicial custody till March 10 in the hate speech case registered by the Erattupetta police. However, due to variations in his ECG reports, George was admitted to Govt Medical College Hospital in Kottayam on the same day. He is expected to be discharged from the hospital on Friday.



The Erattupetta police had registered a case against George for allegedly making remarks that could

incite religious hatred. This action was taken following a complaint filed by the Erattupetta Municipal Committee of the Muslim Youth

League. It accused George of making inflammatory comments on Muslims during a panel discussion on a news channel.

George has been booked under various sections of the BNS and Kerala Police Act, including charges of deliberately insulting a religion or religious beliefs and inciting provocation with the intent to cause a riot. George had been embroiled in similar controversies in the past.

In April 2022, he was booked for hate speech following remarks made during the Ananthapuri Hindu Maha Sammelanam. Later that year, the Palarivattom police registered a case against him for delivering a communally sensitive speech at Vennala, Kochi.

SSB's high-tech office set for inauguration on land donated by late doctor

Nearly 19 years later, SSB's permanent high-tech office will be inaugurated by Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Saturday on the same plot of land.

KOCHI. It's a curious case of a late doctor's desire. In 2006, Dr Koshi V John donated 10.37 cents of land in Thevara, Kochi, to the State Special Branch (SSB) — the intelligence wing of Kerala police. It was an ardent desire to contribute to society that inspired him to donate the land, but why specifically to SSB remains a mystery. Even police officials are baffled as to why the doctor was specific in his will about handing over the land to the special branch.

Nearly 19 years later, SSB's permanent high-tech office will be inaugurated by Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Saturday on the same plot of land. SSB is an arm of the state police that collects ground-level intelligence to ensure law and order. In Kochi, the agency had been functioning out of temporary facilities — till now. "A native of Pathanamthitta who had worked in the United States



will, we took possession of the land. In 2013, the state government granted the SSB permission to construct a building. Work was started in 2019. Due to the pandemic, construction was delayed. Dr Koshi is now no more," said Shahul Hameed, SP of SSB

Ernakulam. Evaluating it in terms of current land prices in Kochi, the property would be priced over Rs 2 crore. "Most of the SSB officers from that period are now retired. Some say that Dr Koshi was close friends with several officers. But we don't know why he donated the land, specifically mentioning SSB in his will," said an officer. SSB's office set for inauguration

"Some claim that he was adamant that only the SSB office should be constructed on the land," the officer said. The current SSB officers in Kochi said they were unaware of any details regarding Dr Koshi's family members. The new office has been constructed for around Rs 3.27 crore. The four-storeyed building will incorporate the office of the Bomb Detection and Disposal Squad, and the SSB Ernakulam Range SP office, which has jurisdiction over Alappuzha, Kottayam, Idukki, Kochi City, and Ernakulam Rural police districts.

Rameswaram fishers' strike enters fifth day; indefinite hunger strike

Fishermen associations in Rameswaram stated that over 100 fishermen from Ramanathapuram were arrested by the Sri Lankan Navy for alleged IMBL violation in the past two months.

RAMANATHAPURAM. Condemning the frequent arrest of Indian fishermen by the Sri Lankan Navy, fishermen from Rameswaram continued their indefinite strike for the fifth consecutive day on Thursday. Refusing to stop the protest during the peace talk held on Thursday, fishermen associations announced that they would stage an indefinite hunger strike from Friday.

February 23. Over 700 boats remained anchored in the ports in Rameswaram for the fifth consecutive day.

On Thursday, Rameswaram tahsildar Abdul Jaffer, Rameswaram DSP Shanthamurthy and officials from the fisheries and revenue departments conducted peace talks



Fishermen associations in Rameswaram stated that over 100 fishermen from Ramanathapuram were arrested by the Sri Lankan Navy for alleged IMBL violation in the past two months. Over the years, hundreds of boats have been seized by the SL Navy and the Lankan government is set to auction the confiscated boats. Pressing the central government to take action towards addressing the prolonging issue, the fishermen went on indefinite strike from

with the fishermen urging them to halt the ongoing indefinite strike. However, the fishermen refused to do so and stated that they will continue the strike till the central government addresses their prolonging issues.

Is there no money in treasury, asks JDS' Nikhil over delay in guarantee payments

He insisted that the government should immediately announce the exact date for depositing the Gruha Lakshmi money. If there is no money, at least they should admit it.

BENGALURU. Slamming the Congress government in the state, JDS Youth Wing state president Nikhil Kumaraswamy on Thursday alleged that those who said they would give money for the guarantee schemes every month, have promptly betrayed the people. "Is there no money left in the treasury? Or does CM Siddaramaiah lack the experience in managing the coffers?" he questioned.



"Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi had said they would provide the

guarantees, including money through the Gruha Lakshmi scheme. However, no money is being deposited into people's accounts, as they had stated. It is not happening. Let them say on which day they will deposit the Gruha Lakshmi money. If it does not happen, we will take the calendar ourselves. Let them mark the date," he taunted. Observing that the women of the state are confused because the said money is not

being deposited into their bank accounts every month, Nikhil alleged, "The government is depositing money according to its whims and fancies. When elections arrive, they deposit 3-4 months' money all at once." He accused the Congress government of misusing the guarantee grants to win elections. "The Congress government is deceiving people through its guarantees. We will fight against it inside and outside the Legislature. We will tell the people how the government is cheating them," he warned.

He insisted that the government should immediately announce the exact date for

depositing the Gruha Lakshmi money. If there is no money, at least they should admit it. "On the one hand, it is extorting the people by imposing taxes and price hikes on the pretext of guarantees, while on the other, it is lying that it is rescuing people through guarantees," he said.

In its two years in power, the government has failed to adequately deliver on many schemes. "CM Siddaramaiah, DCM DK Shivakumar... you promised to empower women by giving them Rs 2,000. However, now the women are surprised that the guarantee is coming in piecemeal form. Both of you must respond," Nikhil added.

The US was never Europe's safe harbour

The Europeans were left dumbfounded, if not shell-shocked, by the verbal whiplashing administered to them by US Vice-President James David Vance at the sixty-first iteration of the Munich Security Conference earlier this month. Vance questioned the fundamental commitment of Europeans to democratic values, that, he argued, underpinned the US-European construct. By the end of the speech, there was a lot of European strategic blood spilled on the conference floor of Hotel Bayerischer Hof. The diatribe led to extended recriminations, with many European leaders pushing back strongly against Vance's caricatured characterisation of the current state of play in Europe. However, this begs the question as to why Europeans are surprised. For, they have to only look back to the past hundred years or so of US ties with Europe to see that America has always only acted in its own interest — what it has conveniently characterised as American exceptionalism. The First World War began on July 28, 1914. It was triggered by the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the Austro-Hungarian empire, and his wife Sophie, by a Bosnian Serb a month earlier. Though it was a European war, the Triple Entente — Britain, France and Russia — which was fighting the Triple Alliance of Austria-Hungary, Germany and Italy, pleaded with America to weigh in on its side.

The US, led by President Woodrow Wilson, stymied by Senators with Jacksonian impulses, refused to enter what it deemed, and perhaps correctly so, a European imperial joust. It was only two and a half years later, on April 7, 1917, that the US declared war on Germany. And that was only because the Germans had unleashed extensive submarine warfare in the North Atlantic Ocean, causing a huge loss of American men and material. An added trigger was a communication by the then German Foreign Minister, Arthur Zimmermann, which later came to be known as the notorious "Zimmermann Telegram". It promised the Mexican government that Germany would help Mexico retrieve the territory it had lost to the US in the wake of the Mexican-American war of 1846-1848. In return for this assistance, Germany asked for Mexico's support in the war. This was a direct affront to the Monroe doctrine conceptualised by President James Monroe and his Secretary of State John Quincy Adams. Articulated during Monroe's address to the US Congress on December 2, 1823, the Doctrine held that the Western Hemisphere, especially the Americas, was the US' exclusive sphere of influence and the Europeans had no business to interfere in this eminent domain. Thus, only when its own interests were threatened did the US enter the European war.

After the spectacular collapse of the League of Nations — midwifed by President Wilson, vide the Treaty of Versailles on June 28, 1919, with the Japanese walkout in February 1933 and the German withdrawal eight months later — the US once again retreated into splendid isolation even as Adolf Hitler and his Nazis gobbled up territories and countries in Europe, beginning with the Austrian Anschluss in March 1938. Even when the Great Britain stood alone in its darkest hour — from May to November 1940 — President Roosevelt expressed his inability to help it because of the Neutrality Act of 1939 and the Johnson Act of 1934. Though certain innovative means were found later, the US only formally entered World War II after the devastating Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941.

Then also, to begin with, on December 8, 1941, it only declared war on Japan. It was only when Germany and Italy declared war on the US on December 11, 1941, did it reciprocate that announcement. The bottom line is that even as Europe was being subjugated by the hoodlums of the Gestapo and Sheutzstaffel, the US may have continued to remain neutral had it not been for the Japanese attack.

Qatar counts in West Asia and beyond

The Gulf nation is important to India primarily for bolstering energy security

EVEN as analysts were preoccupied with the implications of US President Donald Trump's policies for India, an important visit passed under the radar. The Amir of Qatar, Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, visited India last week and was given the signal honour of being received at the airport itself by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The courtesy has been reserved for the leaders of only a few countries, including leading economies like Japan and France. Qatar, in contrast, is a tiny West Asian kingdom. But it wields far more heft than is evident by its mere size. It is the fifth richest country in terms of per capita GDP and is home to the world's largest natural gas field. It also plays a disproportionately large role in the geopolitical events of the region, including recent negotiations to reach a peace deal in the Israel-Hamas war.

Qatar is critically important to India for many reasons, but primarily as a major supplier of liquid natural gas (LNG). As much as 45 per cent of the country's requirements are met by imports from this Gulf country. LNG is natural gas cooled to a liquid state. In this chilled form, it can be transported by special tankers to terminals around the world. It is then warmed again and moved through pipelines to distribution points. The advantage is that it can be transported to places beyond the reach of pipelines. There have been many proposals for subsea pipelines to bring natural gas from Gulf countries like Oman to the subcontinent, but these have failed to take off due to technical reasons. LNG imports are, therefore, a viable option.

