

www.dailypioneer.com @TheDailyPioneer facebook.com/dailypioneer instagram.com/dailvpioneer

PUBLISHED FROM: LUCKNOW BHOPAL RAIPUR CHANDIGARH HYDERABAD

Prime Minister Narendra Modi invokes Nari Shakti

RAHUL DUTTA New Delhi

ndia for the first time will see only women security personnel ensuring the safety of a VIP today on the occasion of International Women's Day. The protectee is none other than Prime Minister Narendra Modi who will attend a mega event in Navsari, Gujarat. More than one lakh women are expected to participate in the public rally.

This initiative will give a strong message to the world on Women's Day and it will also convey how women are playing an important role in making Gujarat a safe and secure State, Minister of State for home Harsh Sanghavi said.

Giving details, he said this will be the first such initiative in the country. "The Gujarat police is taking a unique initiative on the occasion of International Women's Day. For the first time in the history of India, only women police will handle the event - right from his arrival at the helipad at Vansi Borsi village in Navsari till the event venue," Sanghavi said. The women police personnel will include Indian Police Service (IPS) officers and other personnel, he added.

The Prime Minister is on a two-day visit to Gujarat and the Union Territory of Dadra and Nagar Haveli on Friday and Saturday, during which he will address the 'Lakhpti Didi Sammelan' at Vansi Borsi village on March 8. He will disburse nearly Rs 450 crores to more than 2.5 lakh women from over 25,000 self help groups(SHG)across the state.

"All women police personnel, including more than 2,100 constables, 187 subinspectors, 61 police inspectors, 16 deputy superintendents of police, five SPs, one Inspector General of Police and one Additional DGP rank officer will handle the security that day," he said.



Secretary Nipuna Torawane will supervise the security arrangements, the State Home Minister said.

"In our culture, respect for daughters has been paramount. The Matri Shakti (motherly energy) of the country also played a big role in our freedom struggle and creation of the Constitution. I am sharing with all of you what Hansa Mehtaji had said while presenting our National Flag in the Constituent Assembly, in her own voice," Modi had said in his Mann Ki Baat.

The Prime Minister said on the occasion of Women's Day, he would hand over his social media accounts, such as those on X and Instagram, "to women who had achieved success in myriad fields, who had innovated and created a unique identity for themselves in various fields," adding that "If you want to avail of this opportunity, become a part of this experiment through the special forum created on NamoApp and share your message with the whole world through my X and Instagram accounts," he said.

Besides, the Centre on Friday said the Government will celebrate International Women's Day on as a national event with the theme 'Viksit Bharat with Nari Shakti'. A national consultation will be held in the presence of President Droupadi Murmu at Vigyan Bhawan. In a statement, the Women and Child Development Ministry stressed the significance of International Women's Day as a global occasion to recognise women's achievements across national, ethnic, linguistic, cultural, economic and political boundaries.

"The Government will celebrate International Women's Day on March 8 as a national event on the theme of Developed India with Nari Shakti which would be graced by the President," said the Government statement.

Stalin plots delimitation counter

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Chennai

┪amil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin on Friday wrote to his counterparts in Kerala, Karnataka, Telangana, West Bengal, Punjab, Odisha and party heads as well, inviting them to join hands with Tamil Nadu and be part of a Joint Action Committee (JAC) for an "uncompromising fight," over delimitation of Lok Sabha seats, which he termed an unfair exercise.

Stalin proposed the inaugural JAC meeting in Chennai on March 22, 2025, and urged the leaders to join forces to chart a "collective course forward." Writing to CMs and leaders, Stalin said reports suggest that the delimitation exercise is being considered based on population, with two potential approaches.

In the first case, the existing 543 seats could be redistributed among the states, and in the second case, the total number of seats could be increased beyond 800. "In both scenarios, all the states that have successfully implemented population con-



trol measures stand to lose significantly if the exercise is based on post 2026 population. We should not be thus penalised for effectively controlling population growth and upholding national development goals," he said.

Rana hopes to buy time as extradition inches closer

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New York

umbai terror attack accused Tahawwur Rana has submitted a renewed application to Chief Justice John Roberts seeking a stay of his extradition to India after the US Supreme Court rejected his emergency bid.

Rana, 64, a Canadian national of Pakistani origin, is currently lodged in the Metropolitan Detention Center in Los Angeles.

He had submitted an "Emergency Application For Stay Pending Litigation of Petition For Writ of Habeas Corpus" on February 27 with Elena Kagan, Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States and Circuit Justice for the Ninth Circuit.

A note dated March 6 on the Supreme Court website said that "Application ..denied by Justice Kagan."

Rana has now renewed his "Emergency Application for Stay Pending Litigation of Petition for Writ of Habeas Corpus" previously addressed to Justice Kagan, and requests that the renewed application be directed to Chief Justice Roberts," according to the submission by Rana's lawyers on Thursday posted on the court's website.

In his emergency application, Rana had sought a "stay of his extradition and surrender to India pending litigation (including exhaustion of all appeals) on the merits of his February 13 petition.

In that petition, Rana argued that his extradition to India violates United States law and the United Nations Convention Against Torture "because there are substantial grounds for believing that, if extradited to India, the petitioner will be in danger of being subjected to torture."

"The likelihood of torture in this case is even higher though as petitioner faces acute risk as a Muslim of Pakistani origin charged in the Mumbai attacks," the application said.

The application also said that his

Limited Premium Paying term 5 to 16 years

Regular Income Benefit / Flexi Income Benefit

Visit: licindia.in

Follow us : 🌃 🔼 🔯 🧑 in LIC India Forever | IRDAI Regn No.: 512

Minimum Basic Sum Assured ₹5 lacs

Guaranteed Additions during Premium Paying term

A NON-PAR, NON-LINKED, INDIVIDUAL, SAVINGS, WHOLE LIFE INSURANCE PLAN

For details, contact your Agent/Nearest LIC Branch or SMS YOUR CITY NAME to 56767474

BEWARE OF SPURIOUS PHONE CALLS AND FICTITIOUS / FRAUDULENT OFFERS., RIDATor its officials do not involve in any activities of insurance business like selling insurance policies, announcing bonus or investment of premiums, refund of amounts. Policyholders or the prospects receiving such phone calls are requested to lodge a police complaint. For more details on risk factors, terms and conditions, please read sales brochure carefully before concluding a sale,

"severe medical conditions" render extradition to Indian detention facilities a "de facto" death sentence in this case.

It cited medical records from July 2024 that confirm Rana has multiple "acute and life-threatening diagnoses", including multiple documented heart attacks, Parkinson's disease with cognitive decline, a mass suggestive of bladder cancer, stage 3 chronic kidney disease, and a history of chronic asthma, and multiple COVID-19 infections.

"Accordingly, petitioner certainly has raised a credible, if not compelling, factual case that there are indeed substantial grounds for believing he would be in danger of torture if surrendered to Indian authorities.

"Further, because of his Muslim religion, his Pakistani origin, his status as a former member of the Pakistani Army, the relation of the putative charges to the 2008 Mumbai attacks, and his chronic health conditions he is even more likely to be tortured than

otherwise would be the case, and that torture is very likely to kill him in short order."

The US Supreme Court denied Rana's petition for a writ of certiorari relating to his original habeas petition on January 21, 2025. The application notes that on that same day, newly-confirmed Secretary of State Marco Rubio had met with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar.

When Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrived in Washington on February 12 to meet with Trump, Rana's counsel received a letter from the Department of State, stating that "on February 11, 2025, the Secretary of State decided to authorise" Rana's "surrender to India," pursuant to the "Extradition Treaty between the United States and India".

Rana's Counsel requested from the State Department the complete administrative record on which Secretary Rubio based his decision to authorise Rana's surrender

Har Pal Aapke Saath

Railway pilots waiting rooms at stations

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

¬he Ministry of Railways on Friday decided to create permanent outside waiting areas at 60 major stations across the country. The decision comes close to a month after 18 people were killed in a stampede at the New Delhi Railway Station due to alleged overcrowding at platforms in the wake of Mahakumbh rush.

Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw held a meeting with senior officials and discussed crowd control measures to be implemented across major stations in the country that periodically face heavy footfall. "During the 2024 festival season, waiting areas created outside the Surat, Udhna, Patna and New Delhi railway stations were able to hold large crowds. Passengers were allowed on the platform only when the train arrived," statement from Ministry said.

Similar arrangements made at nine sta-

tions in Prayagraj during Maha Kumbh proved to be effective too. The permanent outside waiting areas will be modelled based on these experiences. According to the statement, pilot projects have started at New Delhi, Anand Vihar, Varanasi, Ayodhya, and Patna stations. "With this concept, the sudden crowd will be contained within the waiting area. Passengers will be allowed to go to the platforms only when the trains arrive. This will decon-

gest the stations, it said. The ministry will enforce access control at these 60 stations. Passengers with confirmed tickets will be given direct access to the platforms. "Those without a ticket or with a waiting list ticket will wait at the outside waiting area and all unauthorised entry points will be sealed," it said.

Another major decision was to construct wider Foot Over Bridges (FOB). Two new designs - for 12-metre wide (40 feet) and 6-metre wide (20 feet) standard FOBs - have been developed. Officials said

these wide FOBs with ramps were effective in crowd management during the Kumbh.

"Cameras also helped crowd management in a big way during Maha Kumbh. A large number of cameras will be installed at all these railway stations and adjoining areas for close monitoring," the statement said.

"War rooms will be developed at large stations. Officers of all departments will work in the war room during crowd situations," it said.

An official said new generation communication equipment will also be utilised. "Latest design digital communication equipment like walkie-talkies, announcement systems, and calling systems will be made available at all the stations with heavy crowd," he said.

Other measures implemented include, a new ID card and uniforms for staff and service persons.

What is your lane number? Ruling MPs play Tughlaq in Capital lanes



Minister Krishan Pal Gurjar display the changed addresses, highlighting 'Swami Vivekananda Marg' with 'Tughlaq Lane' inscribed beneath it in brackets, at their official residences on Tughlaq Lane in

RAJESH KUMAR New Delhi

→ JP Rajya Sabha MP Dinesh Sharma Band Union Minister of State for Cooperation Krishan Pal Gujar - have renamed their official residences on Tughlaq Lane in Lutyens' Delhi to Swami Vivekananda Marg, days after their party colleagues proposed renaming various areas of the national capital. The two BJP MPs highlighted 'Swami Vivekananda Marg' in the nameplates, with 'Tughlaq Lane' inscribed beneath it in brackets. However, other residences on the same road still bear the nameplate "Tughlaq Lane." The move comes amid recent propos-

als by some BJP leaders to rename several areas christened after Mughal leaders in the national capital.

Sharma was allotted the official residence at 6 Tughlaq Lane, where he recently moved in with his family. He performed a housewarming ceremony and shared pictures of the event online. On Thursday, Sharma formally shifted into his residence following a religious ritual with his family. The pictures he posted on social media platform X show him with his family, with the new nameplate clearly visible in the background. The plate prominently displays "Swami Vivekananda Marg," although "Tughlaq Lane" is still

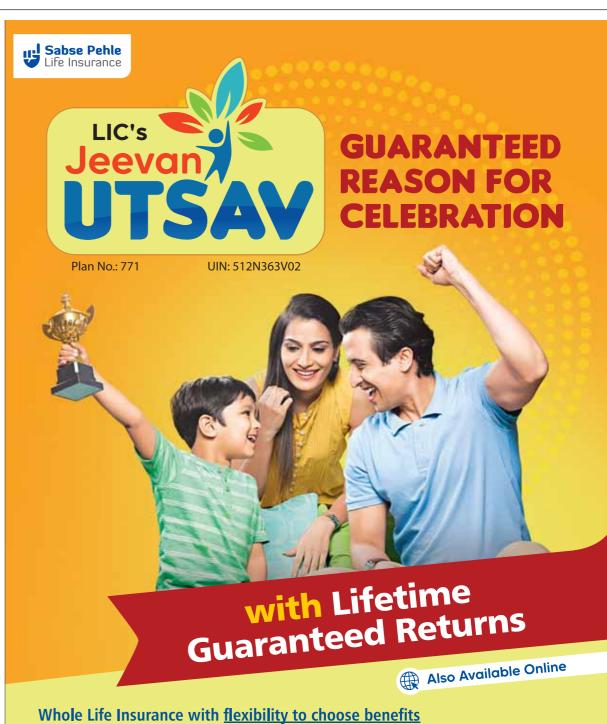
Sharing the pictures, Sharma wrote on X, "Today, I performed a religious ceremony and moved into my new residence at Swami Vivekananda Marg (Tughlaq Lane) in New Delhi with my family." Tughlaq Lane has not been renamed, nor is there any official plan to do so immediately.

When asked about the name change, Sharma said Tughlaq Lane is still written on the nameplate. "But along with that, 'Vivekanand Marg' is written because on Google [Maps], this street is registered as 'Vivekanand Road'... No MP can change the names of the roads. There is a proper authority for it [renaming roads].

It is not just Sharma. Union Minister of State for Cooperation Krishan Pal Gurjar has also changed the nameplate. The address on the nameplate of his official bungalow now reads "8 Vivekanand Marg".

