

WEATHER

Generally clear. Hazy in the evening. Maximum and minimum temperatures likely to be around 30°C and 19°C respectively.

RAINFALL: NIL

RELATIVE HUN	IIDITY
Max. 67%	Min. 53%
TEMPERATURE	
Max: 30.2°C	Min: 19.3 °C
SUN RISES	SUN SETS
06:08 hrs	17:33 hrs
MOON RISES	MOON SETS
19:59 hrs	07:40 hrs
New Moon on 2	28 February

THUMBNAILS



PM Modi, US Prez Trump tighten Indo-US embrace

Both leaders reaffirmed that the global scourge of terrorism must be fought

NIKHIL VYAS NEW DELHI, 14 FEBRUARY

rime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Donald Trump, meeting at the White House on Thursday night, took giant steps to deepen the ties between the two countries by pledging to work together in diverse areas, including defence, counter-terrorism, law enforcement, civil nuclear energy, semiconductors, artificial intelligence and trade. The personal equation between the two leaders was very much in evidence as they discussed a range of bilateral issues as well as global developments. Indian officials said the "fruitful" meeting lasted nearly four hours, including talks between the two delegations.

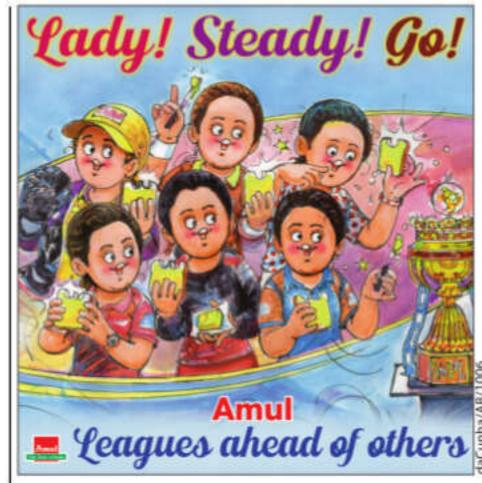
Al-Qa'ida, ISIS, Jaish-e Mohammad, and

Lashkar-e-Tayyiba in order to prevent heinous acts like the attacks in Mumbai on 26/11 and the Abbey Gate bombing in Afghanistan on August 26, 2021," the statement said.

"Recognising a shared desire to bring to justice those who would harm our citizens, the US announced that the extradition to India of Fahawwur Rana has been approved," it said.

'MAGA, MIGA unite for MEGA partnership' **STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, 14 FEBRUARY**

Inspired by US President Donald Trump's slogan 'Make America Great Again'' (MAGA), Prime Minister Narendra Modi coined a new term 'Make India Great Again' (MIGA) for 'Viksit Bharat', saying the two visions of the two leaders together forms the "MEGA partnership for prosperity".



A view of a Dalmatian pelican at Ansagar Lake, in Ajmer on Friday. ANI

WPI inflation eases to 2.31 per cent in Jan amid decline in food prices: The wholesale price index (WPI) inflation eased to 2.31 per cent in January down from 2.37 per cent in December 2024, according to data released by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry on Friday. Food article prices declined but there were rising costs in the manufacturing of food products and textiles. (Page 12)

This was the first meet-Prime Minister Modi said: ing between Prime Min-"India and the United ister Modi and President States have stood firmly together in the fight Trump after the inauguration of the American against terrorism. We leader for a second term. agree that concerted action is necessary to Mr Trump is now expected to visit India eradicate cross-border



later this year for the terrorism." Quad Summit which will A joint statement outlining the way forward also see the participation of the Prime Ministers of for India- US ties was adopted after the talks. Australia and Japan.

According to India-Addressing a joint conference alongside the US US Joint Statement, PM President after their bilat-Modi and Mr Trump reaferal talks at the White firmed that the global House in Washington, scourge of terrorism must be fought and terrorist safe havens eliminated from every corner of the world.

"They committed to strengthen cooperation against terrorist threats from groups, including

Addressing the joint conference, Mr Modi said: "I am thankful to the President that he has decided to hand over the culprit who committed the killings in India in 2008, to India now. Indian

courts will now take appropriate action." PM Modi and Mr

Trump also pledged to work together to prevent proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems and to deny access to such weapons by terrorists and non-state actors, the statement said.

His remarks came during a joint press conference in Washington with Trump.

"Americans are familiar with President Trump's motto, Make America Great Again, or "MAGA." The people of India are also moving towards development at a fast pace with the determination of "Viksit Bharat 2047" on the track of heritage and development," the PM said.

Pakistan calls India-US joint statement one-sided

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, 14 FEBRUARY

Islamabad on Friday took exception to the "specific reference" to Pakistan in the joint statement issued by India and the United States after the Modi-Trump talks, saying it is "one-sided, misleading and contrary to diplomatic norms."

In his weekly briefing, Pakistan foreign office spokesperson said Islamabad is "surprised" by the inclusion

of such remarks without acknowledging the country's "sacrifices" in the fight against terrorism.

In their joint statement, the two leaders also asked Pakistan to "expeditiously bring to justice" the plotters of the 26/11 Mumbai attacks, which killed over 165 people.

The joint statement named terror groups like al-Qaida, Islamic State, Jaish-e Mohammad, and Lashkar-e-Tayyaba as the foremost threat.

My administration has approved extradition of Tahawwur Rana: Trump

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, 14 FEBRUARY

In a key announcement, President Donald Trump said the United States has agreed to extradite November 26, 2008 Mumbai terror attack accused Tahawwur Rana to India.

The key accused in the 26/11 terror attack is currently at a high-security prison in the US and India has been seeking his extradition for years.

"I am pleased to announce that my administration has approved the extradition of one of the plotters (Tahawwur Rana) and one of the very evil people of the world, having to do with the horrific 2008 Mumbai terrorist attack to face justice in India. He is going back to India to face justice," Mr Trump said after bilateral talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi in washington.

The US President



be working together like never before to confront the threat of radical Islamic terror across the world. There are more to follow."

USA's agreement to extradite the terror accused and thanked President Trump for confirming his extradition. "A perpetrator of the Mumbai terror attack is being extradited for his interrogation and trial in India. I thank President Trump for expediting the process."

Rana, who was convicted for his role in the 26/11 attack on Mumbai that resulted in the death of 164 people, will PM Modi appreciated the now be interrogated by Indian

India.

agencies and face trial in Rana's co-conspirators included, among others, David Coleman Headley. Headley pleaded guilty and

cooperated against Rana. Rana is also accused of having close links with Pakistan's **Inter-Services** Intelligence

Selection panel for new CEC expected to meet soon, ahead of Rajiv Kumar's retirement

AGENCIES

day.

NEW DELHI, 14 FEBRUARY With Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Rajiv Kumar set to retire on 18 February, the selection committee for appointing his successor is

expected to meet next week, possibly on Sunday or Mon-

The committee, composed of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal, and Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, will deliberate on the appointment of the new CEC.

Following Rajiv Kumar's departure, Gyanesh Kumar will become the senior-most Election Commissioner, with his tenure extending until 29 January 2029.

To streamline the selection process, the central government has recently established a search committee under the leadership

Ram Meghwal. This committee is responsible for shortlisting potential candidates for the position of the next Chief Election Commissioner, ensuring that the most qualified and capable

individual is appointed to this critical role. The Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and Election Commissioner (EC) are appointed by the President of India based on the recommendations of a selection committee.

This committee is led by the Prime Minister of India and includes the Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha, as well as a Union Council of Ministers member nominated by the Prime Minister.

The term of the CEC can be up to six years from the date they assume office. However, the CEC will retire upon reaching the age of sixty-five, even if their term

BJP likely to name next CM of Delhi after PM Modi returns from USA

NIKHIL VYAS

NEW DELHI, 14 FEBRUARY

The BJP is likely to name the next Chief Minister of Delhi anytime after Prime Minister Narendra Modi returns from his five-day visit to France and the United States.

After its historic win in the DelhiAssembly elections, the BJP continued brainstorming over the selection of the next chief minister for the sixth consecutive day.

According to the sources, the BJP's legislature party comprising the 48 newlyelected MLAs is likely to meet on 16 February to finalise the name of the new chief minister after the Prime Minister returns from the USA.

The sources said the swearing-in ceremony of the new chief minister is likely to be held either on 19 or 20 February. The saffron party registered a landslide victory in the assembly elections, the results of which were declared on



thirds majority bagging 48 seats in the 70-member assembly. After the announcement of Delhi Assembly polls on 8 February, many key meetings of top party leaders with newlyelected MLAs regarding the selection of the new Chief Minister and government formation have taken place.

The term of the current DelhiAssembly will conclude on 26 February and the new government must take charge by then. Top party leaders, including Union Home Minister Amit Shah, party president JP Nadda, and state unit president Virendra Sachdeva, have to discuss the selection of the next chief minister of Delhi.

Speculation is rife that Parvesh Verma, who earned the tag of 'giant killer' after defeating AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal from the New Delhi constituency, is being seen as a strong contender for the top post. There are also speculations about the possibility that the next chief minister could be a woman. According to the sources, a woman MLA could also be under consideration for the post. Among the BJP's 48 MLAs are four women-Rekha Gupta, Nee-

lam Pahalwan, Poonam Shar-

for daily financial needs.

Customers were seen rush-

ing to branches in a panic,

worried about their savings,

bill payments, and loan EMIs.

the eligible depositors would

be entitled to receive deposit

insurance claim amount of

their deposits up to a monetary

ceiling of Rs 5,00,000 (Rupees

five lakh only) in the same

capacity and in the same right,

from the DICGC, as applicable

under the provisions of the

DICGC Act, 1961, based on

submission of willingness by

the depositors concerned and

The RBI had stated that

RBI supersedes board of directors of New

Over 50 crore devotees take holy dip at Triveni Sangam

MANOJ BHADRA

MAHAKUMBH NAGAR, **14 FEBRUARY**

The grand Mahakumbh 2025, held on the sacred land of Teerthraj Prayagraj since 13 January, has now etched its name in history.

With over 50 crore devotees taking a holy dip at the Triveni Sangam, this extraordinary event has set a global benchmark for religious and cultural unity. This participation marks the largest congregation in human history for any religious, cultural, or social event.

To grasp the sheer magnitude of this gathering, one only needs to compare its scale: aside from India and China, no other country in the world has a population exceeding the number of devotees who have already visited Mahakumbh.

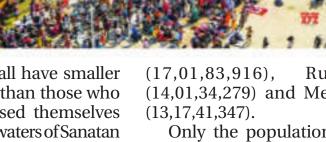
Nations like the United States, Russia, Indonesia, Brazil, Pakistan, and



Bangladesh all have smaller populations than those who have immersed themselves in the sacred waters of Sanatan Dharma. According to the US

Census Bureau, among the world's top 10 most populous countries are India (1,41,93,16,933), China (1,40,71,81,209), America (34,20,34,432), Indonesia (28,35,87,097), Pakistan

(25,70,47,044), Nigeria Brazil (24, 27, 94, 751),(22,13,59,387), Bangladesh



Russia (14,01,34,279) and Mexico

Only the populations of India and China surpass the number of devotees who have gathered at the Mahakumbh. In contrast, nations like the United States, Indonesia, Pakistan, and Brazil fall significantly behind.

This unparalleled spiritual phenomenon is a testament to the timeless grandeur of Sanatan Dharma, transforming

Mahakumbh from a mere festival into a global symbol of faith and unity.

The sacred confluence of Maa Ganga, Maa Yamuna, and the invisible Maa Saraswati has witnessed an unprecedented surge of faith as saints, devotees, Kalpvasis, and pilgrims immerse themselves in the holy waters. The scale of this divine gathering has now surpassed the expectations set by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, who had envisioned a record-breaking Mahakumbh even before it began. Right from the start, CM Yogi had projected that this grand and divine Mahakumbh would see 45 crore devotees, a milestone already achieved by 11 February. By 14 February, the number of bathers had crossed 50 crores, with 12 days and one major bathing festival remaining. The total count is now

expected to soar beyond 55

to 60 crores.

A closer look at the pilgrimage highlights the overwhelming participation on key bathing days, with Mauni Amavasya seeing the most significant gathering, with eight crore devotees taking the holy dip. On Makar Sankranti, 3.5 crore devotees participated in the Amrit Snan. More than two crore devotees bathed on 30 January and 1 February. Paush Purnima witnessed 1.7 crore devotees taking the sacred dip. On Basant Panchami, 2.57 crore devotees participated in the ritual bathing. The significant bathing festival of Magh Purnima also saw over two crore devotees at Triveni Sangam. With Mahakumbh 2025

continuing to draw millions, this spiritual congregation is on track to become the largest in human history, reaffirming the eternal grandeur of Sanatan Dharma on a global scale.



India Co-operative Bank; customers panic **STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE** IU MERIN

NEW DELHI, 14 FEBRUARY

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has superseded the Board of Directors of New India Co-operative Bank for 12 months, citing poor governance standards.

The move comes a day after imposing restrictions on the Mumbai-based Co-operative Bank. "In exercise of the powers conferred under Section 36 AAA read with section 56 of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949 (As Applicable to Co-operative Societies), the Reserve Bank has today superseded the Board of Directors of New India Cooperative BankLtd, Mumbai, for a period of 12 months," the RBI said in a statement. Further, the RBI has appointed Shreekant, a former chief general manager of the State Bank of India (SBI), as the administrator to manage the bank's affairs.



grant or renew loans, make new investments, or accept fresh deposits without prior approval. It assured depositors that those eligible could claim up to Rs 5 lakh from the DICGC. The RBI move caused significant distress among depositors, many of whom rely on their bank accounts

A committee of advisors has been set up to assist him, comprising Ravindra Sapra (former general manager, SBI) and Abhijeet Deshmukh (chartered accountant).

The RBI had imposed several restrictions on the bank, including a six-month freeze on withdrawals due to liquidity concerns. Depositors cannot access their savings, current, or other accounts, though the bank has been allowed to set offloans against deposits and cover essential expenses such as employee salaries, rent, and utility bills.

It said the bank cannot after due verification.







Governor inaugurates National Flag mast at Batasia War Memorial

to the nation. The site features

The Batasia War Memorial, built in 1995, holds deep historical and emotional significance

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE SILIGURI, 14 FEBRUARY

overnor Dr CV Ananda Bose today inaugurated the newly constructed 72-foot Flag Mast at the Batasia War Memorial in Darjeeling. The ceremony, a solemn tribute to the bravery and sacrifices of Indian soldiers, including the revered Gorkha soldiers, was organised by the Zilla Sainik Board, Darjeeling, with support from the Indian Army.

Other guests present were Lieutenant General Zubin A Minwalla, General Officer Commanding (GOC) of Trishakti Corps, military officials, veterans, veer naris (war widows), and civil dignitaries,

ilies.

including state government representatives. The ceremony began with

built in 1995, holds deep his-

torical and emotional sig-

nificance. Located in a region

home to nearly 15,000 vet-

erans, the memorial pays

homage to the Gorkha soldiers

of the Indian Army who laid

down their lives in service

a beautifully landscaped circular garden with a central a wreath-laying ritual, followed bronze statue of a soldier in by the hoisting of the National reverence, overlooking the Flag and the playing of the Darjeeling hills and the majes-National Anthem, evoking a tic Kanchenjunga range.

profound sense of patriotism. The construction of the 72-foot Flag Mast at this her-A special Felicitation Ceremony was also held to honour itage site presented unique challenges due to the elevated veer naris and awardees, terrain and conservation recognising the immense sacrifices made by military famrequirements, making its successful completion a The Batasia War Memorial, notable achievement.

The event witnessed an overwhelming turnout of citizens, veterans, civil dignitaries, and government officials, standing as a powerful tribute to the Indian Army's unwavering service and sacrifice.



With five more detections, silicosis patient count in West Burdwan now 10

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE ASANSOL, 14 FEBRUARY

With the detection of five more patients, the total number of active silicosis patients in West Burdwan district has now touched double digits and it is likely to further increase.

For the first time, a silicosis awareness workshop was held at Asansol of West Burdwan district along with public sector units like Sail's IISCO Steel Plant and Durgapur Steel Plant, Damodar Valley Corporation, private sector sponge iron factories, refractories, brickfields etc. The workshop was organised by West Burdwan district magistrateSPonnambalam.

The workshop details of the silicosis disease has been discussed in details like how it occurs, what are symptoms, prevention measures, treatment etc.

The CMOH of West Burdwan, members of West Bengal Pollution Control Board,



other health officials, ADM and other district officials were also present during the workshop.

Recently, Subol Roy of Barabhui village, under Alladih gram panchayat of Salanpur Block has died due to silicosis. The National Human Rights Commission had sought a detailed report from the DM of West Burdwan on silicosis at Barabhui village recently.

The MLA of Asansol South, Agnimitra Paul has also started agitation on this issue very recently. The district civil department started taking measures and first organised a local medical health checkup camp and later a medical board at Asansol. Five patients were detected of silicosis out of 20 people by the previous board. The family of the deceased has been assured of all government benefits.

administration and the health

Several hundreds of people work in the hazardous silicon and stone-crushing units in Salanpur block of West Burdwan and are suffering from breathing and lung diseases.

Statue of Thakur Panchanan Barma unveiled in Siliguri





Elderly woman robbed of ₹15 lakh

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE KOLKATA, 14 FEBRUARY

An elderly woman was robbed at knife point by a miscreant reportedly after her domestic help opened the door for the caretaker of the house



Occasion for us to re-dedicate ourselves to defending India: Governor on Pulwama attack anniversary

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE SILIGURI, 14 FEBRUARY

Afull-length statue of Thakur Panchanan Barma, the revered social reformer and leader, was unveiled at the Leusipakuri Box Traffic Point on Friday to commemorate his 160th birth anniversary. The ceremony was organised by the Darjeeling District Rajbanshi Kshatriya Samiti and attended by Siliguri mayor Goutam Deb.

The event marked a tribute to Thakur Panchanan Barma's enduring legacy and contri-

butions to society. The unveiling ceremony drew attention to his pivotal role in advocating for the rights and upliftment of the Rajbanshi community.

The installation of the statue at this prominent location serves as a lasting reminder of his ideals and vision for social justice and equality.

to fetch water. Police have detained two persons in connection with the heist. The incident happened

in the heart of the city, at a house located on CR Avenue in north Kolkata, on Thursday night.

The woman had been bed-ridden and incapable of walking for quite some time due to her femur bone fracture bore the brunt of the robbery.

The police identified the woman as Madumitra Mitra. She was allegedly robbed at knife point of Rs 15 lakh in cash and valuables worth several lakhs.

City police sources said that the alleged incident happened last night allegedly after the domestic help had opened the door for the caretaker of the house, who had asked for water.

The alleged miscreant, claimed police sources, entered the house taking advantage of the opened door and went straight to

the elderly woman's room brandishing a knife and looted cash and ornaments after overpowering her.

Burtolla police, who launched an investigation, detained the caretaker, who entered into the house to take water and the domestic help, who had opened the door for the former.

Sources at the detective department of Kolkata Police claimed that the heist could not have been possible without any insider's involvement.

"We have started an inquiry to unlock the puzzle regarding the entire operation. There are certain missing links, which have to be bridged to unravel the mystery. For which we are taking

help of CCTV cameras to ascertain the number of miscreants and chronology to crack the crime," said a senior officer without elaborating further.

Meanwhile, the local Trinamul Congress councillor of ward 26 Taraknath Chatterjee attributed the crime to alleged police inaction, saying: "The entire area at Central Avenue after midnight remains under the grip of anti-social elements, who roam freely and indulge in criminal activities, while the police presence remains

negligible. I've apprised the local Burtolla police station a number of times and even wrote to the DC (North) but nothing worthwhile has happened so far."

AGENCIES SILIGURI, 14 FEBRUARY

West Bengal Governor CV Ananda Bose on Friday said that the Pulwama terror attack anniversary is an occasion for Indians to re-dedicate themselves to defending the country.

"This is an occasion for us to re-dedicate ourselves to defending our country," Bose told reporters as India pays homage to 40 CRPF personnel, who lost their lives in the terrorist attack in 2019.

"India is strong, and we will assert that. India is great, and we will prove it," he added.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday paid tribute to the CRPF personnel.

Taking to social media platform X, PM Modi said: "Homage to the courageous heroes we lost in Pulwama in 2019. The coming generations will never forget their

The air strike was launched in the early hours of 26 February, and Pakistan's efforts to launch an offensive the next day to target Indian military installations in Jammu and Kashmir were thwarted by an alert IAF

sacrifice and their unwavering dedication to the nation."

Union home minister Amit Shah also paid tribute, calling the attack a "cowardly act of terrorism".

"On behalf of the grateful nation, I pay my heartfelt tribute to the soldiers who were martyred in the cowardly terrorist attack in Pulwama on this day in the year 2019," he wrote in a post on Х.

Today marks six years since the Pulwama terror attack when 40 valiant Indian soldiers were killed after a suicide bomber rammed an IED-laden vehicle into the security convoy carrying them.

In a retaliatory strike, the Indian Air Force carried out

multiple aerial strikes on 26 February 2019, at JeM terror camps in Pakistan's Balakot, killing a "large number" of terrorists and destroying their infrastructure.

The air strike was launched in the early hours of 26 February, and Pakistan's efforts to launch an offensive the next day to target Indian military installations in Jammu and Kashmir were thwarted by an alert IAF.

In the dogfight, Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman, flying a MiG-21 Bison fighter plane and chasing Pakistani jets, crossed over to PoK, where his aircraft was shot down. He was taken into custody by Pakistan. India also shot down a Pakistani fighter jet.

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGA e-TENDER NOTICE

The Superintendent of Suri District Correctional Home, WB for and on behalf of the Governor of WB, invites e tender for supply of dietary articles at Suri District Correctional Home for the period from 01.04.2025 to 30.09.2025 Tender Inviting Notice No. 01/TN 25(Suri)/2025-2026 dated 16.01.2025 Date of documents download starts 15.02.2025 at 16:00 hrs. Last date of ubmission of tender: 09.03.2025 by 12:00 hrs. Full particulars may be had website the www.wbtenders.gov.in "The ADG & IG of Correctional Services, West Bengal reserves the rights to cancel any or all the tenders without showing any reason." Sd/- Suri District Correctional Home, W.B. ICA- T3206(2)/2025

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGA

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

NIT No. (1) DPL/PUR/CORP/ITC/12/24-

THE DURGAPUR PROJECTS LIMITED

(A Govt. of West Bengal Enterprise)

CIN NO. U40102WB19615GC025250

808969 1

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL **e-TENDER NOTICE**

The Superintendent of Kalna Subsidian Correctional Home, WB for and on behalf of the Governor of WB, invites e Tender for supply of dietary articles at Kalna Subsidiary Correctional Home for the period from 01.04.2025 to 30.09.2025. Tender Inviting Notice No. 025 01/TN-25/KALNASCH dated 15.01.2025 2025 Date of documents download start 025 15.02.2025 at 14:00 hrs. Last date of 025 ubmission of tender: 02.03.2025 at 2025 14:00 hrs. Full particulars may be had website www.wbtenders.gov.in "The ADG & IG of Correctional Services, West Bengal reserves the rights to cancel any or all the tenders without showing any reason." Sd/- Kalna Subsidiar

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGA NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Correctional Home, W.B. ICA- T2202(2)/2025

Balurghat SSH (G+ 9). Pre Bid meeting

date - 20/02/2025 at 3:00 P.M. Last date

of submission of bid (online)-

07/03/2025 upto 11:00 Hrs. The tender

document can be downloaded from

www.wbtenders.gov.in on or after

11:00 Hrs. on 15/02/2025. Details of the

tender will also be available at

www.wbmsc.gov.in Clarification

requests, if any may be sent to

wbmscl.malda@gmail.com or

info@wbmsc.gov.in or contact with

Arun Kumar Ghosh, Executive Engineer

(Civil), West Bengal Medical Services

Corporation Limited, Swasthya Sathi

Building, Swasthya Bhawan Complex,

GN-29, Sector-V, Salt Lake, Kolkata-

700091, Land-033-40340360, Mobile &

Whatsapp - 9434734486, E-mail-

arunghosh.24in@gmail.com

Sd/- General Manager & Joint Secretary

to the Govt. of West Bengal H&FW

MORE

TENDER

ADS ON

PAGE 4

ICA- T3210(2)/2025

Department.

Bid ref. no.-WBMSCL/NIT-114/2025, dated- 10/02/2025 West Bengal Medical Services Corporation Ltd. is inviting online bids for the works-1. Annual maintenance for Civil and Sanitary & Plumbing works at Malbazar SSH (G+4). 2. Annual tenance for Civil and Sanitary Medical College & Hospital Plumbing works at Islampur SSH (G+4). 3. Annual maintenance for Civil and Sanitary & Plumbing works at Falakata 55H (G+4). 4. Annual maintenance for **Civil and Sanitary & Plumbing works at** Gangarampur SSH (G+5). 5. Annual maintenance for Civil and Sanitary & Plumbing works at Chanchol SSH (G+4). 6. Annual maintenance for Civil and Sanitary & Plumbing works at Raiganj SSH (G+9). 7. Annual maintenance for **Civil and Sanitary & Plumbing works at**

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGA e-TENDER NOTICE The MSVP, IPGME&R-SSKMH, Kolkata having its office at 244, A.J.C Bose Road, Kolkata-700020 is inviting e-tender for procurement of signage items (7 types for Forms & Stationery Store (1st cal from the bonafide bidders. Tender HEW HEW HFW 813826 HFW 813826 2025 HFW 813826 7. For details lo on to www.wbtenders.gov.in Sd/- MSVP, PGMER-S5KMH, Kol-20 (CA- T3208/292026

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGA **DEBEN MAHATA GOVERNMENT** MEDICAL COLLEGE & HOSPITAL HATLIARA, PURULIA

Abridged Notice Inviting EOI (2nd Call) for Tea Stall Services ealed EOI (2nd Call) is invited for Te Stall Services at Deben Mahata nent Medical College, Hatuara Campus, Purulia. Last date of submission is 27.02.2025. Please visit www.dmgmch.edu.in/ www.wbhealth.gov.in/www.purulia.ni c.in for viewing the complete notice. Deben Mahata Govt Principal.

Sikkim CM pays tribute to Gyalo Thondup, brother of Dalai Lama, in Kalimpong

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE SILIGURI, 14 FEBRUARY

Sikkim chief minister Prem Singh Tamang (Golay) visited Kalimpong on Friday to pay his respects to the late Gyalo Thondup, elder brother of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama. Mr Tamang visited Thondup's residence, offering prayers and expressing solidarity with the bereaved family.

Gyalo Thondup, a towering figure in the Tibetan struggle and a key interlocutor between the Tibetan government in exile and global leaders, passed away at his Kalimpong home on Saturday evening after battling agerelated ailments. He was 95. His funeral was held on Tuesday.





Procurement and Renewal of Microsoft 365 Business Basic for 01 Year Subscription. Bid submission end date: 17.02.2025, Bid Opening date: 19.02.2025, NIT No. (2) WBDPL-13.013/ 1/2025-GM-POW(DPL)-DPL/WW/E-290 Dated 05.02.2025, Tender ID: 2025 DPL 811034 1 for Electrical Works related to supply, installation, Erection and Commissioning of Electric Accessories for Renovation of 8MGD Drinking Water Pump House. Bid submission end date: 19.02.2025, Bid Opening date: 25.02.2025, NIT No. (3) WBDPL/DPPS/PUR/NIT(E)-031 DJ/390/24-25, Tender ID 2025_DPL_810531_1 For Procurement of V-Belt of AC & Ventilation Plant of Unit. 7 & 8. Bid submission end date: 22.02.2025, Bid Opening date: 28.02.2025. NIT No. (4) WBDPL/DPPS/ PUR/NIT(E)-123 SP/375/2024-25, Tender ID: 2025_DPL_811639_1 For Procurement of Spare (Mill Turret Top Plate) for Mill of Unit-7/DPPS. Bid submission end date: 22.02.2025, Bid Opening date: 26.02.2025. NIT No. (5) WBDPL/DPPS/PUR/NIT(E)-121 SR/388/2024-25, Tender ID: 2025 DPL 811619 1 For Procurement of M.S.ERW for Sprinkler System at Coal Yard /CHP/DPP5. Bid submission end date: 22.02.2025, Bid Opening date: 26.02.2025. NIT No. (6) WBDPL/DPPS/ PUR/NIT(E)-036 DJ/430/2024-25, Tender ID: 2025_DPL_812141_1 For Procurement of 3 Core, 185 sq.mm AL PVC Insulated AYWY, FR Type LT Power Cable. Bid submission end date: 22.02.2025, Bid Opening date: 28.02.2025. Cancellation NIT No. (7) WBDPL/DPPS/PUR/NIT(E)-095SP/375/2024-25, Tender ID: 2025 DPL 790616 1, cancellation NIT No. (8) WBDPL/DPPS/PUR/NIT(E)-031 DJ/390/2024-25, Tender ID: 2025 DPL 793774 1 5l.No. 7 & 8 are hereby treated as cancelled. Visit https://wbtenders.gov.in / www.dpl.net.in ICA- T3207(2)/2025

ICA- T3212(2)/2025

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL e-TENDER NOTICE

The Superintendent of Mekhligani Subsidiary Correctional Home, WB for and on behalf of the Governor of WB, invites e-tender for supply of dietary articles at Mekhliganj Subsidiary Correctional Home for the period from 01.04.2025 to 30.09.2025. Tender Inviting Notice No. 05/MSCH/2025 dated 17.01.2025. Date of documents download starts: 15.02.2025 at 01:00 pm. Last date of submission of tender: 01.03.2025 up to 05:00 pm. Full particulars may be had from the website www.wbtenders.gov.in "The ADG & IG of Correctional Services. West Bengal reserves the rights to cancel any or all the tenders without showing any reason," Sd/- Mekhliganj Subsidiary Correctional Home, W.B.

ICA- T3205(4)/2025

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGA DIRECTORATE OF PUBLIC HEALTH ENGINEERING OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, RESOURCES DIVISION

lanaswasthya Karigari Bhawan (NUALAYA) C.N.B. STREET NO- 18, CN BLOCK, SECTOR-V BIDHANNAGAR, Kolkata - 700093

NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER NO.- WBPHED/EE/RS/e47/2024-25 TENDER ID : 2025_PHED_811248_1 Scrutinization, Analysis and Identification of Errors for 'Functional Household Tap Connection' data collected through WB-JJM Mobile Application. Pre-gualification, Technical & Financial bid Submission starting date (online) (05.02.2025 from 6:00 p.m.) Pre-gualification, Technical & Financial bid Submission closing date (online) (06.03.2025 upto 2:00 p.m.) For detail Logon to : www.etender.wb.nic.in Sd/- Executive Engineer, Resources Division, Public Health Engineering Directorate, Govt. of West Bengal. ICA- T3224(2)/2025

"In this moment of profound loss, we extend our deepest condolences to the family. We prayed for the departed soul to rest in eternal peace," the Sikkim chief minister said. He further remarked, "May his legacy of wisdom, dedication, and service continue to inspire

future generations." Thondup played a pivotal role in shaping Tibet's relations with the outside world after fleeing his homeland in 1952. He served as a bridge

between the Dalai Lama and international leaders, including Jawaharlal Nehru, Chiang Kai-shek, Zhou Enlai, and Deng Xiaoping. Notably, it was Thondup who secured

Prime Minister Nehru's approval for political asylum when the Dalai Lama fled to India in 1959.