Natural gas is also a cleaner alternative to other fossil fuels. It currently comprises only 6 per cent of the country's energy mix, but the target is to raise this to 15 per cent by 2030. The International Energy Agency has forecast that India's natural gas consumption will rise by nearly 60 per cent over this period from 2023 levels. This, in turn, will lead to a doubling of LNG imports owing to sustained demand growth and a slowing domestic production. Currently, imported natural gas accounts for roughly half of the country's consumption needs.

Qatar and the US look set to be major suppliers of natural gas in the form of LNG in the long run. An existing India-Qatar contract for the supply of 7.5 million tonnes per annum of LNG has recently been extended for another 20 years with effect from 2028. The value of the contract is a mind-boggling \$78 billion. This long-term commitment provides a tremendous comfort level in the energy sector at a time when the US is doubling down on sanctions against Russia. Right now, India needs to ensure that oil and gas supplies are not disrupted for any reason. Diversification of sources of supply has already been carried out in the case of oil, with imports contracted from multiple sources. As far as natural gas is concerned, the recent agreements with Qatar give similar confidence that much of the demand will be met without any hiccup.

PM Modi's warmth towards the Qatari leader also stems from an expectation of substantial investments to be made in the coming years.

A \$10-billion investment plan was announced during the visit, but this could expand significantly, especially in the energy sector. Foreign direct investments of \$1.5 billion



have already been made by the Qatar Investment Authority in a wide range of areas, including retail, power and information technology. As for bilateral trade, it is expected to rise from \$14 billion currently to \$28 billion over the next five years. Yet, investments from Qatar are lagging behind those from other Gulf countries like Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). These countries have announced investment plans of \$100 billion and \$75 billion, respectively, largely in the hydrocarbons sector. Clearly, more efforts are needed to enhance ties with the equally cash-rich yet smaller neighbour.

Apart from economic cooperation, the Qatar leader's visit has led to bilateral relations being upgraded to a strategic partnership. It becomes the fifth Gulf country with which India has developed this relationship. The upgradation of ties is significant, especially in the context of the key role that this small nation plays in West Asia. It has become a broker for peace talks in most conflicts in the region, the most recent being the Gaza truce that was negotiated in Qatar. For India, it has also emerged as a channel of communication with the Taliban in Afghanistan. The relationship had flourished in 2022 when eight former Indian Navy personnel were sentenced to death by a

Qatari court. PM Modi's intervention led to the sentence being commuted, but one former naval officer still remains in custody. It is also interesting that the ambitious India-Middle East-Europe Corridor (IMEC) project has bypassed Qatar, though both the UAE and Saudi Arabia are on board. Hopefully, these lingering irritants in bilateral ties will be ironed out soon. At a time when media scrutiny of the India-US relationship is overwhelming due to a raft of announcements by Trump on various issues, the growing importance of India-Qatar ties has been given only muted recognition.

But there is no doubt that this relationship, built on the foundational element of energy security, is set to become deeper. One aspect that will play a significant role in determining the course of these ties is the eight lakh-strong Indian diaspora that makes a major contribution to the economy of the Gulf country. It is incumbent on the government to ensure adequate working conditions for its citizens there, even as domestic foreign exchange reserves benefit from the bonanza of remittances that prop up foreign exchange reserves. A multiplicity of factors, therefore, are underpinning this much-needed initiative to expand relations with a country that has rapidly assumed a key role in West Asia.

Asphalt over art

HC's shortsighted ruling on Rock Garden

The Punjab and Haryana High Court's directive to demolish a section of the Rock Garden's wall for road widening and parking expansion raises serious concerns about the balance between infrastructure and heritage conservation. The decision, executed by the UT Administration, not only erases a part of Nek Chand's artistic legacy but also sets a troubling precedent for how India treats its cultural and forest heritage in the name of 'development.' For decades, the Rock Garden has stood as a testament to human ingenuity, turning waste into wonder. However, in what can only be described as an ironic injustice, a part of this artistic and cherished landmark is being razed to make space for asphalt and use by polluting vehicles. The claim that the demolished wall was not part of Nek Chand's original structure does little to justify the destruction. A landmark's significance is not merely in its blueprint but in the cultural and emotional connection it holds for the people.

The rationale for this demolition is flawed on multiple



levels. First, traffic congestion around the high court is largely due to poor management, not the presence of

the Rock Garden. Sustainable alternatives, such as better public transport and shuttle services, have been overlooked. Plus, a systematic restructuring of case lists by the HC can reduce daily footfall at the court, addressing traffic concerns. Second, the administration's promise of 'relocating' the wall and replanting trees does not compensate for the irreversible loss of an ecosystem. Chandigarh's famed tree-lined landscape is already under siege; removing century-old trees for road widening is another nail in the coffin of its ecological balance.

The larger question remains: If courts, meant to be guardians of justice, do not defend public heritage and environmental integrity, who will? Chandigarh deserves sustainable urban planning, not thoughtless destruction disguised as progress.

Why India must think twice about Trump's F-35 offer

The F-35 is already a highly questionable and controversial commodity in the USA itself. There have been too many glitches.

A FORMER foreign secretary has advised "India to adjust to a whole new world" with "only transactions and deals" and believes that there are "no friends and enemies in this scenario." Obviously, the diplomat's assessment originates from the 'real-time' unpredictability of the sole 'super power', President Donald Trump, who appears difficult to be dealt with by today's "whole new world." Simply put, the 'scenario' today has dramatically turned to 'T' for 'transactional Trump', and 'D' for 'dollar deals Donald', with the USA launching its global blitzkrieg for 'deal' and 'transaction'. The US unilateralism is compelling friends and foes alike to either scurry for cover or make a personal appearance before Trump to keep him in good humour, notwithstanding the bleak prospect of any meaningful result. Trump loves the driver seat for deals, dictating all in his durbar to put their signatures in the DC-prepared draft of transaction documents.

Trump now wants India to buy the Lockheed F-35 fighter to reduce America's \$35 billion bilateral trade deficit with Delhi.

However, India knows well (as does the USA, presumably) that any international deal, transaction, contract, or even the hatching of criminal conspiracy, is a bilateral process and essentially a matter of 'offer plus acceptance' for the sealing of the deal. From India's perspective, too, shouldn't then the F-35 be looked into?

Barring the US Douglas DC-3 Dakota and Fairchild Packet C119G transport and air-dropping, the Indian Air Force has never had a US fighter in its combat squadron inventory since 1947. Hence, the sudden transformative, unilateral and command-like offer to India to buy the Lockheed F-35 multirole fighter by the transactional President of the US (POTUS) deserves a scrutiny, especially in light of the contemporary geopolitical weather and history of erratic, overbearing US policy

towards Delhi-DC bilateral contours over the decades.

First, let us be clear that no air force of a country of India's shape and size is made in a day and an air force building is no garden party or a matter of joke. It is a serious business of high-tech, high-risk, high-investment and exceptionally high-quality trained personnel or men behind the machines. Jane's All the World's Aircraft shows that the period from the "request for proposal" to the "first delivery" of the F-35 fifth generation multirole stealth fighter Lockheed, spanned over 15 years (December 1995-May 2011). Also, India was never under the US radar either as an industrial partner or a potential buyer or readymade user of the high-tech Lockheed fighter. The F-35 essentially was for the advanced west and its defence and security partners from the non-west. Thus, in late 1996, "Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Greece, Israel, Singapore, Spain and Sweden were briefed on the programme." It was clear from the beginning that it would be an enormously expensive flying machine.

First-level collaboration with 10 per cent cost-sharing was sought from the UK; Italy and the Netherlands were level-two partners, with 5 per cent cost sharing; level three involved the payment of 1-2 per cent with Denmark and Norway and, finally, came Australia, Canada and Turkey, who were to bear the cost on their own. Consequently, the cost of each fighter was exorbitant. As seen from the annual publication of Jane's All the World's Aircraft, from 2012-2013, each unit cost of the US Air Force F-35A was quoted as \$37.3 million. It escalated to \$94.3 million in 2017 and is now well over \$100 million per fighter. On top of this, if one takes into account the depreciation of

the Indian rupee vis-a-vis the US dollar, the expenditure by the Indian exchequer can be truly mindboggling. It can make any F-35 'deal' or 'transaction' highly explosive and an impossible hot political potato, with the questionable possibility of the US fighter role, responsibility and utility in the Indian defence



system. There are also multiple technical factors which surely would be beyond the comprehension of the millions of uninitiated, who get impressed by the air display and further charged by the emotional public debate of 'for optics.' The F-35 is already a highly questionable and controversial commodity in the USA itself. There have been too many glitches and cost and time overruns that have made both the POTUS and his principal Man Friday, Elon Musk, making comments on the US aviation industrial capacity and capability. The

POTUS is after Boeing for its inability to deliver two 'Air Force One' transport craft for the White House. Musk is all over F-35, making comments like: "F-35 fighter jets are obsolete" and "meanwhile, some idiots are still building manned fighter jets like F-35."

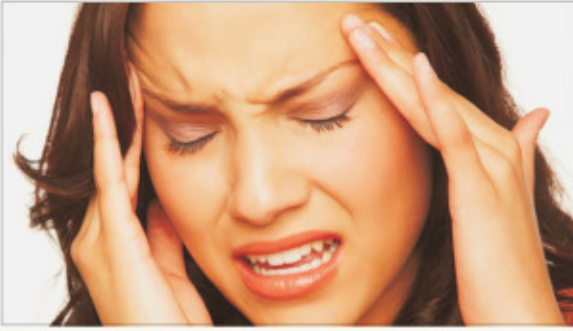
Expectedly, the outgoing US air chief has given Musk a mouthful of expletives. Tech and economics aside, India is expected to follow zero-tolerance to flight safety failure if it afflicts an extraordinarily "sophisticated stealth" like F-35. Regrettably, things went wrong early in October 2010 itself, with a brief grounding of the fleet at the Edwards Air Force Base (AFB), owing to a "software problem affecting the pump that could have caused un-commanded inflight shutdown of engine."

Almost 15 years have gone by, but unexplained and unexpected inflight glitches continue to plague the F-35s. A few citations would suffice. In two successive accidents in June and July of 2014, a mixed group of F-35s "suffered catastrophic engine failure at Eglin AFB which was followed by a fleet-wide grounding order." This is similar to what the Indian Air Force faces today — a whole fleet of the indigenous Advanced Light Helicopter Dhruv being grounded after the January 5, 2025 crash. For the F-35, however, the most serious finding of the accident inquiry report was "rubbing between third-stage fan blades in low-pressure section of the P&W F-135 engine and the inner wall of compressor casing." Unfortunately, the F-35 offered by the POTUS still suffers from nagging niggles which do not inspire confidence of any potential user. That's the irony, but also the reality. One, therefore, would hate to see a possible increase in the number of widows and orphans in our Air Force stations during peace time.