Defending the change, Gurjar, said, "We have faith in Swami Vivekananda, which is why we have added his name. But we have not removed Tughlaq Lane. We have not done anything against the rules. Vivekananda is an inspiration for our youth, not Tughlaq." When asked if he considered Sultan Tughlaq an aggressor, he responded, "Definitely. Whether it is Aurangzeb... They were attackers. I demand that this road be officially renamed as Vivekananda Marg."

"Swami Vivekanand is an ideal for the youth of this country. Hundreds of years ago in Chicago, he made a place for India before the world in 'Dharm Sansad,"





Voters to have unique EPIC number: ECI

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

he Election Commission of India (ECI) on Friday said that it would address the issue of duplicate EPIC cards issued to voters over the next three months. The poll panel said it will also ensure a unique Voter ID for the existing electors which are having duplicate EPIC number and for the future electors as well. This comes after detailed discussions within its technical teams and consultations with Chief Electoral Officers (CEOs) across the country, the ECI said that it has committed to ensuring that each elector has a unique national EPIC number.

"The Commission has now decided to resolve this long pending issue after detailed discussions within the technical teams and concerned CEOs in the next three months by ensuring a unique national EPIC number to the existing electors having a duplicate EPIC number and for future electors as well," the poll board said in the statement.

According to the EC, sample enquiry of over 100 electors reveals that electors with duplicate EPIC numbers are genuine electors. Since the allotment of EPIC series in the year 2,000 to the States/UTs, some EROs did not use the correct series. The issue of allotment of duplicate numbers due to incorrect series across States/UTs could not have been detected as the States/UTs were independently managing



the electoral roll databases.

"As regards the issue of duplicate EPIC numbers, the Commission has already taken cognizance of the matter. Irrespective of an EPIC number, an elector who is linked to the electoral roll of a particular polling station can cast his vote at that polling station only and nowhere else," it said. In a statement, the poll authority said India's electoral rolls are the biggest database of electors across the globe with over 99 crore registered voters.

The Trinamool Congress (TMC) flagged the issue of duplicate voter identity card numbers in different states and accused the EC of a cover-up. Reacting to this, TMC said the EC has finally "admitted and

accepted" their guilt as the poll panel issued a second statement over the issue of duplication of voter ID card numbers. "The ECI has finally admitted and accepted their guilt that duplicate EPIC (Electoral Photo Identity Card) numbers have been allotted to multiple people. All of this has happened because West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee nailed the lies of the ECI and exposed this scam," TMC Rajya Sabha MP Saket Gokhale said in a post on X shortly after the poll panel released a statement saying it will address the "decades-long" matter in the next three

"After being in denial, the ECI now says it will 'fix the issue' in just three months. It has also given a very unconvincing explanation that "this duplication of EPIC has happened since the year 2000 due to registration officers using incorrect alphanumeric series", he said. Gokhale questioned how an "incorrect series" was allegedly used when ECI's Handbook for Electoral Registration Officers has clear guidelines, and asked about the fate of the software that was supposed to catch this. He asked if the ECI said this had been happening since 2000, why nothing was done for 25 years until Banerjee pointed it out. "Why hasn't ECI still revealed how many duplicate EPICs currently exist? This is the second eyewash in a week being passed off as a 'clarification' by ECI," he said.

The EC recently held a high-level meeting to discuss concerns about duplicate of these numbers in the voter database. Following the meeting, the commission decided to launch a focused, time-bound initiative to carefully review and remove any duplicate entries and errors in the elec-

According to EC, new instructions will soon be sent to CEOs in all states and Union Territories, asking them to identify and delete duplicate records and make necessary corrections within the next two months. This move comes shortly after the TMC accused the EC of voter list manipulation and claimed that identical EPIC numbers appear across different states. The TMC has said it plans to raise the matter in Parliament next week.

NDMC attaches properties in Khan Market over property tax

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

he New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) on Friday attached seven shop-cum-flat properties in the upscale Khan Market over nonpayment of property tax.

A senior NDMC official stated, "We have attached seven shop-cum-flat properties in Khan Market and after attaching the properties, the civic body has given a notice of five days to the owner to pay the due property tax."

According to the official, the outstanding dues for these properties run into crores, and the owners had failed to make payments despite multiple notices in the past.

In addition to the seven properties in Khan Market, the New Delhi Municipal Council has also partially attached a builder's property on Bhai Veer Singh Marg within its jurisdiction.

With this, the civic body has attached a total of 21 properties in the last few days as part of its intensified tax recovery efforts.

On Thursday, the New Delhi Municipal Council issued show-cause notices to 380 property tax defaulters, warning of strict measures, including property attachment and account freezing, if dues were not paid. The civic body has identified 3,200 taxpay-

ers who have defaulted for three con-

"Under NDMC regulations, a 30-day show-cause notice is issued to 380 defaulters, followed by additional reminders. If there is no response or payment, the Council may take action, including property attachment, sealing, or account freezing," the New Delhi Municipal Council statement said.

The New Delhi Municipal Council, which oversees around 15,600 properties, has set a property tax collection target of ₹1,150 crore for the current financial year. As of mid-February, ₹807 crore had been collected.

To facilitate taxpayers, the NDMC announced that its tax collection centre at Palika Kendra and three counters in Gole Market, RK Puram, and Sansad Marg will remain open on Saturdays and Sundays in March (except gazetted holidays) beyond regular working days.

Meanwhile, the New Delhi

Municipal Council has already attached 13 properties in Connaught Place and sealed several shops and restaurants over the last few days due to non-payment of property taxes.

However, the New Delhi Traders Association (NDTA) has raised concerns over what it calls excessive tax demands and business closures.

trio accused on Thursday.

bank accounts in their name.

Lalit Modi surrenders **Indian passport**

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

ndian Premier League (IPL) founder Lalit Modi has filed an application with the Indian High Commission in London to surrender his Indian passport. The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) confirmed this on Friday.

Modi is known to have acquired citizenship of Vanuatu, a South Pacific Island nation. He left India in 2010 and is learnt to have been living in London.

The former IPL chief is wanted by Indian law enforcement agencies in connection with allegations that he was involved in embezzlement of crores of rupees during his stint as the top boss of

"He has made an application for surrendering his passport in the high commission of India, London," External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal

The same will be examined in light of extant rules and procedures. We are also given to understand that he has acquired citizenship of Vanuatu. We continue to pursue the case against him as required under law," he said.

Railway pilots waiting rooms at stations

address concerns.

It was also directed to appoint of a senior officer as station director at major stations. The ministry said the station director

will be financially empowered to take onthe-spot decisions to improve the station. "The station director will be empowered to control the sale of tickets as per capacity of the station and the available trains," the statement said.

Despite the gravity of this issue, the

Union Government has provided neither

clarity nor any concrete commitment to

Their representatives have vaguely stat-

ed that delimitation would follow a "pro-

rata" basis, without explaining the base that

will be used for such pro-rata calculation.

Further, the CM slammed "empty rhetoric"

than no state will face a decrease in its seats.

democracy is at stake, can we accept such

vague assurances? When our states' futures

hang in the balance, do we not deserve

Pointing to the all-party meeting held

here on March 5, 2025 and its proposal to

transparent dialogue?," he asked.

"When the very foundation of our

Stalin plots delimitation counter

Omar reacts to EAM's statement on J and K



MOHIT KANDHARI ■ Jammu

sparing Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Thursday reacted strongly to the recent statement of the foreign minister S Jaishankar on the floor of Assembly.

"The foreign minister (S Jaishankar) is saying that we will get back the part of J and K which is under the occupation of Pakistan. Who has stopped them? Have we ever said that do not get it back?" the chief minister said, winding up the discussion on motion of thanks to Lt Governor Manoj Sinha's address in the Assembly here.

Jaishankar, speaking during a session at the Chatham House think-tank in London on Wednesday, said the Kashmir dispute would be solved after the "return of the stolen part of Kashmir which is under illegal Pakistani occupation".

Omar also maintained he would be grateful to the BJP-led government if alongside Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) it also retrieves the part of the Union Territory (UT) under illegal occupation of China.

Speaking on the motion of thanks Omar also came down heavily on the

BJP leaders for accusing the National Conference (NC) of insulting Jammu and Kashmir's last ruler Maharaja Hari Singh and challenged them to give just one instance when the ruling party or any other Kashmir-based party insulted the Dogra ruler while the BJP disintegrated and downgraded his Muslim majority

Referring to the speech of BJP members in the House, he said the Congress was targeted for leaving Haji Peer in the Uri sec-

"During the Kargil war, there was an opportunity to get back PoK because it was Pakistan which attacked us. If you were so willing, you would have brought back that part but what stopped you? When you look at the map of Jammu and Kashmir, one part is also in China but you do not talk about it," he said.

He said when the BJP-led central government brings back PoK, they should also bring that part of J-K which is presently in China and "we will be grateful to you".

Sunil Sharma for accusing the ruling party

Countering the Leader of Opposition (LoP) in J-K Assembly and BJP leader of insulting the Maharaja, he dared the opposition party to give him a single instance when the last Dogra ruler was insulted by NC or for that matter by the PDP and Congress.

Maharaja by separating Ladakh from J&K and finishing his laws, especially related to land and jobs which were meant to provide safeguards to the people," he said.

You have distorted the map of

Abdullah said the BJP is justifying the separation by saying that it was the longpending demand of the people of Ladakh.

"Have you asked them? Have you tried to find out?

"From day one, the people of Kargil were against this decision. The Buddhists of Ladakh who distributed sweets are today of the opinion that they were better placed with J&K. They walked from Leh to Delhi to get back their rights," he

The chief minister also took a dig at the LoP for his "derogatory remarks" against the July 13, 1931 "martyrs" and said "though we have different political ideologies, they deserve respect for rising up against the autocracy and their sacrifice led

Police arrest three for setting up bank accounts for cyber frauds the help of police technology arrested the

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Gurugram

cyber crime police team of the police has arrested three accused including a woman for allegedly providing a bank account to cyber fraudsters in the name of customer service, police said.

The accused were identified as Nilofar and Abhishek a resident of Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh, and Harshit Shukla a resident of Unnao, Uttar Pradesh.

According to the police a complaint was received on February 13 at the Cyber Crime Police Station (South). The complainant stated in his police

complainant that he had searched and inquiry number of Indian Post on "When he contacted on that particu-

lar number, the persons on the other side cheated him of Rs 95,000 by engaging him in conversation," the complainant told the police. Based on his complaint, a case was reg-

istered under section 318(4), 319 at the During investigation, a police team led by Inspector Naveen Kumar, SHO of the

said police station took action and with

spokesperson of the Gurugram police The police team has recovered 03 mobile phones, 03 SIM cards, 03 ATM

During police interrogation, it was

found that all the accused had owned fake

Aadhaar cards made on Delhi address

and through that they had opened many

which the accused used to get Rs. 5000

for one bank account," Sandeep Kumar,

"The accused used to make those bank accounts available to cyber criminals for

cards, 08 cheque books and 11 passbooks from the possession of the accused. Further action is being taken in the case as per rules. Investigation of the case

Senior police officers of Gurugram claimed that the police are closely working with other agencies and organisations

to counter cyber fraud. In view of the increasing cyber crimes,

Gurugram Police is taking immediate action against cyber criminals. Gurugram Police is working with full dedication to stop the increasing cybercrime and catch the criminals, Kumar said.

MEA officer dies by suicide

n a shocking incident, an officer of the Ministry of External Affairs ▲ (MEA) died by suicide by jumping off a building in Chanakyapuri area on Friday. "The deceased has been identified as Jitendra Rawat (42). He was staying on the first floor but went to the fourth floor of the building and jumped. We have not recovered any suicide note from the spot," the police said.

It was further informed that he was troubled for the past few days. According to the police, the officer was a director at the Overseas Employments and Protectorate General of Emigrants in the Ministry of External Affairs. Besides Belgium, he also had a posting in Myanmar.

Police said the incident occurred around 6.20 am on Friday. Neighbours alerted the authorities, and a team from the local police station rushed to the scene. The officer was taken to the hospital, where he was declared dead. According to police, he lived with his mother on the first floor of the building. No suicide note was found. The sent it for postmortem.

fering from depression and was under going treatment. Rawat is survived by his wife and two children, all three of whom live in Dehradun in Uttarakhand. Only his mother was at home when he died. His wife lives in Dehradun and is coming to Delhi," police said, adding that they are still ascertaining the reason behind the extreme step. The government officer lived on the first floor of a four-storey

building. Police confirmed the death and said no foul play was suspected. Authorities are currently probing the circumstances leading to the incident. The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), in a statement said, "An officer of the Ministry of External Affairs passed away in the morning of March 07, 2025, in New Delhi. The Ministry is providing all possible assistance to the family and is in touch with the Delhi Police.'

'The Ministry stands with the family in this hour of grief and difficulty. Further details are not being released bearing in mind the need to respect the family's privacy in this time of bereavement," MEA added. Chanakyapuri, known as the diplomatic enclave of Delhi, houses various embassies and government offices.

police has recovered the body and has According to police, Rawat was suf-Rana hopes to buy time as

The Counsel also requested immediate information on any commitment the United States has obtained from India with respect to Rana's treatment.

"The government declined to provide any information in response to these requests," the application said.

It added that given Rana's underlying health conditions and the State Department's own findings regarding the treatment of prisoners, it is very likely "Rana will not survive long enough to be tried in India.