Thondup's contributions to the Tibetan cause were chronicled in his book, The *Noodle Maker of Kalimpong:* The Untold Story of My Struggle for Tibet, co-authored with American writer Anne F. Thurston.

Residents and hawkers in Sealdah locality try to gather their belongings a day after a fire gutted their shops on Thursday.

Acetic anhydride used to make heroin seized, 3 arrested

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE KRISHNAGAR, 14 FEBRUARY

In a major crackdown on illegal drug manufacturing, the Kotwali police, under the Krishnagar police district seized a large quantity of acetic anhydride, a banned chemical essential for heroin production. Three persons were arrested in connection with the case late last night.

Acting on a tip-off from a reliable source, a police team led by DSP Shilpi Paul and IC Kotwali Amalendu Biswas set up a trap on national

highway 12 near Jora Masjid at around 9 p.m. According to police sources, intelligence reports indicated that a truck bound for Murshidabad from Kolkata was carrying a significant quantity of contraband chemicals.

Upon arrival of the truck at the designated spot, the police team pursued and intercepted the vehicle. A thorough search of the truck revealed several containers filled with acetic anhydride, Paul. along with numerous cartons packed with body sprays. As

documentation. During the

search, we recovered eight containers, each holding approximately 60 litres of acetic anhydride. This chemical is crucial for heroin production," said DSP Shilpi

The arrested individuals were identified as Taiyab (25) the truck drivers failed to and Najim (18) from Bharat-

produce valid documents for the transportation of the (38) from Barabanki, Uttar Pradesh. They were produced chemical, they were immediately taken into custody. before the chief judicial mag-"We have seized the truck istrate's court in Krishnagar, where the magistrate remandcarrying illegal contraband chemicals without proper ed them to police custody

for seven days. Police sources confirmed that acetic anhydride is a key component in the production of heroin, as it is used to convert morphine extracted from opium poppies into the illicit drug. The chemical also has legal applications in the manufacture of aspirin, plastics, paints,

pur, Rajasthan, and Ashok and cigarette filters, but is often diverted for illegal drug production.

> The international market value of acetic anhydride is estimated at around Rs 16,000 per litre. Investigations are underway to trace the origins and intended recipients of the contraband, as authorities suspect the involvement of a larger drug syndicate.

> Further inquiries are being conducted to dismantle the supply chain and prevent the trafficking of such substances in the future, a senior police officer said.











NHRC seeks report on three deaths in Kolkata manhole

The National Human Rights Commission has stated that if the contents of media reports about the incidentare true, they raise a significant issue of human rights violation for the victims

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, 14 FEBRUARY

he National Human **Rights Commission** (NHRC) has taken suo motu cognisance of a media report on the death of three construction workers in a manhole at Kolkata Leather Complex earlier this month and sought a report from the West Bengal government, an official said on Friday.

The Commission has issued notices to the state's Chief Secretary and Commissioner of Police, West Bengal, calling for a detailed report on the matter within two weeks. It is expected to include the status of the investigation.

The deaths occurred after the victims inhaled toxic gases during repairs in a 10-foot-



deep manhole on 2 February.

According to the media report, carried on 3 February, the victims were deployed by a contractor to renovate a portion of a drainage network under the Kolkata Metropolitan Development Authority

(KMDA). The Commission has observed that the contents, if true, raise a serious issue of violation of the human rights of the victims, said a statement.



The statement said the Apex Court, in its judgment

passed in Balram Singh vs Union of India dated 20 October, 2023, has held that it is the duty of the local authorities and other agencies to use modern technology for cleaning sewers.

The Commission has also been consistently advocating a total ban on activities of hazardous cleaning without adequate and proper protective/safety gears or equipment and advocated suitable



use of work-friendly and technology-based robotic machines. It issued an advisory on

24 September, 2021, for the Protection of Human Rights of the Persons Engaged in Hazardous Cleaning to the Union, State Governments and local authorities with an object to ensure complete eradication of such practice.

In a separate case, the NHRC took suo motu cognisance of a media report that about 38 students of a gov-

ernment-run school, fell ill after inhaling poisonous gas emitting from a nearby cement factory in Baloda Bazar district, Chhattisgarh on 22 January,

2025. According to the media report, the students complained of nausea, vomiting and uneasiness and they started fainting. The NHRC issued notices to the Chief Secretary, Government of Chhattisgarh, calling for a detailed report on the matter

Viral video: Health dept seeks report from CMOH

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE KOLKATA, 14 FEBRUARY

The state health department today sought a report from Chief Medical Officer of Health (CMOH) of Nadia district today in connection with misbehaviour of a doctor with a child's father.

Sources at the state health department claimed that Nabanna was upset with the reports that the father of a patient at Santipur State General Hospital had to clean the floor, and asked the state health secretary to seek a report from the CMOH, Nadia with immediate effect. On Friday, there was a commotion at the Santipur State General Hospital, where a doctor had reportedly asked the father of a five-year old child to clean the floor allegedly after his child vomited following administering of an injection. The incident's video went viral.

SPECIAL BOND

KOLKATA, SATURDAY 15 FEBRUARY 2025

TheStatesman



School teacher Indrani Ganguly and members of her cultural organisation hand over roses and mementos to police personnel on the occasion of Valentine's Day, Friday.

Dilip Ghosh urges state to implement central schemes



Bengal school job scam: Accused Sujay Bhadra approaches Calcutta HC with bail petition

Bengal school job case: CBI gets court nod for collecting Kuntal Ghosh's voice samples

within four weeks.

AGENCIES

KOLKATA, 14 FEBRUARY

Sujay Krishna Bhadra, a prime accused in the multi-crore cash-for-school-job case in West Bengal on Friday filed a bail petition at a division Bench of the Calcutta High Court in connection with the case registered by Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) in the matter.

Bhadra has filed the bail petition on health grounds. Although recently granted bail in the case filed by Enforcement Directorate (ED) in the school-job case, Bhadra could not come out of the bars because CBI, which is running a parallel probe in the matter, has shown him as arrested.

The division Bench headed by Justice Arijit Banerjee has admitted the petition and asked CBI to submit the medical report of Bhadra by February 18, which will be the next date of hearing in the matter.



On 11 February, after three

consecutive failures, the CBI had been able to get the voice samples of Bhadra.

On Friday, the CBI also got permission from the special court in Kolkata to collect the voice samples of another accused in the case Kuntal Ghosh, in light fresh evidence secured by the investigating

officials in the matter. Earlier, the ED sleuths too have collected the voice samples of Bhadra. The trial process in the ED-registered case at a special court of the Prevention of Money LaunderingAct (PMLA) in Kolkata

has already started this month. Heavyweight individuals named as accused are the former West Bengal education minister and Trinamul Con-

gress secretary general Partha Chatterjee, his close aide Arpita Mukherjee, and his son-in-law Kalyanmoy Bhattacharya among others.

Babli Chatterjee Memorial Trust, a trust named after Chatterjee's deceased wife is also named in the ED chargesheet as an accused entity. It is alleged that the ill-proceeds were shown as donations to this particular trust and thus diverted.

AGENCIES

KOLKATA, 14 FEBRUARY

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), on Friday, received the permission of a special court in Kolkata to collect the voice samples of Kuntal Ghosh, another accused in the cash-forschool job case in West Bengal.

On 11 February, after three failed attempts, the CBI finally collected the voice samples of the prime accused in the case, Sujay Krishna Bhadra.

The CBI counsel, on Friday, informed the special court that the collection of voice samples of Kuntal Ghosh has become necessary following the sourcing of new evidence by the investigating officials.

Satisfied with the arguments of the CBI counsel, the judge of the special court permitted the Central agency to collect Ghosh's

voice samples. February 18 has been fixed by the court for the collection of the voice samples.

Ghosh is currently out on bail. He was arrested a couple of years back by the Enforcement Directorate (ED), which is conducting a parallel probe in the school job case. Later CBI too had matter. shown him as arrested in

connection with the school job case. The main charge against Ghosh is that he was respon-

sible for collecting several crores of rupees from different job-seekers who paid money to get jobs in staterun schools in West Bengal.

Another charge against him was the creation of a fake website showing unsuccessful candidates in teachers' eligibility test (TET) examinations as successful ones.

The trial process in the ED-registered case at a spe-

of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) in Kolkata has already started this month. There are a total of 53 accused - 29 individuals and 24 corporate entities or trusts - as mentioned in the subsequent charge sheets filed by ED in the

cial court of the Prevention

Heavyweight individuals named as accused are the former West Bengal Education Minister and Trinamool Congress secretary general Partha Chatterjee, his close aide Arpita Mukherjee, and his son-in-law Kalyanmoy Bhattacharya among others.

Babli Chatterjee Memorial Trust, a trust named after Chatterjee's deceased wife, is also named in the ED charge sheet as an accused entity. It is alleged that the ill-proceeds were shown as donations to this particular trust and thus diverted.

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE HOOGHLY, 14 FEBRUARY

The senior Bharatiya Janata Party leader Dilip Ghosh today visited Triveni Kumbh Mela. He was highly impressed to know that more than a lakh took the holy dip on auspicious Maghi Purnima day and the state government has tried its best to hold the Triveni Kumbh mela smooth-

ly. The senior BJP leader, answering to the Media, said the allotment of funds by the state government on development issues is insufficient. The central government is all set to provide the

necessary funds but the state government lags behind with its share of funds against the fund provided by the central government for the completion of development projects.

The state government has allotted only 1,400 crore for industrial growth, which is insufficient for setting up of large-scale industries, capable of providing massive job opportunities. Maximum allotment of funds is for madrasas, while the allotment of funds for state-run schools is insufficient. Appeasement and vote bank politics is the guiding theme of the entire state Budget, said Mr Ghosh.

Trinamul biggest beneficiary of binary politics: CPM report on Bengal

AGENCIES

KOLKATA, 14 FEBRUARY

The CPM, in its internal party document, has identified Trinamul Congress as the biggest beneficiary of binary polarisation of politics in West Bengal.

In the document, which had done an analysis of the party's election strategy, the CPM's centralleadership had stressed that the party comrades at all levels should paymore attention to counter BJP both "politically"

and "ideologically". "In West Bengal, the party has been fighting both the Trinamul Congress and BJP for the past decade. While doing so, the party at all levels must pay more attention to counter the BJP politically and ideologically. This is important since a large section of secular-minded people see the TMC as an effective counter to the BJP because of the binary politics that has revolved," the party's internal



document read.

However, a section of the state leadership of the party in West Bengal, feels that identifying Trinamul Congress as the biggest beneficiary in this

binary polarisation in state politics is a somewhat oversimplified formula.

"While it is true that a section of the secular-minded people in the state have accepted Trinamul Congress as an effective counter to the BJP, at the same time, a large section of anti-TMC voters are now accepting BJP as an effective counter to the state's ruling party. In such a situation, in West Bengal perspective,

what is required is a balanced campaign strategy as regards opposing Trinamul Congress and BJP in the state simultaneously," said a state committee member of the CPM who refused to be named. In fact, the trend in binary

polarisation in West Bengal politics was first evident in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, where BJP turned out to be the biggest beneficiary increasing their winning tally in the state to 18 from just two in 2014.

However, in the 2021 West Bengal Assembly elections, while the trend of binary polarisation continued, it was the Trinamul Congress who became the beneficiary of that. The same trend continued in the 2024 Lok Sabha with the state ruling party again

olution for the forthcoming 24th party Congress scheduled in April this year at Madurai in Tamil Nadu, where the leadership had stressed more on independent political lines in the coming days rather than on electoral understanding.

"The party should pay more attention to the independent political campaign and mass mobilization around the political platform of the party. There should be no blurring of our independent identity or diminishing of our independent activities in the name of electoral understanding or alliances," read the draft political resolution, a copy of which is available with agencies.

As regards maintaining the independent line, the draft resolution had cautiously touched upon the two states

MD, MS students must undergo 3-month residential rotation: NMC

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE KOLKATA, 14 FEBRUARY

The National Medical Commission (NMC) has directed that all postgraduate medical students doing MD/MS courses in broad specialities must have to complete a mandatory three month-long district residency programme (DRP) on rotation in district hospitals or the district health system.

As per Section 5.2(V) of PGMER-2023, this programme aims to enhance their clinical and managerial skills while contributing their services in the public health system. The NMC has also reiter-

ated that PG medical students undergoing the training programme should primarily be accommodated within their respective states or Union



The inter-state posting of the MD/MS students should be rare and would require prior approval of the Postgraduate Medical Education Board (PGMEB) of the NMC, sole regulatory authority monitoring medical education in the country.

non-clinical specialties, where direct patient care is not involved, will be trained in coordination with the district health officer or chief medical officer.

Their roles may include diagnostics, laboratory services, pharmacy, forensic services, general clinical duties, managerial responsibilities, and public health program implementation. Additionally, they may be posted in research units, laboratories, or field sites of the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and other national research organisations.

It also flagged concerns over no objection certificates (NOCs) being issued by deans/ principals and directorates of medical education without fulfilling the prescribed norms. Authorities have been instructed to strictly follow the approved procedure to ensure compliance with PGMER-2023 regulations.

unfortunate that the vacant

being the biggest beneficiary. In all three elections the CPM-led Left Front ended scoring ducks. Earlier this month CPM

released its draft political res-

of Tripura and West Bengal, where the CPM-led Left Front had electoral understanding and seat-sharing arrangements in the past elections.

Territories (UTs).

The commission has issued guidelines in this regard to all medical colleges and health authorities in respective states and UTs across the country.

"If any state feels such a requirement, prior approval of the PostGraduate Medical Education Board (PGMEB) of NMC must be obtained before proceeding further,"

extraordinary circumstances,' emphasising strict adherence to the PG medical education regulations of 2023.

the directive stated. It also

flagged concerns over No

Objection Certificates (NOCs)

being issued without fulfilling

has clarified that the inter-

state posting for this purpose

should be 'rare and only in

In its guidelines, the NMC

the prescribed norms.

The NMC clarified that postgraduate students in

Aviation ministry pushes for better air links to Europe, Asia from city

RAJIB CHAKRABORTY

KOLKATA, 14 FEBRUARY

The ministry of civil aviation has prioritised Kolkata airport in a major push to enhance international air connectivity, facilitating better access to Europe and Asia. Several international carriers, including Emirates, Qatar Airways, Singapore Airlines, Turkish Airlines, Lufthansa, British Airways, and Air India, are set to join operations, further expanding Kolkata's reach as a global travel hub, sources said.

Union minister of civil aviation, Rammohan Naidu Kinjarapu, has recognised Kolkata's strategic importance and directed focused efforts to improve its connectivity. In line with this, the ministry has instructed Kolkata airport



officials and technical personnel actively working to establish to attend a two-day workshop direct links to European desin Delhi to discuss expansion tinations. plans and operational improve-A senior official from the ments from Kolkata. Currently,

civil aviation ministry stated: Kolkata has limited direct "The Indian government is flight connections to Europe, committed to transforming requiring travellers to rely on city airport into a key hub for connecting flights via major flights to both Europe and southeast Asia. Addressing hubs such as Istanbul, Dubai, Bangkok, or Singapore. While challenges such as airline Kolkata enjoys strong coninterest and infrastructure limitations is a priority in this nectivity with southeast Asian nations, the government is endeavour." As part of this

initiative, major international airlines, including Emirates, Qatar Airways, Singapore Airlines, Turkish Airlines, Lufthansa, British Airways, and Air India, are expected to expand their operations through their respective hubs, ensuring improved connectivity to global destinations.

This expansion aligns with the 100-year celebration of Kolkata airport, underscoring its historical significance and future potential. Given its geographical advantage, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose International (NSCBI) Airport is poised to play a crucial role in India's aviation growth strategy, particularly in strengthening connections with Europe and Asia. With the implementation of this initiative, travellers from Kolkata will benefit from

more affordable and convenient international travel options, reinforcing the city's position as a pivotal hub in India's aviation sector. "I also urged our officials to be globally competitive as we must set new benchmarks in speed and execution without compromising on quality. This 2-day workshop brings together AAI officials from different zones, fostering greater collaboration and a unified approach to strengthen our civil aviation sector.

"Inaugurated AAI's workshop on Major Infrastructure Projects today, applauding AAI's efforts in advancing regional connectivity, embracing digital innovation, and championing sustainability," Minister Kinjarapu todaywrote on his X-handle.

HC summons Bengal home secy over govt's 'non-cooperation' with panel on chit funds

AGENCIES

KOLKATA, 14 FEBRUARY

The Calcutta High Court on Thursday summoned West Bengal home secretary Nandini Chakraborty to be present in the court next week and clarify the state government's points in a case related to the state's alleged non-cooperation with a committee formed to ensure compensation for the victims losing money after investing in the deposit schemes of chit fund entities in the state.

Chakraborty will have to appear at the division Bench of Justice Joymalya Bagchi and Justice Gaurang Kanth on 20 February and explain the state government's obser-

vation on the accusations in the matter.

post in the committee had In the wake of the mushnot been filled up and even rooming of chit funds or Ponzi the terms of officers appointed entities in the state in the last in the committee and whose tenures there had expired decade, a committee, headed by a retired justice, was formed had not been extended. The to ensure proper compensacomplaint is also there the state government is yet to tion for the victims losing crores of money by depositing give the clearance for fixing in the multi-level-marketing and paying the remuneration schemes of such shady entities. of the chairman of the com-However, a case was filed of mittee. the Calcutta High Court accus-The Calcutta High Court ing the state government of observed that such non-cooperation on part of the state government was especially

ernment.

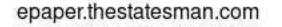
not extending cooperation to the said committee, especially as to making provisions unfortunate when the court itself took initiative of forming for necessary infrastructure and filling up the post there. the committee only after get-The HC bench took the ting assurance of full coopcomplaints quite seriously eration from the state gov-

and observed that it was











HC allows Mohan Bhagwat's public meeting in Burdwan



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE BURDWAN, 14 FEBRUARY

The Calcutta High Court today gave a go-ahead for the public meeting of RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat at a sports stadium beside Burdwan town.

Bhagwat, during his Bengal tour was scheduled to address the public meeting at the Sports Authority of India stadium on 16 February. The district police and administration had restrained the permission for the public meeting on the plea that use of loudspeakers were 'banned' during the ensuing Maderected in the farthest northern corner of the stadium for the scheduled 50 minutes

programme. The SDM, Burdwan (North), Tirthankar Biswas, said that the permission was detained on the ground of the use of loudspeakers in the proposed meeting that's restrained by a previous HC

order. The RSS, challenging the district administration's decision, had moved the HC. Today, the HC judge, Justice Amrita Sinha, in her order has given a go ahead of the programme and the order has specifically mentioned

people walking in for treatment on Friday

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE KOLKATA, 14 FEBRUARY

ore than 8,000 people visited the Sebaashray camps at Satgachia today.

Forty two camps have been opened in Satgachia. Sebaashray is the initiative of Abhishek Banerjee, Trinamul Congress national general secretary and the party's MP from Diamond Harbour. The camps will be held in the vast areas that fall under Diamond Harbour Lok Sabha seat.

Metiabruz. The camps are held for 10 days in each Assembly segment. Mr Banerjee oversees the entire exercise. Mr Banerjee on his X-

15 patients regain vision at Bishnupur camp: TMC

Since inception, 6,55,494 individuals have received health check-ups with 11,015

handle wrote: "What makes #Sabaashray truly exceptional is not just the scale of its outreach but the spirit that drives it- expecting nothing in return, yet delivering everything that matters. The initiative thrives one simple yet profound logic that when intent is pure, the impact is boundless."

The Trinamul Congress in its official X-handle wrote:

your vision; you lose the colors of your dreams and the confidence to chase them. Through #Sebaashray, Shri@abhishekaitc is bringing back not just sight, but hope and dignity.

"15 individuals from the Bishnupur Model Camp have regained their vision after successful, free cataract surgeries at Renuka Eye Institute.

"For them, it's more than a surgery, it's a second chance to see their world, their loved ones, and their dreams once again."

Abhishek on Friday Then it moved to Falta fol- "When you lose your eye- evening wrote on his X- solution and every concern lowed by Bishnupur and sight, you don't just lose handle: "Love isn't just is heard."

about grand gestures, it's about showing up, standing by and delivering when it matters most. #Sebaashray stands as a testament to my commitment to the people of Diamond Harbour,

whose trust has shaped my journey in public service. Since inception, 6,55,494 individuals have received health check-ups, diagnostic screenings, free medicines and referral services.

"Today, on Day 43, the 42 Health Camps in Satgachia extended care to 11,015 people, ensuring that every ailment is met with a

NFR introduces special trains for Prayagraj Mahakumbh pilgrims



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE SILIGURI, 14 FEBRUARY

To accommodate the anticipated surge of pilgrims for the 2025 MahaKumbh Mela in Prayagraj, the Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) has announced additional special trains.NFRCPROKKSharma stated that two pairs of special trains will operate between Jogbani and Tundla, catering to devotees travelling to the

grand religious event. Special train No. 05718 will depart from Jogbani at 6.40 p.m. on 14 February, reaching Tundla at 7 p.m. the next day. Its return journey (train No. 05717) will leave Tundla at 9.40 on 16 February, arriving at Jogbani at 2.20 a.m. on 18 February. Similarly, train No. 05720 will depart Jogbani at 6.40 p.m. on 15 February, reaching Tundla at 7 pm the following day, with its return (train No.

arriving at Jogbani at 2.20 a.m. on 19 February. These trains, comprising 22 coaches including AC-2 tier, AC-3 tier, sleeper class, and general sitting coaches, will halt at key stations like Forbesganj, Katihar, Barauni, Patliputra, Prayagraj, and Etawah.

ocal

Additionally, a one-way special train (No. 05841) will run from Rangapara North to Tundla, departing at 5.30 p.m. on 15 February and arriving at 6.30 a.m. on 17 February. NFR is also operating a daily pair of Maghi Purnima special trains (Nos. 07540 and 07539) between Katihar and Manihari until 21 February, featuring eight coaches for passenger convenience.

Mr Sharma emphasised that these initiatives aim to provide comfortable and hassle-free travel for pilgrims. Passengers are advised to check stoppages and timings on the IRCTC website or NFR's social media platforms before planning their journey.



hyamik examination. The that the use of loudspeakers dais for the meeting has been in the programme is allowed.

05719) scheduled from Tundla at 9.40 p.m. on 17 February,



5.	Construction of Compound Wall, Police Chowky, Parking Shed and other Misc. Work of Hon'ble High Court Justice Bun- glow Vivek, Sneha and Seva, at Nagpur.	225.00	2360.00	12 Months
6.	Construction of Wall Compound, Gajjebo, Toilet, Ground Development, Drainage Repairs and other Misc. Work at Hon'ble Judges Bunglow Anuradha at Hon'ble High Court Bombay Bench, Nagpur.	155.00	2360.00	12 Months
7.	Providing Parking Shed, Police Chowkey, Toilet, Compound Wall, Sewer Line and Misc. Repairs at Hon'ble High Court Justice Bunglow Hiranyagarbha, Civil Lines, Nagpur.	131.00	2360.00	12 Months
8.	Repairs and Renovation to Hon'ble High Court Judges Bunglow Seva, Sunit and Soudamini at High Court Bombay Bench, Nagpur.	370.00	2360.00	12 Months

Detailed tender notice can be seen on website: https://mahatenders.gov.in / https://mahapwd.gov.in

Detailed tender notice can be seen on the Notice Board in the office of the undersigned.

- Right is reserved to reject any or all tenders without assigning any reason thereof.
- In this Tender Notice, Tender downloading, Tender opening etc. information available on website.
- The bidder shall submit the hard copy of tender document (Technical and Financial Envelope) in sealed envelope within 3 days from last date of submission at the office. of tender opening authority.
- Post Qualification Criteria will be applicable for the said construction work.

O.W. No: 1512	Executive Engineer
Date: 06-02-2025	P.W. Dn. No. 1 Nagpur
DGIPR/ROC-6414/24-25	



Buildings at Hon'ble High Court Bombay

Bench, Nagpur.

Rs. : 355000.00 Sr. No. 3. Name of work with location : ENGG-JP-2024-25-113 Sr. DEN (N)/JP Section Augmentation of drainage arrangement system, retaining wall and road approaches in various locations of RUB's in the SSE/W-NNL section under ADEN-RGS jurisdiction. Approx. Cost of work : 23328637.82 Earnest money Rs. : 266700.00 Sr. No. 4. Name of work with location : ENGG-JP-2024-25-114 Sr. DEN (N)/JP Section - Augmentation of drainage arrangement system, retaining wall and road approaches in various locations of RUB's in the SSE/W-RGS section under ADEN-RGS jurisdiction. Approx. Cost of work : 116643189.10 Earnest money Rs. : 733200.00 Sr. No. 5. Name of work with location : ENGG-JP-2024-25-115 Sr. DEN (N)/JP Section - Augmentation of drainage arrangement system, retaining wall and road approaches in various locations of RUB's in the SSE/W-SIKAR section under ADEN-SIKAR jurisdiction. Approx. Cost of work : 93501323.88 Earnest money Rs. : 617500.00 1. Detail is available on N.W.Rly websitewww.ireps.gov.in and Notice Board in WA section, DRM Office, NWR/Jaipur. 2. Tender No. ENGG-JP-2024-25-110 is to be closed on 05.03.2025 at 15.30 hrs and opened on 05.03.2025 at 16.00 hrs & Tender No. ENGG-JP-2024-25-112 to 115 is to be closed on 07.03.2025 at 15.30 hrs and opened on 07.03.2025 at 16.00 hrs. 3. M/s CREATIVE MINERALS INDIA PVT. LTD MATHURA, Plot no. 03, Sector 04, Shri Radha Valley, Mathura (UP) 281001 shall not be participated in Tender no. ENGG-JP-2024-25-110.

with TRR (P)-209.933 Km in Rewari

Phulera chord section Approx. Cost of

work : 40993351.85 Earnest money

185-CR/25 Please join us on f 10 1 NWRailways (5) NWRailways

1,80,000.00. SI No. 4, Tender No. : Engg 1-25-26-LLHOpen Item-4. Name of Work: Open E-tender for Zonai work for Zone no.-4 for 2025-26 P.E. 30.06.2026 under AEN/Workshop/ Liluah and CWM/Liluah. Approx. Cost of Work : ₹ 51,00,000.00. Earnest Money : ₹ 1,02,000.00. SI No. 5, Tender N 1-25-26-LLHOpen Item-5. Work: Open E-tender for Zona Zone no.-5 for 2025-26 P.E. 3 under AEN/Workshop/ Lil CWM/Liluah. Approx. Cost of 75,00,000.00. Earnest M 1,50,000.00. SI No. 6, Tender N 1-25-26-LLHOpen Item-6. Work: Open E-tender for Zon Zone no.-6 for 2025-26 P.E. 3 under AEN/Workshop/ Lil CWM/Liluah. Approx. Cost of 75,00,000.00. Earnest M 1,50,000.00. SI No. 7, Tender N 1-25-26-LLHOpen Item-7. Work: Open E-tender for Zon Zone no.-7 for 2025-26 P.E. 3 under AEN/Workshop/ Lil CWM/Liluah. Approx. Cost of 75,00,000.00. Earnest M 1,50,000.00. Cost of Tender D Nil for each. Completion Pe months for each. Date & time of tender : On 10.03.2025 upto The details of tenders are av website https://www.ireps.go with corrigendum (if any). Ten requested to submit their offer the above website. No manua be accepted. MISC-33 Tender Notice is also available at www.er.indianrailways.gov.in / www.

under AEN/Workshop/ Liluah and

CWM/Liluah. Approx. Cost of Work : ₹

90,00,000.00. Earnest Money : ₹

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available at	Period of Work : 04 years	Date of	publishing on GeM website : 11.02.2025			
ov.in along	Bid End Date/Time : 06.03.2025 At 15:00 Hrs.					
nderers are or on line on ual offer will 33/2024-25 at websites : w.ireps.gov.in	be available/uploaded since D on Website www.GeM.gov.in the form of E-Bids shall not t vendors are required to get th being attached should be sign free of cost to all tenderers. 5.1	ate of publis ate of publis be accepted hemselves hed by the t n case of an	with tender booklet of above E-Tenders will shing on GeM website and shall be remained a date of tender closing. 2. Bids other than in d against above tenders. For this purpose, registered with GeM website. 3. Document enderer. 4. E-Tender Forms shall be issued by difficulty helpdesk available on the website			
nRailway			Fender can be submitted up to Date & time of to participate in instant tender. 297/25 (C)			

No. : COM/PARCEL/LEASING/Long term e-AUC/HWH/2024/Pt-III Dt. 12.02.2025 Senior Divisional Commercial Manager, Eastern Railway, Howrah, 4th Floor, Rail Yatri Niwas Building, near Howrah station, Howrah-711101 invites e-Auction in two phases for 16 Nos. of SLRs in 09 passenger carrying trains originating from Howrah Division for two years through e-auction module of IREPS website. Non-transferable Auction catalogue containing detailed terms and conditions are available at www.ireps.gov.in The bidding for the instant e-Auction is to www.ireps.gov.in For participation on of merchants through e-Auction ndatory. Merchants are also required on Catalogue Details : (1) Auction : FSLR-I of 13023 Up Howrah-Gaya 4.02.2025, 13.00 hrs. (2) Auction : 15 Nos. of SLRs in 08 passenger : 26.02.2025, 13.00 hrs. HWH-603/2024-25 er.indianrailways.gov.in / www.ireps.gov.in

e-Auction for Leasing of Parcel Space over

Howrah Division

Dy. Chief E	lectrical Engineer/ERS
[PR4/804]	CLW/Chittaranjat

Validity Period: 60 (sixty) days.

Complete details of Tender can be

seen in the Railway's Website:

EASTERN RAILWAY

Abridged e-Tender No. DCPM-GS-ENG-SDAH-11-24-25 (Open Tender in Single Packet System) Date: 12.02.2025. Tender for e-tendering is invited by Dy. Chief Project Manager, Gati Shakti Unit, Engineering, Eastern Railway, Sealdah, 3rd Floor, DRM Building, Kaizer Street, Sealdah, Kolkata-700014 for the following work: Name of the Work: Sealdah Division Engineering Design Consultancy work including Topographical Surveying and Geotechnical Investigation works in connection with construction of ROB in lieu of Level Crossings at different locations under the jurisdiction of Sealdah Division of Eastern Railway (Total 14 Level Crossings). Approx. Value : ₹ 1.33.09,420.18; Cost of Tender Documents: Nil; Earnest Money: ₹ 2,16,600.00; Completion Period: 6 Months. Date of Opening: 03.03.2025. 15.00 hrs. The tender document and other details can be obtained from the website www.ireps.gov.in The bidding for the tender is to be submitted through the etendering on above website. Manual offers are not allowed against this tender and any manual offer if received shall not be accepted and will be summarily rejected. SDAH-355/2024-25 Tender Notice is also available at websites :

www.er.indianrailways.gov.in / www.ireps.gov.in

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TheStatesman KOLKATA, SATURDAY 15 FEBRUARY 2025

Conflicts today extend beyond people & nations: PM Modi

The PM remarked that this has led to an environmental crisis that threatens the planet

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, 14 FEBRUARY

ime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday observed that conflicts nowadays extend beyond people and nations, with humanity increasingly in conflict with nature.