Headache

bothering you? Here are quick remedies

If you frequently suffer from headaches, try switching on to a more healthy diet comprising of fresh fruits and vegetables that provide the body ample vitamins and minerals and regular exercise.



Whether you have a headache due to cold, stress or lack of sleep, here are some remedies to help you deal with a headache:

Take a nap: Sleeping for a short while help to reduce headaches. However take care not to oversleep as it can aggravate the headache. A nap of 15-30 minutes is sufficient.

Practice breathing exercises: Take slow deep breaths. Inhale and exhale slowly. This helps to ease out the discomfort caused due to the headache.

Head massage: Massages are known to be effective in curing headaches. Gently massage your temples with your fingers in a circular motion. Also, gently tap your fingers on your forehead.

Aromatherapy: Sniffing some aromatic oils can not only reduce headache but also uplift your mood. Essential oils of lavender, ylang ylang, sandalwood and vanilla are beneficial in soothing your stress away.

Best home workouts for Women

With a busy schedule, most people, especially women, complain that going to the gym is not possible. Health expert, Nidhi Mohan Kamal describes a few exercises that can be done at home.

Walking/Running: They help to relieve stress, improve your heart health, reduce the risk of depression, burn mega calories and improve your overall health. They also help build strong, toned legs. For weight loss, a brisk walk for more than 20 mins has been proven beneficial.

Squats: Squats are a compound, full-body exercise that work more than one muscle group. This powerful exercise helps tone your butt, strengthen your body and burn a lot of calories. To boost your calorie expenditure, you can try to do jump squats. If you're still a beginner try to hold isometric squats against the wall for some time.

Pushups: Pushups can work wonders for your body. They work muscles in the shoulders, arms and also engage the core. Start with baby push ups with your knees on the floor and once you gain strength you can chose difficult variations.

Lunges: Lunges give amazing results because they isolate every leg individually, helping transform your body. Walking lunges are a great way to shape legs and lose extra flab around the butt and thighs. Later you can start doing it with weights or by alternating it with jumps.

Cycling: Cycling it is a foolproof way to work your legs. It strengthens your legs, arms and back, encourages your heart to work more efficiently and aids in weight loss. Always wear a helmet on the road to ensure safety though. Nidhi says, "So now you can do these workouts at home and start losing weight. If you get stuck or need any help please feel free to write to me."



It is time to stop blaming the outdoor air for your child's deteriorated health conditions. The air inside your home could be to blame.

Is your home making your Child sick?



India's struggle with air pollution is being spoken about on a daily basis. We are now beginning to recognize that outdoor air pollution is hazardous to the physical, mental and emotional wellbeing of any person. However, most of us remain ignorant towards the grave threat we face indoors and are yet to wake up to this grim situation. The air we are breathing in every day could be gradually killing us. According to the WHO, air pollution impacts the most vulnerable sections of the population and children are among the worst hit. Moreover, a survey by Greenpeace conducted inside five prominent schools across Delhi found that the quality of air was extremely unhealthy.

How indoor air pollution can affect your child's health?

Low levels of indoor air pollution can also negatively affect the health of vulnerable individuals, especially asthmatic children



Moreover, children have a faster breathing rate than adults and inhale more air pollutants (per body weight) than adults do. Their vulnerability arises from their narrower airways as their lungs are still developing

Air pollution increases a child's risk of getting sick more often by reducing the respiratory system's ability to fight infection and remove foreign particles, resulting in lower stamina, frequent complaints of lethargy, allergies, breathing problems, respiratory disorders, chronic asthma etc.

In fact, developmental problems have also been noticed in some children at a later stage in life

What precautions can you take to improve your child's health?

A few precautionary measures can go a long way in

protecting your child from air-borne illnesses and respiratory problems

It's important to understand that humid or unventilated homes can breed mold and mites

No smoking, safe use and storage of household chemicals and good ventilation can ensure that your children grow up in a healthier environment

During summers, switching on air conditioners for long is not advisable as the same air gets circulated around.

Instead, try installing a good quality air purifier with a high efficiency particulate air filtration (HEPA) filter, as it can trap small particles and pollutants, thereby significantly improving air quality

Ensure that your child gets adequate rest breaks when it is very hot/smoggy

Make sure that your child drinks lots of fluids (water and natural fruit juices), especially during summer

De-cluttering homes during summer season is important. Maybe it is time to rethink. Your home may not be the safest place for your child.



Insomnia:

If you suffer from a lack of sleep or have irregular sleep hours, you need to visit your doctor. According to studies, insomniacs are at twice the risk of suffering a stroke than people who don't have trouble falling asleep. As one's sleep deficit increases, so does their blood pressure. Over time, this can lead to inflammation of the vascular walls. Even a couple of nights like that can increase BP. Listen to calming sounds just before you go to bed. For example, the sound of water, the chirping of birds or the faint sound of a horse's hooves.

Stress:

Stress can have a lasting impact on your brain. A new study says that those who experience more stressful situations (work, relationship and health problems) in their middle age are more likely to develop dementia later in life.



Aerated drinks:

While having aerated drinks on rare occasions is OK, people who drink more than 8.5 ounces a day are at an increased risk of developing pancreatic cancer. Fizzy drinks with high sugar content cause your pancreas to increase insulin production. This results in pancreatic



Don't ignore these Warning signs

Simple things may put you at risk of many diseases, say experts. So, watch out for these warning signs.

cells getting exposed to a higher concentration of insulin than other cells in the bod, which in turn creates an imbalance that may cause cancer growth.

Vitamin-D deficiency:

While staying outdoors for long periods of time without

adequate sun protection is a big no-no, experts say that sun exposure for about 10 to 20 minutes a day is a must. Vitamin-D deficiency increases the risk of respiratory infections. This vitamin is also vital for a strong immune system.

Non-stop rain and snowfall in Himachal: Roads shut, power cut, landslide in Kullu

Snowfall continues in Lahaul-Spiti even after three days. In several areas, over three feet of snow has accumulated, and there also remains a risk of avalanches, said officials.

New Delhi. Heavy snowfall coupled with rain and landslides across many parts of Himachal Pradesh, including the tribal districts of Lahaul, Spiti, Chamba and Mandi, has put life to a standstill with no electricity reported in many areas. Snowfall continues in Lahaul-Spiti even after three days. In several areas, over

three feet of snow has accumulated, and there also remains a risk of avalanches, said officials. On the other hand, heavy rainfall for the past two days has caused mayhem in Kullu district as several vehicles have been reportedly washed away in the Bhoothnath Nala area and vehicles buried under debris in Gandhinagar. The meteorological department in Himachal has issued an orange alert.



Late last evening, an avalanche hit the Tindi Panchayat area of Lahaul Valley. Heavy snowfall in the region has left residents anxious. Though there was no loss of life, the sight of the ice flood left locals in shock.

Considering the continuous heavy snowfall on Thursday, the district administration has issued a notification ordering the closure of educational institutions in Lahaul-Spiti on Friday. Additionally, the snowfall has led to a drinking water

shortage, and 53 electricity transformers have been rendered inoperative.

Lahaul Valley is witnessing such heavy snowfall after a long time, forcing people to remain indoors. The Meteorological Department has also issued an avalanche warning for several areas, advising residents to stay indoors.

Meanwhile, a landslide in Himachal Pradesh's Mandi district has blocked the Chandigarh-Manali National Highway, with a bus reportedly involved in an accident. As a result, there is heavy traffic

congestion even though small vehicles are allowed to pass, said authorities.

The exact details of the bus accident remain unclear, and police are investigating. Machinery from Afcons, an infrastructure company engaged in four-lane construction, has been deployed to clear the debris which has been blocking the highway. Mandi District Police has shared an advisory on social media, urging travellers to exercise caution. Officials confirmed that efforts to clear the debris began immediately using Afcons machinery.

While partial clearance has allowed small vehicles to pass, traffic remains heavily affected on both sides, said officials. Authorities further said that full restoration of traffic will only be possible once all debris is removed. While debris removal is underway, continuous rainfall is slowing down the process, said a senior police official.

India Needs 7.8% Growth To Become High-Income Country By 2047: World Bank

To achieve this goal India would require reforms in financial sector as well as in land and labour market, the World Bank said in its India Country Memorandum titled 'Becoming a High-Income Economy in a generation'.



New Delhi. India will need to grow at an average 7.8 per cent to become a high-income country by 2047, a World Bank report said on Friday. To achieve this goal India would require reforms in financial sector as well as in land and labour market, the World Bank said in its India Country Memorandum titled 'Becoming a High-Income Economy in a generation'.

Recognizing India's fast pace of growth averaging 6.3 per cent between 2000 and 2024, the report notes that India's past achievements provide the foundation for its future ambitions. "However, reaching the ambitious target of becoming a high-income economy by 2047 will not be possible in a business-as-usual scenario... for India to become a high-income economy by 2047, its GNI (gross national income) per capita would have to increase by nearly 8 times over the current levels; growth would have to accelerate further and to remain high over the next two decades, a feat that few countries have achieved.

"To meet this target, given the less conducive external environment, India would need to not only maintain ongoing initiatives but in fact expand and intensify reforms," the World Bank report said.

In recent years, India has introduced a host of structural reforms to transform the country into a global manufacturing hub, to boost infrastructure, improve human capital, and leverage digitization, while at the same time bolstering macroeconomic stability.

"To reach high income by 2047, India's growth rate needs to average 7.8 per cent, in real terms, over the coming decades... Only an 'accelerated reforms' package would put India on track to become high-income by 2047," the report said. World Bank India country director Auguste Tano Kouame said lessons from countries like Chile, Korea and Poland show how they have successfully made the transition from middle to high-income countries by deepening their integration into the global economy. The report said that over the past decades, India has developed at a scale and pace that few would have thought possible. From 2000 to today, in real terms, the economy has grown nearly four-fold, and GDP per capita has almost tripled. Because India grew faster than the rest of the world, its share in the global economy has doubled from 1.6 per cent in 2000 to 3.4 per cent in 2023. India has become the world's fifth largest economy.