'The issues raised by petitioner merit full and careful consideration, and the stakes are enormous for him. The very least the U.S. Courts owe the petitioner is a full chance to litigate these issues, including exercising their appel-

late rights, before he is consigned to the fate that awaits him at the hands of the Indian government," the application

It added that if a stay is not entered, there will be no review at all, and the US courts will lose jurisdiction, and "petitioner will soon be dead.

"Therefore, we respectfully request that this Court enter an Order staying the extradition and surrender of petitioner pending a full and considered hearing on petitioner's claims by the district court, circuit court, and, if necessary, a writ of certiorari to and further

proceedings before this Court," it said. US President Donald Trump, during joint press conference with Prime Minister Modi in the White House last month announced that Rana's extradition to India has been approved.

What is your lane number? Ruling **MPs play Tughlaq in Capital lanes**

"Such great personalities are the ideals of this country and sentiments of the country are attached to them...So, I changed the nameplate to Swami Vivekanand Marg..." he added.

Such changes are approved by a panel of the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC), the civic body that has jurisdiction over roads in central Delhi. Requests are put up before the NDMC council, a 13-member body headed by the chairperson. The rules say renaming requests should take into account history, sentiment and whether a personality needs to be acknowledged in that manner. After the BJP's return to power in Delhi after 27 years, demands to rename several locations in the city have been gaining momentum. BJP leaders have proposed renaming various areas of the city, including Najafgarh to Nahargarh, Mohammadpur village to Madhavpuram, and Mustafabad to Shivpuri.

The changing of names of places, roads, and institutions is part of the ruling BJP's border ideological agenda to shed the colonial legacies to reflect India's indigenous heritage.

The party also claims that the move is

ly those who contributed significantly in shaping Indian society. Multiple instances of renaming have taken place under the BJP rule. In 2018,

to honour historical figures, particular-

Allahabad was renamed Prayagraj to restore its ancient identity linked to the renamed Deen Dayal Upadhyay Junction in honour of the BJP ideologue. In 2015, Aurangzeb Road was renamed

after former President APJ Abdul Kalam. A year later, the Race Course Road, the elite address for the Prime Minister's official residence, was changed to "Lok Kalyan Marg".

extradition inches closer Hindu pilgrimage site, Prayag. The same year, Mughal Sarai Railway Station was

In 2018, Faizabad District was

renamed Ayodhya to emphasize its religious and cultural significance in Hinduism. In 2021, Hoshangabad in Madhya Pradesh was renamed Narmadapuram to highlight its connection to the sacred Narmada River while removing Mughal-era influences.Most recently, in 2023, Maharashtra's Aurangabad was renamed Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar, and Osmanabad became Dharashiv, shedding Mughal and Islamic references in favour of local historical and

Stalin said he has written to the chief

form a JAC by reaching out to all states that face the same threat, he said: "I believe this issue transcends individual State concerns - it strikes at the heart of our federal principles. Together, we must examine the constitutional, legal, and political dimensions of this challenge. We must jointly develop alternatives that preserve our current representation in percentage terms. Only through a collaborative analysis and an unified advocacy, can we hope to secure a delimitation process that honors our role in nation building without compromising our current level of representation in per-

Stalin sought the formal consent of CMs/leaders to join the proposed JAC comprising of Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Karnataka in the South to West Bengal and Odisha in the east, Punjab in the north. The DMK chief also wanted the leaders to nominate one senior representative from their party who can serve on the JAC and help coordinate unified strategy.

The Tamil Nadu CM described the

union government's plan for delimitation a blatant assault on federalism, punishing states that ensured population control and good governance. He asserted, "we will not allow this democratic injustice!"

ministers of Kerala, Karnataka, Telangana, West Bengal, Odisha and Punjab. Also, he has written to heads of parties in Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, West Bengal, Odisha & Punjab, calling for an uncompromising fight against this

Rekha Gupta to launch Mahila Samriddhi Yojna on Women's Day

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

ekha Gupta-led BJP government in Delhi is likely to roll out the implementation of Mahila Samriddhi Yojna and a scheme to provide free LPG cylinders during Holi and Diwali from Saturday, at the Mahila Diwas programme to be attended by BJP president JP Nadda in Jawaharlal Nehru stadium on the International Women's Day on Saturday. The Delhi government may also announce Ayushman Bharat Yojna and a scheme to provide free LPG cylinder during Holi and Diwali.

In its manifesto for the Assembly polls held in February earlier, the BJP promised to provide ₹2,500 per month to women from poor families under the Mahila Samriddhi Yojna when it came to power

Sources said the Delhi Cabinet will approve both schemes in a meeting scheduled on Saturday. Following the approval, the formal announcement will be made at Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium after 12 pm.

The Cabinet is likely to discuss the guidelines and eligibility criteria of the scheme before giving its nod, they said. The Chief Minister is scheduled to attend the Delhi BJP's Mahila Diwas programme at ILN stadium at noon on Saturday.

The party said in a message that several senior BJP leaders including Delhi unit co-in-charge Alka Gurjar, state president Virendra Sachdeva, Mahila Morcha national president Vanitha Srinivasan, and BJP MPs Kamaljeet Sehrawat and Bansuri Swaraj will be present in the event. "The announcement of rolling out registration for the women aid scheme will be made in the event at JLN stadium," the sources

The Delhi government estimates that 15 Lakh to 20 Lakh women will qualify for the scheme.

The IT department is working on integrating databases from various departments to streamline the eligibility verification process. The Budget for the scheme will reportedly be increased in the next financial year to include all eligible beneficiaries. The Mahila Samriddhi



Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta

Scheme follows similar initiatives in other BJP-ruled states, such as the Ladli Behna Yojana in Madhya Pradesh and the Ladki Bahin Yojana in Maharashtra.

Sources said the eligibility criteria of an annual income of not more than ₹2.5

Lakh and an age group of over 18 years up to 60 years were discussed at a meeting attended by chief secretary. "The income limit for women eligible to register under the scheme will be ₹2.5 Lakh. We prepared a draft of the Mahila Samriddhi Yojana, which will be presented in the cabinet meeting for approval," officials added.

Once the draft is approved, the registration process will begin.

The Delhi government is developing an online portal for the registration process. A dedicated software is also being designed by the IT department to help verify applications and ensure that only eligible women receive the benefits.

In its Delhi Assembly election manifesto, BJP promised to provide ₹2,500 per month to women from poor families under the Mahila Samriddhi Yojna if it came to power in the capital.

The opposition, AAP, recently criticised BJP govt for not approving the scheme in its first cabinet meeting, as promised by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The party held a protest at several

places, questioning BJP for not approving the scheme in its first cabinet

AAP leader Atishi on Friday wrote a letter to Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, urging her to ensure immediate transfer of ₹2,500 to women's accounts, as promised by the BJP during the

Assembly polls. "The prime minister had assured the mothers and sisters of Delhi that once the BJP's government is formed, the scheme to provide ₹2,500 per month would be approved in the first Cabinet meeting and funds would start reaching women's accounts by Women's Day," the Leader of Opposition in the Delhi Assembly wrote.

With only a day to go for Women's Day, women across Delhi are eagerly awaiting the fulfilment of this promise, Atishi said.

"They are hoping that the first instalment will be credited to their accounts as assured by the BJP. To give the women of Delhi their due, the funds should be transferred without delay. Every woman in the city is looking towards you with hope," she said.

I felt like the protagonist of the film Nayak, says CM

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

elhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta quoted a famous shayari by Urdu poet Rahat Indori to underline that she would be no pushover despite having no major administrative experience. Speaking at the private news channel Conclave, Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, a first-time MLA from Shalimar Bagh, said she felt like the 'naayika' (heroine) from the Bollywood movie 'Nayak' on assuming the top post and asserted that it was not a "lottery" but an honour for all daughters of the country

"Shaakh se toote huwe patte nahin hain ham, aandhiyon se kaĥo apni auqaat mein rahe (I am not among those leaves that break from the branches, someone should tell the storm to stay within its limits)," Gupta said.

The Chief Minister said the only woman Chief Minister across BJP-ruled states, said the BJP government in Delhi will ensure the cleaning of the Yamuna in three years, starting a ferry service on it and diminishing three landfill sites up to 80-90 per cent in next two years.

The other priorities of her government were to ensure that Delhi people do not face water shortage in the summers and waterlogging during monsoon, she said. On being asked about her getting preference for the chief minister's post over several senior leaders and MLAs, Gupta said, "Let no one have any misunderstanding. This victory is due to the people of Delhi and the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi."

"This is not a post, it is a job and a responsibility. Our aim is a developed Delhi for a developed India," Gupta said.

Underlining that the women in Indian society do not get opportunities to go on the "front foot", she said her appointment as chief minister of Delhi was an honour for all daughters of the country and there was a lot of enthusiasm over it.

The appointment of a woman as chief minister was a very significant vision of the party and PM Narendra Modi and it was not just a "symbolic facelift" but a genuine effort to promote women to higher posts of decision-making, Gupta said.

It was not like a dream come true, Gupta said, adding she was moving on her own

path when she was selected to the post. "I felt like the protagonist of the 'Nayak

movie. I won't say it was a lottery. It is an honour of all daughters in the country and Modiji has realised the vision of women led development and women-led government," the Delhi chief minister said.

She said the Delhiites have now understood that the "double-engine" government of the BJP is the "best pathway" to make the national capital a developed city Gupta asserted that the entire party leadership stood with her.

The people of Delhi have a lot of hopes from the new government, the chief minister said and added that she would work to strengthen the basic facilities and develop Delhi into a modern city.

She said air pollution was a major challenge for which her government would work in a time-bound manner in consultation with experts. It will work intensively to control factors contributing to air pollution, such as stubble burning and vehicular emissions, Gupta said.

She also stressed that she will live among the people and not in the "Sheesh

WRI report: Fare-free bus travel boosts women's access to jobs

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

report, titled Fare-Free Bus Travel Scheme for Women: Lessons from A Scheme for women: Lessons from Delhi, published by the World Resources Institute (WRI) India has claimed that the Delhi government's Fare-Free Public Transport (FFPT) scheme for women, introduced by the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) in October 2019, significantly boosted women's access to jobs, education and healthcare, while also helping them save money as they travel farther and more frequently across the capital.

The report said women's ridership in Delhi's public buses increased by 20 per cent between 2019 and 2023, ever since the Delhi government introduced the Fare-Free Public Transport (FFPT) scheme for

The initiative launched in Delhi which allows women to travel for free on both Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC) and cluster buses, has not only increased access to public transport but also altered travel patterns, employment opportunities, and safety perceptions.

Authored by Harshita Jamba, Aravinda Devaraj and Chaitanya Kanuri, the findings detail the impacts of the FFPT scheme on women's mobility patterns and choices, access to opportunities, and experience of safety during bus travel in

The researchers, based on a survey that included 28 per cent of respondents from Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) with annual household incomes below ₹3,00,000, and an additional 57per cent from households earning under ₹6,00,000, found that the share of female ridership rose from 33 per cent to 42 per cent from 2019-20 to 20222-23, going by the state's planning department data.

Among the 2010 women bus users surveyed across 15 spatially distributed locations in Delhi, 95 per cent were captive users who lacked access to a private vehicle and relied on buses due to economic constraints. The fare waiver has effectively made women less dependent on male family members, enabling them to travel alone or cover transport costs for other family members, the authors added. The study highlighted that insufficient and inefficient bus services, which result in overcrowding and harassment, continue to affect women's access to safe and reliable bus services. The survey found that 59 per cent of women expressed concerns about safety due to hostile behaviour from staff.

The report said some have welcomed

the scheme as a step in the right direction to improve women's mobility, but some bus users and on-ground transport staff have bristled at it. The backlash has come in the form of discriminatory remarks and exclusionary actions from bus crew members and male co-passengers. Ridership trends show a steady increase in women's share of the daily bus ridership from 33 per cent in 2019-20 to 42 per cent in 2022-23

According to the report, over 90 percent of these women use buses on a weekly basis for work, education, care giving, and discretionary activities. As many as 95 percent of the women in our sample lack access to a private vehicle and rely on buses due to economic constraints. They reported that the FFPT scheme saved up to eight per cent of their household income per month. The fare waiver has also made women less dependent on male family members, enabling them to travel alone or pay transport costs for other family mem-

Fare-free public transport (FFPT), also known as "free public transport," allows passengers to use public transport services, such as buses or trains, within a defined geographical area or during specific periods without paying fares or purchasing

High-resolution cameras to be installed across Delhi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

aving in front of a surveillance camera may soon help save a woman's life, as the Delhi Police prepares to launch a one-of-a-kind project in the coming months.

The 'Safe City' project, currently in pipeline, aims to install high-resolution cameras across Delhi, with live feeds beamed at local police stations, the offices of Deputy Commissioners of Police (DCPs) and the Police Headquarters. "This will be the first such initiative in the country," the officer said.

The project will involve the use of facial recognition technology, alerting police immediately if a woman in distress waves her hand in front of these cameras.

Initially, there were discussions about integrating panic buttons into the camera poles, but the idea was dropped amid concerns of misuse and unnecessary resource deployment, said the officer involved in the

"If any incident of crime against women occurs on the streets of Delhi, police will be immediately alerted and can intervene before the situation escalates. This will be a significant step in crime prevention," he

The project is still under development,

with weekly review meetings every Tuesday, attended by the heads of various departments.

The multi-crore initiative is expected to be launched this year by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

Lower-level officers have been instructed to identify high-crime areas or "black spots" where there is a greater need for surveillance.