He remarked that this has led to an environmental crisis that threatens the planet. He emphasised that the answer to this challenge lies in the shared traditions of Asia, rooted in the principles of Dhamma (belief in Buddhism).

The PM was delivering his remarks, during the SAMVAD programme organised in Thailand, via video message.

Highlighting the theme of SAMVAD, which speaks of the Asian Century, Mr Modi noted that while people often refer to Asia's economic rise, this conference highlights that the Asian Century is not just



about economic value but conflict avoidance, the PM also about social values. remarked that conflicts often

He emphasised that the teachings of Bhagwan Buddha can guide the world in creating a peaceful and progressive era, and his wisdom holds the power to lead towards a human-centric future. Talking about one of the

He emphasised that multiple perspectives can exist on the core themes of SAMVAD—

same issue.

MrModi highlighted another cause of conflict—perceiving others as fundamentally different from ourselves. He remarked that differences lead to distance, and distance can turn into discord. To counter this, he cited a verse from the Dhammapada, which states that everyone fears pain and death.

He emphasised that by recognising others as similar to ourselves, we can ensure that no harm or violence occurs. He added that if these words are followed, conflict can be avoided.

"Many of the world's issues stem from taking extreme positions rather than a balanced approach," said the PM. He highlighted that extreme views lead to conflicts, environmental crises, and even stress-related health problems.

He emphasised that the solution to these challenges lies in the teachings of Bhagwan

Buddha, who urged everyone to follow the Middle Path and avoid extremes. The principle of moderation, he noted, remains relevant today and offers guidance in addressing

global challenges. Mr Modi remarked that he hails from Vadnagar, a small town in western India that was once a great seat of Buddhist learning. In the Indian Parliament, he represents Varanasi, which includes Sarnath, the sacred place where Bhagwan Buddha delivered his first discourse. He noted that it is a beautiful coincidence that places associated with Bhagwan Buddha have shaped his journey.

"Our reverence for Bhagwan Buddha is reflected in the policies of the Indian Government," the PM said. He also highlighted the collaboration with many nations over the past decade to promote the teachings of Bhagwan Buddha.

Modi covered up Adani's corruption even in America: Rahul Gandhi

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, 14 FEBRUARY

Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Friday said Prime Minister Narendra Modi covered up billionaire businessman Gautam Adani's alleged corruption even in the United States.

The statement comes in the wake of Modi's response to a query if he discussed the case of Adani with US President Donald Trump. Modi had stated that "when heads of two countries meet, they do not discuss such personal matters".

Gandhi, in a post on X, said: "If you ask questions in the country, there is silence. Abroad, it is a personal matter. Modi ji covered up Adani ji's corruption even in America."

The Leader of the Opposition who has been accusing Modi of favouring Adani further said: "When filing a friend's pocket is 'nation building' for Modiji... bribery and looting the nation's wealth becomes a personal



matter.'

It may be mentioned that in November last year, Gandhi had demanded Adani's immediate arrest after the US Department of Justice (DoJ) and US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) indicted him and others for alleged bribery.

"It is now pretty clear and established in America that Adani has broken both Amerhas been indicted in the US. I am wondering why Adani is still running around a free man in this country, despite being accused of a Rs 2,000 scam and multiple others," he had said. The Adani Group had

ican law and Indian law. He

denied all allegations made by the US DoJ and the US SEC, and said all possible legal recourse will be sought.

mission exam (UPSC exam).

while dismissing anticipatory

bail plea had made strong

observations against Khedkar

saying it is a "classic example"

of fraud, not only with a con-

stitutional body but also with

society and the nation as a

emphasised that interrogation

is necessary to uncover the

conspiracy involved.

The High Court had

The Delhi High Court

Ashok Gehlot has no moral right to speak on phone tapping: Union Minister Shekhawat

SC extends protection from arrest to former IAS trainee officer Puja Khedkar

PARMOD KUMAR



abilities in order to clear the Union Public Service Com-

whole.'

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

JODHPUR, 14 FEBRUARY

Union Minister for Tourism, Art and Culture Gajendra Singh Shekhawat on Friday hit back at former Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot for the latter's comments on alleged tapping of Agriculture Minister Dr Kirodi Lal Meena's phone, saying the ex-CM at least has no moral right to raise finger at others on this issue.

Talking to the media at his residence here Shekhawat elaborated: "Occurance of phone tapping was the maximum during Gehlot's regime in the state and these were then confirmed by none other than his own aides".

The Union Minister said: "The then OSD in the CMO, under Gehlot, Lokesh Sharma had made statement in a Delhi Court that phone tap-

ping occurred under the previous regime, this was held in illegal manner.

"I was also asked to leak it to media", Shekhawat quoted Sharma as saying.

So, at least those who had committed such acts have no moral right to target others over this issue, Shekhawat said.

He also criticised the Congress and the other opposition parties for the latters' protest

against amendment in the Waqf Board Act.

arise from the belief that only

one path is correct while others

are wrong. He cited Bhagwan

Buddha's insight on this issue,

noting that some people cling

to their own views and argue,

seeing only one side as true.

The Minister said: "Those who encroached and holding possession of the Waqf Board's properties are opposing the new legislation.

On the Congress' criticism against the government agencies for alleged lapses and/ or mismanagement in organising the Maha Kumbh in the Prayagraj, Shekhawat

said: "They are in habit of condemning us for the sake of opposing. About mega event of Kumbh they do oppose in public domain but then rush up the Kumbha Nagari for taking holy dip. Same attitude was evident in the criticism of Covid-19 vaccine. They had criticised the government publicly, then silently rushed to the vaccination centre to take the jab at the earliest."

NEW DELHI, 14 FEBRUARY

The Supreme Court on Friday extended its interim protection from arrest to former IAS trainee officer Puja Khedkar accused of forging her documents to obtain eligibility for the 2022 Union Public Service Commission test under the reservation for other backward classes (OBC) and persons with benchmark disabilities.

On a request from Additional Solicitor General SV Raju, a Justice BV Nagarathna, heading a bench also comprising Justice Satish Chandra Sharma granted more time to Delhi police to file its response on Khedkar's challenge to the Delhi High court order rejecting her plea for anticipatory bail.

Posting the matter for hearing on 18 March, the court extended its 15 January



2025, order protecting Puja Khedkar from any coercive step. However, the court asked Khedkar to cooperate in the investigation.

"List after three weeks. Let interim protection be continued till then provided she is cooperating for investigation," ordered the top

court and posted the matter for hearing on 18 March.

In the course of the hearing of the matter, senior advocate Siddharth Luthra, representing Pooja Khedkar, told the bench that she has not been called for questioning by the police and she is willing to cooperate.

On the last date of hearing, the top court ordered that no coercive steps would be taken against Khedkar till the next date of hearing.

Khedkar is accused of allegedly fraudulently availing reservation meant for Other Backward Classes (OBC) and Persons with Benchmark Dis-

The High Court had also highlighted that the father and mother held high-ranking positions, suggesting the possibility of collusion with influential individuals. Khedkar is facing criminal

charges filed by the Delhi Police, accusing her of cheating and unlawfully claiming OBC and disability quota benefits in the civil services examination.

GIStofocuson urban development: **MPChiefMinister STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE**

BHOPAL, 14 FEBRUARY

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister, Dr Mohan Yadav, said on Friday that the 'Global Investors Summit' (GIS) would focus on urban development, as the state offers unique investment opportunities in key areas like Rs 50,000 crore in 'Housing for All', Rs 17,230 crore in essential facilities, and Rs 32,400 crore in real estate development. The two-day GIS would commence here on 24 February.

He pointed out that the state is emerging as a leading one in India's urban transformation, with smart cities, robust infrastructure and seamless growth.

He said that Madhya Pradesh integrates strategic

Nobody will be left in Thackeray's Sena, claims BJP MLC Pravin Darekar

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE MUMBAI, 14 FEBRUARY

BJP Member of Legislative Council (MLC) Pravin Darekar, who is known to be a confidante of Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, said in Mumbai on Friday that not a single MLA will be left in Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena, if Aaditya Thackeray begins to monitor the movements of his MPs and MLAs, to prevent them from defect-

ing. "Why do you need to take permission to eat? Aaditya Thackeray had gone to meet Chief Minister Fadnavis. Did he take permission? If everybody has to take prior per-

missions, then not even a



single person will be left in the party (Thackeray-led Shiv Sena)," Darekar said.

Darekar was reacting to Aaditya Thackeray's diktat 'Operation Tiger'. issued to his MPs on Thursday that they must seek prior permission before attending any luncheon meetings called by

all those who are joining the party. Eventually, those who have stayed back (in Uddhav Thackeray's Shiv Sena) will also join us.'

Aaditya Thackeray had issued his diktat, a day after Rajan Salvi, an old Bal Thackeray-eraloyalist veteran from coastal Konkan region, who spent more than 35 years in the undivided Shiv Sena, left Thackeray-led Sena and joined Shinde-led Sena, giving a boost to Deputy CM Shinde's 'Operation Tiger' strategy of luring

Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena, away members of Maha Vikas who are reportedly luring Thackeray MLAs through Aghadi (MVA) to join his party. However, sources had said that Aaditya Thackeray's diktat

In a related development, Deputy Chief Minister Shinde had upset some Shiv Sena said: "We are trying to grow MPs, who expressed their disthe Shiv Sena. We welcome pleasure.

YouTuber Ranveer Allahabadia moves SC for

PARMOD KUMAR

YouTuber and podcaster Ranveer Allahabadia on Friday moved the Supreme Court for the clubbing of multiple FIRs registered against him across the country for his obscene remarks during his guest appearance on the 'India's Got Latent'

As Senior advocate Abhinav assigned a date for listing.



Advocate told the bench that multiple FIRs have been registered against Ranveer Allahabadia and Assam Police has summoned him to appear before it today. On 11 February 2025, the Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said the Guwahati Police have registered an FIR against YouTubers

and social influencers Allahabadia, Samay Raina, Ashish Chanchlani, Jaspreet Singh, Apoorva Makhija, and others for promoting obscenity and engaging in sexually explicit and vulgar discussions on India's Got Latent. FIRs have been registered against them in Maharashtra and Assam.

clubbing of multiple FIRs over his obscene remarks

NEW DELHI, 14 FEBRUARY

show.



investments, sustainable development, and cuttingedge digital governance. The CM said the state is rapidly expanding its infrastructure, housing, and smart city projects with ongoing urban projects worth Rs 72,000 crore and upcoming projects worth Rs 88,000 crore.

Dr Yadav noted that with seven smart cities, worldclass connectivity, and progressive urban policies, Madhya Pradesh is well positioned to provide superior infrastructure to investors and developers.

The CM said that the state has introduced the MP Re-Densification Policy 2022 and MP Redevelopment Policy 2022 to promote modern infrastructure and redevelopment. He said the MP TDR Rules 2018 optimize land use and support sustainable urban development. The CM said the state's EV Policy 2025 promotes electric mobility with infrastructure incentives while the Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Policy 2019 fosters high-density urban growth around transit hubs.

BPSC protest gains momentum after Khan Sir claims proof of irregularities

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE PATNA, 14 FEBRUARY

The ongoing protest over alleged irregularities in the BPSC 70th PT (preliminary test) got another momentum as Khan Sir alias Faizal Khan, who is leading the students movement, claimed that he has got proof of the examination having been rigged. Khan Sir said instead of printing a new set of question

papers for the BPSC 70th PT examination held on 4 January, the BPSC used the remaining set of question papers printed for the examination held on 13 December, 2024.

He said that he will present the evidence in the High Court and expressed confidence that after seeing the evidence the High Court will order to cancel the exam. Reacting to the allegations, the BPSC stated that some coaching operators are



spreading confusion and asked BPSC aspirants to remain alert.

In a post on the social media platform 'X', it stated: "The Commission clarifies that for the re-examination held on 4 January, three sets of new question papers were printed as per the number of candidates and as per the provisions of the Commission.

One set of question papers was selected under the Element of Surprise and used in the re-examination.

"It took 21 days to conduct the re-examination only because of printing of new sets of the question paper. Hence, the allegations being propagated/broadcast on social media are completely baseless."

Even after two months of the examination, the protest continues at the government-designated protest site in Gardanibagh, Patna. Students said that they were not tired and they would continue to protest till the government accepted their demand of reexamination. They also observed that the protest will escalate in the coming days.

As the assembly session is about to start here they will approach all party leaders to raise their demands in the House.

Jharkhand police's opium eradication drive: 9,871 acres of illicit crops destroyed, 86 arrested

SHASHI SINGH

RANCHI, 14 FEBRUARY

A special drive to eliminate illegal opium cultivation is being conducted across Khunti, Ranchi, Seraikela-Kharsawan, and Chaibasa districts under Ranchi Zone from 5 February 2025, to 17 February 2025. The campaign ed. is being carried out as per the directives of the govern-

ment and the Director General of Police. According to a statement issued by the police headquarters, the campaign has so far resulted in the destruction of 6,473 acres of illicit opium cultivation and the arrest of

55 individuals in Muruhu, Arki, Khunti, Saiko, and Maranghada police station areas of Khunti district. In Ranchi district, operations in Bundu, Tamar, Dasham Falls, Rahe, Sonahatu, and Namkum police station areas have led to the destruction of 2,484

acres of crops and the arrest

of 19 individuals. In Chaibasa district, 394 acres of illegal cultivation were destroyed in Bandgaon, Tebo, Karaikela, and Toklo police station areas, while in Seraikela-Kharsawan district, 520 acres were cleared in Kuchai, Ichagarh, Chowka, and Kharsawan police station areas, with 12 people arrest-

In total, 9,871 acres of illegal opium cultivation have been eradicated, and 86 individuals have been taken into custody. It is estimated that one acre of opium cultivation yields around 3 to 4 kilograms of raw opium, which is valued at approximately 4 to 5 lakh per kilogram in the market. This campaign has successfully prevented a significant amount of illegal opium from entering the drug market. On 13 February 2025, under the leadership of the Inspector General of Police (IGP), South Chotanagpur Zone, Ranchi, an operation was conducted in Parasi



village under Kundla Panchayat in the Tamar police station area of Ranchi district to destroy illicit opium crops. The campaign involved the Rural Superintendent of Police (SP), the Sub-Divisional Police Officer (SDPO) of Bundu, and other officials and personnel. During the operation, awareness was raised among local residents about the adverse effects of illegal opium cultivation, urging them to refrain from engaging in such activities.

supervision of the Inspector General of Police. The police administration has appealed to the general public to provide information about illegal opium cultivation. Citizens have also been made aware of the strict legal consequences, which include heavy fines and imprisonment of up to 20 years.

The Jharkhand Police has received public cooperation in this extensive campaign, and the administration has appreciated the efforts of all officials and personnel involved in the operation.











The campaign is being

monitored daily under the







Launching the TVK in Feb-

Former Andhra CM YS Jagan condemns ex-YSRCP MLA's arrest

He accused the TDP-led coalition government in AP of abusing power and misusing the police

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE HYDERABAD, 14 FEBRUARY

ondemning the arrest of former MLA Vallabhaneni Vamsi, YSRCP supremo and former Andhra Pradesh chief minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy accused the TDP-led coalition government in Andhra Pradesh of abusing power and misusing the police to file false cases against Opposition leaders and activists.

Vamsi, who was charged with kidnapping and intimidation was remanded to 14 days judicial custody after he was produced before the court by police following his arrest.

Reddy warned that the government would be held responsible as the MLA's



wife feared for his safety in custody. Vamsi was arrested yes-

terday in a case of kidnapping and intimidating the eyewitness and complainant in connection with the attack on the TDP office in Gannavaram during the YSRCP regime.

"The way the coalition government is acting in the case of former MLA Vallabhaneni Vamsi is extremely unfair. In the Gannavaram case, a Dalit youth testified before a judge and exposed the conspiracy of the ruling party saying that the TDP pressured him and filed a false case... How right is it to send the police to harass a Dalit youth on the day he gave his statement and threaten and intimidate them? Is this a democratic government," asked the YSRCP chief.

"I strongly condemn Vamsi's arrest. If there is any issue with Vamsi's security, this government will have

to take full responsibility," he added.

He also condemned the "false" case against former Denduluru MLA Kotharu Abbaya Chowdhury accusing the police of acting unjustly by filing cases of attempt to murder against YSRCP leaders. He accused AP Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu of failing to fulfill the 143 promises he made before polls, cancelling existing schemes and pushing people into crisis. In a reference to the "Red Book" of Nara Lokesh where he had noted the atrocities of the YSRCP government on TDP supporters and leaders, YS Jagan said: "The people themselves are noting down your mistakes in their diaries. We warn you that you will have

(TVK).

to pay a fitting price."

Modigovt according 'Y' scale security to actor Vijay raises political hackles **STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE** of stay within Tamil Nadu.

CHENNAL 14 FEBRUARY

Taking political circles in Tamil Nadu by surprise, the Ministry of Home Affairs has accorded 'Y' category security to Vijay, actor-politician and president of the fledgling Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam

The principal opposition AIADMK, which is reportedly engaged in informal talks for an alliance with the actor's party, has smelt something fishy in the development.

"Is this a bait from the BJP to get him on board in the NDA?" asked AIADMK Deputy General Secretary KP Munusamy, a former minister on Friday.

"It is not clear on what basis the Modi government has extended 'Y' scale security to Vijay. If it was given in view of Vijay being a hugely popular actor and there would be crowds swarming him wherever he goes, it could



be seen as magnanimity. If not, it could be a bait to get him towards them," he told reporters at Krishnagiri.

Naturally, the AIADMK must be worried as this comes just a year ahead of the Assembly elections in Tamil Nadu and the party is making strenuous efforts to cobble up an alliance to take on the ruling DMK. Moreover, it had quit the BJP-led NDA months before last year's Lok Sabha elections.

With the 'Y' category security, the actor would have round-the-clock CRPF protection with an armed guard at his residence or at his place

The TVK cadre is excited at the 'Y' category security for their leader, who had last week held discussions with acclaimed poll strategist Prashant Kishor on preparations for the assembly elections. Kishor is reported to have given a report stating that the TVK could garner a vote share of more than 15 percent and the party should be focused on enhancing it.

political enemy, while the

BJP is the ideological enemy.

He had declared that his out-

fit's focus was the 2026 assem-

bly election to unseat the

DMK from power.

President Murmu inaugurates the Art of Living's 10th International Women's Conference

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE BENGALURU, 14 FEBRUARY

The President of India ruption. In such a competitive Droupadi Murmu inaugurated the inaugural session of the 10th Edition of The International Women's Conference where she inspired the august gathering of over 500 delegates from 50 countries by inviting every woman to look within and find a treasure trove of virtues, talents, mental and spiritual strength to make a positive and long-lasting impact on the society.

services," President Droupadi Murmu said, "We are at the edge of technological dis-



women's empowerment is needed, and it is very progressive. Here the mythology assigns the main ministries and over 500 delegates from education available to India's to women: the Defense Ministry—Durga, Finance Ministry—Lakshmi, Education Ministry-Saraswati." Balancing leadership roles and self-discovery with inner strength, self-love, and selfawareness was the resounding message at the inaugural session of the 10th International Women's Conference (IWC) that brought together a constellation of the finest women leaders from the echelons of power to diplomacy and arts.

speakers and 6,000 delegates from 115 countries. This year's conference, with 60+ speakers more than 50 countries, is a

been working tirelessly for the last 4 decades to make holistic and value-based

"Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar and the Art of Living have inspired and helped people around the world to find inner peace through meditation and humanitarian

world we should ensure our human values remain intact. This is where the role of women becomes important because they lead with compassion and kindness." Honorable President, while speaking about the need to work on mental health shared," You can break silence by creating safe spaces and support systems for everyone to share and express...It is not possible to break barriers and stereotypes without mental

strength." Uniquely themed 'Just Be,' the conference called for a conscious pause, balance,

acceptance of oneself, and resilience as avenues for navigating life's challenges and driving meaningful change in the world.

The global spiritual master and humanitarian Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, the inspiration behind the IWC movement, beautifully shared: "We cannot let a single tear fall from the eyes of a woman." He said, that progress is born out of a positive environment, and by a woman just being present it becomes happy and positive.

"Her emotions are a blessing because it is with this emotional strength that she

Speaker's dais in protest.

Meanwhile, the Speaker

switched off Satheesan's

microphone and demanded

that the members return to

their seats. As the situation

remained tense, the Speaker

moved on to the next pro-

binds people together." He added: "Perhaps if women take on leadership roles in the world's major nations, the conflicts, disputes, wars, and various societal distortions we see today might diminish or even cease."

Gurudev also said: "India has shown the way how

Karnataka govt to

universities; Bidar

shut nine new

Over nearly two decades and across 10 editions, the IWC has united many eminent

sanctuary for women to reflect, inspire, have meaningful dialogue, and share their journeys, while also diving deep within through meditation, breath work, and yoga amidst the serene environment of the Art of Living International Center.

IWC was born out of the vision and brainchild of Smt. Bhanumathi Narasimhan, Chairperson, of the International Women's Conference and the venerable sister of Gurudev. Sharing his vision of a stress-free and violence-free world, she has

remotest and rural corners. She has also introduced millions to the path of meditation and happiness in the footsteps of Gurudev.

Highlighting the essence of the conference, she says "Just Be' encourages us to pause, connect with our inner source, and find a balance between dynamism and relaxation. Meditation helps us stay present, fostering clarity and creativity. This conference is a space to learn, share, and grow together, embracing kindness, resilience, and inner peace."

Andhra HC denies bail to accused in Raju's custodial torture case

AGENCIES

AMARAVATI, 14 FEBRUARY

The Andhra Pradesh High Court on Friday dismissed the bail petition of K. Tulasi Babu, an accused in the custodial torture case of former MP and current Assembly Deputy Speaker K. Raghu Rama Krishna Raju.

The High Court, which had reserved its order on the bail petition on 11 February, pronounced the same on Friday.

Raju, then an MP, was arrested and allegedly tortured in police custody in 2021 when the YSR Congress Party was in power.

After the TDP-led coalition came to power, a case was registered against former Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy and others on a complaint by Raju.

Speaker-Opposition leader face-off disrupt Kerala Assembly proceedings

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, **14 FEBRUARY**

A dispute between the Speaker and Leader of the Opposition V D Satheesan (*photo*) over the excessive time taken by the latter led to the disruption of proceedings in the Kerala Assembly on Thursday.

Speaker AN Shamseer's intervention to stop his walkout speech has not gone well with Satheesan even though the speech exceeded nine minutes. He was elaborating how the government was neglecting the backward sections of society when the Speaker intervened.

A visibly agitated Satheesan made it clear that he won't back down. He said it was up to the Speaker to decide whether the session

Classified



should continue, but that he wouldn't allow it to proceed if the Speaker kept interrupting him. He also emphasised the importance of speaking with dignity in the Assembly. Following this, Opposition members gathered in front of the ceedings varsity to escape axe **AGENCIES BENGALURU, 14 FEBRUARY** The Karnataka government will bring the shutters down on nine of the 10 new uni-

> versities that were established during the tenure of the BJP government after it was found that only one of them was fully functional, sources confirmed on Friday.

The decision about this was taken in the Cabinet subcommittee meeting headed by Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar on Thursday which discussed it in detail.

According to sources, the subcommittee has decided to continue the Bidar University as it is a fully functional university and has 150 affiliated colleges and is functioning efficiently by generating good income.

Revanth hits out at PM Modi

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

HYDERABAD, 14 FEBRUYARY

Mounting an all-out attack on the BJP and BRS over the caste census conducted by his government Telangana chief minister A Revanth Reddy today alleged that Prime Minister Narendra Modi exhibited the personality traits of a privileged class since he originally did not come from backward classes and called for the social boycott of BRS leaders like K Chandrasekhar Rao and KT Rama Rao for not participating in the survey.

Participating in a programme at the Congress headquarters, Gandhi Bhavan Reddy aggressively attacked his rivals in his customary style. He took part in a power point presentation on the caste census conducted recently and said the Prime Minister originally did not hail from a BC family.

He raked the old controversy that the community from which the Prime Minister hailed, was brought under BCs later.

"Modi is not a BC by birth. After becoming the chief minister, he included his caste among the BCs. Modi ... is a BC only according to a certificate. His personality is that of an upper caste," said Reddy. He then elaborated upon the benefits that can be derived from conducting a caste census.

He said once a caste census is conducted, then reservations can also be obtained according to law. If there are official figures even the Supreme Court can agree that the reservation for BCs must be increased. He accused the opposition parties of creating misconceptions for their own political mileage.

He asked BCs association to go to the residences of BRS leaders like K Chandrasekhar Rao, KT Rama

Rao and T Harish Rao and beat drums. He called for a social boycott of the BRS leaders for not participating in the caste census. He slammed the Opposition party for their criticism that the caste census data was

not correct. He also took a dig at BRS supremo K Chandrasekhar Rao recalling the latter's statement that when he hits out he gives a hard blow.

Reddy responded by saying: "KCR should hit his son hard for his behaviour, his daughter for the liquor scam that dragged him and Kejriwal down, and his nephew for land grabs. Telangana witnessed their evil deeds and delivered the beating in the elections."

The chief minister also slammed BJP leaders and Union ministers G Kishan Reddy and Bandi Sanjay, challenging them to say what they brought for Telangana from the Centre.

ground. He is someone who

has trust in the grassroots

systems of panchayati raj.

He has worked extensively

with tribals. Every year, he

spends the day of Lakshmi

Puja during Diwali with the

tribal population in his district.

He isvery frank as a leader,

and always very clear about

what he can and cannot do,"

a Maharashtra Congress

district in the Vidarbha region.

He began his political career

in the Congress-affiliated

National Students Union of

India (NUSI). He grew from

being the Zilla Parishad Chair-

man of Buldhana in the early

2000s to becoming an MLA

representing Buldhana assem-

Sapkal hails from Buldhana

leader said.

Congress appoints Harshwardhan Sapkal as Maharashtra state president



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STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE MUMBAI, 14 FEBRUARY

The Congress officially announced on Friday in Mumbai that it has replaced Nana Patole with a lowprofile, one-term MLA from Buldhana called Harshwardhan Vasantrao Sapkal as president of the Maharashtra Pradesh Congress Committee (MPCC).

In a related development, the Congress also appointed MLA Vijay Waddettiwar as its Maharashtra state legislative party leader.

In terms of caste arithmetic, Waddettiwar is an OBC leader, while Harshwardhan Sapkal is from the Maratha community and outgoing Nana since there is one Maratha Patole is an OBC leader from and one OBC leader, running Vidarbha. Earlier, Wadettiwar the Maharashtra unit of the party. Both leaders are from was the Leader of Opposithe Vidarbha region, which tion. used to be a former Congress

Significantly, the appointments of Sapkal and Wadettiwar balance the caste equation within the MAharashtra Congress state leadership



a low-profile leader, who has climbed the ladder from the ground upwards, and is known to have earned the trust of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi over the last few vears.

"Sapkal is an organisation man. He keeps a low-profile and quietly works on the

bly constituency in 2014. Sapkal represented Buldhana until 2019, when he lost the election. Presently, he is president of the Congress' Rajiv Gandhi Panchayat Raj Sanghatan as well as a secretary of the All India Congress Committee (AICC).







stronghold which was lost

Congress sources, Sapkal is

According to Maharashtra

to the BJP.









'BJP govt should not cite lack of funds for Mahila Samman scheme'

Acting CM Atishi also tried to show case the poor performance of BJP governments in other states

AGENCIEAS

NEW DELHI, 14 FEBRUARY

ishing out data on the AAP government's good financial performance, outgoing Delhi Chief Minister Atishi on Friday sought to plug any chance for the next BJP government offering an excuse of lack of funds for not implementing schemes like Rs 2,500 monthly financial assistance to women.

Addressing the media here, Acting Chief Minister Atishi took pains to justify the AAP government's freebies or free social welfare schemes, dispelling doubts that the Arvind Kejriwal brand of welfare politics did not mean 'bad economics'.

The Acting Chief Minister said she was sharing the data about the AAP government's good economic performance so that BJP leaders do not

blame the outgoing government for the alleged poor state of finances and delay the implementation of the BJP's poll promises.

"I hope the new BJP government will not make financial excuses and fulfil all its promises made to women and others," she said.

She said Delhi's Budget outlay under Central rule in 2014-15 was Rs 31,000 crore and under the Congress government in 2009-10 the outlay was Rs 25,000 crore, she said.

After the 10-year rule under the AAP government, in 2024-25 the city's Budget outlay was Rs 77,000 crore, marking a rise of 2.5 times, she said. Talking about the debt

that the AAP government acquired in legacy from the previous Congress government, she said the debt to

GDP ratio in 2014 was 6.6 per cent and it came down in 2023 to 3.9 per cent and in



2024 the figure stood at 3 per government managed the finances.

"Under Arvind Kejriwal, Acting CM Atishi also tried the city's debt to GDP ratio to showcase the poor perwas halved from 6.6 per cent formance of BJP governments to 3 per cent," she said, highin other states by sharing lighting how well the AAP debt to GDP ratio in Uttar

Addressing the media here, Acting Chief Minister Atishi took pains to justify the AAP government's freebies or free social welfare schemes, dispelling doubts that the Arvind Kejriwal brand of welfare politics did not mean 'bad economics'.

Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh.

"In BJP-ruled Uttar Pradesh, the debt to GDP ratio is 32.5 per cent and in Madhva Pradesh, the debt to GDP ratio is 33 per cent," she said.

She also highlighted a CAG report in 2022 which complemented the AAP-led Delhi government for being the only revenue-surplus state in the country since 2015.

Satyendar Jain ED case: Union govt seeks President's nod for trial

Suraksha Sanhita which out-

lines the requirement of prior

government sanction before

a court can take cognizance

of offenses committed by

ED in a Rs 4.8-crore money

against the former Delhi Min-

Jain was arrested by the

public servants.

year.



AGENCIES NEW DELHI, 14 FEBRUARY

In fresh trouble for former Delhi Health Minister Satyendar Kumar Jain of the Aam Aadmi Party, the Union Ministry of Home Affairs has requested President Droupadi Murmu to grant prosecution sanction for initiating legal proceedings against him in a money laundering case, official sources said.

The President's approval has been sought under Section 218 of the Bharatiya Nagarik ister in 2017 under the Prevention of Corruption Act.

In April 2022, the ED had provisionally attached immovable properties worth Rs 4.81 crore belonging to the companies linked to Jain and his aides.

Apart from the alleged corruption and money laundering cases filed against the former minister, Jain is also accused of threatening Tihar Jail staff during his stay.