"This remarkable development story also includes a steep decline in extreme poverty, and massive expansion of service delivery and essential infrastructure. Building on these achievements, India has set the ambitious goal of becoming a high-income country by 2047," the report added.

"Arbitrary, Illegal": Top Court Sets Aside Dismissal Of Two Women Civil Judges

New Delhi. The Supreme Court set aside the orders of the dismissal of two women civil judges in Madhya Pradesh in 2023, terming the action as "punitive, arbitrary and illegal".

The case pertained to the dismissal of Judges Aditi Kumar Sharma and Sarita Chaudhary, who had joined the Madhya Pradesh judicial service in 2018 and 2017 respectively. A bench of Justices BV Nagarathna and N Kottiswar Singh noted that one of judges, during probation period, had got married, contracted Covid-19, had a miscarriage, and her brother was diagnosed with cancer. "When there is birth there is sense of fulfillment whereas miscarriage has serious effect on mental health of women which has psychological impact which even leads to suicide and recurring miscarriages even has severe effects on health. Miscarriage affects a person's identity, stigma, isolation in other factors. It is not enough to find comfort in growing number of women judicial officers unless we secure a comfortable atmosphere for them to work in," Justice Nagarathana said.

While adding that women judges often take pain-killer medicines to sit through the entire day in court on certain days, the Bench added that freedom from discrimination for women during pregnancy is precious right. The top court direct the reinstatement of both women judges within 15 days. Justice Nagarathna said a report given by the Madhya Pradesh High Court in a sealed cover was also not satisfactory in persuading the Bench to take a different view. "We hold that the termination was in the form of punishment. The termination was stigmatic in nature," she said. On November 11, 2023, the top court had taken a suo motu cognisance of the termination of six women civil judges by the state government over their alleged unsatisfactory performance. However, a full court of the Madhya Pradesh High Court reconsidered its earlier resolutions on August 1, 2024 and decided to reinstate four officers— Jyoti Varkade, Sushri Sonakshi Joshi, Sushri Priya Sharma and Rachna Atulkar Joshi -- on certain terms and conditions, leaving out the other two, Aditi Kumar Sharma and Sarita Chaudhary from the exercise.

Teacher writes answers on board during exam, suspended after video goes viral

New Delhi. In a shocking incident, a teacher in a Madhya Pradesh school was caught helping students cheat by solving the question paper on a blackboard. The incident, which was captured on camera, took place on February 25 in Betul district. The school has suspended the teacher and has launched an enquiry into the matter. During the exam, primary school teacher Sangeeta Vishwakarma was seen writing answers for the Mathematics question paper on the blackboard, enabling students to cheat.

As the teacher was helping students cheat, someone recorded the entire incident and shared the video on social media, where it quickly gained traction.

As soon as the video went viral, the district administration took immediate notice. Betul Collector Narendra Kumar Suryavanshi ordered an urgent investigation considering the seriousness of the matter. During the enquiry, the allegations of facilitating cheating against the teacher were found to be true, leading to her suspension.

Assistant Commissioner of the Tribal Affairs Department, Shilpa Jain, said that Sangeeta Vishwakarma was assigned as an invigilator in the examination hall. However, Jain pointed out that Vishwakarma misused her position by solving the question paper on the blackboard and facilitating cheating among students. "Following her suspension, a disciplinary enquiry has been initiated against the teacher. If further serious charges are proven, strict action may be taken against her," said Jain. Additionally, action is being considered against the examination centre head and assistant centre head. If required, an FIR may also be registered following the investigation," Jain added.

After this incident, the education department issued strict warnings to all teachers, stating that using unfair means or promoting cheating in any way during exams will result in severe consequences. The administration has also instructed authorities to enforce strict monitoring at examination centres to prevent such incidents in the future.

48-km stretch along Yamuna to get facelift

NEW DELHI. "No part of Delhi should experience waterlogging this season. If it occurs, the officials responsible will face suspension," said PWD and Water Minister Parvesh Verma on Thursday, the third day of the Assembly session. Outlining his plans for a cleaner Delhi, Verma said he has set a 100-day deadline for cleaning 77 drains throughout the city.

"Though the goal has been set for 100 days, we intend to complete the cleaning faster, before the Monsoon arrives. I have sought before and after pictures and videos of every single drain. Nearly 12 meetings have been held in this regard. The department has been given clear instructions - desilt, use pumps or whatever is required, but waterlogging will not be tolerated."

Meanwhile, taking a step towards a cleaner Yamuna, Verma stated that the entire 48 km stretch will be



redeveloped into a green zone comprising jogging path, picnic spot dotted with small eateries and stalls.

He assured that rules against the river pollution will be made stricter. "The industries releasing the industrial waste into the Yamuna will be fined." Verma also emphasized that this year the Chhhat Pooja will be held amid better conditions.

He talked about waste leakage identification, replacement of old water lines, installation of a GPS system in water tankers, and

streamlining the drainage cleaning process.

Additionally, the minister instructed officials to initiate sewer and footpath cleaning, accelerate the construction of five flyovers, and enhance the aesthetics of pavements beneath flyovers within a set deadline. "I inspected the construction work at Barapullah (puliya) today and have directed officials to commence construction work in April and complete it in four months," he stated.

"Today, I instructed the Public Works Department (PWD) and flood management officials to prepare a plan for sewer and footpath cleaning, review pending flyover projects, restart their construction, and undertake pavement beautification under flyovers," he said.

Verma also examined a damaged culvert that had remained unrepaired for two years, leading to road closures and severe traffic congestion.

USAID accused of supporting Hamas, Lashkar-linked group at Congress hearing

New Delhi. Over USD 2 billion has been sent by the US Agency for International Development (USAID) to support the Hamas terrorist organisation since the October 7 attacks on Israel in 2023, under the Biden Administration, according to testimony presented during a House Committee hearing on USAID and federal workers.

Reports further indicate that USAID also provided assistance to an anti-Indian outfit designated as a terrorist organisation by the US government. It funded the Falah-e-Insaniat Foundation (FIF), a front for Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) based in Pakistan. LeT was responsible for the 26/11 Mumbai attacks, which left 166 people dead and over 300 injured.

Previously, USAID had been accused of continuing to support the foundation despite being under investigation for

the same. Both the LeT and its front JuD, proscribed as terror organisations by both India and the US, have carried out multiple terror attacks across India,

Hand for Relief and Development (HHRD). HHRD has alleged ties with jihadist organisations in South Asia. "USAID funded HHRD, a Michigan-based Islamist charity with ties to jihadist groups, including Pakistan's Falah-e-Insaniat Foundation, a US-designated terrorist organisation involved in the 2008 Mumbai attacks," said Middle East expert Amjad Taha said on X, further claiming that USD 110,000 was sent to jihadist groups operating out of South Asia, including FIF, which was behind the 26/11 Mumbai attacks.

The Trump administration has decided to cut 90% of USAID's foreign contracts and over USD 60 billion in funding for the US's assistance programs worldwide, signalling a decades-long shift in the US shaping up its policies and interests abroad with the help of the aid agency's initiatives.



'Duplicate registrations': CAG exposes Rs 220 crore irregularities in Ladli scheme

The report found that the Women and Child Development department overseeing the scheme failed to verify beneficiary details, leading to widespread duplication.

NEW DELHI. A Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) audit has uncovered massive discrepancies amounting to over Rs 220 crore in the Ladli Scheme, launched to provide financial assistance for girls' education. The audit documents, exclusively accessed by this newspaper, revealed thousands of duplicate and fraudulent registrations, an excess payment of over Rs 41 crore, and a staggering Rs 618.38 crore lying unclaimed. The report found that the Women and Child Development department overseeing the scheme failed to verify beneficiary details, leading to widespread duplication. It identified over 36,000 cases where beneficiaries' names, birth dates, and parental information were identical, raising concerns about fraudulent enrollments.

According to the findings, 16,546 duplicate and 131 triplicate registrations were detected among 8.84 lakh active beneficiaries as of December 2022. This resulted in an excess payment of Rs 11.49 crore. In another 20,127 cases, where either the names or dates of birth matched, Rs 29.23 crore was disbursed. The



audit also highlighted that the department did not integrate Aadhaar verification until May 2023, allowing multiple enrollments of the same beneficiary. The department only initiated steps to incorporate the Ladli Scheme into the Direct Benefit Transfer system that May. This failure to ensure a foolproof registration process led to significant financial irregularities.

The CAG flagged another primary concern: nearly 9 per cent of beneficiaries were enrolled after turning 18, the scheme's maturity age, causing a financial loss of Rs 180.92 crore. The audit found that 78,065 beneficiaries who had already crossed the eligible age at

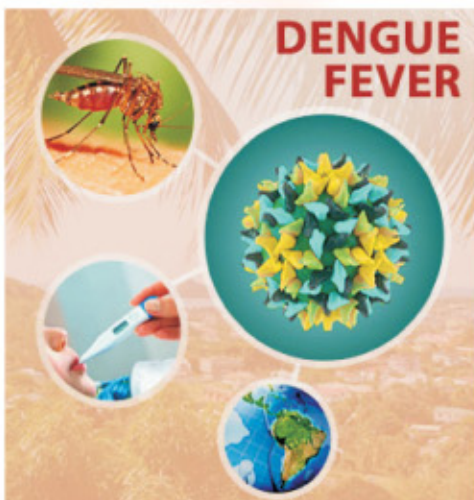
enrollment had accounts accumulating funds. "In many cases, the column 'Date of Birth' was blank," it stated. Meanwhile, a staggering 618.38 crore for beneficiaries remained unspent since the scheme's inception, even as lakhs of eligible girls have crossed the maturity age, the audit report has revealed. The initiative was launched in 2008 during the tenure of late former Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit to provide financial assistance to girls at different stages of their education and a lump sum amount of up to Rs 1 lakh upon turning

18. As of December 31, 2022, around 4.9 lakh girls, out of 8.84 lakh active beneficiaries, which amounts to 55% of the scheme's total active enrollees, had not received their due benefits despite meeting the eligibility criteria, the audit said. The report states that Rs 236.03 crore remained unclaimed by 1.26 lakh beneficiaries aged 18 to 20 years. Another Rs 224.56 crore was not disbursed to 1.18 lakh beneficiaries between the ages of 20 and 26, while Rs 157.78 crore never went to 77,000 girls now over 26 years old. Additionally, 1,74,960 cases where beneficiaries met the maturity criteria were left unsettled.