"Station House Officers (SHOs) have been asked to compile a list of locations where crime rates are high, as it is not feasible to install cameras at every corner of the city," a police source said. Moreover, the software used in the system is programmed to identify known and wanted criminals.

"The police database has been integrated into the system, allowing it to recognise suspects even if their photos are a decade old. The AI-driven software can analyse changes in appearance over time and match them to existing records," the officer added.

If a known criminal is detected in a specific area, an alert will immediately appear on the monitoring screens, the person said. The project has already been started on a pilot basis at select police

Janaushadhi Kendras to benefit weaker sections

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

elhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, on Friday, said that the Delhi government will open anaushadhi Kendras across the nation al Capital, which would provide people of Delhi with medicines at lowest prices, as well as sanitary napkins to women at

Congratulating people on the occasion of the seventh Janaushadhi Diwas, Gupta said, "The governments before us did not implement the Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana. Maybe because the word 'Pradhan Mantri' in the scheme. We will open Janaushadhi Kendras everywhere. We will follow the decision of the High Court, which says that there should be a Janaushadhi Kendra within 500 meters of every hospital."

Gupta also visited the Janaushadhi Kendra in Ashok Vihar early morning. She emphasised that "this scheme will particularly benefit economically weaker sections, as it provides medicines for serious illnesses like cancer and diabetes at much lower prices". Additionally, sanitary napkins for women will be available at just ₹1, promoting hygiene and better health for women.

The Chief Minister further announced that, in compliance with Delhi High Court directives, the Delhi government will ensure that at least one Jan Aushadhi



Delhi CM Rekha Gupta during her visit to an Janaushadhi Kendra

Kendra is established within a 500meter radius of every government hospital. This Jan Aushadhi Kendra provides WHO certified medicines and medical items to the public at 50-70 per cent lower price compared to branded medicines. A lot of medicines are available at a lower price up to 90 per cent.

In addition, these Jan Aushadhi Kendras will assist government hospitals by facilitating local medicine purchases in case of emergencies.

New Delhi BJP MP Bansuri Swaraj also lauded the 'Jan Aushadhi' initiative as a visionary project that was given a major impetus under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The BJP MP emphasised that the 'Jan Aushadhi Kendras' have not only significantly reduced the cost of medicines for the common people but have also played a crucial role in boosting employment opportunities across the country, particularly through their franchise model. Swaraj was speaking from a 'Jan Aushadhi Kendra' in Karol Bagh, where she highlighted the impressive savings that customers experience.

RANJAN DIMRI

"For example, medicines for chronic conditions like diabetes and hypertension. Here, the medicines are available at up to 91 per cent lower prices compared to conventional chemists. Even multivitamins and calcium supplements, which are essential for everyone, are 94 per cent cheaper. The 'Jan Aushadhi Kendra' offers more than 2,000 affordable medicines, as well as over 300 surgical products," she said.

Meanwhile, BJP MP Ramvir Singh Bidhuri also spent Jan Aushadhi Diwas among the people who came to Jan Aushadhi Kendra on Friday. He talked to the people who came to these centers. Everyone appeared satisfied with the cheap and quality medicines available at these centers. Bidhuri went to the Jan Aushadhi Kendra located in the AIIMS campus and met the people there. Generic medicines for almost all diseases are available at Jan Aushadhi Kendras. People described this scheme of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi as verv

beneficial for the general public. Every year, March 7 is celebrated as 'Jan Aushadhi Diwas,' a day dedicated to raising awareness about the 'Pradhan Mantri Bharatiya Jan Aushadhi Pariyojana ' and promoting the use of generic medicines. The celebrations are part of a week-long campaign that runs from March 1 to 7, with various events organised across the country.

LG inaugurates Amrut Biodiversity park, prioritises greener city

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

elhi Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena inaugurated the Amrut Biodiversity Park on Friday and said that providing a greener and cleaner city to the people will be his pri-

After inaugurating the park, he said that around a year-and-a-half ago, the place was in a terrible state, full of dirt and neglect. "It was cleaned up, and today it has been transformed into a beautiful park."

"We aim to provide the people of Delhi with a clean and refreshing environment while also increasing green spaces in the city. We are also considering setting up a small café in the park where joggers and visitors can take a break and relax," Saxena

Developed as part of the Yamuna floodplain restoration scheme by Delhi Development Authority (DDA), Amrut Biodiversity Park spans over 90 hectares on the eastern bank of the Yamuna River.

This previously underdeveloped area, which was used for agriculture, nurseries, and settlements, had experienced prolonged depletion of its natural floodplain, soil texture and native plant communities. The site has a flat topography with an overall slope away from the Yamuna River, forming small catchment zones that collected water from annual inundation, which also resulted in the formation of gullies within the site. Given the site's susceptibility to flood-

ing, the park's landscape features have been strategically designed to manage stormwater, reduce flood risks, and improve the local water table through natural filtration. The six water bodies have capacity to hold 225 million litres of water. Slopes have been reinforced with jute, and

grass have been planted to stabilise these slopes, as the area is prone to inundation during high floods. Kachha pathways have also been developed for walking and jogging amidst the natural plantation.

As part of the efforts to restore biodi-

Amrut Biodiversity Park

versity, approximately 14,500 trees of various species, including Neem, Kachnar, Cluster Fig, Peepal, Pilkhan, Chilbil, Senegalia catechu, Champaca, Mango, Mahua, Spanish Cherry, Kaim, White Mulberry, Kadamba, Jangal Jalebi, KanakChampa, Amla, Karanj,

Elaeocarpusganiturs, Ashoka Tree, Jamun, Trumpet Tree, Imli, Tamarix, Teak, Arjuna, Baheda, Siris, Kala Siris, Star Fruit, and Madagascar Almond, have been planted here by National Botanical Research Institute. Additionally, about 18,000 shrubs and approximately 3.21 Lakh riverine grasses have been planted, establishing robust riverine grass communities.

To foster public engagement with nature, two public interfaces have been established along NH-24, near the CWG Village. These areas offer amenities that connect visitors with the natural environment, even during flood-induced inundation periods.

By integrating nature into the heart of the city and along the major highways, Amrut Biodiversity Park will contribute to cleaner air, cooler urban temperatures, and a healthier environment, addressing the challenges posed by rapid urbanisation. This park will not only offer respite to the city's residents but also restore the local ecosystem, promote water conservation.

Following Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of a cleaner and greener Delhi, "We are working hard towards this goal with several new projects already in progress," he said.

'To help with water conservation and attract birds, we have created several depression areas within the park to store rain and floodwater. Additionally, around 20,000 different plants have been planted, which will further enhance the beauty of the park in the coming years."

Speaking about the cleaning of the Yamuna, the LG said it was progressing at full speed. Chief Minister Rekha Gupta and other ministers are continuously monitoring the work being carried out in mission mode, he added. The inauguration of this park represents a significant achievement in the efforts to rejuvenate the Yamuna floodplain area and highlight the importance of sustainable urban development.

DDA has extensively work on the Rejuvenation of River Yamuna and many projects are being developed on its bank including Asita, which was once an encroached land and now converted into green beautiful landscape. Besides, it has developed Baansera-Bamboo park-which was once a C&D waste area.

On the western bank of Yamuna, Vasudev Ghat was developed, where Yamuna aarti is held twice every week.

Development should reach disadvantaged: President

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

resident Droupadi Murmu on Friday said the benefits of development should reach all sections of society, especially the disadvantaged and marginalised.

Addressing a group of state civil services officers who called on her at the Rashtrapati Bhavan here, she also urged them to uphold the principles of sustainability and inclusiveness in their functioning.

The President advised the officers to adopt a national and inclusive approach in administrative functioning and implementation of government policies and programmes.

She said the essence of governance lies in responsiveness and sensitivity towards the needs of the people.

"At the same time, the benefits of development should reach all sections of society, especially the disadvantaged and marginalised," President Murmu said.

The officers are attending the 126th induction training programme at the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration, Mussoorie.

The President congratulated the officers on their promotion and induction



President Droupadi Murmu addresses state civil services officers attending the 126th Induction Training Programme at LBSNAA during a meeting at the Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi

into the Indian Administrative Service and said that they should inspire and lead by example in their new role, motivating those around them to strive for excellence in public service. A citizen-centric administration prioritises the welfare of people, focusing on the poor and deprived, she said.

President Murmu advised them to ensure that policies and programmes are

implemented in a way that addresses people's concerns effectively

She said the decisions that they take and the policies they implement should contribute to the development of the country and the people.

The President said when the challenges of climate change and environmental degradation are tackled, it is essential to promote eco-friendly initiatives.

Rajnath praises women Navy officers circumnavigating globe

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

efence Minister Rainath Singh on Friday lauded the courage of two women Navy officers who are currently undertaking a mission in their sailing vessel to circumnavigate globe. The two-women crew of Navika Sagar Parikrama II (NSP II) include Lt Commander Dilna K and Lt Commander

Interacting with through video conference on the eve of International Women's Day, the Defence Minister praised courage, dedication and resilience of the NSP II crew, who have embarked on a challenging voyage of circumnavigating the globe, as part of India's continued efforts to showcase Nari Shakti in highendurance missions.

He congratulated the crew for the remarkable milestones of crossing Point Nemo, the world's most isolated waters and sailing through the Drake Passage, one of the most treacherous water bodies. The vessel INS Tarini, currently in the South Atlantic Ocean at a distance of 450 nautical miles from the previous port of call Port Stanley in the Falkland Islands, is heading to Cape Town, South Africa.

Rajnath Singh reiterated the government's vision of a gender-inclusive armed force, encouraging more young women to aspire for careers in defence and adventure sports. He acknowledged the invaluable role of women in bolstering national security and reaffirmed the government's commitment to expanding opportunities for women in the defence

Navika Sagar Parikrama II (NSP II) is a flagship initiative of the Indian Navy, aimed at circumnavigating the globe through a two-women crew on board. NSP II symbolises India's resolve to encourage women's participation in maritime and defence sectors, fostering leadership and self-reliance. The crew, comprising two women offi-

cers of the Indian Navy, underwent rigorous training in navigation, weather management, and ocean survival techniques before undertaking this prestigious journey, which was flagged off on 02 October 2024 at Goa by the Chief of the Naval Staff.

The Ministry of Defence has been at the forefront of ensuring greater representation of women in the Indian Defence Forces. Various initiatives, including per-



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh interacts with 'Navika Sagar Parikrama II' crew Lt Commander Dilna K and Lt Commander Roopa A

manent commission opportunities, increased intake in the National Defence Academy (NDA) and Indian Naval Academy (INA), and leadership roles in combat and aviation branches, have significantly contributed to a more inclusive

NCW to set up 21 PMC centres across nine states

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

wenty-one Pre-Marital Counselling (PMC) centres across nine states will be established to give expert guidance on the social, psychological and behavioural aspects of marriage, National Commission for Women (NCW) Chairperson Vijaya Rahatkar said here on Friday. The centres will be officially launched on Saturday on the occasion of International Women's Day.

Also, on the occasion of International Women's Day, the NCW will organise a special exhibition in the Parliament to honour 15 women who played a pivotal role in drafting of the Constitution.

Addressing a press conference, Rahatkar

On the occasion of International Women's Day, the NCW will organise a special exhibition in the Parliament to honour 15 women who played a pivotal role in drafting of the Constitution

- VIJAYA RAHATKAR, NCW CHAIRPERSON

said, "The aim is to provide guidance to the younger generation on how to have a happy marriage." Rahatkar said the initiative follows extensive consultations with over 100 experts from across the country.

"We held consultations in Pune, where experts discussed what should be included in the PMC programme. We also conducted 'training of trainers' for counsellors to identify key topics that need to be covered," she said.

The centres will be officially launched on Saturday on International Women's Day. They will be located in Rajasthan's Bikaner, Madhya Pradesh's Bhopal, Maharashtra's Nashik, Latur, and Mumbai, and Gujarat, Odisha, Kerala, and Faridabad in Uttar Pradesh. Rahatkar said that the centres will be set up near marriage registration

"We plan to have such centres in every district of the country. Each centre will require a space of 150-200 square feet and will be staffed by trained counsellors,"

The NCW chief said she has also urged district collectors to support the initiative by putting up hoardings, banners, and distributing brochures in universities, offices, and marriage registration venues.

"We have prepared well, but as we move forward, new issues will emerge. We plan to engage with colleges and create social media platforms to reach a wider audience," she said.

She also said in collaboration with the Akhil Bharatiya Abhivakta Parishad, a lawyers' body, the NCW will host an event on March 8-9 in Chhatarpur to honour over 1,200 women advocates.

Mira Khadkar, the vice president of the Parishad, said women advocates are the backbone of justice and their expertise is instrumental in creating a more equitable

India flags Bangladesh releasing 'violent extremists'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

ndia on Friday voiced concerns over Bangladesh releasing certain "violent Lextremists" and underlined that it is the responsibility of the interim government to protect the Hindus and other minorities as well as their religious

New Delhi said it supports a "stable, peaceful, inclusive and progressive Bangladesh" in which all issues are resolved through democratic means and by holding inclusive and participatory elections. "We remain concerned about the deteriorating law and order sit-

uation, further exacerbated by the release of violent extremists, who were sentenced for serious crimes," said Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal.