Last month, Assistant Superintendent Jaidev and **Deputy Superintendent** Parveen Kumar, Tihar Jail, had complained against Jain in an 'incident report' on 8 December 2022, that when they went to serve a Show Cause Notice to Jain as per rule 1272 of DPR, 2018, he

laundering case in May 2022 threatened them. for allegedly using four com-Jain has been blatantly panies linked to him to swindle intimidating these officers money. He stepped out of and others for their acts trying jail on bail in October last to prevent him from availing facilities of massage, lavish food and other VIP treatments, The ED case was based on the CBI's FIR lodged that came to the fore recently,

said a jail official.

Assam Budget Session 2025 to focus on development and communal harmony, says Deputy Speaker

Protesting students accuse Jamia of breach of privacy

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI, 14 FEBRUARY**

their teens. Nothing gives the Jamia admin the right



"On February 10, you were identified as leading an unruly and rowdy group of individuals to vandalize and deface the university's property," a letter from the Jamia authorities said

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

GUWAHATI, 14 FEBRUARY

Deputy Speaker of the Assam Assembly, Numal Momin, said on Friday that the upcoming budget session, set to commence on 17 February, will be a significant event aimed at uniting the people and fostering communal harmony in the state.

"This is an important session, and the budget will carry immense significance," Momin stated. "Assam is a diverse state, home to many communities and religions living in communal harmony. This budget will reflect that diversity and bring people together. Additionally, since this session will be accessible to many residents, it will boost public morale and encourage greater participation in governance."

Momin also highlighted

At the same time, political tensions between the ruling party and the opposition Congress are intensifying, with Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma frequently targeting key **Congress leaders**.

cent.

that several key bills are expected to be introduced during the session, although he did not provide specifics.

Ahead of the budget session, Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs, Jayanta Mallabaruah, ceremonially launched the Online Building Permission System (OBPS) in Guwahati on February 13. This system, now available across 32 municipalities in the state, aims to streamline the building approval process and enhance public service delivery.

"The OBPS will provide a smooth and citizen-centric service, making it easier for

people to obtain building permissions efficiently," Mallabaruah said.

The upcoming budget session comes at a critical time for Assam. With Assembly elections two years away, the BJP-led government is expected to focus on policies that reinforce economic growth, infrastructure development, and social welfare.

At the same time, political tensions between the ruling party and the opposition Congress are intensifying, with Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma frequently targeting key Congress leaders.

to destroy the futures of these students," the Left-A day after several students of Jamia Millia Islamia were affiliated organisation said detained and later released in a statement. over their protest against The protest began on

Monday, with students conshow cause notices sent to two PhD scholars, they demning what they termed alleged on Friday that their as the administration's names and other details "crackdown on student were made public by the activism". The university varsity which was a "clear claimed the protesting stuviolation of their privacy". dents vandalised university According to the Student's property, including the central canteen, and broke the Federation of India (SFI), gate of the security advisor's the administration has put up the crucial details such office, forcing the adminisas address and phone numtration to take action.

Some of the students allegedly involved in the protest claimed they also got suspension letters from the Jamia administration.

"No amount of suspen-"On February 10, you sion notices against these were identified as leading an unruly and rowdy group students can justify the violations of their privacy. There of individuals to vandalize are young women in this and deface the university's list and students just out of property.

"Furthermore, on February 11, you again participated in an unauthorized and unlawful protest within the JMI campus, disrupting the normal functioning of university and creating ruckus inside the campus thereby resulting in gross inconven-

Jamia Milia latania (JMI) due to your involvement in acts of vandalism, unauthorized and unlawful protests, and defamation of the University which constitute serious breaches of University's Ordinances along with ensuing rules and regulations till the outcome of the proceedings of the Disciplinary Committee," the letter said.

ALI YAVAR JUNG NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF (P) **SPEECH & HEARING DISABILITIES** (DIVYANGJAN)

ience to other students teach-

ers and employees of the

University," according to a

student who claims to have

received the suspension let-

you that you are suspended

with immediate effect from

"This letter serves to inform

ter.

(Under the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan) Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, Government of India}

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F.No. A-12018/10/2023-E-IV **GOVERNMENT OF INDIA** MINISTRY OF JAL SHAKTI Department of Water Resources

River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation

of Delhi: LG Saxena **STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE**

Sanitation workers backbone

NEW DELHI, 14 FEBRUARY

Lieutenant Governor (LG) VK Saxena said on Friday that sanitation workers are the backbone of Delhi, without them one cannot imagine a clean national capital.

Interacting with sanitation officials and swachhta sainiks of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) as part of his 'Samvaad', he acknowledged their vital role in maintaining the city's cleanliness and sanitation and stressed the critical role they play in the overall health of Delhi.

Addressing the sanitation workers, the LG said: "You are the backbone of Delhi, and without you, it's difficult to imagine a clean Delhi. I

commend your dedication, particularly during challeng-

ing times like the Covid-19 pandemic, Yamuna river floods, and the successful organisation of the G-20 summit."

Referring to the recently-concluded DelhiAssembly polls, Saxena said: "Today, we are meeting at a time when the people of Delhi have changed and elected a new government. Actually, this change, brought about by the public, will be visible only when Delhi becomes completely clean and green. Sanitation workers have made strong efforts to clean Delhi. However these efforts are falling short. We still have to work harder and make

Uttar Pradesh no longer a 'BIMARU' state: Nitin Gadkari

day.

ing this target."

opportunities.

bers along with their pho-

tographs outside the varsity

gate for everyone to see,

which is a breach of the pri-

vacy of the students.

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE LUCKNOW, 14 FEBRUARY

Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari praised the development in Uttar Pradesh, stating that the state is no longer a 'BIMARU' state but has become one of the leading contributors to India's economy.

He also said that Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has successfully worked towards establishing 'Ram Rajya' in Uttar Pradesh.

The Union Road Transport and Highways Minister was addressing at the inauguration and foundation stone laying program of various develconstruction, and another opment works worth Rs 1,028

crore organized here on Fri-Rs1lakh crore worth of projects are in the pipeline.

During this, he said, "Under PM Narendra Modi's leadership, India aims to become a global leader and a \$5 trillion Intelligent Machine and Guideconomy, with Uttar Pradesh playing a crucial role in achievensuring superior road quality and zero potholes for the

energy, transport, and communication will boost indusindustrial growth in Purvantries, attract investment, and chal, a Rs 75,000 crore road network is planned from create new employment Varanasi to Kolkata and Gorakhpur to Siliguri," Gadkari Highlighting infrastructure said. He requested Chief Mindevelopment in UP, Gadkari ister Yogi Adityanath to expesaid that Rs 1.25 lakh crore dite land acquisition and worth of roads have been completed, Rs 1 lakh crore environmental clearances for these projects to ensure worth of projects are under

timely execution.

He further noted that the Kanpur-Lucknow Expressway is being built using 'Automated ed Construction' technology for the first time in India,

He mentioned that strong infrastructure in roads, water, next 10 years. "Additionally, to drive

Mahakumbh sets a new world record of cleanliness

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE MAHAKUMBH NAGAR,

14 FEBRUARY

The land of Tirtharaj Prayagraj is not only holding cultural heritage of humanity as a grand Mahakumbh-2025, but Sangamnagari is also witnessing historical world records. Along with the world record of the confluence bath of 50 crore devotees, Tirtharaj set a unique world record towards cleanliness on Friday.

Under this, more than 300 sanitation workers set up a world record by cleaning the Ganges at different ghats simultaneously. All the prescribed procedures were adopted by the Mela Authority to create this record. Now the representatives of the Guinness Book of World Records will verify the entire process and will provide a certificate after certifying this record. After receiving the certificate, it will be a unique record in itself, where so many cleaning workers simultaneously launched a cam-

paign to clean the river for more than half- an -hour at different ghats.

Delhi clean."

In view of the global image of Mahakumbh in Prayagraj, the state government has waged a public awareness campaign to clean the river. Due to this campaign, crores of devotees coming to Mahakumbh are bathing in the holy, pure and clean water of mother Ganga, mother Yamuna and invisible mother Saraswati. Now, this campaign is going to get authenticity in the form of world records.

Akanksha Rana, Special Officer (OSD) of the Fair Authority, said that on the instructions of the Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, the target of setting up the records of the largest river cleaning campaign was set, which has been completed today with the entire process.Under this, Ganga cleaning campaign was carried out simultaneously at the three ghats (Ram Ghat, Bhardwaj Ghat and



the Ganges river. Through this campaign, which lasted for more than half- an -hour, awareness was also spread to keep the river and ghats clean.

According to Rana, representatives of the Guinness Book of World Records were also present to watch this campaign. Also present were professors of MNIT. Videography of this entire process Gangeshwar Ghat) built on was also done, which will be

recognized after watching and verifying this record. The purpose of this record is not only to achieve world records, but also to highlight the dedication of the Mahakumbh to the preservation of holy rivers. Through this, emphasis will be laid on the importance of ecological protection and spiritual relations with the natural environment.

After completing the process of making world

According to Rana. representatives of the Guinness Book of World Records were also present to watch this campaign.

records of river cleaning simultaneously, now the Mela Authority will move towards another world record on Saturday as well. This record will be of the largest synchronised sweeping drive. Under this, a coordinated cleaning activity will be met by 15,000 participants. The importance of this record is to promote hygiene and envi-

ronmental protection as the internal values of the Mahakumbh Mela, which will strengthen the message of collective responsibility to maintain the sanctity of

major sites. Earlier, the fair administration set this record with 10,000 participants in 2019, which they hope to improve

on this time.

National Dam Safety Authority (NDSA) is a Statutory Body set up by the Central Government in exercise of the powers conferred by Section 8(1) of the National Dam Safety Act, 2021. The Authority shall discharge such functions as per the Second Schedule of the Act as may be necessary to implement the policy, guidelines and standards evolved by the National Committee on Dam Safety for proper surveillance, inspection and maintenance of specified dams and for such purposes. The National Dam Safety Authority has it's headquarter at New Delhi.

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5.	Member (Disaster & Resilience)	Level-14 (Rs. 1,44,200-2,18,200)	01

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US-India Pivot

he high-profile meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Donald Trump underscores the delicate balance between cooperation and contention in bilateral trade and strategic relations. While both leaders projected a vision of a "mega partnership" driven by energy deals, defence cooperation, and immigration agreements, underlying tensions on tariffs and trade imbalances remain unresolved. The engagement signals progress, but the broader implications for India's economic interests demand careful scrutiny. One of the key takeaways from the Modi-Trump meeting was India's commitment to increasing oil and gas imports from the US. For Washington, this aligns with Mr Trump's push to narrow the trade deficit by boosting energy exports. For New Delhi, securing diverse energy sources is a strategic imperative, especially as geopolitical uncertainties continue to disrupt global supply chains. However, the flip side of this deal is India's trade deficit, which could widen further if US energy proves costlier due to a strong dollar. This raises questions about long-term affordability and whether such purchases are sustainable without compromising fiscal prudence. The defence sector was another focal point, with Mr Modi expressing interest in acquiring advanced fighter jets from the US. This aligns with India's broader push to modernise its military, particularly given regional security concerns. While access to cutting-edge US technology strengthens India's defence capabilities, over-reliance on American arms could create dependencies that limit strategic autonomy. Balancing these purchases with the "Make in India" initiative will be key in ensuring that domestic defence production does not suffer at the cost of foreign acquisitions. Trade barriers remain a thorny issue. Mr Trump's persistent complaints about India's high tariffs reflect the larger struggle between protectionism and market access. Mr Modi's willingness to reduce some tariffs on US goods is a pragmatic step to soften trade friction, but this is unlikely to appease Mr Trump, who has shown a strong inclination toward aggressive trade policies. With the US increasingly using tariffs as a leverage tool, India must brace for the possibility of stricter trade conditions in future. Immigration, another recurring friction point, also featured in discussions between Mr Modi and Mr Trump. India's acceptance of deported undocumented migrants was a gesture of cooperation, but concerns remain over the fate of legal Indian immigrants, particularly those on H-1B visas. Any tightening of US visa poicies would impact Indian professionals, especially in the tech sector, affecting remittances and employment opportunities. The broader message from the Modi-Trump meeting is clear: while India and the US seek to deepen economic and strategic ties, transactional diplomacy continues to define the relationship. Energy deals and defence purchases can smoothen trade disputes in the short term, but structural issues such as tariffs and visa policies require sustained negotiations. Mr Modi must navigate these complexities by leveraging India's growing global stature while safeguarding its economic interests. A "mega partnership" may be the aspirational goal, but ensuring it remains equitable and mutually beneficial is the real challenge ahead.

Drawing new lines

Trump may see the US as the indisputable hegemon in the region, but a lot has changed in the past few years. Russia and China have gained considerable global influence. China used its economic might and global rise to gain a potent voice. Russian president Vladimir Putin will not accept any deal in Ukraine which will scuttle his gains in Ukraine. At the end of Trump's term, China will be far more formidable. Europe will refuse to play his master's voice







Tever since the abolition of Nepal's monarchy in May 2008 has the institution been as much a topic of interest and discussion as it has in recent months. Former King Gyanendra's recent trip to India to attend the Kumbh Mela and the concurrent meetings with Indian political leaders has been viewed by the media, political analysts and leaders as potentially meaningful.

This is not the first time such visits have taken place. But this one comes when one after another corruption scandal is hitting the headlines, and the public distrust in government is high.

Right here and now, should a referendum take place, the majority would probably vote for a constitutional monarchy to make a comeback. This contrasts with the months and years leading up to the overthrow of the institution.

The assassination in June 2001 of King Birendra ~ who in 1991 instituted multiparty democracy ~ along with nine other royal family members led to Gyanendra's ascension to the throne. The Maoist insurgency, which lasted a decade beginning in 1996, was in full bloom and elections were not being held. In February 2005, Gyanendra declared a state of emergency and dissolved the Parliament, which was reinstated in April 2006. Broad public out-

AI Diplomacy

he Artificial Intelligence Action Summit in Paris showcased the growing divide in global AI governance. While 61 countries, including India, backed a collective statement on AI ethics, sustainability, and cooperation, two major players ~ the United States and the United Kingdom ~ chose not to sign it. Their refusal underscores a broader geopolitical struggle over AI leadership, one that places national interests above international collaboration. Against this backdrop, India's proactive stance in advocating for global AI standards marks an important shift in its approach to emerging technologies. At the heart of the summit was the question of how AI should be regulated. The final communique emphasised six key principles, including inclusivity, transparency, and ethical deployment of AI. However, the US objected to language promoting international cooperation, preferring a more unilateral approach. The UK, too, cited national interests as a reason for staying out. These decisions align with the broader policy direction of major Western economies, which often resist multilateral frameworks that might constrain their technological dominance. India, on the other hand, struck a balanced position, pushing for AI governance while ensuring that innovation is not stifled. Prime Minister Narendra Modi highlighted the need for collective global efforts to set standards that can mitigate AI risks while fostering trust. India also emphasised inclusivity, particularly for nations in the Global South, which face challenges in accessing AI infrastructure, compute power, and skilled talent. This approach positions India as a bridge between technologically advanced economies and emerging markets, advocating for an AI framework that benefits all. The summit also highlighted the evolving nature of global AI competition. With China's rapid advancements in AI, particularly with cost-effective models that challenge Western dominance, the Americans framed AI regulation as a national security issue. This stance reflects concerns over data privacy, surveillance, and AI-driven disinformation campaigns. However, by rejecting multilateral commitments, the US risks deepening global AI fragmentation, leading to competing regulatory regimes instead of a cohesive international framework. For India, this moment presents a unique opportunity. By advocating for AI governance while prioritising innovation, it can shape the global AI conversation in ways that align with its long-term technological ambitions. The decision to host the next AI Action Summit underscores India's growing influence in this space. If it can leverage its strengths in AI research, software development, and digital infrastructure, it could become a key player in defining ethical AI standards for the world. As AI continues to evolve, the lack of a unified global approach remains a challenge. Countries are prioritising their strategic interests over collective regulation, creating risks of unchecked AI deployment. India's push for a balanced approach ~ one that fosters trust, inclusivity, and innovation ~ could serve as a model for responsible AI governance. With its role in hosting the next summit, India now has the chance to lead this critical conversation on the global stage.

n November 2017, after a lengthy meeting with Chinese president Xi Jinping, • Donald Trump boasted that he and Xi can solve "probably all" the world's problems. Today, he believes he alone can solve all the world's problems. That explains his boast in the company of his friend Benjamin Netanyahu that US "will take over Gaza" and "own it". The king believes he has the right to single-handedly redraw the

world map as he sees fit. Trump believes, so does Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu, that the strong are destined to gobble up the weak. Redrawing the world map is very much on their agenda. The Israeli leader claims that the war has "already changed the face of

the Middle East.' The irony of Netanyahu's pompous claim is too stark to miss. He is the first foreign dignitary to meet President Trump which is "a testimony not only to the strength of the Israeli-American alliance" but also the vitality of their friendship.

In fact, Netanyahu boasts that Israeli soldiers "have redrawn the map". He is confident that together with President Trump, they "can redraw it even further, and for the better." This is Trump's "golden age of peace" in the Middle East! Netanyahu has his own dream of bringing about a new regional order in the Middle East.

Redrawing the map is a sinister game with disastrous consequences. Africa is still paying the price for the colonial carve up of the continent.

During the colonial period, European powers drew up these borders according to their own interests and without much consideration for the natural or cultural landscape of the region. This resulted in many countries having straight line boundaries that do not align with the natural or ethnic divisions within Africa.

The Middle East has its own share of the problem. The 1916 Sykes-Picot map of the division of territorial spoils between Britain and France of what is today the modern Middle East hasn't fared any better.

When Sykes and Picot hammered out their agreement, the strategic interests of the British and French took precedence over the

tangled sectarian and ethnic demographics of the region. The region continues to pay the price for im-

bluster than sub-

stance. But his acts

perial arrogance. Now there is a Trump-Netanyahu plan. Trump has his own compulsions to do the strong leader act. There will be more

will be disruptive. And pretty any deal with Israel. dangerous too.

Trump is testing the limits of his power. Like Netanyahu, Trump too is seeking to redraw the world map as he deems fit. He is practically threatening the world leaders that those who do not "bend the knee" should be prepared to face the consequences.

He has created a febrile and unpredictable political atmosphere around his administration. Trump believes personal interventions can swiftly and permanently end longstanding conflicts such as Gaza

His belief that his constant lies, exaggerations and inventions can create new realities, both reshaping the present and permanently rewriting history is delusional, to say the least.

The leaders in the Middle East are wary of Trump's unpredictability and his impulsive and reckless comportments. And hence they will be wary of playing along. Trump's team contains quite a few hawks, even

extreme hawks. The Arab leadattack Syria? No one believes it ers are aware of serious disrupis to eliminate Iranian military tion in bilateral relationships. targets or to destroy Syrian mil-

That explains a flurry of high-level confabulations. Syrian interim president Ahmad al-Sharaa has undertaken his first international trip to Saudi Arabia. Earlier, Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan visited Damascus in January.

Riyadh is en-

US special envoy for the

Middle East Steve Witkoff has

said that Qatar, which along

with the US and Egypt, mediat-

candidate for normalization.

open secret.

Israel's game may include gaged in an active the annexation of Jordan Valley. Israel has deployed military units dialogue with Europe and the US to in the buffer zone along the help lift economic Golan Heights separating Syria sanctions imposed and Israel. The terrain has been on Syria. There are an officially designated as a declear indications militarised zone as part of a 1974 that Trump will UN-brokered ceasefire deal.

itary infrastructure.

Grabbing as much land as

it can is part of the grandiose

plan. Some experts don't rule

out Israel's long game of break-

ing Syria into a series of cantons,

with each free to cooperate with

external actors, including Israel.

push for Abraham All said, whenever Trump Accords 2.0. The comes out with peace plan for Palestine, he will call it a deal US wants Saudi of the century. What it will in-Arabia to join. Riyadh has been volve will be much more than the revival of his earlier estinian state as a "peace plan". precondition for

The Abraham Accords marked the most important foreign policy accomplishment of President Trump's first term. Academics and journalists generously lauded his feat.

Abraham Ben-Zvi of Unied the Gaza ceasefire, is also a versity of Haifa argued that Pres-Trump is far more open in ident Trump had changed "the siding with Israel than during face of the Middle East". Israeli his first term. Washington and writer Ari Shavit was even more Tel Aviv may also be preparing euphoric saying "history is startthe ground for Israeli settleing to flow in a new, secure ments in Gaza. Trump's support channel." for a US-Israel-Saudi axis is an Today, given Netanyahu's

ethnic cleansing and Trump's Trump may see the US as global grabbing, that sense of the indisputable hegemon in the hope is missing. Trump's shock and awe plan will be the one region, but a lot has changed in the past few years. Russia and that will give Israel what it China have gained considerable wants, concede to Palestinians global influence. China used its everything Israel does not care economic might and global rise for. It may at best promise some financial assistance to the Pales-Russian president Vladimir tinians that will never see the Putin will not accept any deal in light of day.

Ukraine which will scuttle his But Trump will call it peace. gains in Ukraine. At the end of He may even demand a Nobel Trump's term, China will be far Peace Prize for it. The world will more formidable. Europe will be made to believe that history refuse to play his master's voice. has indeed begun to "flow in a Why is Israel continuing to new, secure channel"

THE KATHMANDU POST

cry followed the direct rule of Gyanendra, who was deposed by the first Constituent Assembly two years later. A referendum would probably vote for the same conclusion.

Since then, nearly 17 years have passed under a republic system, and public perceptions of ~ and support for ~ the monarchy are on the mend. Lately, Gyanendra's scheduled visits to various districts have drawn large crowds. Some of it may have been staged, as these visits are not impromptu but done with planning and as die-hard loyalists make it a point of showing up.

But crowds are increasingly getting larger. It is not a sea of people by any means, but it is growing ~ growing by the day. This is giving rise to conjecture that it is only a matter of time before the institution ~ essentially left for dead ~ is restored after a long hiatus. The question is, what changed in these 17 years?

The same way Gyanendra for the most part can be blamed for planting a seed for the monarchy's demise, the leading contemporary parties can be blamed for elevating his popularity. Gyanendra miscalculated by adopting a high-handed approach when he staged a coup in February 2005, forming a government of royalists,

some of whom were of questionable abilities.

There was a similar coup by his father, Mahendra, in December 1960, establishing the partyless Panchayat system, but that move was welcomed by people, who were disgusted by the corruption in the Nepali Congress-led government.

Gyanendra's attempt to emulate his father, on the other hand, drew public ire; corruption was present but not rampant. Fast forward to now, one cannot claim the same. Since 1991 in general and 2008 particularly, corruption has been the norm rather than the exception.



global affairs



editor@thestatesman.com

Yamuna revival

SIR, The Yamuna river figured prominently in the just-concluded Delhi Assembly elections. After the BJP's victory, Prime Minister Narendra Modi assured Delhi that the new government would make every effort to clean the river. "It may be a long haul, but Mother Yamuna will surely bless our efforts," he said.

Will this help the cause of the river? The Central government has a huge role to play here. Since the Yamuna is the biggest tributary of the Ganga, the National Mission for Clean Ganga can make a huge impact on its fate.

So too can the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests, Jal Shakti Ministry ~ including the Central Water Commission and the Upper Yamuna River Board ~ the Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (which has the Delhi Development Authority under it) and the Central Pollution Control Board.

Unfortunately, these central agencies have not performed well enough to give the Yamuna a new lease of life in Delhi. The Yamuna puzzle has many components. A Delhi water policy can be a key instrument to provide guidance



on these issues.

to gain a potent voice.

The new government in Delhi can, through the involvement of people, prepare such a policy. Importantly, the BJP is also in power in other Yamuna basin states like Haryana, Uttar

ILLEGAL MIGRANTS

Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Uttarakhand. The AAP and the Congress

must act as a responsible Oppo-

sition in the Delhi Assembly and

Parliament and keep the Yamuna

issue alive. A lot can and must be

done to improve the state of the Yamuna in Delhi. The challenge of climate change must also be considered.

> Yours, etc., Shovanlal Chakraborty, Kolkata, 12 February.

SIR, This has reference to your editorial "Deportation Drive" published on 6 February. Ahead of PM Modi's visit to Washington, the massive crackdown on illegal Indian immigrants by the Trump administration is very unfortunate and condemnable. Though launched in the context of national security and economic stability, this forceful deportation initiative has nevertheless caused a great political furore over the inhuman treatment meted out to the returnees, particularly the use of handcuffs, shackles and a military aircraft. It has tarnished India's global image and also raised multiple socioeconomic, political and diplomatic concerns that need immediate attention.

No doubt, travelling abroad in pursuit of dreams for greener pastures is an age-old trend. But to realise them through irregular means is not justified as it results in financial loss and physical and mental stress. The US action has highlighted some key takeaway points to discourage unlawful migration from the country. India is one of the top illegal sources of immigration to the US and Europe. The government should address critical issues such as socio-economic distress, lack of affordable quality education and ample employment opportunities that drive desperate young aspirants to seek entry into the US through illegal means. It should engage with the US, the acclaimed champion of human rights, to ensure that the Trump administration treats the illegal migrants considerately and addresses their concerns; should revisit its migration policies and negotiate with Western countries for structured work visas for skilled and unskilled workers to migrate legally. It should tighten the noose around the necks of unregulated travel agents and unscrupulous human traffickers who befool people in the name of international migration, and should rehabilitate the distraught deportees and educate others not to move abroad illegally.

Yours, etc., D S Kang, Hoshiarpur, 10 February.







TS) **100 YEARS AGO**

OCCASIONAL NOTE

IT is idle to speculate on what might have happened had Mr. Gilligan won the toss in any of the previous test matches, but one may be excused for cherishing the opinion that the rubber would as yet have been undecided instead of already lost. This belief is strengthened by the news of the splendid start made by the M. C. C. in the match now in progress at Melbourne. With the score at 382 for five wickets at lunch on the second day, England has laid the foundations of an impressive, if not a winning total, and for this happy state of affairs, she is once more mainly indebted to Herbert Sutcliffe who, by scoring his fourth century in the present series of tests and amass-ing a record number of runs, has proved himself quite one of the outstanding batsmen of all time. With the exception of Chapman none of the first six batsmen has failed, and with Hendren and Whysall well-set and care-free, the Australian bowlers were faced with a gloomy prospect when play was resumed after lunch.

T5 **NEWS ITEMS**

MORE FLOODS IN ENGLAND **MANY VESSELS IN** DISTRESS

(BRITISH OEFICIAL WIRELESS.) LEAFIELD (OXFORD), FEB. 13.

LAST night's gale, which at times reached a velocity of 68 miles an hour, was accompanied by heavy rain, and gauges in the London area recorded a fall of threequarters of an inch. Reports from many parts of the country state that large areas are again under water, and as rain has continued intermittently during the day it is feared that considerable damage will result from flooding. Owing to damage to the overhead wires and to the flooding of underground cables, inland telephone and telegraph communication has suffered considerable interference, and some of the Continental lines are also down. In the English Channel, where the gale still continues, the Continental boat services are being maintained under difficult conditions, but many vessels are taking shelter in harbour. Motor launches were in much request to tow small vessels in distress into sheltered waters. The steamer Ardgarvel, bound from Rotterdam to Greenock, was reported drifting unmanageable off the Lizard late last night. Two drifters went to the assistance of the vessel and attempted to take her in tow, but the hawsers parted in the violent seas. A Falmouth tug arrived when the steamer was in a dangerous position and towed her to Falmouth after several hours' buffeting. The rudder of the Ardgarvel was broken. The landslide due to heavy rain and floods at Middlewood, in Cheshire, caused considerable dislocation of railway traffic this morning between Buxton and Manchester.

'Kumbh has awakened Hindus'

ahakumbh 2025 is the world's largest gathering, with an estimated 400 to 450 million visitors. It is scheduled from January 13 to February 26 at the Triveni Sangam in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh. According to astronomical calculations, the 2025 edition is unique since the constellation alignment seen is witnessed once in 144 years. The Kumbh Mela has also been recognized as part of Intangible Cultural Heritage by UNESCO.

Derspective

SATURDAY INTERVIEW

Mahant Ravindra Puri, president, Akhil Bharatiya Akhada Parishad talked to Manoj Bhadra of The Statesman about the success of the Mahakumbh as well as the stampede which claimed "30 lives".

Q: All three 'Amrit snans' at the revered Mahakumbh have ended with the active participation of all 13 akharas. What is your comment on the government arrangements this time?

A: I have been attending all editions of the Ardh Kumbh and Mahakumbh since 1995. But this was the first time we enjoyed such excellent facilities... 'Na buhuto, na bhavishyati' (neither in the past nor there be another such in future).

Besides, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath was very concerned about the well being of the seers, and he personally attended to their problem. He

A: We are fortunate that at last the Hindus have awakened and they have attended this Mahakumbh with their families and friends. This unity of the Hindus will have a positive impact in the country as well as in the world too.

Earlier other religions thought that Hindus are not united and they had taken advantage. But now everything has changed in this Mahakumbh and Hindus are united to safeguard their religion.

We are expecting that till the end of this Mahakumbh, around 50 crore people would have taken a dip in the Sangam. All the credit goes to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath for their good arrangements.

Q: On Mauni Amavasya, the main Amrit Snan day, there was a stampede in which several pilgrims were killed and injured. Though the official figure is 30, many reports have claimed the number to be much higher. What is your comment?

A: It was an unfortunate incident and we the Akharas were first to condole it and even suspended our Amrit Snan till the situation normalized, and the pilgrims who came from far-flung areas took the dip in the Sangam. As you are aware, on that day, there were around 8 to 10 crore people in and around the Kumbh. There were also some people who were against the Sanatan ideology. So 'Katchadhari' people tried to create disturbances, but it was controlled by the security forces in time. But I can say that when

there are big gatherings, such incidents happen.

Q: The Opposition blamed the Centre and the state government for the incident.

A: The Opposition leaders and 'anti-Sanatani' forces are not happy witnessing such unity among the Hindus for the first time in the country. When they could not find anything to criticize the government, the stampede has given them an opportunity to defame the government and even our seers.

These opposition leaders are giving statements without any basis and even people have now rejected their views. It is on record that around 40 crore pilgrims have visited Mahakumbh and appreciated the facilities and arrangements provided by the government. How can these opposition leaders try to blackmail the majority Hindus?

Q: There have been some reels and clippings on social media about alleged mismanagement at Mahakumbh. Some of these had also shown the negative view point of seers.

A: The anti-Hindu forces had employed several YouTubers to dent the image of the Mahakumbh. They took videos and photos to create a negative narrative of the Hindu-Sanatani congregation. This was the reason that these so-called Leftist YouTubers



Q: Several opposition leaders and even some environmentalists have raised the issue of a polluted Sangam.

A: I have also heard about it and seen it in the media. But I ask you, did any of the devotees complain about it or did people fall ill? These anti-Sanatani forces are trying everything to create confusion among the Hindus to suspend their vatra to Prayagraj. But all their conspiracies had failed, and people in large numbers

Sangam. These types of conspiracies are always hatched by these anti-Hindu forces just to create a division among the society.