5 countries using method to keep

Dengue in check



hosts, VCRC director P Jambulingam said. "When female *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes draw blood infected with the dengue virus from humans, these insects become potential transmitters of dengue. They can inject the virus into the next person they draw blood from," he said at the 13th Conference on Vectors and Vector-Borne Diseases held in Chennai on Monday. "Studies show *Wolbachia* retains the virus in the insect's abdomen and does not let it migrate to its salivary gland."

The research institute will test the bacteria in its laboratory from March, with eggs of mosquitoes infected with *Wolbachia* from Monash University in Australia.

In 2016, more than 11 lakh people across the country tested positive for dengue and more than 200 died of the disease, data from the National Vector Control Programme shows. In the past six years, more than 30,000 people in Tamil Nadu tested positive and nearly 100 people died due to dengue. If the research is successful, the Union health ministry believes it could eliminate dengue from the country or at least out the brakes on the disease.

Research by the Australian scientists showed *Wolbachia* from fruit flies can block the dengue virus in mosquitoes. The Indian Council of Medical Research has signed a memorandum with Monash University to study the impact of the bacteria countering dengue.

"We have tried traditional vector control measures such as fogging, mosquito nets,

spraying insecticide and clearing larvae from breeding sources," ICMR director Dr Soumya Swaminathan said. "But they have largely been ineffective. We have not been able to bring down dengue. It's time we look for biocontrol mechanisms." In the first phase of the research, officials will allow breeding of bacteria-infected eggs in a cage with adult mosquitoes carrying the dengue virus.

"We hope that in less than 10 weeks, the insects will be infected," Jambulingam said. "Then we'll check if the virus is retained in the insects' abdomen. If it is, we will launch these insects in the field."

At least five countries including Vietnam, Indonesia and Brazil are testing *Wolbachia*-infected mosquitoes to check the spread of dengue.

Dr Soumya said ICMR is keeping tabs on research by private company Oxitec, which uses advanced genetics to insert a self-limiting gene into mosquitoes.

The gene is passed on to the insect's offspring, so genetically engineered male mosquitoes released in the wild mate with wild females and their offspring inherit the self-limiting trait. The resulting offspring die before reaching adulthood and local mosquito populations decline.

Former ICMR director N K Ganguly said to control dengue, the country needs better disease burden assessment. "That requires a

better reporting system," he said. "We should strengthen evidence-based outbreak management. We still have a long way to go."



Here's the buzz for people in Tamil Nadu, a state in which mosquitoes infect an average of 5,000 people with dengue each year and 100 deaths have been recorded in the past six years.

Scientists at Vector Control Research Centre (VCRC), Puducherry, will soon induce *Wolbachia* bacteria from fruit flies in the primary transmitter of the dengue virus, the female *Aedes aegypti* mosquito, to slow or prevent the spread of the life-threatening ailment.

Once we introduce it in mosquitoes, the *Wolbachia* bacteria will hopefully block the dengue virus (flavivirus) from infecting new

Lowering systolic BP below 120 may prevent early death

Intensive treatment to lower systolic (top number) blood pressure to below 120 mm Hg can prevent 107,500 early deaths every year, according to a new study.

Systolic blood pressure refers to the pressure in the arteries when the heart beats. The bottom number, diastolic, refers to the pressure between beats.

Current guidelines recommend keeping systolic blood pressure below 140 mm Hg (millimeters of mercury).

However, the results also revealed that there

was a 27 per cent reduction in mortality from all causes when systolic blood pressure was lowered to below 120, compared to the standard treatment of lowering blood pressure to below 140 mm Hg.

"If fully implemented, intensive lowering of systolic blood pressure could prevent about 107,500 deaths per year," said researchers at Loyola University in Chicago.

For the study, published in the journal *Circulation*, the team enrolled more than 9,350 adults aged 50 and older who had high blood pressure and were at high risk for cardiovascular disease.

High blood pressure, or hypertension, is a leading risk factor for heart disease, stroke, kidney failure and other health problems.

While saving lives, an intensive blood pressure regimen also would cause serious side effects, the researchers said.

The study estimated that approximately 56,100 more episodes of low blood pressure, 34,400 more episodes of fainting and 43,400 additional electrolyte disorders would occur annually with implementation of intensive systolic blood pressure lowering in US adults.

But most of these effects do not have lasting consequences and are reversible by lowering blood pressure medications, the researchers noted.



Smoking ban in public places may help improve health

Researchers have found evidence that a ban on smoking in public places could be an effective measure to reduce exposure to second-hand smoke which has long been associated with negative health effects. "The study findings highlight the impact of smoke-free policies, which contradict the hypothesis driven by the tobacco industry that smoke-free legislation merely displace smoking from public to private places," said lead author Esteve Fernandez of the Catalan Institute of Oncology in Spain. The study of second-hand smoke exposure after two smoking bans in Spain showed that overall exposure can be decreased across all settings by comprehensive legislative efforts.

The researchers reviewed approximately 2,500 adult non-smokers' self-reported rates of tobacco smoke exposure in several public and private settings following smoking bans in 2006 and 2011.

While the 2006 smoking ban prohibited smoking in enclosed public places and workplaces (except in hospitality venues) and selected outdoor areas (hospital campuses, educational centres, and playgrounds). The survey results, published in the journal *Nicotine & Tobacco Research*, showed significantly lower exposure following the second legislation, with participants reporting their overall exposure falling from 72 per cent in 2006 to 45 per cent in 2011. Exposure decreased across all locations surveyed, beyond the workplaces and hospitality settings covered by the 2011 legislation.

For example, exposure also decreased in residences from 29 per cent to 13 per cent and in transportation spaces from 41 per cent to 13 per cent.

"Exposure to second-hand smoke in selected outdoor settings may be further reduced by extending smoke-free legislation," said senior author Maria J. Lopez of the Public Health Agency of Barcelona, Spain.

Sensex plunges nearly 1,000 points, Nifty tumbles over 1%; IT, auto stocks bleed

New Delhi. Benchmark stock market indices fell sharply in early trade on Friday, reacting to global cues after US President Donald Trump said that his proposed tariffs on Mexican and Canadian goods will be effective from March 4. The S&P BSE Sensex lost nearly 977.03 points to 73,635.40 at 10:06 am, while the NSE Nifty50 declined 303.60 points to 22,241.45 at 10:06 am. The sharp fall has eroded the market capitalisation of BSE-listed companies by Rs 7 lakh crore. Smallcap and midcap stocks were also hit hard during the trading session, with deep losses across the board due to a sharp jump in volatility. Information Technology and auto stocks plunged during the session, reflected by a nearly 4% fall in the Nifty IT index and almost 3% decline in the Nifty auto index. Dr. VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Financial Services, said that stock markets dislike uncertainty, and uncertainty has been on the rise ever since Donald Trump was elected US president. "The spate of tariff announcements by Trump has been impacting markets, and the latest announcement of an additional 10% tariff on China is a confirmation of the market view that Trump will use the initial months of his presidency to threaten countries with tariffs and then negotiate for a settlement favourable to the US," he added. Vijayakumar also noted that how China responds to the latest round of tariffs remains to be seen. "Even now, the markets have not discounted a full-blown trade war between the US and China. It is likely to be avoided. However, the uncertainty element has increased as reflected in the sharp spike in CBOE volatility index to 21.13," he said. He indicated that the stock market could witness a recovery in March, backed by better macroeconomic news flows and subdued FII selling.

Who is Tuhin Kanta Pandey A look at his key roles in the government

New Delhi. Tuhin Kanta Pandey has been appointed as the 11th chairman of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi), replacing Madhabi Puri Buch. Buch's three-year term as the Sebi chief will end on March 1, 2025. The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has approved Pandey's appointment for a term of three years. He is a 1987-batch Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer from the Odisha cadre and is currently serving as the Finance Secretary and Secretary of the Department of Revenue. Pandey took over as Finance Secretary in September 2024 after the position became vacant due to TV Somanathan's promotion to Cabinet Secretary. Before this, he had held key positions in the government, including: Pandey took over as Finance Secretary in September 2024 after the position became vacant due to TV Somanathan's promotion to Cabinet Secretary. Before this, he had held key positions in the government, including: Secretary of the Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM), Secretary of the Department of Public Enterprises (DPE). In these roles, Pandey played a major part in India's economic policies, disinvestment programmes, and public sector management. His experience in handling government finances and investments makes him a strong choice for leading Sebi. Pandey has been involved in some of the most important financial decisions in recent years.

Worked on the 2025-26 Budget: He was one of the key figures in shaping the Union Budget, which provided Rs 1 lakh crore in tax relief to the middle class.

Portfolio in red Top mutual funds to consider amid stock market downturn

New Delhi. The stock market has been on a rough path in recent months. Dalal Street saw another decline on Friday, with the Sensex and Nifty falling more than 1% in early trading. The Sensex tanked by 1,000 points as weak global signals, especially new tariff threats from the US, hit investor confidence.

Since the highs of September 26, 2024, the Nifty 500, which represents a broad section of the market, has dropped by over 17%, while the Nifty 50 has fallen around 14%. Mid-cap and small-cap indices have suffered even more. After a strong bull run of nearly two years, many investors are now looking for safer investment options as the markets have seen a huge correction. Mutual funds that balance risk and growth are a preferred choice among many. Below are some mutual funds that could be considered in this volatile market.

LARGE-CAP FUNDS

"Large-cap funds invest in well-established companies, which generally fall less during market downturns. Among active large-cap funds, Canara Robeco Bluechip Equity Fund has consistently outperformed the Nifty 100 over five-year rolling returns since February 2020," said Subho Moulik, Founder & CEO, Appreciate.

However, passive large-cap funds have gained popularity due to their cost-effectiveness and performance. Two noteworthy large-cap index funds recommended by Subho Moulik are:

ICICI Pru Nifty 50 Value 20 Index Fund - Picks 20 well-valued stocks from the Nifty 50 universe. Since September 26, 2024, it has outperformed the Nifty 500 and Nifty 100 in 60% and 58.5% of the cases, respectively. Over five years, it has consistently outperformed both indices. Expense ratio: 0.3% (lower than actively managed funds).

Nippon India Nifty 50 Value 20 Index Fund - Outperformed the Nifty 500 and Nifty 100 in 59.14% and 58.06% of instances since September 26, 2024. Based on three-year rolling returns, it has beaten the Nifty 500 and Nifty 100 99.1% and 100% of the time since February 2020.