India has repeatedly underlined that it is the responsibility of the interim government to protect the Hindus and other minorities, as well as their properties and religious institutions, he said. "However, only 1,254 incidents out of

over 2,374 incidents reported from August 5, 2024 to February 16, 2025 have been verified by the police. Further, 98 per cent of these 1254 incidents were deemed 'political in nature," he said.

TELANGANA MLC POLLS

Revanth Reddy to meet Congress high command

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE New Delhi/Hyderabad

→he process for elections to the legislative council in Telangana expedited as Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy along with the PCC core committee is scheduled to meet the Congress high command during the weekend and finalise the names of MLC contestants.

The election is necessitated under the MLA quota. With 64-seats in the Telangana Assembly, besides one MLA of CPI as an ally, Congress is likely to win four under quota, while the BRS will get one. The other party AIMIM is seeking one position which is being vacated by Mirza Riazul Hasan Effendi.

With the tenure of five MLCs in state concluding on March 29, the elections are scheduled to be held on March 20. MLA quota in MLC elections are conducted to elect members through voting by state legislators.

Sources said party which came to power first time in the state after bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh about 11 years ago is to do a balancing act for four MLC seats with SC, ST, Backward Class, upper castes and minority categories.

Front runners amongst the backward class are Anjan Kumar Yadav, Bandi Sudhakar Goud, Madhu Yashki Goud, Charan Koushik Yadav, Saritha Yadav, Sunitha Rao, amongst others. Whereas from minority several contestants including Mohammed Ali Shabbir, Feroz Khan, Faheem Qureshi are doing the rounds.

State political sources said while SA Sampath Kumar, Addanki Dayakar, Ramulu Naik, Bellaiah Naik are few



Frontrunners include Bandi Sudhakar Goud

names being considered from the SC and ST category, Jeevan Reddy, Sama Rammohan Reddy, Harkara Venugopal, Kusuma Kumar are big name from within the upper caste.

AICC sources said Bandi currently State Congress Spokesperson is one the strongest candidates as he has served several former Congress CMs, Union Ministers in his Congress worker spanning for over 35 years.

The notification to this affect was issued on March 3 and candidates will have to submit their nominations by Macrh 10 and scrutiny on March 11. The withdrawal of nominations has to be completed by March 13 and polling scheduled on March 20. The entire election process is set to conclude by March 24.

Decks cleared for redevelopment of Dharavi slums

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

umbai's Dharavi redevelopment project will continue to go on Lafter the Supreme Court refused to stay it on Friday. A bench of Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna and Justice Sanjay Kumar sought responses from the Maharashtra government and Adani Properties Pvt Ltd, which was awarded the tender for the project, on a petition challenging a December 20, 2024 verdict of the Bombay High Court.

The High Court had cleared the decks for redevelopment of the slums in Dharavi and upheld the tender awarded to the Adani Group for the project, ruling there

or perversity" in the decision. The High Court in the process dismissed the plea of UAE-based Seclink Technologies Corporation challenging the state government's decision to award the mega redevelopment project to Adani Properties Pvt Ltd, which had made an ₹5,069 Crore

Seclink Technologies Corporation emerged as the highest bidder for the project first in 2018 with its ₹7,200 Crore offer, but the tender was later scrapped by the Government. The Adani Group had emerged as the highest bidder for the 259hectare Dharavi redevelopment project in the heart of Mumbai and bagged it with its ₹5,069 Crore offer in the 2022 tender

Corporation has moved the top court against the High Court decision.

While issuing notice in its plea, the top court directed Adani Properties Pvt Ltd to make payments for the project through a single bank account. After the Bench issued notice on the plea, senior advocate C Aryama Sundaram appearing for Seclink Technologies Corporation urged the court to order a status quo. The CJI, however, said, "No." Sundaram informed the Bench that the petitioner company offered ₹7,200 Crore in the first tender. "I will increase my offer of ₹7,200 crore by 20 per cent," he told the bench, adding

that the figure comes to ₹8,640 Crore. "What about additional obligations?" appearing for the state.

When the Bench asked Sundaram if the petitioner was willing to comply "with the same obligations as put on the highest bidder", the senior counsel said "yes". The bench noted Sundaram's submission on the proposed commitment and said, "The petitioner will file an affidavit to the said effect before this court." The matter would come in the week of May 25.

The Bench, however, clarified no special equities would be claimed by either sides. Senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, appearing for Adani Properties Pvt Ltd, said the project work had already commenced. "I have carried out constructions. I have deposited funds. About 2,000 peo-

Allahbadia, Apoorva submit written apologies to NCW

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

ouTubers Ranveer Allahbadia and Apoorva Mukhija submitted written apologies to the National Commission for Women (NCW) over their offensive remarks made on "India's Got Latent", panel chairperson Vijaya Rahatkar said on Friday and asserted their comments on the online show were "simply not acceptable".

Allahbadia, Mukhija and show producers Saurabh Bothra and Tushar Poojari appeared before the NCW here on hursday. According to sources, the two

YouTubers were quizzed for hours. Addressing a press conference on Friday, Rahatkar said the NCW will not accept the use of inappropriate language.

"Four people — Tushar Poojari, Saurabh Bothra, Apoorva Mukhija and Ranveer Allahbadia — appeared before the commission. The panel will not

accept the use of inappropriate language. Such remarks are simply not acceptable," the NCW chief said in response to a question. Rahatkar said the individuals expressed regret over their remarks.

"Keeping the social impact (of the comments) in mind, they were issued notices. They appeared before the commission and expressed deep regret. They said they should not have spoken in such a manner and have submitted a 'maafinama' (written apology)," she said.

She further said when they appeared before the NCW, "we told them that their comments could lead to action against them. They deeply regretted the language they used (in the show) and admitted that they should not have made such statements."

"They said, 'We made a big mistake and we will not repeat such errors in the future. We will always ensure that the words we use do not hurt anyone," Rahatkar told reporters, adding that



YouTuber Ranveer Allahbadia being brought for questioning in connection with his offensive remarks made on 'India's Got Latent' show in Guwahati on Friday

Allahbadia, in particular, assured the NCW that he would be more mindful in

the future. "This is the first and last time such a mistake has happened. From now on, I will think carefully and speak with respect about women," she said, quoting Allahbadia. Rahatkar also highlighted Allahbadia's additional remarks, stating, "He specifically mentioned that the law is doing its job, and what has happened cannot be undone. He said, 'I will ensure that I speak thoughtfully and remain vigilant about the impact of my words, especially concerning women."

The NCW took cognisance of the remarks made by Allahbadia, Mukhija and others on comic Samay Raina's show that sparked outrage last month.

Several FIRs were lodged against Allahbadia, popularly known as BeerBiceps, for his comments on parents

ED arrests Ashish Bhalla of WTC group

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

¬he Enforcement Directorate (ED) has arrested Ashish Bhalla, the promoter of the Delhi-NCR-based realty group WTC, in a money laundering case linked to homebuyers' funds. Bhalla was taken into custody under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) on Thursday and a special court in Gurugram sent him to ED custody for six days, said officials.

The ED charged that after promising assured returns in exchange for investment against plots or commercial spaces, WTC "diverted" the funds of depositors and these were "siphoned off" to several shell companies to acquire lands at various locations. Hundreds of crores of rupees were also diverted to suspicious entities in Singapore whose beneficial ownership is with Bhalla's family members, said the agency.

During the probe, it was found that the WTC group collected more than ₹3,000

Crore from various investors across several States, such as Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Chandigarh, Ahmedabad and Punjab. The ED action comes after the agency raided multiple premises of the WTC Group and Bhalla apart from that of the Bhutani Group and its promoter Ashish Bhutani on February 27. It was alleged that Bhalla remained "absconding" during the raids and "induced" key persons against cooperating with the investigation. Ashish Bhalla is a "key beneficiary"

and the "mastermind" of the fraudulent activities of the group and has made unlawful gains through the scheme, according to the ED. The ED case stems from dozens of FIRs filed by the Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of Delhi Police and Faridabad police against the WTC group and its promoters including Ashish Bhalla, Suparna Bhalla, Abhijeet Bhalla, Bhutani Infra and others for cheating, criminal breach of trust

ers by the accused companies and persons, the ED said in an earlier statement. These police cases were booked on the basis of complaints from "hundreds" of homebuvers and investors.

Bhutani Infra said in a statement last week that it severed all ties with the WTC Group earlier this month and "is now fully cooperating with the ED in its investigation". There was no comment from the WTC group. The ED said the police FIRs alleged that WTC Faridabad Infrastructure Private Limited and its promoters "lured" the general public to invest in their project in Sector 111-114 for the allotment of residential plots.

The promoters and directors hatched a "criminal conspiracy" and "siphoned off" the hard-earned money of the plot buyers by not completing the project within the stipulated time and "nondelivery" of the plots to the buyers for more than 10 years, it said.

The FIRs also alleged that the Bhutani and fraud against hundreds of homebuy- Infra group acquired WTC and re-

launched the project in Sector 111-114, Faridabad, keeping the plot buyers in "disarray", committing fraud with investors and luring them to "surrender" their units, the ED said. During the searches, the agency said,

documents related to fund collection of more than ₹3,500 Crore from various investors against 15 projects were found The ED did not say where these doc-

uments were recovered from. The agency had said it seized several "incriminating" documents related to diversion, layering of funds apart from property documents like sale and registration deeds and laptops and hard drives etc. "Additionally, assets to the tune of

thousands of crore (of rupees) have been identified in the name of WTC group," it said. Fixed deposits of WTC group of companies have also been frozen and seized along with jewellery and bullion worth ₹1.5 Crore, according

India seeks action in Jaishankar's security breach in London event rushing towards the car in which

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

inistry of External Affairs (MEA) on Friday here said that the incident of security breach during External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar's event in London indicated "licence accorded to such

forces" in UK. Making this assertion, MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said Ministry of External Affairs had noted statement issued by UK Foreign Office regarding the incident, but "view of its sincerity would depend on the action taken against the culprits" on this and previous occasions.

In a statement released on Thursday, the UK had strongly condemned the security breach, terming any attempt to "intimidate, threaten, or disrupt" public events as "completely unacceptable."

A purported video of the incident circulating on social media platform shows a man with the Indian tricolour

Jaishankar is seated. A group of protesters with pro-Khalistan flags can be seen shouting slogans even as the policemen stationed at the spot block the man and take him away. Protestors also tore up the Indian flag. The incident took place on Wednesday. Jaiswal said the security breach during External Affairs Minister Jaishankar's visit

licence accorded to such forces, as well as indifference to their intimidation, threats, and other actions aimed at impeding our legitimate diplomatic activities in UK". The incident occurred when a pro-

to the United Kingdom shows "both the

Khalistan protestor tried to block Jaishankar's convoy outside Chatham House in London. Ministry of External Affairs spokesper-

son Randhir Jaiswal said that India had conveyed its "deep concern" to the UK authorities, adding that there was a "larger context" to the incident.

CMFRI to honour two women for entrepreneurial success in fisheries

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA Kochi

he ICAR-Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) will honour two women entrepreneurs for their achievements in the fisheries sector as part of its International Women's Day celebrations.

The honour for Akhilamol M A and Sangeetha Sunil is in recognition of their perseverance and entrepreneurial spirit which enabled them to achieve success against all odds, said a release issued by CMFRI on

They will be felicitated by CMFRI during the International Women's Day celebration to be held at the Institute on March 10. While Akhilamol excelled in fish farming

and consultancy services, Sangeetha thrived in fish value addition. Both of them are the beneficiaries of CMFRI's Science Technology and Innovation (STI) Hub project, which focuses on training and capacity building for gender mainstreaming in the fisheries sector, the release added.

Driven by the need to support her children's education, Akhilamol, hailing from Kodungallur, began her career in fish farming. Participation in a CMFRI training programme led to a career change, providing her with the skills and knowledge to generate income through aquaculture, the release said.

Building on this foundation, she developed her entrepreneurial skills and set up a fish consultancy to guide others in the sector. Under the guidance of STI Hub of CMFRI, integrated fish farming unit near Kodungallur.

This unit showcases a diverse range of activities, including the farming of sea bass, pearl spot and mullet alongside poultry rearing, vegetable cultivation and floriculture, according to CMFRI.

Moreover, she has a cage farming venture underway in Kodungallur backwaters and provides business consultancy services under the banner 'Ponnoos Aqua Clinic'.

A resident of Nayaramabalam in Ernakulam district, Sangeetha, on the other hand, channelled her passion into fish value addition. She developed her business specialising in a wide array of value-added fish products under the brand name 'Salt N Spicy'.



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Patna

ll male employees of the Bihar government across the state will take a pledge to stand united against any form of harassment or violence towards women and girl children, for women's empowerment on Saturday, on the occasion of International Women's Day.

The day is celebrated around the world on March 8.

It is a day when women are recognised for their achievements.

The theme this year is: International Women's Day — For ALL Women and Girls: Rights, Equality, Empowerment. The Additional Chief Secretary

(ACS), Social Welfare Department and Chairman-cum-Managing Director of the Women and Child Development Corporation (WCDC) of Bihar, Harjot Kaur Bamhrah, in a letter to all district magistrates (DMs), has asked them to organise events in their respective districts on March 8 and felicitate women Women labourers work at a brick kiln on the eve of the International Women's Day in Patna and girls who have done commendable work in different fields.