Q: Shankaracharya Swami Avimukteshwaranand Saraswati has even demanded the resignation of Yogi Adityanath over the stampede incident.

A: Asking for resignation from the chief minister is due to deep frustration and nothing else. This is

himself visited the akharas to inspect their facilities several times.

Q: Prayagraj Mahakumbh is also identified as the biggest ever Hindu conclave.

picked up some fake saints and sadhus to defame the Sanatan Dharma.

I personally do not rule out that the stampede that happened on January 29 could be the handiwork of these forces.

have bathed in Sangam and other places, and more will come till Shivratri on February 26.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other dignitaries have also bathed in the so-called polluted

shameful for us. And a 'sadhu' should not be involved in politics. But I can definitely comment that these types of saints are like vultures who try to damage their own community and religion.

US policies a historical throwback

TAKENORI INOKI

ill the start of U.S. Presi-dent Donald Trump's second administration lead to a foundational change in U.S. trade policy? Both Japanese companies and their counterparts elsewhere in the world have strong interests in and serious fears about what will eventually happen. It is quite difficult to predict how the returning president will affect the world economic order in the medium and long terms.

One area of interest is what structural changes will occur in global trade and production as a result of the additional tariffs on exports to the United States.

Setting higher tariff barriers means the forceful exercise of a sovereign right of a nation. But it cannot be ignored that the sovereignty of the United States is weakening. This is because mega companies with global operations have gotten around various regulations at home and abroad, and accumulated swathes of confidential information regarding national security and financial transactions. They are U.S. titans that have achieved rapid growth by accelerating industrial transformation through the development of information and communications technology.

When we think about the United States' further tilt toward trade protectionism via additional tariffs, we cannot overlook the U.S. history of utilizing tariffs as the economic basis of governance for a long time after its foundation. Trump's remark that "Tariff is the most beautiful word" other than "religion" or "love" doesn't sound like a joke.

Going back to the 19th century, tariffs accounted for almost 90 per cent of federal government revenue until the Civil War. Historically speaking, tariffs were a primary revenue source for the federal government the United States made it possible to levy income taxes for the first time when a relevant constitutional amendment was ratified just before World War I.

During the two world wars, the U.S. government became gargantuan, to the extent that tariffs' portion of federal budget resources decreased greatly in relative terms. Especially after the establishment of the post-World War II system for promoting free and multilateral trade under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, the role of tariffs receded considerably.

Nonetheless, tariffs remained as a strategic tool for the U.S. government in terms of both budget revenue and trade policy. This was proven when Joe Biden's administration succeeded the first Trump administration without any fundamental change in tariff policy.

In February 2018, the Trump administration unleashed a salvo of tariffs on imported goods, with levies of 30-50 per cent on imported large washing machines and solar panels. Additional tariffs on steel and aluminum were imposed on certain countries in March 2018, and in June of that year they were expanded to the European Union, Canada and Mexico. Also in June 2018, Trump surprised the world by announcing plans to slap an additional 25 per cent tariff on \$50 billion worth of Chinese goods.

The tariff policy of Biden's administration was no different from that of its predecessor. In May 2024, Biden announced plans to double tariffs on Chinese solar cells and triple them on Chinese lithium-ion batteries for electric vehicles, as a measure to rival Trump in drawing labour union support.

Trump's imposition of the additional tariffs described above was not based on legislation newly passed by the U.S. Congress. He applied provisions of such existing trade laws as Section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962 and Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974, which authorize measures including the issuance of trade-related executive orders based on investigations by the U.S. Trade Representative's office, the Department of Commerce and the International Trade Commission. This process strongly reflects the United States' tradition of flexibly applying its Constitution as a protectionist nation.

What makes it difficult to understand Trump's economic policies is his tactic to dramatize, like an actor, his intellectual negotiations as a businessperson. This approach can be described as a remnant of the isolationist past of the U.S. that is deeply rooted in the undercurrents of the political and business spheres; this is patriotic nationalism that is unwilling to correspond with changes in the times.

In 2017, shortly after taking the oath, Trump announced the withdrawal of the United States from the Trans-Pacific Partnership, calling the TPP a potential disaster for the U.S. economy and the backbone of the national sovereignty of the United States. Trump warned that the trade agreement would result in dividing the global economy.

However, the national sovereignty of the United States has already begun weakening within itself — from a different direction. Those gigantic companies with global operations in the cutting-edge fields of information and communications technology are now wielding overwhelming political power in areas beyond individual nations' sovereignty. As a result, they now are highly influential in those realms that governments used to exclusively control and administer.

For example, cryptocurrency which has become possible thanks to information and communications technology — poses a threat to the currency-issuing authority of the U.S. federal government. Further, communication of data, including classified information related to national security, is reliant on undersea cable networks operated by private-sector companies.

As shown by the appointment of billionaire Elon Musk to lead the newly created Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), the CEOs of some global mega companies have now secured increasingly great sway in U.S. politics. Musk has said he is neither Democrat nor Republican and called himself "socially liberal and fiscally conservative." In a nutshell, that means that he has chosen to hold an



can control the government at will as a business tycoon.

Meanwhile, the trade war between the United States and China has the potential to profoundly change the "dollar-based order" in the medium to long term. Even though the Chinese economy is reportedly stagnant, the weakening of the dollar's status as the world's key currency is likely to be the greatest factor threatening the United States' position in the world.

China and Russia appear inclined to increase the shares of their own currencies, instead of the dollar, in foreign exchange settlements, as a way of countering U.S. economic sanctions against them. Considering the risk for them of losing trade and investment due to the difficulty of accessing dollars, it would be natural for them to seek the establishment of a non-dollar denominated international settlement network.

Countries that opt to move toward strengthening the existing dollar-dominated international settlement network from the viewpoint of security enhancement are likely to keep the supremacy of the United States and that of the dollar intact. if Washington tightens economic sanctions against China and Russia, even countries friendly to the United States may begin looking for alternatives to the U.S. currency to avert risks. A close check of currency shares important government position so he in foreign exchange transactions

makes it possible to see one aspect of the issue. According to the Bank of International Settlements' Triennial Survey of global foreign exchange turnover, the U.S. dollar's share remained the largest in 2022, followed by the euro, the Japanese yen and the British pound, in that order. But the Chinese yuan came in fifth with a global share of 3.5 per cent as of 2022, compared with 0.2 per cent in 2007, or one year prior to the 2008 financial crisis.

While the United States and other major developed countries have been reducing reliance on trade with China, more attention should be paid to the fact that the Association of Southeast Asian Nations has been strengthening two-way trade relations with China.

The world's economic order is faced with fundamental problems, which are beyond what the unilateralist Trump imagines. People like us tend to criticize them for their "appearance of frivolity" or "lack of virtue." We should not forget the importance of assessing their policies from a medium to long-term perspective, putting emotional opinion aside.

BRITAIN & THE PROTOCOL MR. CHAMBERLAIN & PACT RUMOURS (BRITISH OFFICIAL WIRELESS) LEAFIELD,

(OXFORD), FEB. 13.

FOR some time past, and in various ways, the Government has been, giving most careful attention to the Geneva Protocol. That document, as the foreign Secretary, Mr. Chamberlain, stated yesterday in the House of Commons, "raises the whole question of disarmament, and therefore of alliances." It is obvious, therefore, that the whole series of current problems requires to be surveyed both broadly and in detail.

A special sub-committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence was appointed some time ago in this connexion, and is understood to have prepared various memoranda for the consideration of the Government. Meanwhile consultations between the Home and Dominion Governments continue by cable, as the result of which the British Government are in possession of considerable data bearing upon the effect which the provision of the Protocol would have upon the particular interests of the respective Dominions. It is of primary importance that an Imperial policy should be evolved upon what is a question affecting all parts of the world. Mr. Chamberlain's statement also set at rest various rumours by its denial of the report that negotiations for a separate pact had been begun with any other country. The Foreign Secretary, moreover, gave a pledge that the Government would not commit Britain to the Protocol or to any French obligation of a comparable character without the consent of Parliament—an undertaking greeted with general approval.

Instead of merely criticizing Trump as an "actor," we need to carefully scrutinize how his trade policy will affect the world's trade structure and economic order.

NO-293049

The Japan News/ANN

DIFFICULTIES OF MR. MACDONALD EXTREMISTS IN THE LABOUR PARTY

("TIMES" SPECIAL SERVICE.) LONDON, FEB. 14.

MR. Ramsay MacDonald, on his return from Jamaica, is finding the leadership of the Labour party no easy matter.

The political correspondent of The Times says he is confronted by the fact that the party still contains a group of "irreconcilables" over which he has little or no control. Numerically this group is small, but vocally it easily drowns the great majority of the party, who are beginning to grow restless owing to the continued refusal of the minority to respect any point of view but their own.



CROSSWORD

12 13 13 13 14 14 15 15 16 <td< th=""><th>U (7)</th><th> getting diarrhoea (3,5) 20 Fear I must abandon growing situation in Bordeaux? (6) 23 Drain noodle juice (3) 24 Mostly pleased with Cup a Soup or fruit puree (5,5) 26 While arsing around, cuddles Sharon? (7) 27 Range of colours displayed by female friend? (7) </th><th> 29 Pervert already sat in a perverted manner (4,6) Down Head-hunter ignores Alabama for a bit (4) A row, not the first, in public sale (7) RAF crew are almost then involved in land battle (6,7) Stomach lining, note, can be thrown up (6) </th><th> home stopping behind after setback (4-3) 8 Tart on romantic rendezvous admitting to sin in small flat (4-1-5) 11 Go off with Greek character to get bullets, oddly, and transform difficult situation (4,3,6) 14 I rib Smiths fans – it`s a local custom (10) </th><th> with unpleasant consequences (2,1,5) 19 Prince wearing sexier pants runs out (7) 21 Seismologist`s unfinished biscuit beginning to rot (7) 22 Insect eaten by aggressive spider (6) 25 Fed up with bottom of straggly beard (4) </th></td<>	U (7)	 getting diarrhoea (3,5) 20 Fear I must abandon growing situation in Bordeaux? (6) 23 Drain noodle juice (3) 24 Mostly pleased with Cup a Soup or fruit puree (5,5) 26 While arsing around, cuddles Sharon? (7) 27 Range of colours displayed by female friend? (7) 	 29 Pervert already sat in a perverted manner (4,6) Down Head-hunter ignores Alabama for a bit (4) A row, not the first, in public sale (7) RAF crew are almost then involved in land battle (6,7) Stomach lining, note, can be thrown up (6) 	 home stopping behind after setback (4-3) 8 Tart on romantic rendezvous admitting to sin in small flat (4-1-5) 11 Go off with Greek character to get bullets, oddly, and transform difficult situation (4,3,6) 14 I rib Smiths fans – it`s a local custom (10) 	 with unpleasant consequences (2,1,5) 19 Prince wearing sexier pants runs out (7) 21 Seismologist`s unfinished biscuit beginning to rot (7) 22 Insect eaten by aggressive spider (6) 25 Fed up with bottom of straggly beard (4)
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with Russian President Vladimir Putin to discuss ending the war, in a move that seemed to identify Putin as the only

player that matters and looked set to sideline Zelenskyy, as

well as European governments,

news for Ukraine, which is

being slowly pushed backward

by Russia's bigger army along

parts of the 1,000-kilometre

(600-mile) front line and des-

perately needs more Western

detailed information to U.S.

officials about the Chernobyl

strike during the Munich Secu-

rityConference startingFriday,

the head of Ukraine's Presi-

dential Office, Andrii Yermak,

wrote on his Telegram chan-

strike damaged the structure

and started a fire, which has

been put out. The Ukrainian

Emergency Service provided

Zelenskyy said that the

Ukraine intends to provide

That was more unwelcome

in any peace talks.

help.

nel.

Trump wants denuclearisation talks with Russia and China

Russia suspended its participation in the New START treaty during the Biden administration

ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON, 14 FEBRUARY

resident Donald **Frump said Thursday** that he wants to restart nuclear arms control talks with Russia and China and that eventually he hopes all three countries could agree to cut their massive defense budgets in half.

Speaking to reporters in the Oval Office, Trump lamented the hundreds of billions of dollars being invested in rebuilding the nation's nuclear deterrent and said he hopes to gain commitments from the U.S. adversaries to cut their own spending.

"There's no reason for us to be building brand new nuclear weapons, we already have so many," Trump said. "You could destroy the world 50 times over, 100 times over. And here we are building

new nuclear weapons, and

they're building nuclear weapons." "We're all spending a lot of money that we could be

spending on other things that are actually, hopefully much more productive," Trump said.

While the U.S. and Russia hold massive stockpiles of weapons since the Cold War, Trump predicted that China would catch up in their capability to exact nuclear devastation "within five or six years." He said if the weapons

were ever called to use, "that's going to be probably oblivion." Trump said he would look

to engage in nuclear talks with the two countries once "we straighten it all out" in the Middle East and Ukraine.

"One of the first meetings I want to have is with President Xi of China, President Putin



START. of Russia. And I want to say,

'let's cut our military budget in half.' And we can do that. And I think we'll be able to."

Trump in his first term tried and failed to bring China into nuclear arms reduction talks when the U.S. and Russia were negotiating an extension of a pact known as New

"We're all spending a lot of money that we could be spending on other things that are actually, hopefully much more productive," Trump said.

American efforts to draw it into nuclear arms talks, saying the U.S. and Russia first need to reduce their much larger arsenals. A government official reiterated that position on Friday.

"The U.S. and Russia should ... significantly and Russia suspended its parsubstantially reduce their ticipation in the treaty during nuclear arsenals and create the Biden administration, as the necessary conditions for the U.S. and Russia continued other nuclear-armed states on massive programmes to to join the nuclear disarmaextend the life-spans or replace ment process," Foreign Mintheir Cold War-era nuclear istry spokesperson Guo Jiakun said at a daily briefing in Bei-

China has rebuffed past jing.

strike. breach the plant's inner containment shell.

The IAEA did not attribute

Russia denies Ukrainian claim it struck Chernobyl reactor shell as radiation levels remain normal



AGENCIES **KYIV, 14 FEBRUARY**

A Russian drone with a highexplosive warhead hit the proshell. tective containment shell of the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant in the Kyiv region during the night, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Friday, but a senior Russian

official rejected blame for the Radiation levels at the plant have not increased, Zelenskyy reporters. and a U.N. agency said. The International Atomic Energy behind the strike. Agency said the strike did not

blame, saying only its team stationed at the site heard an explosion and were informed that a drone had struck the

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov denied the Ukrainian claims it was responsible. "There is no talk about strikes on nuclear infrastructure, nuclear energy facilities, any such claim isn't true, our military doesn't do that," Peskov said in a conference call with

It was not possible to independently confirm who was

a photograph it said showed a searchlight illuminating a The strike came two days ragged hole in the roof of the after U.S. President Donald Trump said he would meet damaged sarcophagus.

Trump administration begins sweeping layoffs with probationary workers, warns of larger cuts to come

AGENCIES WASHINGTON, 14 FEBRUARY

Personnel Management, first step in sweeping layoffs. which serves as a human President Donald Trump Order to drop New York Mayor Adams' case roils Justice Department as high-ranking officials resign

The Trump administration on Thursday intensified its sweeping efforts to shrink the size of the federal workforce, the nation's largest employer, by ordering agencies to lay off nearly all probationary employees who had not yet gained civil service protection — potentially affecting hundreds of thousands of workers.

In addition, workers at some agencies were warned that large workplace cuts would be coming.

The decision on probationary workers, who generally have less than a year on the job, came from the Office of

resources department for the federal government. The notification was confirmed by a person familiar with the matter, who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to

discuss it publicly. Even workers in the personnel office itself were not immune: Dozens of probationary employees at OPM were told on a Thursday afternoon group call that

they were being dismissed and then instructed to leave the building within a halfhour, according to another person who likewise spoke on condition of anonymity. It's expected to be the

signed an executive order Tuesday that told agency leaders to plan for "largescale reductions in force.'

Elon Musk, whom President Trump has given wide leeway to slash government spending with his Department of Government Efficiency, called Thursday for the elimination of whole agencies.

"I think we do need to delete entire agencies as opposed to leave a lot of them behind," Musk said via a videocall to the World Governments Summit in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. "If we don't remove the roots of the weed, then it's easy for the weed to grow back.

AGENCIES

arsenals.

NEW YORK, 14 FEBRUARY

Manhattan's top federal prosecutor, Danielle Sassoon, and five high-ranking Justice Department officials resigned Thursday after she refused an order to drop corruption charges against New York City Mayor Eric Adams — a stunning escalation in a dayslong standoff over the Trump administration prioritising political aims over criminal culpability.

Sassoon, a Republican who was interim U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York, accused the department of acceding to a "quid

pro quo" — dropping the case to ensure Adams' help with Trump's immigration agenda — and said she was "confident" the Democratic mayor committed the crimes spelled out in his indictment, and even more. Before the showdown, Sassoon said, prosecutors had been preparing to charge Adams with destroying evidence and instructing others to destroy evidence and provide false information to the FBI. "I remain baffled by the

rushed and superficial process by which this decision was reached," Sassoon wrote Trump's new attorney general, Pam Bondi, on Wednesday.



The Associated Press obtained a copy of the letter.

The acting deputy U.S. attorney general, former Trump personal lawyer Emil Bove, had ordered on Monday of the case. Bove placed case prosecutors on administrative leave and said they and Sassoon would be subject to internal investigations.

In Bove's letter, also obtained by the AP, he said the Justice Department in Washington would file a motion to drop Adams' charges and bar "further targeting" of the mayor. As of Thursday evening, Adams' case was still active and no new paperwork had been filed.

dropped. He told Sassoon, The department's public integrity section, which had in a letter accepting her resbeen asked to take over the ignation that she was "incapable of fairly and impartially" case, was also roiled by resreviewing the circumstances ignations.

Returning Palestinians try to make their shattered houses homes again

AGENCIES

JABALIYA, 14 FEBRUARY

The Nassar family managed to assemble a semblance of their home's old living room. A sofa and some chairs survived, along with a small table they can gather around to eat. The room's wall had been almost entirely blown away, so they hung sheets over the gaping hole, hiding the mound of wreckage outside.

Buried somewhere under that rubble, Khalid Nassar knows, is the body of his son Mahmoud. It has lain there unretrievable for the past four months since he was killed in an Israeli airstrike.

This has been the struggle for displaced Palestinians

returning to their homes in Gaza under the nearly monthold ceasefire: To re-create

some bit of normal lives amid the death and destruction left by 16 months of Israeli bombardment and ground offensives against Hamas fighters. Coming home after months

— or more than a year — of living in tents or other shelters, families have no means to do any serious rebuilding. So they find little ways to settle

in. Apartment buildings that were reduced to hollowedout skeletons have been draped with colourful bed linens serving as walls — as if the houses have been turned inside-out.

Families dig chunks of concrete and mangled metal out of



the interior to make them last year, moving around semi-habitable. Rooms look northern Gaza. Khalid Nassar's son Mahmoud was killed in like fragmented movie sets, with furniture arranged in October when he tried to go any intact corner, while the back home to retrieve some remaining walls are shattered. clothes in the neighbouring The Nassars fled their home building, which they also

in Jabaliya refugee camp early owned, and a strike hit it,

Nassar said. His daughter was also killed in a separate airstrike on her home in Jabaliya, where her body too remains buried under rubble.

The family returned in January, as soon as Israeli troops withdrew from Jabaliya, which had been the scene of some of the fiercest fighting of the war in the previous four months.

They found the top floor of their three-storey building was wiped away. One of Nassar's sons settled with his wife and kids on the second floor. The 61-year-old Nassar, his wife Khadra Abu Libda, 59, and the five children of another son, who was imprisoned by Israel, moved into what remains of the ground floor.

A roadside bomb struck a vehicle carrying miners in southwestern Pakistan, killing 9 people

that the Adams case be

AGENCIES

QUETTA, 14 FEBRUARY

Aroadsidebombstruckavehicle carrying coal miners in restive southwest Pakistan on Friday, killing at least nine people and wounding others, officials said.

The attack happened in Harnai, a district in Balochistan province, according to a government administrator Wali Kakar. He said police had transported the dead and wounded to a hospital and officers are still investigating.

Most of the victims were from the country's northwestern Swat Valley and other areas, authorities said.

Interior Minister Mohsin

Interior Minister Mohsin Nagyi and provincial authorities in separate statements condemned the attack and ordered local authorities and police to trace and arrest those who orchestrated the attack and killed innocent labourers.

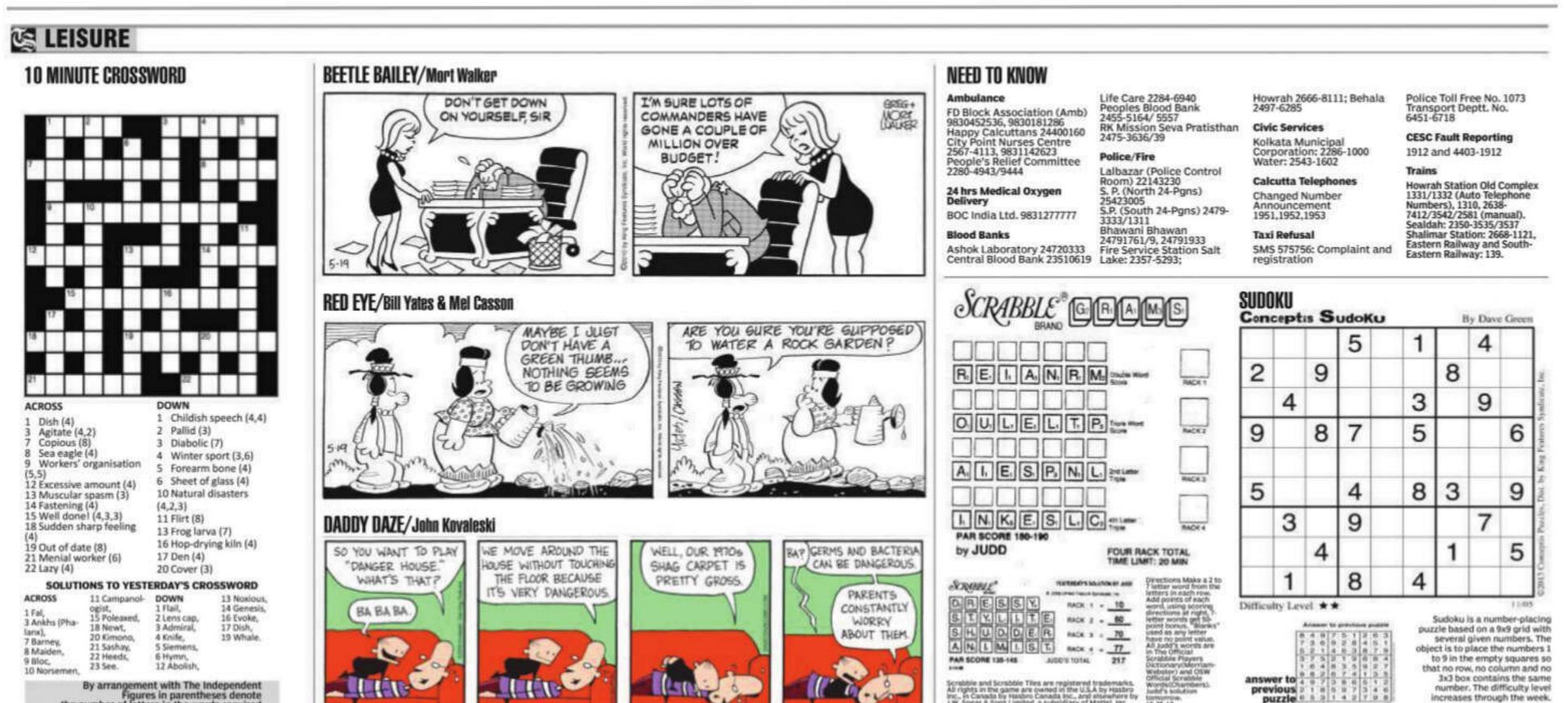
Naqvi and provincial authorities in separate statements condemned the attack and ordered local authorities and police to trace and arrest those who orchestrated the attack and killed innocent labourers.

Though no one claimed responsibility, the suspicion is likely to fall on the outlawed Baloch Liberation Army separatist group which has been

such previous attacks on labourers from other parts of the country. Oil- and mineral-rich Balochistan has along-running insurgency, with several separatist groups staging attacks, targeting security forces and

blamed by the government for

civilians in their quest for independence. Several militant groups also are active in the province.



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Figures in parentheses denote the number of letters in the words required

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Ubrld

The Statesman KOLKATA, SATURDAY 15 FEBRUARY 2025

BNP, Jamaat on collision course

Timing of national elections, proportional representation divide the longtime allies

AGENCIES

THE DAILY STAR/ANN DHAKA, 14 FEBRUARY

he BNP and Jamaate-Islami now seem to be poles apart over when the local and parliamentary elections should be held and the proportional representation system in the House.

The fact that their relationship is strained became clear as day last week when the parties took opposing stances on the timing of the polls and on proportional representation.

Yesterday, both parties made statements that hint at new political dynamics ahead of the 13th national polls.

After a Jamaat delegation called on Chief Election Commissioner AMM Nasir Uddin at the Nirbachon Bhaban yesterday morning, its Secretary General Mia Golam Parwar told reporters that

national election be held after completing reforms to the state institutions relevant to the electoral process.

He claimed the people want local government polls before the national election and that his party is with the people. He said they also demanded proportional representation in the House.

the Jamaat's stance, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir said, "We are against proportional representation. We will not support proportional representation in any way because people

are not accustomed to it." Proportional representation is an electoral system in

if a party gets 40 percent of the total votes, the system of the seats in parliament.

the party demanded that the past-the-post (FPTP) system

An hour later, asked about is practised, in which the

candidate receiving the highest number of votes in a constituency wins a seat in parliament. The Electoral Reform Com-

tem.

which the distribution of seats corresponds with the proportion of the total votes cast for each party. For example,

will allow it to get 40 percent In Bangladesh, the first-



instability.

"The sooner the [national] election is held, the easier politics will become. The people will return to a stable situation," he said at a press mission has proposed having briefing at the BNP chair-

an upper and a lower house. person's Gulshan office. He said the election is cru-It recommended a proportional representation system cial for two reasons. "Firstly, for the upper house. for restoring stability, and It also cited a strong dissecondly, for improving govagreement among political ernance in the country, which parties regarding the pro-

is currently facing significant portional representation syschallenges." Fakhrul also expressed concerns over the state of Fakhrul yesterday said that holding local polls before education at universities and the national election would colleges, saying, "It is very difficult to address these push the country further into

issues without an elected government."

Yesterday, Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus, now in Dubai, said the national election could be held in December this year.

Late last year, he had hinted the polls could be in late 2025 or mid 2026, after which the crack in BNP-Jamaat relationship started becoming more visible.

The BNP and its allies had been saying they want the national election with minimal reforms done so that the elected government can carry out all other reforms. They have also been pushing for the polls to be held in the middle of this year.

The Jamaat has been demanding polls after necessary reforms and without any hurry.

When Yunus on January 8 said they were simultaneously preparing for national and local body elections, it pushed the parties even further apart.

Bangladesh: Dictating terms to Yunus govt, student outfit sets deadline to ban Awami League

at a time when the United

Nations has clearly recom-

mended the interim govern-

ment in Bangladesh against

banning any political party

for the sake of a multiparty

party bans that would under-

mine a return to a genuine

multiparty democracy and

effectively disenfranchise a

large part of the Bangladeshi

electorate," said a fact-finding

report published by the Office

of the United Nations High

Commissioner for Human

Rights (OHCHR).

"Refrain from political

democracy.



AGENCIES DHAKA, 14 FEBRUARY

Student Against Discrimination (SAD), the group behind the nationwide protest and violence in Bangladesh in July and August 2024 leading to the fall of government led by former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, is now aggressively demanding a ban on Awami League.

On Thursday, the student leaders renewed their demand to ban Hasina's party, this time demanding the action within 24 hours, local media reported.

The development comes government led by Chief

Advisor Muhammad Yunus had banned Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), the student wing of Awami League, under the Anti-Terrorism Act of 2009. The ban cited BCL's alleged involvement in murder, torture, rape, and terrorism, and was seen as a precursor to banning the parent organisation.

The same interim government had lifted ban on radical Islamic party Jamaate-Islami and its student wing Islami Chhatra Shibir immediately after the fall of Hasina government in August 2024. In December, Chief Elec-

tion Commissioner (CEC) AMM Nasir Uddin, during a meeting with election officials at the Chittagong Circuit House, said that the Awami League is allowed to participate in elections unless the government or the judiciary issues a ban against the party. The student organisation

has a reputation of resorting to violence and wields immense influence in the In October, the interim functioning of the current regime.

The talks shaping Syria's new constitution will exclude Kurdish forces, organisers say AGENCIES inclusion," she said. enclave in the northeast dur-In late January, Syria's ing the country's civil war. Discussions are ongoing former rebel factions appointbetween the SDF and the ed Islamist former rebel leader Ahmad al-Sharaa as interim government in Damascus. Formerly known as Abu president of the country after Mohammed al-Golani, alan offensive he led toppled Assad in late December. They Sharaa is the head of Hayat also threw out Syria's con-Tahrir al-Sham, which led stitution, adopted under the lightning offensive that Assad, saying a new charter ousted Assad. The group was would be drafted. once affiliated with al-Qaida "This will be the first real Most of the former insurbut has since denounced its former ties.

Bristlingat'GulfofMexico' name change on maps, Mexico says it might sue Google

Construction site catches fire in South Korea, leaving at least 6 dead

DAMASCUS, 14 FEBRUARY

The conference to chart Syria's political future will include all segments of Syrian society except for the Kurdish-led administration in the northeast and loyalists of the repressive former government of Bashar Assad, organisers said Thursday.

gathering of Syrians in 75 years," said Huda al-Atassi, a former detainee and a member of the organizing committee for Syria's national dialogue conference. She read the panel's statement at a news conference in Damascus.

The conference will cover "social, political, economic and governance issues, laying the foundations for a solid future based on national consensus, justice, reform and

gent factions also agreed to dissolve and join the new Syrian army and security services, but the U.S.-backed, Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces in northeastern Syria has so far refused to do the same.

SDF forces have been clashing with Turkish-backed groups in northern Syria, and the Kurds are concerned about losing political and cultural gains they have made since carving out their own

In recent years, al-Sharaa has sought to cast himself as a champion of pluralism and tolerance and promised to protect the rights of women and religious minorities.

Since Assad's fall, HTS has become the de facto ruling party and has set up an interim government largely composed of officials from the local government it previously ran in rebel-held Idlib province.

Vinnik, who operated cryp-

tocurrency exchange BTC-

e, was arrested in 2017 in

AGENCIES

MEXICO CITY, 14 FEBRUARY Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum said Thursday that her government wouldn't rule out filing a civil lawsuit against Google if it maintains its stance of calling the stretch of sea between northeastern Mexico and the southeastern United States the "Gulf of

America." The area, long named the Gulf of Mexico across the the world, has gained a geopolitical spotlight after President Donald Trump declared he would change the Gulf's name.