Stock market crash: 5 things investors should know as Sensex plunges 1,000 points

Stock market crash: Retail investors, already grappling with losses, are left wondering whether this correction will continue or if a recovery is on the horizon. Here are 5 things investors need to know

New Delhi. Domestic stock markets are heading for a rough close this week, with benchmark indices tumbling in early trade on Friday. The Sensex crashed nearly 1,000 points, while the Nifty slipped over 1%, reflecting weak global cues and persistent selling by foreign investors.

Market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms took a hit of almost Rs 7 lakh crore as

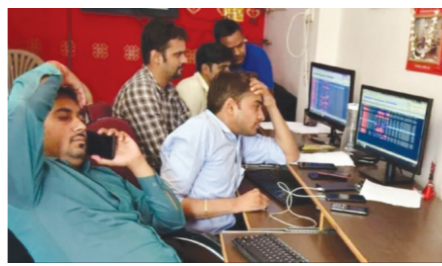
investor sentiment turned sour.

Donald Trump's fresh tariff threats and lack of positive triggers have added to the pressure. Retail investors, already grappling with losses, are left wondering whether this correction will continue or if a recovery is on the horizon. Here are 5 things investors need to know:

TRUMP TARIFFS HAUNT DALAL STREET Dr. VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Financial Services, pointed out that stock markets dislike uncertainty, and uncertainty has been on the rise ever since Donald Trump was elected US president.

"The spate of tariff announcements by Trump has been impacting markets, and the latest announcement of an additional 10% tariff on China is a confirmation of the market's view that Trump will use the initial months of his presidency to threaten countries with tariffs and then negotiate for a settlement favourable to

the US. How China responds to the latest round of tariffs remains to be seen," he said. "Even now, the markets have not discounted a full-blown trade war between the US and China. It is likely to be avoided. However, the



uncertainty element has increased, as reflected in the sharp spike in the CBOE volatility index to 21.13," he added.

RECOVERY IN MARCH?

March is likely to witness a recovery in the Indian market backed by better macro news flows and subdued FII selling. "Since largecap valuations are fair, and in

pockets attractive, FIIs are unlikely to press selling as aggressively during the last few months. Long-term investors can utilise the weakness in the market to slowly accumulate fairly-valued quality largecaps and select fairly-valued stocks in the broader market, like defence stocks for instance," Vijayakumar said.

NIFTY TRENDS UNINSPIRING

Prashanth Tapse, Senior VP (Research), Mehta Equities Ltd, indicated that the Nifty trends over the past few sessions have been "uninspiring" and that it is moving "much like a tortoise".

He also highlighted how negative catalysts are hurting sentiments on Dalal Street. "Weakened investor sentiment following Trump's announcement of a 25% tariff on EU imports and Nvidia's mixed quarterly results. FIIs have sold over Rs 1.34 lakh crore in 2025," he said. "Technically, Nifty's strength depends on surpassing the 24,074 mark, with downside risks at 22,300 and 21,281.

India, EU agree to push for conclusion of free trade pact this year

The EU is India's biggest trade partner in goods, with trade hitting \$137.5 billion in 2023-24, nearly doubling in ten years.

New Delhi. India and the European Union (EU) want to wrap up a free trade deal this year, according to European Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen, reported news agency Reuters. The EU is India's biggest trade partner in goods, with trade hitting \$137.5 billion in 2023-24, nearly doubling in ten years.

Talks on the deal were stuck for eight years before restarting in 2021. Now they include investment rules and



geographical tags. Leyen, visiting India for two days, is here with EU leaders as both sides deal with global tensions. They are expected to set priorities for closer ties.

She told a business event that tough times make strong partnerships. "We both stand to lose from a world of spheres of

influence and isolationism, and we both stand to gain from a world of cooperation and working together," she said before meeting PM Modi.

"But I believe this modern version of great power, competition is also an opportunity for Europe, and India to reimagine its partnership," she said.

Karnataka labour department finds no law violation in Infosys layoffs: Report

NEW DELHI. The Karnataka labour department has found no violation of labour laws in the recent terminations by Infosys, according to an interim report submitted to the state government. The department said that the individuals affected were not employees but trainees, and therefore, the company had not breached any legal requirements, reported The Economic Times (ET). The final report is expected to be submitted within a week, and a copy will also be sent to the Union labour department for further review. A senior government official involved in the investigation confirmed that the layoffs did not break any laws.

"We have not found any violation of labour laws in our inspection at Infosys. There was no employee-employer relationship between them in the first place. They were not even given appointment letters to be called employees. They were trainees for three months, receiving stipends as part of an apprenticeship programme," the official said as quoted by ET. The official further explained that the

state government cannot interfere in the selection process of any private company. However, all necessary information has been gathered from Infosys, and a final report will be



submitted by March 4 or 5. The investigation was conducted by a team led by additional labour commissioner (industrial relations) G Manjunath. Following instructions from Karnataka labour minister Santhosh Lad, the team visited Infosys campuses in Mysuru and Bengaluru. Officials reviewed documents related to the hiring and assessment process to determine whether the company had followed fair practices. According to the

government's inspection, 329 trainees could not clear the assessment test, while over 600 trainees from the 2022 batch progressed to the next stage.

The labour department noted that Infosys had used incorrect terminology to describe the situation. The official clarified, "These are not really terminations, as they were only trainees for a few months. To become employees on probation, they had to clear the tests." On February 7, Infosys terminated hundreds of trainees who were hired from off-campus two-and-a-half years ago but were only onboarded in October 2023. The company stated that these trainees failed to pass an internal assessment programme, which was a requirement to continue with the organisation. A source mentioned in the report who is familiar with Infosys' training process confirmed that typically, only 5% of trainees fail the internal test. However, in this case, the failure rate was 33% because many of the trainees were from the 2022 batch, which faced disruptions during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Bitcoin tumbles 5% to fall below \$80,000 for first time since November

The decline comes amid uncertainty over US President Donald Trump's trade policies, regulatory decisions on cryptocurrency, and concerns among investors after a major hack in rival digital currency ether.

New Delhi. Bitcoin fell sharply on Friday, dropping below \$80,000 for the first time since November. The price of the world's largest cryptocurrency declined by more than 5% in a single day, reaching \$79,666. This decline comes amid uncertainty over U.S. President Donald Trump's trade policies, regulatory decisions on cryptocurrency, and concerns among investors after a major hack in rival digital currency ether. The fall in bitcoin's value marks a huge drop from its peak in mid-December, when it was trading above \$105,000. At the time, investors were optimistic that the Trump administration

would introduce favourable policies for the cryptocurrency market, including a strategic bitcoin fund and relaxed regulations. However, while some crypto-friendly officials were appointed, no major policy changes have been announced since then. "Bitcoin's fall below \$80k shows that positive sentiments from a crypto-friendly administration and high-profile endorsements have run their course,"

Joshua Chu, Co-Chair of the Hong Kong Web3 Association told Reuters. Market analysts believe that bitcoin's decline is linked to the broader financial landscape, including a slowdown in the technology sector. Kyle Rodda, a senior financial market analyst at Capital.com, explained that the cryptocurrency has been affected by the recent drop in major Wall Street tech stocks. "Momentum ran out when there was no fresh news to keep driving the bullish narrative. Bitcoin, which still trades as a 'higher beta tech' play, is being dragged down by the sell-off in Wall Street tech stocks," he told Reuters.

The second-largest cryptocurrency, ether, also saw a sharp decline, falling nearly

6% to \$2,149.38, its lowest level since January. Investors have also been withdrawing funds from bitcoin-backed exchange-traded funds, further contributing to the downturn in the market. Investor confidence has also been affected by global economic concerns.



There are signs that the strong performance of the U.S. economy may be slowing, which has made global markets nervous. At the same time, Trump has announced plans to impose a 25% tariff on imports from Canada and Mexico starting in March, with additional tariffs on Chinese goods also expected. These

policies have raised fears of increased inflation and slower economic growth worldwide. Another factor that has shaken the crypto market is a large-scale hack targeting Bybit, the world's second-largest cryptocurrency exchange after Binance. On February 21, Bybit confirmed that hackers had stolen ether worth about \$1.5 billion. The Dubai-based exchange serves more than 60 million users globally and allows trading of multiple digital currencies, including bitcoin and ether. According to blockchain research firm Elliptic, this was one of the largest thefts in the history of cryptocurrency. Reuben Conceicao, chief strategy officer at digital wallet firm Metasig, pointed to multiple reasons for the market downturn.

"It's a combination of macro forces. The Fed only planning one rate cut, more tariffs, uncertainties around geopolitics and war, and the Bybit hack didn't help confidence either. It is hard for people to be excited and pump BTC when there are bigger issues at play," he told Reuters.



partner with the White House. Tech leaders have broadly fallen in line around Trump since he won the election in November, with Zuckerberg making a particular turn towards the Republican since his return to office. Zuckerberg has multiplied his advances towards Trump, who last summer threatened the tech tycoon with life imprisonment after Meta excluded the president from Facebook in January 2021 for encouraging the assault on the Capitol.

The CEO and founder has dined with the Republican on several occasions, donated to the president's inauguration fund, eased up on content moderation, and ended Facebook's US fact-checking program in an effort to draw closer to the new Republican leadership in Washington.

His longtime political affairs boss was also replaced by a prominent Republican, and he named Trump ally Dana White to his board after the US election. The measures align with the conservative views of the president and his allies, as well as masculinist entertainers and personalities like Elon Musk.

NEWS BOX

Harry Brook my choice to be next England captain, but be careful: Nasser Hussain

New Delhi Nasser Hussain said that Harry Brook would be his choice to replace Jos Buttler as England's next white-ball captain but admitted that they will need to be careful with the young batter. England faced another disappointing outing at an ICC event as they were dumped out of the Champions Trophy 2025 following their loss to Afghanistan. This would raise questions about Jos Buttler's position as the skipper of the side. Buttler admitted that he would need to assess his position as skipper following the exit from the Champions Trophy. Hussain, in his column for the Daily Mail, endorsed Brook to take the role as he felt it was time to move away from Buttler. However, the former captain admitted that the choices are a bit limited at the moment.

"Harry Brook would be my choice as England's next limited-overs captain now it's clearly time to move on from Jos Buttler." "If you're having to think about being England captain, as Buttler said he would be after Champions Trophy elimination earlier this week, you probably know you're done." "The truth is though that as far as future leaders go, the cupboard is



pretty bare and some of that is simply because not enough domestic 50-over cricket is being played," said Hussain. Brook has had experience leading England in ODIs as he was skipper of the side for the series against Australia last year.