"All DMs have been asked to organise events (cultural) in their respective districts on the occasion of International Women's Day and also felicitate women and girls at least 6 to 10 (including those working in private sectors), who have done commendable works in different fields," Bamhrah said.

The district administration will also give commendation certificates, mementoes and smart branded watches (worth ₹2000) to those who will be felicitated. Besides, all male government employees and officials will take a pledge to stand united against any form of harass-

ment or violence towards women and girl child," Bamhrah said. She further said that this year's theme

power and opportunities for all, and an inclusive future where no one is left behind. "The vision is empowering the next

calls for action to unlock equal rights,

generation - youth, particularly young women and adolescent girls - as catalysts for lasting change," she said.

"The Bihar government, under the leadership of Chief Minister Nitish Kumar Jee, has been actively working towards women's empowerment and gender equality through various policies and schemes," the ACS said.

All male government employees will also take the pledge and oath stressing their commitment to creating a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment where no woman or girl should feel insecure or disrespected at the district-level

events on Saturday, the ACS said. They will also fill up a self-declaration form (of commitment) and sign it stressing that they will work for gender equality and women empowerment, she said, adding that the DMs have been asked to upload activities of Saturday's events of their respective districts on the

websites of the WCDC.

Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) personnel during the 56th CISF Raising Day Parade in Ranipet district in Tamil Nadu Cleric urges Muslims in UP to stay indoors during Holi



BISWAJEET BANERJEE

ll India Muslim Jamaat's nation-Aal president, Maulana Shahabuddin Razvi, has urged mosque leaders across Uttar Pradesh to adjust Friday prayer timings on March 29, as Holi coincides with Friday prayers. He suggested that mosques in mixed-

population areas hold Friday prayers at 2:30 pm to prevent any inconvenience during Holi celebrations. However, in Muslim-majority areas,

he stated that no change in prayer timing was necessary. He advised local religious leaders to implement these adjustments where needed. Maulana Razvi urged Muslims to

avoid stepping out unnecessarily during Holi celebrations, especially between morning and afternoon when festivities peak. "If there is an urgent need to go out, do so with caution," he said. He advised Muslims not to react if accidentally smeared with colors. "Simply wash it off with water. It does not make clothes impure," he clarified.

At the same time, he appealed to Hindus to respect the holy month of Ramzan and refrain from applying colors to fasting Muslims or hijab-wearing women. He urged people to guide children accordingly to ensure peaceful cel-

The cleric emphasised that no one should take the law into their own hands in case of disputes. "If any issue arises, report it to the authorities or elders rather than reacting impulsively," he advised. Calling for mutual respect for religious sentiments, he warned against anti-social elements attempting to disturb Hindu-Muslim harmony.

Maulana Razvi reminded the Muslim community that Ramzan teaches patience and discipline. "The Prophet of Islam has taught that a true Muslim does not harm others through words or actions," he said. He concluded by urging Muslims to observe Ramzan peacefully and ensure harmony during the fes-

After Kashi and Ayodhya, now it is Mathura's turn: Yogi famous Lathmar Holi and Laddumar Holi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Mathura

hief Minister Yogi Adityanath inaugurated 'Rangotsav 2025' in Barsana, 'Mathura, during his one-day visit. On this occasion, he declared that after the revitalization of Kashi and Ayodhya, it is now time for the development of Mathura and Braj Bhoomi.

During the event, the Chief Minister offered prayers at the Shri Ladli Ji Maharaj temple and commenced the festival of colors with the traditional Laddumar Holi and a floral celebration. In his address, he described the land of

Braj as a symbol of devotion and faith, enriching Sanatan culture for over 5,000 Radha and Shri Krishna is felt in every par- in Mathura district

The Chief Minister stated that Uttar Pradesh is blessed to be home to Kashi, Ayodhya, and Mathura-three sacred pilgrimage sites that stand as eternal symbols of Sanatan unity. He credited Prime Minister



Narendra Modi's leadership for establishing a new tradition of heritage preservation and development, evident in the grand success of the recently concluded Prayagraj Mahakumbh. Describing Holi as a festival

of unity and harmony, CM Yogi emphasized that while the Mahakumbh conveyed a message of unity to the world, Holi further strengthens it. He lauded the rich traditions of Sanatan Dharma, highlighting the world-

of Barsana as embodiments of this cultural Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath announced that significant provisions have

been made in this year's budget for the development of Braj Bhoomi, with projects worth crores linking Barsana to new growth opportunities. A ropeway service has been introduced in Barsana for the first time. "There would be no limits to the development of Mathura, Barsana, and Braj Bhoomi," he said. On this auspicious occasion of Holi, the Chief Minister expressed confidence that the development of Braj Bhoomi would gain fresh momentum. He visited the Shri Ladli Ji Maharaj tem-

ple to pray for the state's welfare. During his one-day visit Yogi Adityanath also reviewed the progress of various regional development projects. Shailaja Kant Mishra, Vice President of the Uttar Pradesh Braj Tirtha Vikas Parishad, briefed the Chief Minister on development works worth approximately Rs 29 crore that have been completed.

Eleven Naxalites, including seven women, surrender in Chhattisgarh

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Narayanpur

¬ leven Naxalites, including seven women, carrying a collective cash reward of ₹40 Lakh on their heads surrendered in Narayanpur district of Chhattisgarh on Friday, a police official said. The cadres turned themselves in before senior police, Border Security Force (BSF) and Indo Tibetan Border Police (ITMP) officials here, Narayanpur Senior Superintendent of Police Prabhat Kumar said. The Naxals said they were disillusioned with the "hollow" and "inhuman" Maoist ideology and exploitation of innocent tribals by senior cadres. They also cited increasing influence of security forces in the insurgency-hit areas as one of the reasons With setting up of security camps,

They said they were also impressed by the efforts of security forces and administration to facilitate development works in interiors of Abujhmaad region through the 'Niya Nellanar' (your good village) scheme and improve the living standards of trib-

All the surrendered Naxalites were active at different capacities in north Bastar and Maad divisions of Maoists, he said.

Of them, Sannu alias Mangesh Upendi (38) Santu alias Badru Vadada (35) were carrying a reward of ₹8 Lakh each on their heads while Janila alias Jalko Korrma (36) carried a reward of ₹5 Lakh, he said.

Four cadres carried a reward of ₹3 Lakh each, three cadres ₹2 Lakh each and one cadre ₹1 lakh, he added.

Naranpur Police and ITBP have played a key role in their surrender. The development has caused a huge loss to the top Maoist cadres. The dream of Naxal free Abhujmaad through 'Maad bacaho abhiyaan' (save Maad drive) is taking a real shape," Kumar said. All the surrendered Naxalites were provided assistance of ₹25,000 each and will be further rehabilitated as per the government's policy, he

DRI grants three day custody to Ranya in gold smuggling case

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Bengaluru

special court for economic offences on Friday granted the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence three days' custody of actress Ranya Rao, who was arrested at Kempegowda International Airport earlier this week for allegedly smuggling 14.2 kg of gold from Dubai.

The DRI sought her custodial interrogation to investigate the source of the smuggled gold and its intended recipients, suggesting a possible link to "anti-national activities". The court agreed to the request, allowing further inquiry into the case. During the hearing, the DRI submitted a statement obtained from the actress to support its request for her

Investigators revealed that Rao, identified in her passport as Harshavardini Ranya, had travelled to Dubai 27 times in the last six months, raising concerns about the nature

Following her arrest, she reportedly claimed to be working as a freelancer in Dubai's real estate sector.

While Rao applied for bail on Thursday, the court deferred its decision to prioritise the DRI's custody request.

According to DRI officials, gold bars worth ₹12.56 Crore were seized from the 34-yearold actress at Kempegowda International Airport. Subsequent searches at her residence led to the recovery of gold jewellery worth ₹2.06 Crore and Indian currency amounting to ₹2.67 Crore. Rao is the stepdaughter of senior IPS officer Ramachandra Rao. The DGP-rank officer is currently serving as the Chairman and Managing Director of the Karnataka State Police Housing and Infrastructure Development Corporation Ltd, according to a senior police official.

The total seizure in the case stood at ₹17.29 Crore, including assets worth ₹4.73 Crore, marking a significant blow to organised gold smuggling networks.

Amitabh Bachchan purchases land in Ayodhya to build memorial trust

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ Ayodhya

Renowned Bollywood actor Amitabh Bachchan has expanded his presence in Ayodhya by purchasing 2 bighas (approximately 5,069 square meters) of land in the city. The property, valued at over ₹86 Lakh, has been acquired under the Harivanshrai Bachchan Memorial Trust from Mumbai-based real estate firm 'The House of Abhinandan Lodha.

The land registration was finalised on January 31 at the Sadar office by Rajesh Rishikesh. Sources indicate that Bachchan intends to establish the Harivanshrai Bachchan Memorial Trust on the site.

The plot, situated in Tihura Manjha, is just seven kilometers from the Ram Temple, making it a convenient 15-20 minute drive to the sacred site.

Bachchan has been increasingly asso-

ciated with Ayodhya, having visited the Ramlala temple on February 9, 2024. During his visit, he remarked, "Ayodhya will now be a frequent destination for me. I have always been connected to the banks of the Ganges."

This land acquisition is part of a larger development by the Lodha Group, which is building a premium township named 'The Saryu' along the banks of the Saryu River. Covering around 51 acres, this project gained prominence following the consecration of the Ram Temple on January 22, 2024. Speculation about Bachchan's involvement in the project first arose when representatives of Abhinandan Lodha Group hinted at the possibility of him purchasing a

Earlier reports suggested he was purchasing a 10,000-square-foot piece of land worth ₹14.5 Crore, though no official confirmation was provided.

Bachchan's visit to Ayodhya on January 22 for the Pran-Pratishtha ceremony of Ramlala, accompanied by his son Abhishek Bachchan, added to the buzz surrounding his connection with

During the event, Prime Minister Narendra Modi was seen inquiring about the actor's well-being, after which Bachchan had darshan of Ramlala.

On February 9, during his return to Ayodhya, Bachchan reflected on his father, the esteemed poet Harivansh Rai

He shared, "Whenever I travel, people often ask, 'Since you live in Mumbai, how will we maintain a bond with you? My father had once shared a thought that stays with me. Although we were born in Allahabad and have lived in Delhi, Kolkata, and Mumbai, our roots will always call us back. That's why I will continue to visit Ayodhya.'

PM Modi highlights issue of obesity in India

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA Silvassa (Dadra

rime Minister Narendra Modi on Prime Minister National Inreduce weight as he cited a report which claimed that nearly 44 crore people in India may be obese by 2050.

Calling obesity the root cause of many diseases, Modi urged people to fight the chronic health condition characterised by excessive body fat by doing regular physical exercises and reducing edible oil consumption by 10 per cent. He was addressing a gathering at Silvassa town in Dadra and Nagar Haveli, part of the Union Daman and Diu located adjoining Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu Gujarat. At the event, Modi inaugurated as well as performed ground-breaking ceremony for development and infrastructure projects worth ₹2,587 Crore for the Union territory. "Diseases linked to our lifestyle are posing a huge risk to our

health today. Obesity is one of them



Territory of Dadra and Nagar Haveli, and Prime Minister Narendra Modi speaks during the inauguration of Namo Hospital in Silvassa, Dadra and

because it is the root cause of many diseases. According to a recent report, nearly 44 Crore people in India may be obese by 2050. This figure is huge and it is equally scary," Modi emphasised.

He said one in every three people in the

country may be suffering from obesity by 2050 if the findings of the report turns out to be true. Modi warned obesity will prove dangerous for people's health and everyone must start trying to overcome this sit-









Women's Day: Not an episodic event but an ongoing epic saga

The future belongs to those who dare to demolish barriers and Indian women are quick learners

nternational Women's Day is not an annual event, to be reduced to yet another date routinely done and dusted in the yearly calendar. It is a potent reminder of the struggles women have endured through history and the milestones yet to be achieved. Indian women, in particular, have battled intense socio-economic and cultural challenges. What sets them apart on the global stage, however, is their unique gift of grit and determination to shatter stereotypes and leave their indelible ink on countless pages of narratives historically dominated and scripted by men, and admittedly some women, for an inherently patriarchal society. Today, as we celebrate these achievements, we must remember that true emancipation for the Indian woman is still a work in progress, indeed an ongoing journey. En route to the final destination lies a path strewn with constrictive societal norms and gender biases that must be negotiated with. The Indian woman shall, and will.

Historically shackled to the home and hearth with limited access to education and career opportunities, the Indian woman has not had it easy. Today, despite the gradual bridging of time-worn gender faultlines, the modern Indian woman still confronts lack of representation in leadership roles. Safety concerns, particularly gender-based violence and harassment, remain pressing issues that not only require a systemic change but a decisive obliteration of decadent mindsets. Cultural expectations are an encumbrance that every woman must fight, her individual battles, her attempts to strike a picture-perfect balance between professional aspirations and family needs. This dual responsibility has often compelled our women to compromises, many stepping back from their place of work due to lack of institutional support, such as maternity benefits and flexible work environments.

Despite these hurdles. Indian women have carved a niche for themselves with their unique resilience. For instance, the Armed Forces, once an exclusive preserve of our young men, now proudly showcases our women as fighter pilots, commanding officers, and front-line warriors. Leaders like Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw in biotechnology, Falguni Nayar in entrepreneurship, Rani Rampal in sports, all have redefined success, inspiring millions. Women journalists, scientists, and engineers have risen to prominence, from Gagandeep Kang in virology to Tessy Thomas, India's 'Missile Woman.' The Indian judiciary, today has an enviable gallery of women judges championing gender justice, with a lady perhaps poised to become the country's first female Chief Justice.