Sheinbaum, in hermorning news conference, said the president's decree is restricted to the "continental shelf of the United States" because Mexico still controls much of the Gulf. "We have sover-

eignty over our continental shelf," she said.

despite the fact that her government sent a letter to Google saying that the company was "wrong" and that "the entire Gulf of Mexico cannot be called the Gulf of America," the company has insisted on maintaining the nomenclature.

It was not immediately clear where such a suit would be filed.

on its X account, formerly Twitter, that it maintains a "long-standing practice of applying name changes when they have been updated in official government sources." As of Thursday, how the

Maps was dependent on the user's location and other data.

Sheinbaum said that

Google reported last month

Gulf appeared on Google

AGENCIES SEOUL, 14 FEBRUARY

About 100 workers man-

helicopter approaching the aged to evacuate the site, building as part of rescue while another 14 were rescued by helicopter from the top of the structure, said Hong Moonshik, chief of the Busan Gijang District Fire Department.

Hundreds of firefighters equipment" to put out the were deployed to the site and fire.

efforts. Shortly after the blaze was reported, the country's acting president, Choi Sang-mok, instructed officials to deploy "all available personnel and

He said the cause of the

Television footage showed

fire wasn't immediately clear.

gray-black smoke and flames

rising from the site and a

minor injuries.

Iran rejects US accusation of funding, arming Yemen's Houthis: Iran's Permanent Mission to the United Nations (UN) in New York has rejected the US accusation that Tehran is providing the Yemen-based Houthis with financial resources, arms support, and military training. AGENCIES

RESCHEDULING OF TWO TRAINS

For Track and S&T Maintenance work in various sections over Howrah division, Traffic Block will be necessary on 16.02.2025 (Sunday) during day time. Consequently, the following trains will be resheduled on 16.02.2025 (Sunday): (i) 53009 Katwa - Azimganj Passenger will be resheduled at 12.15 hrs. instead of 12.00 hrs from Katwa. (ii) 37749 Bandel-Katwa Local will be resheduled at 12.45 hrs. instead of 12.15 hrs. from Bandel. Special Note: Special or late running trains & any further newly introduced train/parcel train/TOD during block period, if any, will be suitably controlled, diverted enroute. Passengers are requested to follow the public address system at stations. Inconvenience is regretted.

Divisional Railway Manager, Howrah

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PUBLIC NOTIFICATION REGARDING ENERGIZATION Line of Budge Budge Lower Yard

Notice is hereby given to all users of Railway lines and premises situated on the completed sections of the undernoted section of Eastern Railway that the 25000 volt, 50 Hz., A.C. overhead traction wires will be energized on or after 01.03.2025. On & om 01.03.2025 the overhead traction line shall be always treated as live and no unauthorized person shall approach or work in the proximity of the said overhead line. Section: (1) Electrification of Existing un-wired line of Budge Budge Lower Yard at Budge Budge from Loc. No. 26/1A, Ch.26/12.50 (from Sealdah) to Loc. No. 27/8, Ch.27/394.00 (from Sealdah) [5.022 TKM] of Sealdah Division of Eastern Railway for public carriage of goods and passenger traffic (Electrified Section). (2) Electrification of Existing un-wired line of Budge Budge Lower Yard to FCI at Budge Budge from Loc. No. 26/8, Ch.26/197.00 (from Sealdah) to Loc. No. 27/FCI/8, Ch.27/425.50 (from Sealdah) [1.151 TKM] of Sealdah Division of Eastern Railway for public carriage of goods and passenger traffic (Electrified Section).



AGENCIES

MOSCOW, 14 FEBRUARY

Alexander Vinnik, a Russian cryptocurrency expert who faced Bitcoin fraud charges in the United States, returned to Russia on Thursday after being freed in a swap that saw Moscow release American Marc Fogel, Russian news agencies reported.

Vinnik arrived in Moscow after being released from custody in California, Russia's state Tass and RIA-Novosti news agencies reported.

They initially cited Russian aviation officials and his lawyer saying that he was flown in from Turkey, but RIA-Novosti later quoted Vinnik as saying that he actually



arrived in Moscow on board my family, and I can't quite believe it vet," RIA-Novosti a U.S. government plane via Poland. quoted him as saying.

He thanked both Russian President Vladimir Putin and U.S. President Donald Trump for his release. "I'm already at home with U.S. on cryptocurrency fraud

charges and was later extradited to the United States where he pleaded guilty last year to conspiracy to commit money laundering.

Steve Witkoff, a special envoy for Trump, left Russia with Fogel earlier in the week and brought him to the White House, where Trump greeted him on Tuesday.

Fogel, an American history teacher who was deemed wrongfully detained by Russia, was arrested in August 2021 for possession of marijuana and was serving a 14-year prison sentence. The White House said his release was part of a diplomatic thaw that could advance negotiations to end the fighting in Ukraine.

Armed fighters have raped scores of children in eastern Congo, UNICEF says

AGENCIES

DAKAR, 14 FEBRUARY

The U.N. children's fund on Thursday accused armed men, likely on both sides of the conflict in eastern Congo, of raping scores of children over the past weeks as rebels expand their footprint and pushgovernmentforces out. The accusation came as

rich region shows no signs of abating. UNICEF cited reports

Kivu provinces, we are receiving horrific reports of grave violations against children by parties to the conflict, including

violence at levels surpassing anything we have seen in recentyears," UNICEF's Executive Director Catherine Russell said in a statement.

"One mother recounted to our staff how her six daughters, the youngest just 12 years old, were systematically raped by armed men while searching for food," Russell added.

Health facilities in the restive region reported during the week from 27 January to 2 February a total of 572 rape cases—more than a fivefold increase compared to the week before, Lianne Gutcher, UNICEF's communication chiefin Congo, told The Associated Press. Of those, 170 of those treated were children, she added.

of the abuses, saying the offenders were apparently from among both the M23 rebels and the government forces fighting them. "In the North and South

had largely extinguished the rape and other forms of sexual



A fire broke out at a resort construction site in the South Korean city of Busan on Friday, killing at least six people, fire officials said.

the conflict in the mineral-

Thorny problems with Valentine's roses: Invasive bugs and toxic pesticides hurt Kenya's exports

AGENCIES

ISINYA, 14 FEBRUARY

The red rose: a token of love for many, and for Kenya, a major economic sector. More than a third of Kenya's flower exports where the roses, in particular, are prized for their longevity and vase performance, the Kenyan government says.

What can't be seen within these uniformly perfect blooms is a tiny larva laid inside the rosebuds, laid by the false codling moth (Thaumatotibia *leucotreta*), which doesn't just feed on roses but can also affect fruits and vegetables.

The moth has been devastating crops across Africa. The European Union is intensifying measures to prevent its spread into Europe, classifying FCM among organisms targeted for regulation as quarantine pests, with consequences for hard-pressed Kenyan farmers.

According to the Kenya Flower Council, the detection

of a single live FCM at any developmental stage leads to the rejection of an entire flower consignment.

"They are too strict," laments Jacky Mwanzia, a marketer with Isinya Roses in Kajiado County, south of Nairobi. "Most of our shipments to the EU are quarantined, and it takes time. It is a waste because we have to meet customers' demand, so we are looking for alternative markets where these measures are not too strict, as we lose about 30 per cent of our rev-

enue." Nationally, the flower industry employs half a million people, according to a Central Bank of Kenya 2021 report, and is estimated by the National Bureau of Statistics to be worth over \$800 million. Roses make up about 66 per cent of cut flower exports, at an estimated value of about \$300 million. The Kenya Plant Health

Inspectorate Service (KEPHIS) reports that since 2020, EU sampling of Kenyan roses



has increased from 5 to 25 per cent, leading to more frequent quarantines and shipment returns.

Despite existing stringent protocols, the EU is expected to enforce even tougher restrictions in the coming months. Due to ongoing noncompliance by exporters, the EU will impose special requirements applicable to Kenyan cut roses, reports the Committee Linking Entrepreneur-

ship, Agriculture, and Development, a French-based network of companies that engages in sustainable agriculture. These new rules take effect on 26 April 2025.

Kenya's warm climate and soils are ideal for growing roses but also favour pests, so pesticides are routinely used to minimise losses. A 2020 study by the Route To Food Initiative of the Nairobi branch of the Heinrich Boell

Foundation, a non-profit, found that 75 per cent of pesticides used in Kenya are highly hazardous. Nearly half are banned in the EU but are still used in Kenya largely due to lower regulatory standards.

Farmers who want to export to the EU have to stay within the bloc's pesticide regulations while also trying to control FCM populations. It can be a tricky balancing

"The EU has a strict zero tolerance on caterpillars and on several chemicals that, given the current weather conditions, we must use. Otherwise, we cannot meet our production targets," says Anantha Kumar, marketing manager at Isinya Roses. The company is a major local employer, with a workforce of up to 1,000 people, depending on seasonal demand.

As a result, the company is now eyeing other markets with less stringent regulations. "The Middle East market is ready to accept our products, and it is really growing,' Kumar says.

In spite of the challenges, the growers at Isinya Roses are not ready to abandon the European market just yet. They are trying natural pest control methods, including releasing beneficial insects, companion planting, using pheromone traps, and applying natural fertilisers and composting instead of chemical fertilisers.

Date of Energization : 01.03.2025 "WARNING TO ROAD USERS"

It is notified for the information of the Public that in connection with introduction of 25 KV A.C. electric traction over the above mentioned sections of Sealdah Division of Eastern Railway, height gauges have been erected at all the level crossings with clear height of 4.78 m above road level with a view to prevent loads of excessive height from coming into contact or dangerous proximity to live traction wire (contact wire), which shall be at a height of minimum 5.5 m above the Rail level at level crossings. Public are hereby notified to observe the height specified above for the purpose of loading vehicles and to see that the loads carried in road vehicles do not infringe the height gauges under any circumstances. The dangers of a load of excessive height are as follows: (i) Danger to the height gauge and consequent obstruction to the road as well as to the railway line. (ii) Danger to the materials or equipment carried or the vehicle itself. (iii) Danger of fire and risk of life due to contact with or dangerous proximity to the conductors

Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer/Traction Distribution, Sealdah









THUMBNAILS

Invesco India Business Cycle Fund: Invesco Mutual Fund on Friday launched its new fund Invesco India Business Cycle Fund (an open ended equity scheme following business cycles based investing theme). The new fund seeks to generate long-term capital appreciation by investing in equity and equity related instruments with a focus on riding business cycles through dynamic allocation between various sectors and stocks at different stages of business cycles in the economy.

Mahindra Manulife Value Fund: Mahindra Manulife Mutual Fund introduced the Mahindra Manulife Value Fund, an openended equity scheme designed for investors seeking long-term growth through a value investing approach. The fund aims to identify and invest in fundamentally strong yet undervalued companies, unlocking their potential for sustainable returns. The Fund aims to generate long-term capital appreciation by investing in a diversified portfolio of equity and equity-related instruments of fundamentally strong yet undervalued companies.

India-US to double trade to \$500 billion by 2030

The two sides will also work together to increase trade in agricultural goods

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, 14 FEBRUARY

rime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Donald Trump launched "Mission-500" in the sector of trade and investment, aimed at more than doubling two-way trade to USD 500 billion by 2030.

According to the information shared by the Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri, both the leaders unveiled the US-India Compact for the 21st Century, to accelerate military partnerships, commerce, and technological advancements.

Addressing a press briefing Misri said: "Two leaders jointly launched the US-India compact for the 21st century, for catalyzing opportunities in military partnership, accelerated commerce and technology. In the area of trade and investment, the

leaders launched Mission-500, aiming to more than double total two-way trade to USD 500 billion by 2030." "The two leaders also

announced plans to negotiate the first tranche of a mutually



approach to strengthen bilateral trade across the goods and services sector. There is a renewed commitment to making greenfield investments in high-value industries in each other's countries."

He shared that the leaders also unveiled plans to finalise a new 10-year framework for the US-India Major Defence Partnership, running from 2025 to 2035.

"The leaders announced plans to finalise a new 10year framework for the US-

also agreed to move forward on ongoing defence procurement negotiations for a number of platforms, including land and air systems and coproduction agreements. There was also an agreement to initiate discussions on the reciprocal defence procurement agreement," Misri said.

During the meet, the leaders recognised that this level of ambition would require new, fair-trade terms, the leaders announced plans to negotiate the first tranche of a mutually beneficial, multi-sector Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA) by fall of 2025.

They committed to designate senior representatives to advance these negotiations and to ensure that the trade relationship fully reflects the aspirations of the COM-PACT.

To advance this innovative, wide-ranging BTA, the U.S. and India will take an integrated approach to strengthen and deepen bilateral trade across the goods and services sector, and will work towards increasing market access, reducing tariff and non-tariff barriers, and deepening supply chain integration.

Further, the US President welcomed India's recent measures to lower tariffs on U.S. products of interest in the areas of bourbon, motorcvcles, ICT products and metals, as well as measures to enhance market access for U.S. agricultural products, like alfalfa hay and duck meat, and medical devices.

India also expressed appreciation for U.S. measures taken to enhance exports of Indian mangoes and pomegranates to the United

Market falls for 8th session for first time in two years

while midcaps are 19.5 per

cent below their peak clos-

capitalisation of BSE-listed

companies dropped below

Rs 400 lakh crore for the

first time since June 2024.

13 major indices were in

the red, with Nifty Energy,

Media, PSU Bank, and Phar-

ma taking the hardest hits,

each falling 2-3 per cent.

under selling pressure amid

reciprocal tariff threats

losers were Bharat Elec-

tronics, Adani Enterprises,

Trent, Adani Ports, and Sun

Pharma, tumbling 3-4 per

On Nifty 50, the biggest

from the US.

Pharma stocks came

Among the sectors, all

Significantly, the market

ing level in September.



NEW DELHI, 14 FEBRUARY

Benchmark indices fell for an eighth straight session for the first time in two years on Friday.

At close, Sensex was down 199 points or 0.3 per cent at 75,939, and the Nifty was down 102 points or 0.4 per cent at 22,929. About 642 shares advanced, 3,200 shares declined, and 73 shares were unchanged.

The downfall was amid the fears of relentless FII selling and weak Q3 earnings.

Notably, the Nifty is currently 13 per cent below its all-time high, while Sensex has declined 12 per cent from its peak.

BSE Midcap and BSE cent. Britannia, ICICI Bank, performers, Hindalco Industries posted a 2 per cent gain propelling its shares to Rs 615, a positive shift stemming from company's Q3FY25 performance.

Maruti Suzuki India's shares saw a 1 per cent appreciation, reaching Rs 12,780 after the international brokerage firm HSBC reiterating its "buy" recommendation.

United Breweries' stock initially demonstrated significant upward movement, climbing as high as 6.6 per cent to Rs 2,166.

On the losing side was the shares of ITI Ltd declining by 5 per cent followed by the release of company's Q3FY25 results.

NATCO Pharma's shares experienced a further 10 per cent decline, extending the previous day's 20 per cent drop.

Manappuram Finance's shares fell 5 per cent, reaching Rs 183. This significant drop was triggered by the company's weaker-than-expected Q3FY25 results.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) have been net sellers in Indian equities amid global economic uncertainty and a strengthening US Dollar.



beneficial multi-sector bilateral trade agreement by the fall of 2025. Both countries will take an integrated

India Major Defence partnership in the 21st century. This is a framework that will run from 2025 to 2035. They States.

The two sides will also work together to increase trade in agricultural goods.

Smallcap indices nosediving nearly over 3 per cent each. The smallcap index is down around 21 per cent from

Nestle, Infosys, and TCS emerged as the top gainers, edging up 0.7-1 per cent. Among the individual

The fall of Sensex and Nifty was amid the fears of relentless FII selling and weak Q3 earnings.

WPI inflation eases to 2.31pc in Jan amid decline in food prices

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, 14 FEBRUARY

The wholesale price index (WPI) inflation eased to 2.31 per cent in January down from 2.37 per cent in December 2024, according to data released by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry on Friday.

Food article prices declined but there was a rising costs in the manufacturing of food products and textiles.

Data from the ministry said the positive rate of inflation in January, 2025 is primarily due to increase in prices of manufacture of food products, food articles, other manufacturing, non-food articles and manufacture of textiles etc.

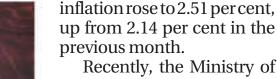
The index for Primary Articles decreased by 2.01 per cent in January. Price of food articles (-3.62 per cent) decreased in January, 2025 as compared to December, 2024.



The Price of crude petroleum & natural gas (6.34 per cent), non-food articles (0.66 per cent) and minerals (0.22 per cent) increased in January, 2025 as compared to December, 2024.

WPIFoodIndexfell to 7.47 percent in January 2025, compared to 8.89 per cent last month, suggesting a slight easing in food price pressures.

Fuel prices declined by 2.78 per cent in January, compared to a 3.79 per cent drop in December. Manufacturing



Statistics & Programme Implementation (MoSPI) released the Consumer Price Index (CPI) based retail inflation saying it eased to 4.6 per cent in January from 5.22 per cent in December.

It was a decline of 91 basis points in headline inflation compared to the previous month, making it the lowest year-on-year inflation since August 2024. Corresponding inflation rate for rural and urban are 6.31 per cent and 5.53 per cent. The significant decline in headline inflation and food inflation during the month of January, 2025 is mainly attributed to decline in inflation of Vegetables, Egg,

Pulses & Products, Cereals and Products, Education, Clothing and Health.

RBI penalises Shriram Finance and Ujjivan Small Finance Bank STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, 14 FEBRUARY

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) imposed monetary penalty on Shriram Finance and Ujjivan Small Finance Bank, amounting to Rs 5.80 lakh and Rs 6.70 lakh, respectively.

The penalty was over for non-compliance with regulatory guidelines after a thorough review by the central bank.

RBI said that following a supervisory review, it identified multiple instances of non-compliance with its directives, and a notice was issued to Shriram Finance, seeking an explanation as to why a penalty should not be imposed for its regulatory lapses.

After reviewing the company's response, additional submissions, and oral representations during a personal



company had failed to implement a system for the periodic

hearing, RBI found that the review of risk categorization of accounts. Additionally, certain agree-

ments with Direct Sales Agents (DSAs) lacked a mandatory clause granting RBI the right

to inspect their books and accounts. The company was also found to have failed in sharing information regarding the Relationship Segment of corporates with Credit Information Companies for the financial year 2022-23.

RBI also assessed the Ujjivan Small Finance Bank's financial position as of 31 March, 2023, and shared that show-cause notice was issued regarding regulatory noncompliance.

It upheld the charge that the bank had failed to issue loan agreements to certain borrowers at the time of loan sanction or disbursement.

RBI clarified that the penalties were imposed solely for deficiencies in regulatory compliance and do not question the validity of any transactions or agreements entered into by the entities with their customers.

BSNL bounces back into profit for first time since 2007

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, 14 FEBRUARY

State-owned telecom major Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) on Friday reported a profit of Rs 262 crore in the third quarter of the current financial year, marking its first return to profitability since 2007.

This milestone reflects the company's focus on innovation, aggressive network over Q3 of the previous year. expansion, cost optimisation, and customer-centric service successfully reduced its improvements, the BSNL finance cost and overall expensaid in a statement. diture, leading to a decline BSNL chairman and manin losses by over Rs 1,800 aging director A. Robert J. crore compared to last year, Ravi, said: "We expect revenue he pointed out. growth to improve further, through strategic revival iniexceeding 20% by the end of the financial year. Revenue tiatives, including spectrum

from Mobility, FTTH, and



have played a key role in bolstering our operations, Ravi and 14 per cent, respectively, said.

He said that BSNL has introduced new innovations

Ravi said.

underscores the BSNL's resurgence and long-term sustainability. As we continue on this growth trajectory, we ering higher value to our shareholders, expanding marinnovation," he added.

The BSNL posted a robust double-digit growth across sively expanding its network with an accelerated 4G rollout and fiber-optic infrastructure

It has also strengthened connectivity across urban and rural areas and introduced customer-centric digital innovations with national WiFi roaming for seamless internet access across networks, the BSNL chief added.

This financial turnaround underscores BSNL's commitment to providing highquality, affordable telecom services while driving India's digital growth. The company remains dedicated to enhancing service delivery, expanding its customer base, and con-Limited, Singapore (BPSPL). tributing to the Digital India and Atmanirbhar Bharat Singapore Dollars (SGD) 7.5 vision, according to a company million (approximately Rs statement.

Asian Paints to sell Indonesia business for₹48 crore, at a₹90 crore loss

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE MUMBAI, 14 FEBRUARY

Mumbai-headquartered Asian Paints officially announced in a regulatory filing on Friday that it has decided to divest its business operations in Indonesia.

The company's whollyowned subsidiary company called Asian Paints Interna-



48 crore), is expected to be closed on or before 31 March, 2025.

APIPL had set up two wholly-owned entities, nametional Pvt Ltd, Singapore ly PT Asian Paints Indonesia (APIPL), has entered into a and PT Asian Paints Colour share purchase agreement Indonesia, nine years ago, in order to tap business to sell off its entire stake in its Indonesian operations to opportunities in Indonesia. However, the company stated Berger Paints Singapore Pte that its business in Indonesia Asian Paints stated that remained sub-scale and the deal, which is valued at immaterial to the company's

steps to enhance their scale. "Based on the strategic review of all its businesses, APIPL has decided to divest its operations in Indonesia. The divestment is expected to lead to a recognition of loss of about Rs 90 crores in the consolidated financials of the company, subject to necessary adjustments at the closing of the transaction," according to the Asian Paints statement. Asian Paints Managing Director & CEO, Amit Syngle, stated: "This announced divestment of our operations in Indonesia will enable us to focus on priority markets of Middle East and South overall international opera-Asia and strengthen our intertions, despite several strategic national portfolio".

Leased Lines has increased by 15 per cent, 18 per cent,

service provider in India, "This Rs 262 crore profit

upgrades.

remain committed to delivket opportunities, and driving

report said on Friday. The expansion is being fuelled by rapid technological advancements, improved delivery services, and rising internet penetration worldwide.

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, 14 FEBRUARY

The global e-commerce market

is on track for significant

growth and is expected to

The report by GlobalData, a leading data and analytics firm, predicts that e-commerce transactions will grow at a alData said.



rate (CAGR) of 11.1 per cent between 2023 and 2028. The US continues to dom-

expected to hit \$11 trillion by 2028

Global e-commerce market

Additionally, BSNL has

The government's support

allocation, and capital infusion

inate the sector, while companies worldwide are focusing reach \$11 trillion by 2028, a on innovation, data-driven strategies, and environmental, social, and governance (ESG) compliance to stay competitive in the evolving market.

compound annual growth Umaru added that it remains high on the agenda for ecommerce companies, both to comply with relevant

regulations and to meet consumer demands. Companies must now ensure compliance with environmental regulations to avoid

legal risks, the report said. Termslike "carbon neutral" and "environmentally friendly" "Consumers are also conare being closely monitored, cerned with the social and making it crucial for e-comgovernance factors of ESG,' Aisha U-K Umaru, Strategic merce firms to align with global sustainability guide-Intelligence Analyst at Globlines.

also its services with mobility such as National WiFi Roamservices revenue growing by ing, BiTV-Free Entertainment 15 per cent during the Octofor all mobile customers, and ber-December quarter, Fiberto-the-Home (FTTH) revenue IFTV for all FTTH customers. The continuous focus on increasing by 18 per cent quality of service and service and leased line services revenue clocking a 14 per cent assurance has further jump over the same quarter strengthened customer trust and reinforced the BSNL's of the previous year. position as a leading telecom

The BSNL has been aggres-

SEBI rejects US businessman Gaekwad's bid for competing offer in Religare stake sale

AGENCIES

MUMBAI, 14 FEBRUARY

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) on Friday rejected a request from US-based businessman Danny Gaekwad to make a competing offer for a majority stake in Religare Enterprises Limited.

Gaekwad had proposed an offer that was 17 per cent higher than the Rs 235-pershare bid made by the Burman family of Dabur for a 26 per

cent stake in the company. His offer aimed to acquire a 55 per cent stake in Religare. However, the Burman family, responding to Gaekwad's bid, stated that his proposal was not formal as he had

only sought SEBI's permission

to make the offer. They also pointed out that he was already late in entering the bidding process.

Earlier, on 28 January, SEBI had returned Gaekwad's letter seeking permission for a competing open offer,

stating that it did not qualify as an exemption under securities law regulations.

Despite facing legal battles in the Delhi High Court and the Supreme Court, Gaekwad approached SEBI and the

Reserve Bank of India again for approval.

The Supreme Court had even directed SEBI to expedite its decision.

SEBI's whole-time member, Ashwani Bhatia, in his latest order, once again rejected Gaekwad's request.

"It is noted that although the price offered by Applicant in the proposed competing open offer is Rs. 275 per equity share, (a premium of Rs.40 per equity share over the offer made by the Burman

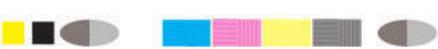
Group), the Applicant has failed to demonstrate his ability to meet the financial obligation for making the competing open offer," the order read.

He stated that allowing such an exemption would not be in the best interests of Religare's shareholders.

Bhatia added that a competing offer, which is not backed by financial capability, would disrupt market dynamics and erode investor confidence.









TheStatesman KOLKATA, SATURDAY 15 FEBRUARY 2025

THUMBNAILS

Punjab Assembly Speaker emphasises on necessity of orientation of new MLAs: Punjab Legislative Assembly Speaker Kultar Singh Sandhawan stated that training and orientation of the newcomer MLAs are necessary as they are in the Assembly for a short period of time. He stated that Legislature is pivotal to democracy and if it does well, the Executive and Judiciary will also do well. Kultar Singh shared insight on the sidelines of the orientation programme organised for MLAs of Haryana Legislative Assembly in Chandigarh. Kultar Singh said that Legislature is a pivotal to democracy. "If the Legislature is working well, the Executive will also be accountable, will work well and it will be easier for the Judiciary as well. So, in order for the Legislature to work well, the training and orientation of the new legislators who have been elected by the people is very important. There is a time of five years in which they should become familiar with all their tools and procedures." Lok Sabha speaker Om Birla was the chief guest for the orientation programme organised for the MLAs of Haryana Legislative Assembly. CM Nayab Singh Saini was also present at the event followed by speaker Harvinder Kalyan and Uttar Pradesh Assembly Seaker Satish Mahana.

BJP developing Lucknow as an Al city, says Yogi

Yogi was speaking while inaugurating two major four-lane flyovers

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE LUCKNOW, 14 FEBRUARY

ttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has said that Lucknow is being developed not only as an Aero City but also as an Artificial Intelligence (AI) city under the leadership of the double-engine government.

"Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Uttar Pradesh is now equipped with modern facilities, providing every citizen with better infrastructure and public services," he said. The CM was speaking while inaugurating two major fourlane flyovers along with Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari here on Friday. The inaugurated projects include the Indira Nagar Sector 25 to Khurram Nagar-Kalyanpur Flyover (3 km), built at a cost of Rs 270 crore, and

the Polytechnic to Munshi Pulia Chauraha Flyover (2 km), constructed at a cost of Rs 170 crore. During the



stones were laid for future initiatives.

The CM mentioned that Lucknow has been gifted development projects worth over Rs 1000 crore, including two major National Highway projects costing Rs 440 crore and state projects worth nearly Rs 600 crore. He highlighted that efforts are being made to develop Lucknow into a metro-level city with world-class infrastructure.

He praised the Defence Minister for his significant contribution to Uttar Pradesh's development. He highlighted Singh's crucial

bringing major projects to Jhansi, strengthening UP as a defence manufacturing hub under the Defence Corridor initiative.

Discussing Lucknow's transformation, Yogi stated that the city is being systematically developed on the model of a State Capital Region. Key projects like Green Corridor, Kisan Path, International Convention Center, and an International Airport are shaping Lucknow into a global city. Additionally, plans are underway to connect Yamuna Expressway and Purvanchal Expressway, posi-

of state's cultural and economic prosperity. He highlighted that 50 crore devotees have already taken the sacred dip, showcasing the state's strength and efficient management.

He mentioned that the Mahakumbh is held on land leased from the Defence Ministry, which the state government has been acquiring smoothly for the past eight years. For the first time, devotees are able to visit Akshayavat, Patalpuri, and Saraswati Koop, which were historically restricted sites.

"To accommodate the massive influx of devotees, the state has enhanced connectivity via road, rail, and air. As many as 40 regular flights are linking Prayagraj to major cities, while hundreds of special trains have been deployed. Most devotees are arriving by road, with infrastructure projects approved by Mr Gadkari playing a crucial role."

On Mauni Amavasya, a staggering eight crore devotees bathed at the Sangam, and the seamless arrangements ensured zero disruption, the CM said. He attributed this success to the administrative efficiency of the doubleengine government.

Opposition slams President's Rule in Manipur, calls it BJP's failure to govern



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE IMPHAL, 14 FEBRUARY

The imposition of President's Rule in strife-torn Manipur has sparked intense political reactions, with opposition parties accusing the BJP-led central government of failing to control the prolonged ethnic violence in the state.

The decision comes after Chief Minister N. Biren Singh resigned, following mounting pressure over his alleged partisan role and the deteriorating law and order situation.

Announced on 13 February, the move places Manipur's administration directly under the Centre, with Governor Anusuiya Uikey overseeing governance

animation. Ethnic clashes over the past 21 months have left at least 250 people dead and caused widespread displacement.

The Communist Party of India (Marxist) has strongly criticised the move, calling it an indication of the "utter bankruptcy" of the BJP's "double-engine government."

The party alleged that the decision was not taken in the interest of Manipur but rather to buy time for the ruling coalition to settle its internal conflicts.

"President's Rule is not the solution," the CPI(M) said in a statement, urging the Centre to engage in negotiations with all communities and political stakeholders to restore normalcy. The Congress echoed sim-

ilar sentiments, with Manipur

President Keisham Meghachandra Singh stating that the Union Government was left with no choice but to impose central rule due to the failure of both the state and central leadership. He also speculated that the decision could push Prime Minister Narendra Modi to finally break his silence on

the Manipur crisis, possibly even leading to a long-overdue visit to the state. The CPI(M) particularly accused the Prime Minister of ignoring the suffering of Manipur's people and prioritising the BJP's political interests over governance.

The party also held the former Chief Minister responsible for aggravating tensions, stating that his resignation was inevitable after evidence of his "sectarian partisan role" emerged in court.

event, a total of 114 development projects worth Rs 588 crore were also inaugurated and foundation

role in advancing the BrahMos missile manufacturing project under Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL) in Lucknow and tioning Lucknow as a transportation hub. He described the historic Mahakumbh 2025 in Prayagraj as a symbol on behalf of the President of India.

The state assembly has been put under suspended Pradesh Congress Committee

HP strengthening rural economy through natural farming: Sukhu

DBT, he claimed.

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

SHIMLA, 14 FEBRUARY

Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Thakur Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu said here on Friday that the state government was committed to strengthening the rural economy through sustainable and farmer-friendly policies.