Champions Trophy: Full Coverage | Points Table Issues with appointing Brook as skipper Hussain pointed out that the major issue with appointing Brook is that he is a regular in the Test team and England has a packed schedule this year when it comes to red-ball cricket. Hussain felt that England would need to ensure that they aren't weighing down a young player with too much burden. "And there would be issues with appointing Brook. Namely whether, in such an important year that includes a home Test series against India and ends with the Ashes, you want to pass on all the burdens associated with leading a struggling side onto a young man and make his life a bit more difficult as a result." "England are trying to go in a direction where they're playing a lot of their Test players in the limited-overs sides. Do they want that with the captain as well? That is another question."

Jose Mourinho banned for four matches and fined after Turkish referees comment

ISTANBUL: Fenerbahce manager Jose Mourinho was given a four-match ban and fined by the Turkish Football Federation following his comments about Turkish referees after a match at Galatasaray. The Turkish federation on Thursday fined the 62-year-old Portuguese coach 1.6 million Turkish lira (\$44,000) after he criticized the match officials in a media conference following a 0-0 Super Lig draw on Monday.

Mourinho served one of his suspended four games on Thursday when he was absent from the bench for Fenerbahce's 4-1 Turkish Cup win at Gaziantep. Britain's Sky Sports News said Fenerbahce had appealed the four-game ban. It means that if Fenerbahce's appeal is unsuccessful, he will miss their next three domestic games. In his post-match interview on Monday, Mourinho welcomed the decision to bring in a foreign referee for the



game and also praised Slavko Vincic of Slovenia for a "top performance."

Mourinho said he'd gone to see the referee and thank him following the game. When he saw the fourth official — a Turkish referee — Mourinho said he told him: "If you are the referee... would be a disaster."

Asked about a challenge early in the match, he said a Turkish referee would have reacted with a yellow card "after the big dive and their bench jumping around like monkeys."

The Turkish federation said the ban and fine were instituted due to "derogatory and offensive statements towards the Turkish referee" and accusations of chaos and disorder in Turkish football. It said Mourinho's remarks violated sports ethics, promoted violence and disorder and could incite fan incidents. Fenerbahce issued a statement on Tuesday defending Mourinho, saying his comments were taken out of context and deliberately distorted. Former Chelsea, Manchester United and Tottenham Hotspur manager Mourinho has previously been fined and suspended for his comments about Turkish match officials.

Lahore rain and Australia threaten Afghanistan's historic semi-final bid

- Afghanistan faces Australia in a virtual quarter-final at the Champions Trophy
- Rain is expected to threaten the match in Lahore
- Both teams have beaten England in Group B

New Delhi Australia and Afghanistan might not carry the history of India vs Pakistan, but it is quickly gaining traction as one of the most dramatic events in an ICC tournament. This is the fourth time in four different editions of ICC trophies that the two teams will meet in a high-stakes match, and sparks will fly once again as politics and cricket mix on the 22 yards at Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore.

Australia have previously refused to play against Afghanistan, citing the troubled history of women's rights in Afghanistan. There have been calls for a boycott from

certain sections of the Australian crowd once again, and thankfully, from a cricketing perspective — and a cricketing perspective alone — those calls have fallen on deaf ears.

The Afghanistan players, who have been prominent fixtures in the Big Bash League over the years, have publicly challenged the calls for a boycott in the past. "I want, all the players want, to play cricket because that is the only source of happiness for people back home in Afghanistan, and if you take that away, there is nothing that people could celebrate or enjoy," Rashid Khan had told PTI in an interview back in 2024. This subtle undertone of dissatisfaction, hurt, and betrayal has always added that extra pitch of theatre to this budding rivalry.

AUSTRALIA VS AFGHANISTAN IN ICC EVENTS

In recent years, Afghanistan have hurt Australia twice in ICC tournaments. In the 2022 T20 World Cup, Afghanistan played out a thriller against Australia in Adelaide, denying them a win by a big margin, thanks to a whirlwind knock from Rashid Khan. Rashid's innings meant that Australia won the Super 12 match by just 4 runs, which eventually led to their exit by Net Run Rate.



In 2023, at the ODI World Cup in India, Afghanistan had Australia by the scruff of the neck. But a generational double hundred from Glenn Maxwell knocked them out instead. From 91/7, Maxwell and Pat Cummins struck a spellbinding partnership to chase down 292 runs in Mumbai, creating a memory for the ages.

In 2024, Afghanistan took some semblance of revenge, beating Australia by 21 runs in the Super 8 stage of the T20 World Cup, booking a spot in their first-ever semi-final in the ICC tournament. Champions Trophy: Full Coverage | Points Table

AUSTRALIA AND ICC TOURNAMENTS While Afghanistan did it in 2024, beating

Australia in an ICC tournament is a monumental task. Ask India, who, despite having a near-perfect campaign in 2023, faltered against Australia in the final at home. India, under the leadership of Rohit Sharma, became the first team in over a decade to fail to win a World Cup final at home. Forget India, ask England in this Champions Trophy. Playing against a C-string Australian team, England failed to defend 350 runs in Lahore, despite having their full-strength attack. Australia are like a mythical beast in ICC tournaments. You hear about them in stories, like folklore of sorts. On their normal days, they play like a dream; it does not matter if they are weaker in strength, and on certain days, Australia remain utterly invincible.

MUST WIN FOR AFGHANISTAN

The good thing is that for Afghanistan, things remain simple. They have to slay the beast. If Afghanistan win, they go through to the semi-finals. If they lose, they are knocked out. Things remain slightly different for Australia, though. I mean, if they win, they surely go through, but if they lose, they have to hope that England heavily beat South Africa in their final group-stage game, which in turn would help Australia qualify via Net Run Rate.

MS Dhoni and R Ashwin reunited as CSK amp up IPL 2025 preparations

- Ashwin rejoined CSK during IPL 2025 auction
- CSK begin their IPL 2025 campaign against MI
- Ashwin and Dhoni's reunion took the fans down memory lane

New Delhi MS Dhoni and R Ashwin were reunited once again as Chennai Super Kings amp up their preparations for the upcoming season of IPL 2025. Ashwin and Dhoni were part of the CSK team that won back-to-back IPL titles in 2010 and 2011. Ashwin wasn't part of the CSK side during the 2018 season as he moved to the Punjab Kings. The off-spinner would make his much-awaited return to CSK during the IPL 2025 auction as he was bought for a whopping 9.75 crore rupees. This means that Ashwin will be back at the Chepauk, alongside Dhoni and former India bowling

partner Ravindra Jadeja as Chennai bid to win their 6th IPL title. The franchise has already started their preps with Dhoni9, captain Ruturaj Gaikwad and others joining at the team base for the preparatory camp.

CSK shared a video on social media on



Thursday, February 27 showing Dhoni and Ashwin heading onto the field for practice. This certainly struck a chord with the Chennai fans, who were quickly reminded of the great days that the duo shared while donning the famous yellow jersey. You can see the full video below: Ashwin had reacted

earlier about his CSK return and said he was reminded of the 2011 auction when the franchise went all in for him.

"They say life is a circle. I played for them from 2008 to 2015. I am always indebted to them. Whatever I learnt at CSK then has propelled me this far in international cricket.

It's been 10 years since I played for CSK."

"The price, CSK buying me and all that is there. But, I feel nostalgic because, CSK fought for me during the bidding war like how they did in 2011. It was a trip down memory lane. It's a very special feeling."

"I have seen a lot of 'Anbuden fans' banners. I have played there for Rajasthan Royals. I played in Chennai, and I noticed that CSK fans won't shout or celebrate when I am bowling and batting." "CSK will begin their IPL 2025 campaign with a mouth-watering clash against Mumbai Indians at the Chepauk on March 23. "I am so glad to return to CSK. I am looking forward to playing in front of the ever-growing fandom. Looking forward to playing with MS Dhoni and playing under Ruturaj Gaikwad," said Ashwin.

Pakistan cricket's miserable state: Prime Minister to take notice, says advisor

New Delhi Pakistan's embarrassing exit from the Champions Trophy is set to have ramifications. Rana Sanaullah, who is the advisor to Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, said in an interview that the PM will be taking notice of structural discrepancies in the Pakistan Cricket Board, run by Mohsin Naqvi. Sanaullah gave a fiery interview to Pakistani paper Dawn, where he stated that despite the autonomy of the PCB, they have not been able to deliver results. The advisor to the Pakistani PM said that the PCB had done as they pleased, which included spending limitless money on the Champions Cup, with a budget of 900 million Pakistani rupees. "The cricket board is an independent institution. They can do as they please, which they have. And what they've done, it is my personal opinion that I will request the prime minister to discuss the matter in the cabinet and parliament," Rana Sanaullah



said. "This is not about any particular instance, or about any one chairman being appointed. This is a process that you can see has been happening for the past five or 10 years," he added. Champions Trophy: Full Coverage | Points Table "The expenditure happening at a higher level should be brought in front of the country and parliament," he concluded. Pakistan overspent their budget for the Champions Trophy by a significant amount due to the

renovation of their three stadiums. Lahore, Rawalpindi, and Karachi saw major overhauls to bring the stadiums up to international standards. According to a PTI report, Pakistan had originally planned to spend PKR 12.3 billion on renovation costs, but it went over by nearly 6 billion PKR when the project was completed. Sanaullah also slammed the Champions Cup, the brainchild of PCB chairman Mohsin Naqvi, which was meant to elevate the standards of domestic players in Pakistan. Sanaullah claimed that the five mentors of the Champions Cup sides had no clue what they were doing and were essentially being paid for doing nothing. "Mentors are being paid PKR 5 million and have been heard admitting to the media that they are unaware of their responsibilities, so they've been taking PKR 5 million monthly for not working," he said.

Prague Masters: Praggnanandhaa held again, Chithambaram scores crushing win against Keymer

- Chithambaram was quite unstoppable as he kept increasing the pressure till Keymer walked in to a lost rook and pawns endgame? it took 45 moves in all.