However, true gender equality must reflect in increased representation of women in politics and corporate boardrooms. Laws do exist to protect their rights, but enforcement is often weak. Education and financial independence are key to furthering women's empowerment and must form the bedrock of fundamental rights. Policy reforms must ensure equal pay, safer workplaces, and equal career growth opportunities. Societal mindsets need to shift, with men playing an active role in supporting gender equality. Schools must instill values of inclusivity from an early age, ensuring that each coming generation is sensitised to the need for a more equitable perspective.

Today serves as a reminder that while progress has been made, the journey toward true empowerment is far from over. It is not just about celebrating achievements but about continuing the fight against gender inequality. India stands at a crossroads where women's participation in every sphere can redefine the nation's future. With a concerted and synchronised effort - from policymakers, businesses, society, to individuals - women's emancipation can move beyond discourse to become an everyday reality. The road ahead is long, and there are promises to keep. Today's Indian woman is not a silent spectator to this change. She is the change.

_e<u>aderspeak</u>

Today is Women's Day. In Navsari, I

On the occasion of Women's Day, I

media account to some such inspiring sisters and

daughters. The son of a poor mother decided that

guarantee for the poor and started MUDRA Yojana.

any guarantee — and those who abuse us, those who

have the 'zero seat', will not understand this, will not

even be able to tell how many zeros are there

Today, ₹32 lakh crore has been given to the poor without

Modi will give guarantee to the poor. Modi took

will participate in a programme.

am going to hand over my social



International Women's Day underscores the need to remember that gender justice should be an integral part of policy-making and governance, beyond symbolic gestures and rhetorical lectures

s a woman in politics and an advocate for women's voices nationally and internationally, I extend my warmest wishes on this International Women's Day. This occasion serves not just as a celebration but also as a moment of reflection on the progress we have made and the long road ahead in achieving true gender equality.

This year's Women's Day comes a short month after the Delhi elections, marking a historic moment with the appointment of the city's fourth female Chief Minister and firstever female Leader of Opposition. We also witnessed an unprecedented voter turnout, with women surpassing men-60.9 per cent against 60.2 per cent—in exercising their democratic rights. Delhi also saw the highest number of women contesting the election this time, making up 14 per cent of the total candidates. However, the same did not translate into elected representatives, with only 7 per cent of the seats going to women, the lowest in a decade.

Before we see these figures as a sign of progress towards women's equal representation in the democratic process, I must remind you of the Women's Reservation Act passed in 2023 to ensure 33 per cent representation of women in the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies. Despite getting full support across party lines, this Act remains in limbo, awaiting the completion of the census and delimitation exercises before getting implemented.

The census was postponed from 2020 and has been indefinitely delayed since the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. As a result, the aspiration of 33 per cent representation remains a distant dream, while the reality continues to hover around 10-14 per cent. This pattern is visible across states that recently held their elections-women comprised 9 per cent of candidates and 8 per cent of elected representatives in Maharashtra, 10 per cent of candidates and 14 per cent winners in Haryana, and 11 per cent of candidates with 15 per cent representation in Iharkhand

Even as we fight for greater representation in politics, the discourse around women remains regressive, with many politicians making misogynistic comments about how women should dress, behave and conduct themselves. Women continue to be blamed for their harassment, while structural issues of gender-based violence remain unaddressed. India still lacks a marital rape law, and progressive legislation such as Maharashtra's proposed Shakti Billdesigned to curb crimes against women and children—was returned without the Centre's assent. A society where women's safety and



efforts to mandate having at least one

woman on company boards, the progress on

parity has been slow.

Women held just 18 per cent of board seats in India in 2023, lagging the global average of 23 per cent. Of this, the number of women chairing company boards stands low at 4 per cent. The situation is even worse at the highest executive levels—only 6 per cent of CEOs globally are women, with India standing at a meagre 5 per cent. Middle management, the crucial pipeline for future leadership, has also declined, with women's representation falling from 18-19 per cent in 2019 to 14-16 per cent post-pandemic.

India's total share of female employees in senior and middle management is only 12.7 per cent, significantly lower than neighbouring countries like Sri Lanka (24.6 per cent) and Thailand (34.7 per cent). The situation is no better for women entrepreneurs. India ranks 57th out of 65 on the Index of Women Entrepreneurs, and only 20 per cent of businesses are led by women. The funding gap is particularly stark — just 0.3 per cent of India's venture capital funding went to women-led startups in 2021.

This funding disparity is not just an Indian problem; globally, women-led startups receive only a fraction of venture capital. In the US, despite women owning almost 40 per



cent of VC funding. Europe presents a similar picture, with maleled startups consistently securing the lion's share of investments. Gender bias in investment process is well-established. Experiments have shown that iden-

tical startup pitches

are more likely to receive funding when delivered by a male voice than a female one. Investors ask male founders about growth potential, while female entrepreneurs are questioned about personal commitments marital status, children and whether their business is merely a "lifestyle venture."

PRIYANKA CHATURVEDI

These biases are deeply ingrained and systemic, stalling women's progress at every level. It is, therefore, not surprising that our artificial intelligence systems, the technology of the future, turn out to be genderbiased as well. AI is only as unbiased as the data it is trained on. The gender disparities in our society are mirrored in AI decisionmaking, reinforcing rather than challenging existing inequalities.

If we want a more equitable future, we need to change our thinking at the fundamental level—ensuring women's inclusion is not just a tokenistic effort but a structural, sustained commitment across politics, business and governance and shift towards women-led development and change.

In the wake of these sobering realities, we must also recognise the steps that can drive real change.

The Government must ensure the timely implementation of the Women's Reservation Act. Companies need to go beyond filling quotas and focus on mentoring and promoting women in leadership roles. Investors and venture capitalists must address their biases and provide fair funding opportunities to women entrepreneurs. Education and skill-building programmes must empower young women to take on leadership roles in various sectors.

Moreover, it is necessary that we, as a society, foster an environment where women feel safe and supported in the workplace, in politics, and public spaces. Sexual harassment and workplace discrimination must be addressed with stronger legal protections and zero-tolerance policies, and public representatives should reflect these values.

Women's issues must not be sidelined or treated as secondary concerns but should be an integral part of policy-making and governance. On this Women's Day, let us go beyond symbolic gestures. The numbers tell a sobering story, but they also offer a clear roadmap for change. It is time to turn these statistics into tangible action and move beyond rhetoric to create a world where women are equal stakeholders in every sphere of life.

(The writer is a politician and member of

cent of businesses, they receive only 2 per Do not besmirch legacy with obscenity

pinion

s a proud Bihari, a Hollywood actress and a global inspirational figure, I feel an urgent need to address a critical issue that has long tarnished our cultural heritage and posed a serious threat to women's dignity and safety. The growing obscenity in Bhojpuri music is not merely a matter of artistic expression; it is a reflection of deeply ingrained patriarchal attitudes that devalue women,

normalise objectification and perpetuate a culture of disrespect and violence. This degradation of our musical tradition has had far-reaching consequences and we must take decisive action to restore its lost dignity. For generations, Bhojpuri music has been a vibrant medium of cultural expression, deeply rooted in our traditions and values.

It has narrated stories of love, devotion and social issues, resonating with the soul of our people. However, in recent years, this once-respected art form has been reduced to a vehicle for vulgarity and misogyny. The lyrics of many modern Bhojpuri songs objectify women, reduce them to mere objects of desire, and promote harmful stereotypes that erode their self-worth. This rampant objectification not only diminishes women's confidence but also fosters an environment where gender-based violence is normalised. When music—one of the most powerful tools of influence—portrays women in a degrading manner, it reinforces the notion that they are inferior and unde-



the obscenity in Bhojpuri music is also corrodgenre celebrated for its poetic richness and emotional depth has now become synonymous with crudeness and disrespect. The commercialisation of vulgarity in Bhojpuri songs has not only tarnished the reputation of our music but has also created a rift between generations—alienating those who grew up cherishing its traditional

The urgency of this issue demands a comprehensive approach to restore respectability to Bhojpuri music while simultaneously ensuring women's dignity and safety. Laws must be enforced to curb the production and dissemination of obscene content in Bhojpuri music. While artistic freedom is important, it should not come at the cost of degrading an entire gender or dismantling cultural values. Stronger regulations should be implemented to hold singers, lyricists, producers, and distributors accountable for their content. The government should establish a monitoring body to review music content before its release, and strict penalties should be imposed on those who promote vulgarity in the name of entertainment. Awareness campaigns should be launched to educate them about their rights and the harmful effects of such content.

This can be achieved by promoting artists who create respectful, meaningful, and uplifting content. Music labels should be encouraged to invest in artists who uphold the

serving of respect. Beyond its impact on women, integrity of Bhojpuri music. Awards and incentives should be introduced to honour musicians who create songs that celeing the cultural fabric of Bihar and other brate women and cultural values. Schools and cultural insti-Bhojpuri-speaking regions. What was once a tutions should integrate traditional Bhojpuri music into their curriculum to revive its authentic charm. Restoring dignity to Bhojpuri music requires collective action from society. The degradation of Bhojpuri music into a platform for obscenity is an issue that affects not just women but the very soul of our cultural identity.

We must act now to reclaim the dignity of our music, ensure women's safety, and uphold the values that define us as a society. The fight against obscenity in Bhojpuri music is not about restricting artistic expression but about fostering a culture where art uplifts rather than degrades. It is time for us to unite and take a stand. Let us demand accountability from those who produce and promote obscene content. Let us empower women to challenge these harmful narratives. Let us support artists who honour our traditions and values. Above all, let us work together to build a future where Bhojpuri music is once again a source of pride, inspiration, and cultural enrichment. The time for change is now-let us be the voice that restores honour to Bhojpuri music and creates a world where women are valued, respected, and celebrated. Together, we can bring back the true essence of Bhojpuri music and ensure that it remains a symbol of our rich cultural legacy for generations

(The writer is an actress, producer and an advocate for cultural reforms; views are personal)

Letters to the Editor

India aims \$5 trillion economy

in ₹32 lakh crore...

 $\operatorname{Madam} - \operatorname{Apropos}$ of the news on PM Modi's vow for a \$5 trillion economy (March 6, 2025), the segmental approach on manufacturing, the service sector, IT, GDP indices, education, health, engineering, AI, defence, etc., for achieving the target of a \$5 trillion economy is not just sufficient. The state governments are not doing enough to generate their own resources and contribute to infrastructure development significantly. The infrastructure development of roads, aviation and maritime, education and health, defence, industry, IT, and technology is key to achieving this target. For the past 5 years, there has been a marathon race in state and Union governments to spend more and more on freebies and welfare schemes with no standards set to benchmark the optimum expenditure out of the budget. Only needy people should get freebies.

We are idling our potential men and women power through freebies. It takes a toll on infrastructure development. The deficit budgets of the state governments are ominous for GDP growth and marching beyond the 5th largest economy, whereas China is regaining its GDP growth. If the entire agriculture and manufacturing sectors are accounted for, we are already at the \$5 trillion economy mark. The indiscriminately higher GST is discouraging the manufacturing sector from disclosing its production for income tax and indirect taxes.

VINOD JOHRI | DELHI

DMK plays language politics

Madam— The ruling DMK has started the language rhetoric- 'anti-Hindi imposition' in the state-is a signal that the elections are round the corner. Now that actor Vijay, who also shares the Dravidian ideology, is likely to split the DMK's vote and the party having to fight the anti-incumbency and serious corruption charges by several cabinet colleagues, the delimitation issue has come in handy as the language issue seems to have not caught on well so far.

Delimitation, once completed, seeks to decide on the number of parliament seats based on the population the state, which, when completed and implemented, Tamil Nadu and southern states are likely to lose in number of states, while the northern states like Bihar, UP, Jharkhand, Meghalaya, etc, are likely to gain. Tamil Nadu's plea is that the southern states are not to be penalised for having followed the population control policy directives issued post-1971 census while the northern states, which have failed, are getting more representation. The argument, though valid, is one that needs discussion, keeping the fairness of democratic principles in mind, which entails that all the voters need to be represented equally. DMK's MK Stalin also would not find supporters for his theory from his own INDI alliance

GOPALASWAMY J | CHENNAI

Countries retaliate to US tariffs

Madam —Apropos of the editorial 'Beginning of a Trade War' (March 6, 2025), no doubt, President Trump has shaken the world with his policy announcements and being criticised for his trade and tariff war. But in many respects, Trump is right in doing whatever is in the best of America's interest. Since World War II, America has been exploited by the world in many ways. Europe, Latin America and developing countries took maximum benefits by exploiting the US. Illegal immigration to America from developing countries hurt America badly. No doubt in the present we are criticising Trump, but history may prove that many of his actions set things right in international relations and made a level playing field for international trade.