"The government has taken a pioneering step by becoming the first state in the country to fix the highest support price for wheat and maize under natural farming," he said,

in the market. adding that the state govern-

"The government has ment has set a milestone by assured farmers a stable income purchasing wheat at Rs.40 perkg and maize at Rs. 30 per by committing to purchase kg from farmers produced up to 20 quintals of maize through natural farming pracper family growing produce through natural farming," he tices. So far, 398 metric tonnes of naturally grown maize have said. Sukhu further said that been procured from 1,508 to encourage farmers to adopt farmers and Rs. 1.19 crore natural farming, the government has started Rajiv Gandhi has been directly transferred to their bank accounts through Natural Farming Start-up Yojana as a part of Rs. 680 crore Rajiv Gandhi Start-up He further said that to promote natural produce, the Scheme, which integrates state government has launched agriculture with employment Him Bhog-Him Makki Atta generation.

President's Rule in Manipur direct admission of BJP's failure: Kharge

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, 14 FEBRUARY

Coming down heavily on the NDA, Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge on Friday said the imposition of President's Rule in Manipur is a direct admission of the failure of the BJP governments at the Centre and the state, and asked Prime Minister Narendra Modi to apologise to the people.

In a post on 'X', he said there is a constitutional crisis

in Manipur that forced the imposition of President's rule.

"Narendra Modi ji, it is your party which has been ruling at the Centre for 11 years. It is your party which ruled Manipur for 8 years. It is the BJP which was responsible for maintaining Law & Order in the state.

"It is your government which is responsible for National Security and border patrol. The imposition of President's Rule by YOU, suspending



YOUR own party's government is a direct admission on how YOU failed the people of Manipur," he said.

Kharge noted the govern-

menthas imposed President's Rule not because it wanted to, but because there is a Constitutional crisis in the state, as none of the NDA MLAs are willing to accept the "baggage of your incompetence".

"Your "Double Engine" ran

over the lives of the innocent

people of Manipur! High time

you now step in Manipur and

listen to the pain and trauma

of the suffering people and

apologise to them. Do you

have the courage of conviction?"

he asked in a series of posts. The Congress chief said the prime minister can no longer denyhis direct responsibility for the north eastern state.

President's Rule was imposed in strife-torn Manipur on Thursday and the state assemblyputundersuspended animation, days after Chief Minister N Biren Singh resigned from his post that led to political uncertainty in the northeastern state.

Mehbooba voices support	NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY	E N D E EASTERN RAILWAY	R EASTERN RAILWAY	Metro Railway, Kolkata Principal Chief Signal & Telecom Engineer, Metro Railway, Kolkat for & on behalf of the President of India invites e-Tenders against Ope e-Tender due to open on 18.03.2025 at 15:00 hrs. Manual offers ar
for Bill on liquor ban in J&K statesman news service Jammu, 14 february	L. No. JHS-DyCEE-WS-T-08-2024-25 Date: 12.02.2025 TENDER NOTICE For and on behalf of President of India, the Dy CEE/WS/JHS, North Central Railway, Jhansi invites open tenders through online (E-Tendering) for the following work:- Tender No.: JHS-DyCEE-WS-T-08-2024-25 Tender value: Rs. 23,14,815/- only Bid Security: Rs. 46,300/- only Description of work: Jhansi Workshop:- Electrical work for:- Augmentation of wagon	Abridged Tender Notice No. KPA- ERS-OT-40-24-25, Dated : 12.02.2025. Tender Notice for E-tender is invited by Dy. Chief Electrical Engineer, Loco, Eastern Railway, Kanchrapara Workshop, North 24 Parganas, West Bengal, PIN-743145 Kanchrapara for	MORE CORRIGENDUM MORE Corrigendum to Tender Notice No. 343_2024-25 published earlier by Divisional Engineer, Eastern Railway, TENDER ADS Howrah, DRM Building, Near Railway Station, Howrah-711101 under the jurisdiction of Sr. DEN/1/HWH, Closing Date of Tender should be read as	not allowed against this tender and any such manual offer receive shall be ignored. Name of work: Upgradation of IP based CCT Surveillance System for North South section (Blue line) of Metro Railwa Kolkata. Tender Value: ₹ 28,99,99,083.59; Earnest Money ₹ 16,00,000/-; Cost of Tender Documents: ₹0 (Zero). Completion Period: Nine months. The tender can be viewed at websit https://www.ireps.gov.in. The tenderer/bidders must have Class-I Digital Signature Certificate & must be registered on IREPS Portal. On
Endorsing the move of her party MLA seeking declaration of Jammu and Kashmir a dry Jnion territory (UT), PDP chief and former chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti, on Friday, called upon parents and reli-	Description of work: Jhansi Workshop:- Electrical work for - Augmentation of wagon Maintenance facility in JHSW by improving Civil Engg. Infrastructure and capacity enhancement works to increase outturn. Completion period: 06 Months Closing date of tender: 18.03.2025 (upto 15:00 Hrs.) Tenderer will submit the tender online upto 18.03.2025 (upto 15:00 Hrs.). Complete details & for submission of tenders can be seen in Indian Railways website http://www.ireps.gov.in 308/25 (ADM) Image: North central railways Image: www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in X @ CPRONCR	the following work : Tender No.: KPA- ERS-OT-40-24-25. Description : "One time repairing and one year warranty of EP contactor test bench, Qty. 01 no." Tender Value : ₹ 1,64,020/ Date and time of closing of tender : 10.03.2025 at 15.00 hrs. Contract Period : 60 days. The Tender document and other	PAGE 2 & 4 PAGE 2	registered tenderer/bidders can participate in e-Tendering. All relevant papers must be uploaded at the time of participating in e-Tender. Open Tender Notice No.: 12-2024-R1 Dated: 14.02.2025 Follow us at: //metrorailwaykol @/metrorailkolkata DAS/DERN/RATIONAL NOTICE INVITING E-AUCTION
gious clergy to support the demand for ban on sale and nanufacture of alcohol. "With youth across J&K rapidly falling into the cruel grip of addiction, I deeply commend our MLA Fayaz Mir for introducing a bill to ban he sale, consumption & man- ufacture of alcohol across J&K. However, legislation alone won'tbe enough. The question remains—will political leaders,	WEST CENTRAL RAILWAY TENDER NOTICE-CORRIGENDUM S&T (Gati Shakti) Unit, Kota Division Tender Notice No: EPC-Kota-RTA-WCR-SnT-GSU Date: 13.02.2025 Some amendments in Tender No: EPC-Kota-RTA-WCR-SnT-GSU of office of Dy. Chief Signal & Telecom Engineer (Gati Shakti) Unit, Kota, West Central Railway, 324002 (Rajasthan), has been made as per details given under. For more details, please see on website http://www.ireps.gov.in. Corrigendum-1 (Dated 12.02.2025)-The Schedule of Bidding Process has been amended:Pre- Bid Meeting: Rescheduled to 28.02.2025 at 15:00 hrs. Authority Response to Queries: Moved to 04.03.2025. Corrigendum-2 (Dated 13.02.2025)-Tender No./Bid No. mentioned in the tender documents as: "EPC-KAVACH-Kota-RTA- WCR-Kota SnT-GSU" should be read as: "EPC-Kota-RTA-WCR-SnT-GSU" as	details can be obtained from the website: www.ireps.gov.in. The bidding for the tender is to be submitted through e-tendering on above website. Manual offers are not allowed against this tender and any manual offer if received shall not be accepted and will be summarily rejected. MISC-332/2024-25 Tender Notice is also available at websites : www.er.indianrailways.gov.in / www.ireps.gov.in Follow us at : @@EasternRailway @easternrailwayheadquarter	E-Auction Notice Senior Divisional Commercial Manager, Eastern Railway, Asansol Division, Station Road, Asansol, Pin-713301 invites e-Auction through IREPS portal vide website www.ireps.gov.in for awarding the contract. Details of which are as given below: Category of Auction: Commercial Publicity (Advertising), e-Auction Catalogue No.: ASN-ADVT-28-02. Auction start date & Time: 28.02.2025 at 12.00 hrs. Name of stations/Location/Train No. & SLR: OOH: i) At Durgapur : North Side of Durgapur station (Bazar End). ii) At Madhupur: North side of Madhupur station near new FOB. RDN : iii) At Asansol : Twelve (12) Dual Display fare Repeater System (DDFRS) at PRS & UTS counters. ii) At Madhupur : On New FOB on Howrah End. Total 04 Assets : No. of OOH assets : 02. No. of RDN assets: 02. All prospective bidders are advised	Awarding contract of Commercial Publicity Rights over Howrah Division E-Auction Notice No. COM/PUB/HWH/Station Beautification/24 Dated : 14.02.2025. E-Auction is invited by Senior Divisional Commercial Manager, Eastern Railway, Howrah, 4th Floor, Rail Yatri Niwas Building near Howrah Station, Pin-711101 for the following work : Name of Work Awarding contract of Commercial Publicity Rights. The Auction Catalogue have been uploaded in www.ireps.gov.in Catalogue No. : PUB-HWH 25-7. Auction start date & time : 03.03.2025 at 12.00 hrs. Seq. No AA/1. Lot No. : ADVT-HWH-UPA-OH-141-25-1 (Advertising – Out of Home). Description : Beautification of stations through Installation Maintenance of Illuminated Board displaying "I LOVE <name of="" stations<br="">with photos of famous places of respective cities in one part (50% area) and advertisement in another part (rest 50% area) at UTTARPARA DANKUNI, CHANDANNAGAR, BANDEL, KAMARKUNDU, ARAMBAR</name>

parents & most importantly our religious clergy rise to the occasion by taking a lead in this fight to protect our children & save countless families. Remaining silent is no longer an option," she said.

Three MLAs, Mir Mohammad Fayaz (PDP), Sheikh Khursheed Ahmad (AIP), and Ahsan Pardesi (ruling National Conference), have submitted separate private members' Bills seeking a ban on alcohol in Jammu and Kashmir. These Bills will be tabled in the coming budget session of the J&K Assembly.

Cutting across party lines, political leaders were supporting the move as alcohol and drug consumption has become an alarming problem in this border UT. Consignments of drugs smuggled through Pakistan have been caught from time to time by the security forces. PDP leader Iltija Mufti also supported the call for the ban. PDP leader Mohammad Ashraf Malik has launched a signature campaign in Dooru-Shahabad constituency, calling for a complete ban on alcohol in J&K.

WCR-Kota SnT-GSU" should be read as: "EPC-Kota-RTA-WCR-SnT-GSU" as per the IREPS NIT dated 11.02.2025. All other terms & condition remain unchanged of Tender documents

Dy.Chief Signal & Telecom Engineer (Gati Shakti) Unit, West Central Railway, Kota स्वच्छ भारत अभियान, एक कदम खच्छता की ओर

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER PUBLIC WORKS (WEST) DIVISION CHHATRAPATI SAMBHAJINAGAR

Public Works Premise, Padampura, Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar-431005 E-mail address: westaurangabad.ee@mahapwd.gov.in Telephone / Fax Number: 0240 2331288

E-Tender Notice No. (38) (Second Times) of 2024-25

E-Tender for the following work in B-1 Tender Form is invited via online e-tendering system from Eligible Contractor by the Executive Engineer, Public Works (West) Division, Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar on behalf of Public Works Department, Government of Maharashtra Tender Document are downloaded from Goverment portal https://mahaten ders.gov.in Right to select or reject is reserved by Executive Engineer, Public Works (West) Division, Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar. Conditional Tender will be not accepted (Number of 02 Works).

All information of e-tender is available on following portal. A) http://mahapwd.gov.in B) https://mahatenders.gov.in

If any change made in this e-tender is informed on above portal.

SI. No.	Name of work	Estimated Cost (Rs.)
1.	CONSTRUCTION OF 3 GRAIN GODOWNS AT (CAPACITY 1080 MT) AT GANGAPUR TQ. GAN- GAPUR DIST. CHH. SAMBHAJINAGAR [E TEN- DER NOTICE NO. 38/02 FOR 2024-25].	6,17,53,129
2.	CONSTRUCTION OF 3 GRAIN GODOWNS AT (CAPACITY 1080 MT) AT KHULTABAD TQ. KHULTABAD DIST, CHH. SAMBHAJINAGAR [E TENDER NOTICE NO. 38/01 FOR 2024-25].	6,12,59,741
	Public Works (West) Divisio	utive Enginee on, Chhatrapa Sambhajinaga

EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY IN CONTRAL RAILWAY **Open E-Tender Notice** Batch No.: 03/2025

-Tender Notice for supply of materials "Participation in through" Web Portal o IREPS-www.ireps.gov.in Offers are invited for supply of the following material. The closing time for the tender is at 14:00 Hrs. (1) Tender No.: 30255001, Short Description of item: IGBT Power modules 15A1 to 1549(9 Module/01 SR) if BHEL make Material Description:- MDL PWR 68817 WCQAA-IGBT MODULE. Quantity: 12 Nos., Publishing Date & Time: 05 Feb. 2025, 15:26 Hrs., Tender Closing Date & Time: 05 Mar. 2025, 11:30 Hrs. (2) Tender No.: 30255002, Short Description of item Supply and retro fitment of Roof mounted air conditioning system without trough to specification No.RDSO/2007/EL/SPEC 0055Rev.02 or latest. Quantity: 63 Nos. Publishing Date & Time: 05 Feb. 2025 15:26 Hrs., Tender Closing Date & Time. 05 Mar. 2025, 14:00 Hrs. (3) Tender No.: 30245325, Short Description of item: Set of connector for panel and non panel for WAG-9 to CLWs Drg /Spec.No. CLW/ES/3/ 0124/O or latest (Set details as annexure) Quantity: 06 Sets., Publishing Date & Time: 06 Feb. 2025, 12:06 Hrs., Tender Closing Date & Time: 05 Mar. 2025, 14:00 Hrs. Participants are required to submit their offer only on-line through the web Portal of IREPS-www.ireps.gov.in before the losing date and time. Other details regarding Consignee and detailed description of stores are available in tender document in tender notice on the above portal. AMM/TRS/GMO PR/02106/DHN/STORE/T/24-25/44

OOH assets : 02, No. of RDN assets: 02. All prospective bidders are advised to visit the website www.ireps.gov.in for full details and to participate against the above mentioned e-Auction as per schedule given. ASN-332/2024-25 Tender Notices are also available at websites : www.er.indianrailways.gov.in/www.ireps.gov.in Follow us at : R@EasternRailway () @easternrailwayheadquarter

EASTERN RAILWAY

Bid Number: GEM/2025/B/5914828, Dated: 05.02.2025. Bids are invited by Assistant Environment & House Keeping Manager, Eastern Railway, DRM Building, Near Railway Station, Howrah-711101 for the following works: Bid End Date/Time : 26.02.2025, 20.00 hrs. Bid Opening Date/Time : 26.02.2025. 20.30 hrs. Bid Offer Validity (From End Date) : 90 Days. Item Category Custom Bid for Services : Mechanized manual cleaning of Begampur, Baruipara Sainthia Jn, Khagraghat Road, Salar, Dhaniakhali Halt, Chandanpur, Jaugram Masagram Jn, Saktigarh, Khana Jn., Guskara, Ahmadpur, MLP, Bazarsau Agradwip stations and surrounding area by outside agencies including rac picking from track disposal of garbage waste from VAT to nominated dum. Similar Category : Cleaning, Sanitation and Disinfection service - Outcome based. Contract Period : 2 Year(s). Minimum Average Annual Turnover of the bidder (For 3 Years) : 106 Lakh(s). Years of Past Experience Required for same/similar service : 3 Year(s). Past Experience of Similar Services required : Yes. MSE Exemption for Years of Experience and Turnover No. Startup Exemption for Years of Experience and Turnover : No. Document required from seller : Experience Criteria, Bidder Turnover, Certificate (Requested in ATC). "In case any bidder is seeking exemption from Experience/Turnover Criteria, the supporting documents to prove his eligibility for exemption must be uploaded for evaluation by the buyer. Do you want to show documents uploaded by bidders to all bidders participated in bid? Yes, Bid to RA enabled : No. Type of Bid: Two Packet Bid. Time allowed for Technical Clarifications during technical evaluation: 2 Days. Estimated Bid Value: ₹ 2,10,96,680.98; Evaluation Method : Total value wise evaluation. Arbitration Clause : No. Mediation Clause : No. EMD Details: Advisory Bank: State Bank of India. EMD Amount: ₹ 2,55,484/-. ePBG Details: Advisory Bank: State Bank of India. ePBG Percentage (%): 5.00. Duration of ePBG required (Months): 30. HWH-606/2024-25

Tender Notice is also available at websites : www.er.indianrailways.gov.in / www.ireps.gov.in

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JANKUNI, CHANDANNAGAR, BANDEL, KAMARKUNDU, ARAMBAG, BARDDHAMAN & RAMPURHAT stations at the location earmarked for this purpose as per sketch plan for a period of 03 years. (HWH-608/2024-25) Sr. Divisional Commercial Manager, Howrah Tender Notice is also available at websites : www.er.indianrailways.gov.in / www.ireps.gov.in Follow us at : M@EasternRailway A@easternrailwayheadquarter

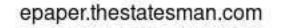
BASSIND RN HALLAWAY

Bid Number: GEM/2025/B/5926871, Dated: 08.02.2025. Bids are invited by Assistant Environment & House Keeping Manager, Eastern Railway, DRM Building, Near Railway Station, Howrah-711101 for the following works: Bid End Date/Time : 01.03.2025, 13.00 hrs. Bid Opening Date/Time : 01.03.2025, 13.30. Bid Offer Validity (From End Date) : 90 Days. Item Category Collection & Disposal Waste Management Service - Collection of garbage and disposal of waste management service from Bandel station and Colony to Municipal Dumping Ground with a supply of Fully rubbish truck with Collection Lifting Transportation. Contract Period : 2 Year(s). Minimum Average Annual Turnover of the bidder (For 3 Years) : 8 Lakh(s). Years of Past Experience Required for same/similar service : 3 Year(s). Past Experience of Similar Services required : Yes. MSE Exemption for Years of Experience and Turnover : No. Startup Exemption for Years of Experience and Turnover: No. Documents required from seller :- Experience Criteria, Bidder Turnover Certificate (Requested in ATC), Additional Doc 2 (Requested in ATC), Additional Doc 3 (Requested in ATC), Additional Doc 4 (Requested in ATC) "In case any bidder is seeking exemption from Experience/Turnover Criteria, the supporting documents to prove his eligibility for exemption must be uploaded for evaluation by the buyer. Do you want to show documents uploaded by bidders to all bidders participated in bid? : Yes, Bid to RA enabled : No. Type of Bid: Single Packet Bid. Time allowed for Technical Clarifications during technical evaluation: 2 Days. Estimated Bid Value: ₹ 14,13,600/-; Evaluation Method Total value wise evaluation. Financial Document indicating Price Breakup Required : Yes, Arbitration Clause : No, Mediation Clause : No, EMD Details: Advisory Bank: State Bank of India. EMD Amount: ₹ 28,272/-, ePBG Details: Advisory Bank: State Bank of India: ePBG Percentage (%): 5.00. Duration of ePBG required (Months): 30. HWH-604/2024-25

Tender Notice is also available at websites : www.er.indianrailways.gov.in / www.ireps.gov.in

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Historic leap for young dancers: Madhya Pradesh Bal Nritya Mahotsav

An exclusive interview with Shri Sheo Shekhar Shukla, principal secretary, department of culture and tourism, government of Madhya Pradesh

PRATYUSH DADHICH



he Khajuraho Nritya Mahotsay, one of India's most prestigious classical dance festivals, is making history by introducing the Madhya Pradesh Bal Nritya Mahotsav, a dedicated platform for young dancers aged 10 to 16. Organised by the Madhya Pradesh Department of Culture with the support of the premier Natavari Kathak Nritya Academy, this groundbreaking initiative aims to provide young classical dancers with an opportunity to perform on an internationally recognised stage.

Sheo Shekhar Shukla, principal secretary, department of culture and tourism, shares the vision behind this initiative, its impact on India's cultural landscape and the future of classical dance opportunities for young artists.

young dancers participate, they often do so as part of their gurus group performances, leaving very few independent opportunities for emerging talent.

To bridge this gap, we conceptualised the Madhya Pradesh Bal Nritya Mahotsav, a world-class platform that prepares young dancers for a professional career in the arts. This festival will allow them to perform on a grand stage, master stagecraft and engage with an audience critical experiences for any performing artist. We believe this initiative will help shape young dancers into well-rounded In an exclusive conversation, Shri artists, ready to represent India at national

Even though the announcement was made on short notice, we received nearly 100 applications within just two days, and we anticipate an even greater response before the deadline. This enthusiasm reassures us of the festival's potential for success.

Q. Do you think the lack of opportunities for children in classical dance has contributed to the rising popularity of Western dance reality shows?

It's true that opportunities for young dancers in classical dance are extremely limited. Classical dance forms require years of rigorous training before a dancer reaches a professional level. Traditionally, milestones like Rang Pravesh or Arangetram are achieved only after years of disciplined practice. At the same time, today's children learn quickly and have access to digital platforms that keep them connected to their passion. In contrast, Western dance-based reality shows are more commercialised and receive greater visibility, making them attractive to young dancers.

However, every artist, regardless of age, yearns for a platform to showcase their talent. When opportunities in classical dance are scarce, young artists naturally turn to available alternatives. This makes it even more important to create credible, high-quality platforms for classical dancers to ensure they continue their journey in traditional art forms.

part of the festival. However, our focus with the Bal Nritya Mahotsav is to nurture young dancers by exposing them to an internationally acclaimed platform at an early stage in their artistic journey.

The 50-year legacy of the Khajuraho Dance Festival is a source of inspiration, and this new initiative will further enhance its stature by recognising and fostering the next generation of artists.

Q. Could you share details about the selection process for the MP Bal Nritya Mahotsav?

We have invited all young classical dancers from Madhya Pradesh to apply through our official website by submitting a video showcasing their talent.

The selection process follows two stages:

- 1. Preliminary screening: A dedicated panel of young, accomplished dancers from Madhya Pradesh will review all applications and shortlist promising candidates.
- **2.** Final selection: A distinguished jury comprising senior and highly accomplished dancers will evaluate the shortlisted candidates and select 12 outstanding young dancers to perform at the festival.

By maintaining a rigorous selection process, we aim to uphold the highest

Deva: a homophobic though brilliant adaptation anchored by a never-before Shahid ***

SUBHASH K JHA

'seriously wanted to dislike Rosshan Andrrews' adaptation of his Malayalam film Mumbai Police for what the writers have done to the original in the second half. A key gay character's dark secret has been completely wiped out and replaced—and here comes the surprise—replaced by a much more profound dilemma of social approbation and individual conscience.

There is a defining sequence in the second half where the untameable cop Dev Ambre (Shahid Kapoor) tells his copy-buddy Rohan D'Silva(Pavail Gulatie) why he did what he did. It is the moment that will be flashed on screen if and when Shahid Kapoor gets a Lifetime Achievement Award.

It is strange and saddening how most fellow critics have missed the combustive, compelling adaptive modes applied by screenwriter Bobby-Sanjay along with Abbas Dalal and Hussain Dalal, Arshad Syed and Sumit Arora into the distinctive invigorating Hindi adaptation.

The adaptation boasts of far more emotional density and political complexity than the original.

The changes in the emotional dynamics from Malayalam to Hindi have most affected the protagonist's character. I can't say Shahid Kapoor is as good as Prithvi Raj in the original. I found Shahid's swag in the first half overdone: the wink, the smirk, the nonchalance, the swagger...they are all like red flags waving provocatively in the brackish breeze.

What I missed in the lengthy but never sluggish film were strong women characters. Not one woman in the film gets space to make her presence felt(and the less said about Pooja Hegde as an investigative journalist, the better). Make no mistake: this is a rugged ricocheting boys' film. Kubra Sait struggles to give shape to her cop's part. She is either scoffed by her senior (the toxic Dev in the first half) or bullied to the ground by the masculine screenplay.

The two supporting actors who stand behind Shahid's Dev, Pravesh Rana and Pavail Gulatie, are effective. But Gulatie deserves more. He should be doing a lot more work.

Deva is not just ingeniously scripted, constantly throwing surprises at us and not for shock value or to prevent our attention from going to the phone; it is also technically par excellence. Amit Roy's camera captures Mumbai in all its toasted-brown glory, traversing lanes and roads with no fear of crowd feuding.

The cops-criminal chases are wildly engaging. Really, I am baffled by the supercilious reviews of the film. The same critics were raving about the most mediocre movies in the past weeks. The disdain for Deva proves we are not quite ready for stories that go beyond the surface.

The writer is a veteran film journalist and columnist.

Views are personal.

Q. The Madhya Pradesh culture department is renowned for hosting international-level events featuring top dancers. What inspired you to conceptualise a kids' festival under the grand Khajuraho Dance Festival?

Madhya Pradesh is home to exceptionally talented young dancers who dedicate as much time and effort to their training as students from any other part of the country. However, most prestigious dance festivals primarily showcase established artists. Even when and international levels in the future.

O. This initiative has received widespread praise, but some have raised concerns about restricting the age group to 10-16 years. How do you respond to these concerns?

We deeply appreciate the overwhelming support from the dance community. At the same time, we understand the concerns about performance quality due to the participants' young age. To ensure excellence, we sought guidance from renowned dance legends, including Madhya Pradesh's legendary Kathak Dancer Padma Shri Dr Puru Dadheech. They assured us that Madhya Pradesh has abundant young talent, and selecting 12 exceptional young performers from a large pool will not be a challenge.

Q. What are your plans after the success of the Bal Nritya Mahotsav? Can we expect a Yuva Mahotsav or a nationwide festival for young artists in the future?

The Khajuraho Dance Festival is a pilgrimage for classical dancers. Providing young artists with an opportunity to perform here will inspire them and fuel their passion for the future. There is no better place than Khajuraho, a global hub for classical arts, to prepare our young dancers for greater challenges ahead. As for a Yuva Mahotsav, various youth-oriented programmes are already

standards of excellence in the Bal Nritya Mahotsav.

Final thoughts

With the launch of the Madhya Pradesh Bal Nritya Mahotsav, the department of culture and tourism has set a new benchmark for promoting young talent in classical dance. This initiative not only reshapes the landscape of arts festivals in India but also ensures that young artists receive world-class exposure at an early stage in their journey. As the Khajuraho Dance Festival continues to inspire generations, this new chapter will undoubtedly nurture the future torchbearers of India's classical dance traditions.

The interviewer is a young dance scholar and impresario

In the second half, when, let's say, Dev gets to know more about Dev, the identity crisis is adumbrated effectively and, at times, powerfully. It is only post-interval that Shahid comes to terms with his character's contradiction and blind spots. The way he allows Dev to confront his own demons and the changes that the screenwriters have brought to the table toward the climax are edifying factors not to be found in the original.



Legendary French star Juliette Binoche to chair Cannes Film Fest jury

GAUTAMAN BHASKARAN

ne#MeToo Movement got organisations and celebratory events to take note of how poorly women were being represented in them. The Cannes Film Festival-considered the star among all such events the world over (although I have begun to feel that Venice, which takes place in late August on the picturesque island of Lido off mainland Venice, is proving to be a tough competitor) - took this movement seriously.

This year, for the second time in succession, a woman, brilliant French actress Juliette Binoche, would head the prestigious main competition jury. She will succeed American director Greta Gerwig, who chaired the jury last year.

A Festival press note points out, and rightly so, "The burst of all-pervad-

Michael Haneke (Austria), David Cronenberg and Abel Ferrara (USA), Olivier Assays, Leos Carax and Claire Denis (France), Amos Gitaï (Israel), Naomi Kawase and Hirokazu Kore-eda (Japan), Krzysztof Kieślowski (Poland), and Hou Hsiao-hsien (Taiwan) to name but some.

One of the films that still remains etched in my memory is Abbas Kiarostami's Certified Copy, a beautiful Iranian work. A story set in Italy's Tuscany, it was all about art and love and how they mixed and mingled to help Binoche's

(1993). If her performances are par excellence, the subjects she picks underline her commitment to people's problems and the unusual way her screen characters attempt to resolve them.

She is also a great activist. Once, she led a protest in Cannes against Iranian director Jafar Panahi's imprisonment. And when she came on stage that evening, she carried a placard with his name on it! Finally, she has also been creating awareness about the ecological dangers threatening the very existence of mankind.



Vijay Raman: The Promethean cop with humanitarian ideals

MOHUL BHATTACHARYA

ow much can a man do in the face of adversity? The book *Did I Really Do All This?* explores this eternal question of existence through the memoirs **L** and personal experiences of Vijay Raman. The book was published in 2024. The book has been invited to seven prestigious Literature Festivals at Dehradun, Mumbai, Pune, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Bhopal, and Trivandrum.

Vijay Raman was the son of a Second World War Veteran from Kerala, born on 18 January 1951. Raman was disturbed as a young man by the discrimination faced by the local farmers, and this led to his decision to pursue a career in law and justice. He enrolled in LLB and topped the exam, winning three Gold Medals. The book *Did I Really Do All This?* is a collection of memoirs published by Rupa Publications posthumously after Raman succumbed to cancer last year.

In conversation with Veena, she informed, "My husband was one of the leading police officers in the country. He has performed in various aspects of policing. Here is actually a real-life hero you want to read about. You can read his first-hand accounts in this book, decimating Pan Singh Tomar and his gang in Chambal, which earned him the President's Gallantry medal in 1981; hardly 29 years of age at that point in time." During his three tenures in J&K, as I.G. BSF Srinagar, he spearheaded the encounter in which the dreaded terrorist Gazi Baba, the mastermind behind the terrorist attack on the Indian Parliament, was annihilated.

The book contains 14 chapters, starting from Raman's

conditions of the circumnavigation. First, we would have to cover a distance of 40,075 km, which was the length of the equator. We had to touch all five continents and drive a minimum distance of 2000 km on each one. Next, we could select our own route and our own starting point, and there would be no gun fired to send us off unless we fired it ourselves, as the time of starting would also be up to us."

Raman made it into the Guinness Book of World Records for circumnavigating the globe in 39 days, 7 hours, and 55 minutes, starting from New Delhi and circling back to the capital in an Indian Contessa. This chapter of the book records a travel journal that is very rarely seen in humans. The adversities, adventures, and, most importantly, the sheer strength it takes to go around the whole world are marvelous. Veena shared, "At the immigration office, an Australian officer had bet 100 dollars to Vijav that they could not complete Australia coast to coast in time. Not only did they complete the route, but after winning the 100 dollars, the team bought gifts and gifted them to the immigration officer, asking him never to underestimate Indians and their unwavering spirit."