PRAGUE. Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa played out a second straight draw against Turkey's Gurel Ediz while Aravindh Chithambaram crashed through the defences of Germany's Vincent Keymer in the second round of the Prague Masters here. Chithambaram, who has been knocking hard

on the doors of elite circles, scored his first victory with black pieces after squeezing himself out of danger zone in his first-round game against Czech Grandmaster Nguyen Thai Dai Van. The Indian was involved in the sole decisive game of the day in the 10-players round-robin format, while the other matches ended in draws. Dai Van drew his second game on the trot with Sam Shankland of the United States, top seeded Wei Yi from China opened his account after splitting the point with Dutchman Anish Giri, and Quang Leim Le of Vietnam achieved the same result against Navara David from Czech Republic.

With seven rounds to go, Chithambaram joined Shankland in lead on 1.5 points out of two games. They are followed by Giri, Le, Dai Van, David, Keymer and Praggnanandhaa. Ediz and Wei Yi share the last spot on a half point apiece from their two games. In a day when world champion Boris Spassky breathed his last, Chithambaram's



victory had traits of the Russian's style of play to go for the kill at the first opportunity and not let it slip. The Queen's gambit accepted may have a solid reputation with black pieces but the young Indian cavalry is all out to breakout of that stereotype.

How else could one explain Chithambaram's choice of move order that gave white the luxury of a dynamic centre? It was an inch-by-inch invasion that won Chithambaram a pawn in the middle game and the trade of

your first crash, your first date, first day of school. The excitement I got by the idea of, "This is my first time in the red suit, the first time in the Ferrari." Wow. Honestly, I've never been so excited. "Hamilton also admitted that he had come to terms with the idea he may never drive for Ferrari. "If I'm really honest, I had accepted the fact that I'm probably not going to drive for Ferrari," says Hamilton. "I was OK with that." While many have been sceptical about Hamilton's move to Ferrari because of his age, the British driver isn't ready to consider himself an 'old man' just yet. "The old man is a state of mind," says Hamilton. "Of course your body ages. But I'm never going to be an old man."



Hamilton was later forced by the Indian to harp on the better possibilities for his troupe. Chithambaram was quite unstoppable as he kept increasing the pressure till Keymer walked in to a lost rook and pawns endgame? it took 45 moves in all. Praggnanandhaa has shown his ability to play all openings with either colour and his choice of French defence turned out to be a good one guaranteeing an equal game. The lone problem was to make something out of an equal position and the 16-year old Turk proved why he is hailed as one of the brightest among young Europeans, as he gave a little away. The players signed the peace on move 46 when it was evident the rook endgame did not offer chances for either of them. In the challengers' section which is being held simultaneously, Divya Deshmukh broke out of her shackles to score an impressive victory over Richard Stalmach of Czech Republic.

Tara Sutaria's

Mom Shares Strong Note After Aadar Jain's 'Time Pass' Comment: 'He Shouldn't Be Saying It'

Before marrying Alekha, Aadar Jain was dating Tara Sutaria. However, the two called it quits in 2023.



Aadar Jain recently shocked everyone when he told his now-wife, Alekha Advani, during one of their pre-wedding festivities, that his previous relationships were only a "time pass". While Aadar's former girlfriend, Tara Sutaria maintained her silence and did not react to the comment, her mother now has seemingly taken a dig at the member of the Kapoor family. Recently, Tara's mother, Tina Sutaria, took to her Instagram stories and shared a note which read, "If your boyfriend/husband ever says anything disrespectful to you, tell him to write it down on a piece of paper, get in his car, drive and deliver it to his mother, or simply hand it to his daughter. If he can't say it to his mother or doesn't want another man to one day say it to his daughter, he shouldn't be saying it to you (sic)."

While Tara's mother did not tag anyone, the timing of her post must be questioned.

What Did Aadar Jain Say About His Past Relationships?

In a video from Aadar Jain's mehendi ceremony that went viral on social media, the groom was heard saying, "I have always loved her and I have always wanted to be with her. So she sent me on this long journey of 20 years through time-pass. It was worth the wait because I get to marry this beautiful, beautiful woman, who looks like a dream. I love you, and it was worth the wait. It's a secret, I have always loved her. I have done time pass for four years of my life. But now I'm with you, baby."

The statement left many disappointed, with netizens slamming Aadar for seemingly calling his previous relationship "timepass." "Shameless. Disrespecting another girl is not cool," one of the users wrote. "Oh my God!!! Such men!!! Time pass for four years!!!! Is he implying his previous relationship!!!! Why hurt someone else's sentiments?" added another. "Such a cr*p guy... I don't know the story, but what kind of person talks like this on his special day? Hollow," a third comment read.

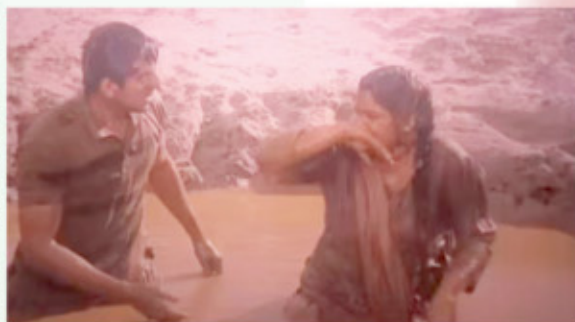
Bhumi Pednekar

Celebrates 10 Years Of Dum Laga Ke Haisha, Pens A Note As She Watches Film In Theatre

Bhumi Pednekar made her acting debut with Dum Laga Ke Haisha co-starring Ayushmann Khurrana. The film was loved by the audience. Well, the romantic comedy-drama has completed 10 years and on this special milestone, the actress has written a long note. She has also shared that she watched the film with her family in theatres. Taking to her Instagram stories, Bhumi shared scenes and wrote, "#10 Years To Dum LagaKeHaisha AYUSHMANN KHURRANA 10 years ago, I watched Dum laga ke Haisha for the 1st time. Full of nerves, an emotional mess cause I couldn't believe I was in a film. I was there watching my childhood dream come alive. And 10 years later, I watched it all over again in a theatre with people I love and those that love the film and my heart was is so full that little girl that dreamt of being a leang la hubhumpednekar, of knowing how, had done it. I couldn't have asked for a better way to enter the films. My dearest @ayushmannk. Thank you for being the best co actor/friend. You are so so special as Prem. Couldn't have done it without you."

She also shared a video in which she is seen interacting with fans in theatres. Bhumi wrote, "A big thank you to everyone that came yesterday and relived this beautiful film. It was so special. The laughs, the cries and just the

joy of seeing movie that moves everyone so deeply is beyond words can explain. Thank you aap mere back bone ho."In the film, Ayushmann plays a disgruntled high-school dropout who reluctantly marries an educated but overweight girl. Initially hesitant about their marriage, he gradually falls in love with her after



they participate in a race. Made on a budget of Rs 14 crore, the film was a hit, earning Rs 113 crore at the box office. On the work front, Bhumi is currently seen in Mere Husband Ki Biwi with Arjun Kapoor and Rakul Preet Singh. The film has been doing well at the box office.



Katrina Kaif Is All Smiles As She Enjoys In A Pool, Fans Call Vicky Kaushal 'Lucky'



Katrina Kaif took to her Instagram handle on Thursday morning to share a series of pictures from her recent vacation. In the first photo, the actress was all smiles as she spent some time in a swimming pool. Another picture featured Katrina in a black cap and a brown jacket with snow-clad mountains in the background. She also shared scenic photographs from her hotel. Needless to say, Katrina looked prettiest in these new photos. While her pictures impressed everyone, fans also rushed to the comments section to call Vicky Kaushal, her actor-husband, luckiest. "Vicky Kaushal is Luckiest Person on Planet one of the fans wrote. "Literally a treat for the eyes added another. "Oh so gorgeous a third comment read. Check it out here:

Katrina Kaif and Vicky Kaushal are one of the most adorable and loved Bollywood actors. They have been married for three years now. Recently, Vicky opened up about how Katrina supported him while he was shooting for Chhaava. The actor mentioned that he needed emotional space while working on the Laxman Utekar directorial and added that Katrina helped him by understanding the same.

"There were intense scenes, sometimes there were action scenes. So, once you are home after 12 hours of shooting, you just fall on the bed. Whatever time was there for personal life, it was little. Katrina being from the same industry, she understands that when intense parts like these are there, then some space is required. So, she was very kind, sweet and patient. I don't bring the characters home but I used to get a bit quiet because the mind is in that zone, it keeps on going what I did today and what I will do tomorrow. Otherwise, there was not much difference. Everything was pretty normal," Vicky said. Meanwhile, on the work front, Katrina Kaif will soon be seen in Jee Le Zaara with Alia Bhatt and Priyanka Chopra. However, there is no update on the film's shoot schedule as of now.

Amitabh Bachchan Asked For THIS To Capture His Emotions During Baghban Climax: 'Mere Andar Bhara Hua Hai'



Salim-Javed, the famous screenwriting duo behind hits like Deewaar and Sholay in the 1970s, are respected icons in Indian cinema. Although they split and never worked together again, many may not know that they contributed to Ravi Chopra's Baghban. The film's story was written by B.R. Chopra, with dialogues by Achala Nagar, but Javed Akhtar wrote the emotional climax where Amitabh Bachchan's character delivers a heartfelt speech. In a recent interview with Pinkvilla, Renu Chopra, Ravi Chopra's wife, shared these details. between Salim



and Javed. Renu remembered that the climax scene, where Amitabh's character receives an award and speaks about giving everything to his children, was 11 pages long. After reading it, Amitabh asked Ravi for three days to prepare for the shoot at a hotel. He told the director to use as many cameras as needed because he knew he couldn't capture the emotions again. They set up three cameras and began filming. Renu recalled Amitabh saying, "Mere andar bhara hua hai (It's all inside me, bursting to come out.)"

In the same interview, Renu Chopra, shed light on the challenges they encountered while making and distributing the film. Renu revealed that finding a distributor for Baghban was no easy feat, as most dismissed the project as "old-fashioned." "The film struggled during its first four days in theatres. Ravi even questioned why he made it. But everything changed on the following Tuesday, and the film picked up momentum," she recalled.

Skepticism about the project wasn't limited to distributors. Legendary filmmaker BR Chopra, Ravi's father, was also doubtful. The original story, penned by BR Chopra two decades earlier, was reworked by Dr. Achala Nagar. "Ravi's father discouraged him from making Baghban, saying it was outdated. Many believed films like Avtaar and Zindagi had already explored similar themes. But Ravi saw it differently—not as a social drama but as a love story between an elderly couple," Renu explained.