Every chapter of this book brings out the image of a man steeped in his own ideology and, at the same time, who remained humble and introverted all his life. "He did not like the limelight," added Veena. Protecting four prime ministers of India, one chief minister of Jammu Kashmir, and countless acts of bravery portrays a man who never backed away from his duty towards his nation. Steeped in his sense of morality, Vijay also helped children from the disturbed grounds of humanitarian conflicts, helped in subduing terrorist attacks on the country's parliament, and even fenced off parts of Kashmir to stop infiltration by any means necessary. It is through and through a journal of a man defying his humane limitations and striving for more than his duty asked him to do. Veena recollects, "After Vijay suddenly and very abruptly left us, I would not have survived had not this book been there. I have lived every moment and relived it through this book. I have always been proud of my husband, but this book stands as a record in history that man can do anything if he wants." The last line of the book says, "I hope and pray I did not disappoint the lord." Reading the book, the readers will feel similar emotions of catharsis for the man who stood for what he preached.

ing laughter, an ideal of commitment to her art and her times Binoche has won over audiences and critics alike, bringing together today's greatest moviemakers in her worldclass filmography. Exactly 40 years

after her first appearance on La Croisette (Cannes' beachfront where the Festival takes place), she will preside over the Jury of the 78th Festival de Cannes, which will award the Palme d'Or on 24 May, Saturday."

A recipient of innumerable accolades -including an Academy Award, a British Academy Film Award, and a Cesar Award - she has been seen in over 70 movies, mostly in the French and English languages. She has often said that she was born at the Cannes Film Festival. Indeed so. Her first major role was in Andre Techine's *Rendez-Vous*, which premiered at the 1985 Cannes exactly four decades ago.

There was, as they say, no looking back for the star. Her movie roles have straddled across continents, with a mindboggling number of directors putting her before the camera. The list reads like a who's who in the world of cinema:

(the name of her character is never revealed) screen relationship with a British opera singer. He is in Tuscany to talk about his new book, Certified *Copy*, which says that every piece of art is original and authenticity does not matter. For, even the original is a copy of another form. A French antiques dealer (Binoche) attends the book launch and leaves her phone number with the singer's assistant/translator.

Watching her in so many movies, I have often thought how the camera seemed to be in love with her. Or was it the other way around? She was in love with it! As French helmer Louis Malle once said, her presence and intensity were stupefying. She mesmerised the hundreds of viewers who watched her perform with passion. We see this, for example, in *The English Patient* (1996), *Chocolat* (2000), and *Three Colours: Blue*

Sometimes, she is compared to the late actress Olivia de Havilland, best known for her character, Melanie Hamilton, in the 1939 Gone With The Wind, set against the backdrop of the American Civil War. Playing along with her were the illustrious Clarke Gable and Vivien Leigh, an impressive cast.

After a delayed start as far as shooting was concerned, the film went on to become a great classic, much like the book, with the same title, that was penned by Margaret Mitchel in 1936. She only wrote one book and earned the title of "one book wonder". But what a wonder it was, and very interestingly, when pressed to write a sequel, she famously quipped, "What would I call it? Back with the Breeze"!

The writer is a columnist and movie critic

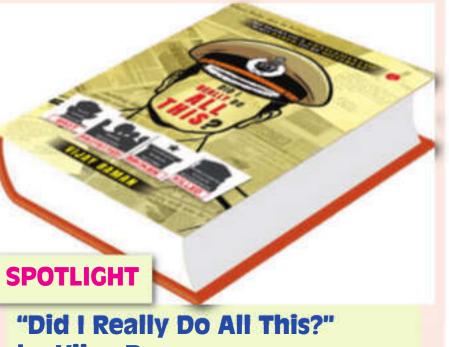
early childhood memories up to his retirement in 2011, when he retired from active service and settled in Pune. Every chapter of the book comes with a neatly boxed message as if an epiphany from the man himself. Sometimes, the message reads, "When adversity strikes, remain brave. Accept the circumstances, and continue to do your best." The book is a testament of a time in India when modernity was still creeping in and parts of India knew what dacoits were.

ENCOUNTER WITH DACOIT PAN SINGH TOMAR IN CHAMBAL RAVINES

"As the sun came up, the firing stopped. I gradually left my position, walked a few steps, and turned to the right. There lay a body, fallen to the ground, clearly with no sign of life. From the unusual height, I knew who it was." This book historically records the duty of a police officer and how 1981 early morning saw the birth of a new man, Vijay Raman, in the midst of chaos in the Bhind district. Raman describes in absolutely lucid language the whole endeavor of the shooting and the aftermath of the subjugation of the famous dacoit in his book. Veena stated, "He took every challenge thrown at him and turned them into opportunities." Unlike other police officer biographies, this book does not just concentrate on certain aspects of crime or policing, "whereas with Vijay it was very different, he was dealing with everything that comes under policing, and crime you could say. Whether it was dacoits, it was murder, or a law and order situation," commented Veena.

AROUND THE WORLD IN 39 DAYS

An excerpt from the book reads, "It took Navin Kapila a while to convince me, and he did so by explaining the



by Vijay Raman **Rupa Publications, 2024** 256 pages













FIH Pro League 2024-25: Indian hockey team gearing up for litmustest at home ground

With all the big guns of world hockey in the fray, the hosts are expected to face a tough task in front of their home crowd

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE BHUBANESWAR, 14 FEBRUARY

The Indian men's hockey team, currently ranked fifth in the world, is all set to kickstart their highly anticipated FIH Pro League 2024-25 campaign at the iconic Kalinga Hockey Stadium in here.

Led by Khel Ratna awardee Harmanpreet Singh, the Indian squad will open their campaign with two thrilling matches against World No. 7 Spain on February 15 and 16, followed by intense clashes against World No. 4 Germany on February 18 and 19.

India's campaign will open at home, thus offering a prime opportunity for the team to showcase their recent momentum. Following their encounters with Germany, India will take on Ireland on 21 and 22 February, before facing the formidable World No. 2 England on 24 and 25 February.

With their bronze medal triumph at the 2024 Paris Olympics, the Harmanpreet Singh-led side has proven their mettle on the international stage. The team was last seen in action during a two-match Test series at home against Germany in October, where India bounced back from a 2-0 defeat in the first game to defeat the visitors 5-3 in the second. Though Germany won the series via shootout, the competitive performances added confidence to India's preparations for the FIH Pro League. Earlier, India showcased their prowess by successfully defending their title at the Asian Champions Trophy in September, winning all their matches and cementing their position as one of Asia's bring fresh energy and skill



Delhi Open: Poonacha-Lock storm into doubles final



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI. 14 FEBRUARY

India's Niki Kaliyanda Poonacha and Zimbabwe's Courtney John Lock reached the final of the Delhi Open 2025 doubles event, defeating third seeds Jay Clarke and Johannes Ingildsen 6-2, 7(7)-6(1) at the DLTA Complex on Friday.

The second-seeded pair dominated the opening set before Clarke and Ingildsen mounted a challenge in the second, forcing a tiebreaker. However, Poonacha and Lock held firm to close out the match in an hour and 24 minutes.

Organised by the All India Tennis Association and the Delhi Lawn Tennis Association, the Delhi Open 2025 is an ATP Challenger 75 tournament played on hard courts with USD 100,000 as prize money on offer.

6-4 and then triumphed in a nail-biting 12-10 final set to secure their place in the final.

The singles quarterfinals provided plenty of action for fans, with all four matches extending beyond 90 minutes. Top seed Vit Kopriva continued his dominant run, dispatching sixth seed Shintaro Mochizuki 6-2, 6-4 in a high-quality contest.

Meanwhile, second seed Billy Harris was pushed to the limit by Elias Ymer, eventually prevailing 6-2, 4-6, 7(7)-6(1) in a three-set battle.

Third seed Tristan Schoolkate progressed after a demanding battle against qualifier Andre Ilagan that

Harmanpreet will be joined by vice-captain Hardik Singh as they lead a well-balanced squad filled with both experience and youthful talent. Senior players such as Manpreet Singh, Mandeep Singh, Lalit Kumar Upadhyay, Sumit, Sanjay, Jugraj Singh, and Vivek Sagar Prasad will form the backbone of the team, while emerging stars like Araijeet Singh Hundal, Angad Bir Singh, and Arshdeep Singh



strongest teams.

to the lineup. "The team is fresh from some fantastic performances in the recently concluded Hockey India League. I am particularly happy to have seen Jugraj winning the top scorer award and this only means well for the Indian team as we have more firepower in our dragflick," expressed Harmanpreet on the eve of their opening encounter. With a mix of seasoned

campaigners and promising youngsters, India will be eager

challenge some of the world's top teams in the tournament. Moreover, after finishing seventh in the last year's edition of the FIH Pro League, India will be determined to make a strong comeback this season. The team will aim to deliver an improved performance and clinching the top spot, a feat that carries the added reward of automatic qualification for the 2026 World Cup.

to make a strong start and

He further elaborated,

"This is an important year for us and Pro League truly marks the start of our new Olympic cycle and the international season. It's an important year for us with World Cup qualification (Asia Cup 2025) coming up and Pro League gives us a great opportunity to test where we stand. We are upbeat about our campaign, Spain, Germany and England are strong teams and will take it match-bymatch." Shedding light on the high-

stake competition, chief coach Craig Fulton said, "The next few days will be more like the Olympic Games, with back-to-back matches which is why we have chosen a bigger squad. Since we are starting our campaign here, performance will be on our mind more than ranking points. The other teams are coming here already having played a few matches in Europe, so our focus will be on doing well and winning matches.'

The winner of the singles tournament also rakes in 75 crucial ATP points.

Poonacha and Lock will now compete for the title against the unseeded Japanese pair, Masamichi Imamura and Rio Noguchi, who staged an impressive comeback win against Hynek Barton and Vit Kopriva.

After losing the first set 1-6, Imamura and Noguchi rallied to win the second set

lasted two hours and 44 minutes. The match included tiebreakers in the opening

two sets, but Schoolkate surged ahead in the final set, clinching a 6(2)-7(7), 7(7)-6(1), 6-2 victory.

Completing the semifinal lineup, Frenchman Kyrian Jacquet held off Michael Geerts, securing a 6-3, 7(7)-6(3) victory to book his spot in the last four.

Jacquet will now square up against Kopriva in the penultimate round while second and third seeds, Harris and Schoolkate, will go head to head for a spot in the final.

Defending champs Mohun Bagan Super Giant take on Kerala Blasters FC, aim to extend lead



Chennaiyin FC, Punjab FC strive hard to sustain their challenge for playoffs in important mid-table encounter



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE CHENNAL 14 FEBRUARY

winning streak against any opponent in the ISL. However, their defensive lapses on the road could be a concern, as they have conceded 15 goals in nine away games this season, including just one clean sheet.

overall to do so in three consecutive games for the Marina Machans. Yadwad has had a productive campaign with three goals and four assists the required results. to his name thus far. Punjab FC have had nine step. Chennaiyin FC are a different players notch a goal good team with good players contribution as a substitute and it will be a big challenge for us," he said. this season, the most by any team in ISL 2024-25. It demonstrates their bench strength nine goals in 2024-25, is one and the fact that they could away from becoming the never be drawn out of the third Chennaiyin FC player equation in the games. to score 10+ goals in a single Punjab FC's Khaiminthang ISL season, after Steven Men-Lhungdim won all six of his doza (13 in 2015) and Nerijus tackles in their most recent Valskis (15 in 2019-20). The match (1-1 draw vs Odisha striker has averaged a goal FC), the highest by any Punjab in every 131 minutes this FC player in a single game. season. He has made 17 interceptions, Abhishek Singh has won back 30 clearances, and won 46 possession six times per game duels thus far in ISL 2024-25. In their three fixtures so this season, ranking third among Indian players. The far, Chennaiyin FC have won once, whereas Punjab FC 20-year-old has also made have emerged victorious 39 clearances, won 77 duels, and rounded off 108 recoveries twice. Chennaiyin FC head coach Owen Coyle said that in ISL 2024-25. his team needs to ensure positive results towards the Brambilla has brought up end of the league stages. three goals and assists each in 18 ISL appearances this "We finished last year strongly and made it to the season. Brambilla has delivered 26 key passes and playoffs, which should be our objective this year too," emerged victorious in 82 duels too. he said.

Punjab FC head coach Panagiotis Dilmperis said that his objective is to take gradual steps towards getting

"We need to go step by

Wilmar Jordan Gil, with

Punjab FC's Tekcham

Chennaiyin FC's Lukas



Defending champions Mohun Bagan Super Giant will be raring to coninue their impressive run of form during the ongoing season and increase their already formidable lead at the top of the Indian Super League (ISL) points table when they take on Kerala Blasters FC at the Jawaharlal Nehru in Kochi on Saturday.

While the rest of the teams are battling to secure positions in the top six and qualify for the playoffs, the Kolkata giants are hardly bohered by the rest of the competition and are comfortably on their way to successfully defending their League Shield title with their spot in the knockout phase already secure.

side are placed comfortably atop with 46 points from 20 games, on the back of 14 wins and four draws. However, FC Goa's four wins in their previous five encounters mean that they

have closed gap with the Mariners. The Gaurs trail them by seven points (39) in the same number of matches at the second spot, and will be raring to capitalise upon any momentary slip-up by the

Kolkata-based team. Kerala Blasters FC have won thrice and drawn once in their previous five encounters, accumulating 24 points from 19 matches. They are placed eighth and chasing sixth-placed Mumbai City FC (31), though Kerala Blasters FC (19) have played a game lesser than the Islanders (20). The Mariners have won each of their last three ISL games against Kerala Blasters FC, including a 3-2 triumph in the reverse fixture this season, and they have a chance to reg-

ister their third league double over Kerala Blasters FC after scaling this feat in 2022-23 and The Jose Molina-coached 2020-21.

Mohun Bagan Super Giant have an encouraging attacking record at this venue, having scored four or more goals in each of their games against

Kerala Blasters FC in Kochi. The Mariners are one of two teams that the Kerala Blasters FC are yet to defeat at home in the ISL (also Punjab FC).

Kerala were unable to score in their most recent home game in the ISL, a 0-0 draw against NorthEast United FC on January 18, 2025. The last time they could not find the back of the net in back-tobackhome games was a stretch of two matches between October and November in 2019. With the Mariners' high-scoring record at the venue and Kerala Blasters FC's renewed run of positive form, another highoctane clash looks set to play out in Kochi.

Kerala's Adrian Luna (six assists this season) is one away from equaling his own record of most assists by a Kerala Blasters player in a single ISL campaign (7 in 2021-22). Luna has created 43 goal-scoring opportunities and made 35 passes per game at 80 per cent accuracy this season. Mohun

given away a goal in their last four ISL matches. If they secure another clean sheet, it will be their longest-ever such streak in the competition.

Mohun Bagan Super Giant have netted 39 times in ISL 2024-25, with Jamie Maclaren (8), Subhasish Bose (6), Manvir Singh (5), top-scoring for them. Their offensive consistency coupled with defensive diligence has produced the sure shot recipe for sustained success this season.

The two sides have faced off nine times in the ISL, with Mohun Bagan Super Giant winning seven games, Kerala Blasters FC claiming one victory, and one match ending in a draw.

Kerala Blasters FC interim head coach TG Purushothaman said that his side has broken down and analysed the Mariners thoroughly.

"We study the strengths and weaknesses of all opponents and we have approached this game similarly. We are ready for the match," he said. Bagan Super Giant have not

Chennaiyin FC will take on Punjab FC at the Jawaharlal Nehru Indoor Stadium in Chennai in an Indian Super League (ISL) fixture on Saturday.

Punjab FC are ninth in the table with 24 points from 19 games, whereas the Marina Machans are 10th with 21 points from 20 matches. Sixth-placed Mumbai City FC (31) are seven and 10 points adrift of Punjab FC and Chennaiyin FC respectively and both sides will 2019 (D1 L6). want to string together a

series of positive outcomes to stay firmly in the hope of a top-six finish.

The Marina Machans will look to reinforce on their 3-0 victory against East Bengal FC and record consecutive wins for the first time since April 2024. Punjab FC will be targeting their first league double in ISL history after thumping Chennaiyin FC3-2 in the reverse fixture.

Punjab FC have won each of their last two meetings against Chennaiyin FC and another victory would give them their outright longest

Chennaiyin FC, contrastingly, have struggled at home, remaining winless in their last four ISL matches at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in Chennai (D2 L2). The last time they went through a longer such streak was a seven-game run between October 2018 and February

Despite these issues, the hosts will look to pounce upon Punjab FC's defensive concerns and put together a strong performance.

No team has permitted their opponent more big chances in ISL 2024-25 than Chennaiyin FC (46). Their opponents have scored 22 times from such opportunities, with the team managing just four clean sheets in 20 games thus far.

Having set up an assist in each of Chennaiyin FC's last two ISL matches, Irfan Yadwad could become just the second Indian player and fifth player







ICC Champions Trophy 2025: History beckons as eight teams battle to overcome multiple challenges in hunt for glory

Some contestants battle injuries to star players among other obstacles while others dream of upsetting the big guns

TRIDIB BAPARNASH

NEW DELHI, 14 FEBRUARY

espite a late injury setback with pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah being ruled out due to a back issue, India arrive at the ICC Champions Trophy2025 with a star-studded line-up.

Fielding a majority of the names that featured at the 2023 World Cup, where they finished runners-up, the experienced duo of captain Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli power a well-rounded batting lineup. Meanwhile, fresh names have been introduced in the bowling line-up with Harshit Rana and Varun Chakravarthy putting themselves in the mix. A noticeable feature of the squad is the presence of multiple all-rounders such as Hardik Pandya, Ravindra Jadeja, Axar Patel and Washington Sundar, who provide depth with bat and ball. Having played a major role in India's T20 World Cup triumph in 2024, Pandya, one of the architects of India's T20 World Cup triumph in 2024, will be critical to India's Champions Trophy ambitions. In the absence of Bumrah, the 31-year-old premiere seambowling all-rounder is likely to shoulder added responsibility with the ball in hand. With the bat, Pandya holds the key as a proven power-hitter, who can accumulate runs quickly in the lower order.

Australia's challenge to overcome key injuries

Australia have been hit by injuries to key players, with regular skipper Pat Cummins, and pacers Mitchell Starc, Josh Hazlewood along with allrounder Mitch Marsh all ruled out of the Champions Trophy. This, along with the surprise retirement of Marcus Stoinis, has forced Australia to call-up several backup players. Despite all this, the Aussies still have a number of experienced campaigners to call upon in the tournament. Veteran star Steve Smith, fresh off a Test series win in Sri Lanka, will lead them in the Champions Trophy. Along with Smith, explosive all-rounders Travis Head and Glenn Maxwell, who played a crucial role in Australia's Cricket World Cup 2023 triumph, will

oppo

the champions of the inaugural edition of the Champions Trophyin 1998, but since then the Proteas are yet to claim a senior also be key to their chances. ICC silverware. But there is Marnus Labuschagne, Alex absolutely no doubt that the Proteas have what it takes to go all the way in Pakistan, entering the tournament placed fifth in the ICC's ODI Team Rankings. Temba Bavuma will lead the side's campaign, which kicks off against the all-round talent of Afghanistan in Karachi. Along with the Afghanis, South Africa is grouped up with Australia and England - there is no easy path to the Champions Trophysemi-final stage for the African side. But Bavuma's side has the requisite quality with the bat and the ball to make a deep impact in the

quality pace resources in the likes of Kagiso Rabada, Lungi Ngidi and Wiaan Mulder, and also impactful spinners like Tabraiz Shamsi, and Keshav Maharaj. All eyes will be on the big-hitting Heinrich Klaasen, who is coming off a stupendous finish to 2024. England eye maiden crown Fresh from a 3-0 drubbing at the hands of India, Jos Buttler's side will walk into the tournament with an intent to right their Champions Trophyrecord, and to finally break through for a triumphin this tournament, having come agonisingly close under the captaincy of Michael Vaughan (runners-up, 2004) and Alastair Cook (runnersup, 2013). After an uninspiring run in their 2023 World Cup, where they finished seventh,

England haven't had the best of times in ODI cricket, having lost all of their four series in the format since. Despite that the side can't be discounted, given availability challenges. With new white-ball head coach Brendon McCullum at the helm, having changed the flavour of English Test cricket after taking over in 2022, a title charge is all-too possible. Buttler, along with Joe Root and the talented Harry Brook, will form the crux of England batting, with fiery Ben Duckett and Phil Salt available for support. England aren't short of pace options in Jofra Archer, Gus Atkinson, Brydon Carse, Mark Wood and Saqib Mahmood, but focus will be on the guile of Adil Rashid, whose leg-spinners can be more than useful

in Pakistan and UAE. Given the injury blow to all-rounder Jacob Bethell, only Liam Livingstone and Joe Root remain as slow bowling support acts for Rashid, meaning that the leg-spinner will have to do the bulk of the work in the spin department.

Afghanseyestunningdebut

Banking on big wins against England, Pakistan and Sri Lanka at the 2023 World Cup, Afghanistan ensured their firstever qualification for the ICC Champions Trophy 2025. Powered by an array of superstars in all departments of the game, and arriving into the competition off the back of their first-ever semi-final finish at an ICC tournament in last year's ICC T20 World Cup 2024, Afghanistan are not to be taken lightly. Adjudged as the ICCODI Player of the Year for 2024, Azmatullah Omarzai has been a crucial pillar for Afghanistan's recent success in the format. At the last World Cup, the all-rounder had finished with 353 runs to go with nine wickets to inspire a streak of big results. In the absence of Naveen ul-Hag, Omarzai will also have added responsibility in Afghanistan's pace unit.

recent tour of the West Indies. played for the Black Caps in early January, taking two wickets they were whitewashed in the while conceding 30 runs in an three ODI contests, but came ODI against Sri Lanka in Hamilback to win the T20I series 3-0. However, despite this recent ton. volatile form, Nazmul Hossain

Pakistan out to defend title Shanto will be leading the side Pakistan are looking to overwith proven pedigree in the come considerable adversity. ICC Champions Trophy with Not only must they deal with a run to the semi-finals in the the added stress of being tourprevious edition, in 2017. Naznament hosts, but Pakistan is mul's campaign will be assisted weathering recent coaching by senior players like Mahinstability, with Aqib Javed in mudullah and Mushfiqur Rahim charge in an interim capacity and the Bangladesh skipper is until after the Champions Troconfident his team can perform phy. The Pakistan side will be well. All eyes will be on the keen to do an encore of their versatile all-rounder Mehidy 2017 campaign, and the onus will again be on opener Fakhar Hasan Miraz, who has come into his own for Bangladesh. Zaman to set the ball rolling alongside the likes of "We are going to the Champions Trophy to become cham-Mohammed Rizwan and Babar pions. All eight teams deserve Azam. Babar is the ICC's topto be champions in this tourranked ODI batter (795 rating points), sitting firmly above Indian duo Shubman Gill (2nd)

Injury forces last minute change in New Zealand squad New Zealand have been forced to make a change to their Champions Trophysquad after pacer Ben Sears was ruled out due to a hamstring injury. Alike-for-like replacement has been made, with Jacob Duffy joining the squad. Duffy, having made just 10 appearances for the Black Caps in the 50-over format since his debut in July 2022, will replace Sears as he misses out due to an injury. The 30-year-old has picked up 18 scalps so far in his ODI career at an average of 25.94

and economy of 6.25. He last

nament. I believe our team has the ability," Shanto claimed. and Rohit Sharma (3rd). The

Carey, and Adam Zampa are other experienced names in the outfit. One of the key players that the Aussies will largely bank on is the hard-hitting Travis Head, who has been instrumental to Australia's success across formats in recent years. He was the star performer in Australia's 2023 World Cup campaign, starring in the semifinal and final wins against South Africa and India respectively, and will be expected to play a similar role in Pakistan and the UAE.

Proteas push for glory The South Africans were

tournament. The side has

Bangladesh aim for glory

Bangladesh have been the perennial underdogs in international cricket, but somehow seem to always compete hard at the upper echelons of the sport. The team has been on a patchy record of late. In their

30-year-old scored back-toback fifties in South Africa to finish off 2024 and he'll need to keep that form rolling if Pakistan are to make a dent in their home tournament. This is the team's first 50-over ICC tournament since Babar stepped down from the captaincy at the conclusion of the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup in 2023. He'll belocked in from the first ball to make sure he leads with his actions at the crease.

Can Rizwan and his side overcome the intense scrutiny that will follow their campaign? Only time will tell.

Impressive Sri Lanka stun Australia to register series white wash



AGENCIES

COLOMBO, 14 FEBRUARY

A century by Kusal Mendis and incredible spells by spinners Wanindu Hasaranga and Dunith Wellalage helped Sri Lanka complete a series whitewash against Australia, thumping the world champions by 174 runs in the second ODI on Friday. Sri Lanka have completed

a whitewash series win by 2-0 and an inexperienced Aussie line-up in absence of skipper Pat Cummins, Josh Hazlewood, Mitchell Starc, Marcus Stoinis and Mitchell Marsh, their frontline and secondary pacers, have been served a

could get for them in Champions Trophy. After Sri Lanka won the toss and opted to bat first, Pathum Nissanka fell early in single digits. An 88-run partnership between Nishan Madushka (51 in 70 balls, with four boundaries and a six) and Kusal Mendis, helped Lankans cross the 100-run mark. While Kamindu Mendis's poor run in the series continued, skipper Charith Asalanka, the centurion of the first ODI, provided support to Mendis with a 94-run stand for the fourthwicket. Kusal completed his century in 113 balls, with 11 fours, his fifth in ODI cricket.

trailer of how ugly things Asalanka pressed the acceleration button towards the end with Janith Liyanage (32* in 21 balls, with three fours and two sixes), ending with 78* in 66 balls, with six fours and three sixes. SL ended their innings at 281/4 in their 50 overs.

Hardie, Ben Dwarshius, Sean Abbott and Adam Zampa took a wicket each. The inexperienced Aussie line-up once again did not have any answers for Sri Lanka's spin bowling. Only Travis Head, Steve Smith and wicketkeeper-batter Josh Inglis reached double digits. Australia were bundled out for 107 runs in 24.2 overs.

Jasprit Bumrah hits gymafter being ruled out from CT 2025



ICC Champions Trophy 2025 winnerstoget USD2.2 million

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, 14 FEBRUARY

The International Cricket Council has announced the prize money for the Champions Trophy 2025. The world body has massively increased the prize pool for the tour-

The format of this year's

Babar equals Amla's world record with 6,000 ODI runs

AGENCIES **KARACHI, 14 FEBRUARY**

Pakistan's star batter Babar Azam levelled Hashim Amla's world record to become the joint-fastest player to complete 6,000 runs in ODI cricket.

He completed the 6,000-run mark in 123 innings, the same number of innings taken by Amla. In 126 ODIs, Babar has made 6,019 runs at an average of 55.73, a strike rate of 88.13. 19 centuries and 34 fifties have come out of his bat, with the best score of 158. Babar reached this milestone during the final of the tri-nation series against New Zealand at Karachi. During the innings after Pakistan won the toss and opted to bat first, Babarlooked fluent in his 34-ball knock of 29 runs. His knock had four boundaries and a six and runs came at a strike rate of 85.29. But like most of his recent knocks, he could not carry on for long and gifted his wicket to Nathan Smith in a soft dismissal. He has not been able to hit an ODI ton, matter of fact, an international ton since August 2023 when he smashed 151 against Nepal in Asia Cup. In this series, he has not been able to hit a half-century. Earlier, Pakistan captain Mohammad Rizwan won the toss and opted to bat against New Zealand in the ODI trination series final. It will be a rehearsal for both sides before squaring off against each other in the Champions Trophy tournament opener on Wednesday. Winning the tri-nation would certainly lift the morale of the players before fighting for the mega prize from next week. Meanwhile, Pakistan skipper Mohammad Rizwan has thrown his weight behind Azam, backing the star batter



nament, which returns for the first time since 2017.

The eight teams participating in the tournament have been guaranteed a participation prize of \$125,000. The total prize pool has increased by an impressive 53 percent from the 2017 edition, reaching \$6.9 million.

The rewards for winning the tournament are much bigger. The winner of the tournament will take home a whopping \$2.24 million, the ICC announced on Friday. The runners-up will receive \$1.12 million. In comparison, the 2017 tournament had a total prize pool of \$4.5 million, with the winner taking home \$2.2 million.

The Champions Trophy also marks the return of a global big-ticket cricket tournament to Pakistan since 1996, and promises to be a thrilling two-week competition, with matches played in Karachi, Lahore and Rawalpindi. The tournament will also be partly played in Dubai, after India refused to send their team across

tournament sees the eight teams divided into two groups of four, with the top two teams in each group progressing to the semi-finals.

go the distance.

the border, citing security

concerns, and as such under

a pre-agreed hybrid model, Rohit Sharma & Co will play

all their matches in Dubai.

This also includes the semi-

final and final provided India

The ICC men's Champions Trophy takes place every four years with the world's top eight ODI teams, with the women's Champions Trophy launching in 2027 in a T20 format.

Commenting on the tournament, ICC Chair Jay Shah said, "The ICC men's Champions Trophy 2025 represents a pivotal moment for cricket, reviving a tournament that highlights the pinnacle of ODI talent, where every match is critical. The substantial prize pot underscores the ICC's ongoing commitment to investing in the sport and maintaining the global prestige of our events. Beyond the financial incentive, this tournament ignites fierce competition, captivates fans

worldwide, and plays a vital role in fostering the growth and long-term sustainability of cricket for future generations."

to rediscover his best form. While runs in Friday's game would be valuable,

against Nepal is excluded, that average dips further below 38.

This series hasn't reversed the trend. He managed just 10 runs in the opening game against New Zealand, his innings dragging through the Powerplay while Fakhar Zaman flourished at the other end. Even in Pakistan's record chase of 353 against South Africa, Babar started well but was trapped in front for 23 by Wiaan Mulder. Rizwan, however, believes Babar is simply a victim of his own success.

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, 14 FEBRUARY

India talisman pacer Jasprit Bumrah has shared a picture of him hitting the gym after being ruled out from the upcoming Champions Trophy 2025.

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) released a statement on Tuesday night to confirm Bumrah's absence from the tournament.

"Fast bowler Jasprit Bumrah has been ruled out of the 2025 ICC Champions Trophy due to a lower back injury. The Men's Selection Committee has named Harshit Rana as Bumrah's replacement," BCCI stated. Bumrah took to his Insta-

gram and shared from inside a gym. Sharing the photo on Instagram, the 31-year-old captioned it, "rebuilding."

Bumrah has been missing from on-field action since January. His last appearance was in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy Test against Australia

second innings but didn't take up his duties with the ball. The eight-team tournament will feature 15 matches and will be played across Pakistan and Dubai. The ICC Champions Trophy from February 19 to March 9 will

After bowling 10.1 overs

He was advised by the

He came out to bat in the

in the first innings, the A-

Lister was visibly in discomfort

Australian doctors not to

participate in the remainder

and went for scans.

of the Sydney Test.

in Sydney.

be hosted by Pakistan and UAE, with India playing its matches in Dubai under a hybrid model.

The biggest match of the ICC tournament between two arch-rivals, India and Pakistan, will be played on 23 February. India will start their campaign against Bangladesh on 20 February. India's last league match will be against New Zealand on 2 March.

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the broader concern remains Babar's

long-term dip in form, which has seen

his numbers drop across all formats.

over the last year. His ODI form - tra-

ditionally his strongest format — has

suffered a noticeable decline. Since

the start of the 2023 Asia Cup, he has

averaged 42.90 in 25 games, bringing

his career average down from nearly

59 to the mid-50s. If his knock of 151

Babar's numbers have taken a hit