National interests determine the relations of every nation with other countries, America being no exception. The world should not create a hue and cry when Trump makes policies in the interest of America. All targeted countries, China, Canada, Mexico, etc, immediately retaliated with equally high tariffs. Whereas America tolerated their unfair and high tariffs for decades and even helped and supported these countries in many other ways. The onus for this trade war is on China, Canada, Mexico, South Korea, India, etc., who heavily taxed imports from the US. Instead of criticising Trump, we should wait and watch for a just and fair

VINAY KR MALHOTRA | AMBALA CANTT

HEALTHCARE NEEDS IMPROVEMENT

non-metro areas (March 6, 2025) presents good reading material. The scope and necessity to develop healthcare facilities in small cities and even in rural areas are much more than what they are today. But the task of developing healthcare in cities is left to the private players in the field for whom healthcare is undoubtedly a com-

modity to mint profit rather than a service. Healthcare seekers come to cities mostly from rural areas and go to metros when specialised treatment is required. Very few of them are fortunate enough to avail themselves of such specialised treatment in public sector healthcare institutions, and others either seek the intervention of insurance providers or meet the high cost by disposing of assets.

If the healthcare institutions and system of educating the public on preventive aspects and providing periodic check-ups even in the absence of any visible symptoms are ensured in the rural areas and towns, the rush in the cities could be considerably reduced. Most of the hospitals are functioning with gross deficiencies in

terms of professional infrastructure or materials, including medicines. A government hospital in Anantapur treats an average of 1500 inpatients a day. Its bed strength is 750 on paper, but the budget provided is for a 500-bed capacity. The height of it is that it has a super speciality hospital attached to manage its fund requirements.

We find an analyse machine that costs a few lakhs but is not put in use for want of an A/C to maintain temperature. This state of affairs is quoted to mention it as an example. Another issue is the quality of medical education. Many teaching institutions suffer due to a want of experienced and efficient teachers. Still, they pump out graduates and postgraduates.

In India, falling sick is taxable. Medicines, medical devices, and ICU-level care are taxed. All these woes are the fallout of the apathy of the government that doesn't prioritise the healthcare of the people but aims at making India the global destination for healthcare. We still have

AG RAJMOHAN | ANANTAPUR





Breaking Barriers, Shaping the Future

The story of women in mining is one of determination, transformation and triumph. From fighting legal battles to working deep underground, from leading corporate teams to redefining industry norms, they are proving that no profession is beyond their reach

ining has long been regarded as one of the most gruelling and physically demanding industries, a domain in which women were historically deemed unfit to participate. The underground mines, characterised by darkness, dirt, and danger, were legally off-limits to women for decades. However, times have changed. Today, women are not only entering the mining sector but excelling in roles that were once considered the exclusive territory of men. Their journey from exclusion to inclusion is a story of resilience, courage, and determination.

For years, the legal framework itself reinforced gender-based exclusion. The British government imposed a ban on women working in underground mines in 1937, citing the hazardous and oppressive nature of the work. A brief lift of the restriction in 1943 was followed by its reinstatement in 1946, cementing the notion that mining was unsuitable for women. This exclusion persisted for over seventy years until a group of seven young mining engineering students in India decided to challenge the status quo. In 2017, these women, led by

Neredukomma Hiranmayee, noticed that job advertisements in the sector clearly stated "Men Only." Determined to fight for their right to work in the field they had trained for, they took their petition to the Narendra Modi-led Central Government. Their persistence paid off when the Mines Act of 1952 was amended in 2019, allowing women to work in underground mines with certain conditions. They were permitted to work between 7 AM and 6 PM but had to provide written consent, and were required to work in groups for safety. While these conditions still imposed limitations, the amendment marked a historic turning point for gender inclusion

Since this breakthrough, several women have entered the mining workforce, proving their capabilities and resilience. In the Singareni Collieries of Telangana, one of India's oldest coal mining PSUs, women miners are now working underground alongside men. Their presence is reshaping the industry and breaking long-held stereotypes. Swathi Penugonada, whose family had a legacy in coal mining, left her job in aerospace engineering to become a miner when the opportunity finally opened up. For her, mining was not just a profession but a tribute to her grandparents who had worked in Singareni mines before her. Another trailblazer, Allam Navyashree, started as a section supervisor in an underground mine, facing scepticism from male colleagues who doubted her abilities. Over time, she their respect, eventually supervising some of the very men who once questioned her competence.

For Chunchu Sandhya Rani, mining was an unexpected career path. Married while still in college, she assumed her rofessional aspirations would be set aside However, with the support of her husband and in-laws, she pursued her mining engineering degree and secured a job at Singareni. Today, while she works underground, her parents take care of her two children, proving that with family support, women can balance both career and motherhood in even the most challenging professions.

These stories of perseverance are not limited to fieldwork alone. Women are also taking on leadership roles within the mining sector, ensuring that gender equality is not just about numbers but about real empowerment. Singareni Collieries, recognising the need for inclusive leadership, has placed women in key decision-making positions. Kavitha Naidu has become the first woman General Manager to handle Personnel & Industrial Relations, a role that involves managing labour disputes, transfers, and negotiations for thousands of workers. Dr



Sujatha, as the Chief Medical Officer, oversees the company's extensive healthcare network, while Sunitha Devi has broken new ground as Singareni's first woman Company Secretary, managing board meetings and corporate governance. These women are not just participating in the industry but they are shaping its future.

The inclusion of women in mining is not just about gender equality; it also brings tangible benefits to the sector. Studies worldwide have shown that diverse workplaces lead to better decision-making, improved efficiency, and stronger financial performance. Women bring unique perspectives and problem-solving approaches, making workplaces more innovative and dynamic. In mining, where safety and operational efficiency are paramount, their contributions are proving invaluable.

Recognising these advantages, mining companies are actively working to create an inclusive and safe work environment for women. Singareni Collieries has implemented several initiatives, including dedicated transport facilities, separate first aid rooms with female medical staff, proper washrooms and hygiene facilities in underground sites, and childcare support for working mothers. Additionally, gender sensitivity training has been introduced to ensure a workplace culture that is welcoming and respectful.

Despite these advancements, challenges remain. The nature of mining still presents physical and logistical difficulties, and societal perceptions about women in demanding professions are slow to change. However, the growing presence of women in mining is sending a strong message that they are not only capable of handling the work but excelling in it. The number of women in the industry is rising and with upcoming recruitment drives, their representation is set to increase significantly in the coming years.

The Ministry of Coal and the Ministry of Mines have taken significant steps to encourage and support women's participation in the sector. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, a strong emphasis has been placed on empowering women in traditionally maledominated industries. The amendments in

mining laws to allow underground mines were just beginning. Today, multiple government policies are actively fostering

Several Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) under the Coal and Mines

inclusion.

Ministries, such as Coal India Limited (CIL) and Hindustan Copper Limited (HCL), have introduced recruitment policies aimed at increasing women's representation. The Commercial Coal Mine Auctions, launched by the Ministry, have also opened new opportunities for women entrepreneurs and professionals in mining and allied sectors. As the industry expands, the vision is to ensure that women are a key part of this growth.

SATISH Chandra Dubey

To further encourage women in mining the government has launched skill development programs and scholarships for female mining engineering students. Mission Karmayogi, an initiative reviewed for the Ministry of Coal and Mines, focuses on creating a skilled and futureready workforce, ensuring that women receive equal access to training and leadership programs. The government's 'Nari Shakti' initiative is also playing a crucial role in promoting women's participation in sectors like mining, ensuring safe working conditions and career growth opportunities.

The Ministry of Mines is also actively working on integrating women into the future of critical minerals exploration. As India moves towards sustainable mining and the development of lithium, cobalt, and other rare minerals essential for electric vehicles and renewable energy, women professionals are being encouraged to take up leadership roles in these

futuristic industries.

The women in mining are not just breaking barriers; they are shaping the future of the industry with resilience and determination. Their courage to step into the depths of the earth, to lead, innovate, and inspire, is a testament to their unwavering spirit. From underground miners to corporate leaders, they are redefining possibilities and proving that strength knows no gender. As India's mining sector evolves, their contributions will be the bedrock of progress. We salute these trailblazers who work tirelessly, often in unseen and challenging conditions, to power our nation. Their journey is not just inspiring but also it is a beacon of empowerment, resilience, and hope for generations to come.

The future of women in mining is not confined to coal alone. As India expands its focus on renewable energy and sustainable resource management, new opportunities are emerging in sectors such as solar energy, thermal projects, and mineral exploration. Women are increasingly stepping into these roles, contributing technological advancements and strategic decisionmaking. As we celebrate international Women's Day, it is essential to recognise the pioneering women who have shattered barriers in mining and those who continue push the boundaries. Their achievements are not just personal victories but milestones in India's journey toward gender-inclusive economic growth. The once male-dominated world of mining is evolving into a field where merit, not gender, determines success.

The story of women in mining is one of determination, transformation, and triumph. From fighting legal battles to working deep underground, from leading corporate teams to redefining industry norms, they are proving that no profession is beyond their reach. Their strength. resilience, and ambition are not only shaping the mines of today but also paving the way for the miners of tomorrow.

(The writer is Union Minister of State for Coal and Mines, Government of India; views are personal

Today is a day beyond celebrations; it is a clarion call for gender justice

or us, Women's Day is more than just a celebration; it is a call to recognise the immense potential that remains untapped due to deep-seated biases. At Gedik Holding and Gedik University, we take pride in fostering an environment where over 250 women are breaking barriers in fields as diverse as aerospace technology and welding. Our commitment to the growth and empowerment of women and girls has spanned over six decades, and today, we witness the transformative results of these efforts.

The gendering of professions has always been fluid. Welding, a field often perceived as male-dominated, is now seeing thousands of women actively shaping the manufacturing of cutting-edge technology. Similarly, computing, once largely led by men, is again being pioneered by women. Industries that have historically excluded women must reevaluate their biases. Women have long played a dominant role in sectors such as computing and manufacturing, and there is no reason why they cannot thrive in today's high-paying fields like engineering, finance, and technology. The cost of exclusion is not merely social-it is economic.

Both India and Turkey face challenges when it comes to women's participation in the workforce. While the majority of employable men are already working, female labour force participation remains significantly lower. According to the World Economic Forum, India's female labour force participation rate is around 24 per cent, while Turkey stands at approximately 35 per cent. This underutilisation of women in the workforce is one of the greatest economic inefficiencies of our time. Prioritising female education is crucial for both nations. India's female literacy rate is currently at 70 per cent, while Turkey's is at 95 per cent. While India is making rapid progress, particularly in rural areas, there is still much to be done. Investing in women's education presents an opportunity for India and Turkey to collaborate and drive economic growth Economic partnerships offer a powerful avenue to enhance

women's participation in business. Textiles and tourism are two industries where India and Turkey have developed growing cooperation. India is one of the largest exporters of yarn to Turkey, where manufacturers transform these raw materials into high-end fashion garments for global markets. Women play a pivotal role in both economies-whether as artisans in India weaving traditional textiles or as designers and

business leaders in Turkey's fashion industry.

Indian wedding tourism in Turkey flourishing, and Turkish women have been instrumental in shaping this transformation.

From event planning to hospitality, luxury services, and cultural adaptation, they bridge the gap between Indian traditions and Turkish hospitality to create seamless, grand wedding experiences. Many Turkish women have specialised in organising elaborate Indian weddings in luxury destinations such as Antalya, Bodrum, and Istanbul. Hotels and resorts have trained female staff to provide authentic Indian wedding hospitality, while Turkish women in the culinary industry have honed their skills to master Indian cuisine. Their expertise extends

to styling, entertainment, and venue management, making Turkey one of the most sought-after destinations for Indian weddings.

Beyond trade, fostering women entrepreneurs can further strengthen economic ties between India and Turkey. Business networks, trade fairs, and mentorship programs connecting Indian and Turkish women professionals could lead to new opportunities and innovations.

Women-led startups in both countries would benefit from cultural exchange programs, digital marketplaces, and co-working initiatives that promote cross-border entrepreneurship.

Cultural ties between India and Turkey extend beyond business, with over 300,000 Indian tourists visiting Turkey annually. From the bustling bazaars of Istanbul to the vibrant markets of Delhi, both nations share a love for dynamic street food cultures, rich history, and warm hospitality.

One fascinating cultural parallel is their tea traditions. In Turkey, tea is known as çay, while in India, masala chai is a daily staple. More than just beverages, tea symbolises hospitality, conversation, and community. Whether served in a tulip-shaped glass in Istanbul or a clay cup on the streets of Kolkata, tea fosters social connections and business discussions alike.

There is also an increasing appreciation for cultural exchange in the creative economy, including art, cinema, and music. Turkish television dramas have gained immense popularity in India, while Bollywood films enjoy a dedicated audience in Turkey. This mutual admiration provides a platform to highlight women's contributions in creative industries, from filmmaking to fashion.

Gender equality is not just a moral imperative; it is an economic necessity. The cost of sexism is evident in lost productivity, missed opportunities, and lower economic growth. By prioritising women's education, integrating them into various industries, and fostering international collaborations-such as those between India and Turkey-businesses and economies can unlock unprecedented potential. Women's Day serves as a reminder that true empowerment does not stem from symbolic gestures but from meaningful structural change. It is time for policymakers, business leaders, and communities to invest in women-not just for the sake of equality, but for the economic prosperity of all.

(The writer is Chairperson, Gedik Holding, Türkiye & Chairperson, Board of Trustees, Istanbul Gedik University; views are personal)

Esnure swift and uncompromising justice for rape survivors

he fight against sexual violence in India is far from over. Every woman in our country has a fundamental right to safety, dignity and justice. Yet, incidents of sexual violence continue to surface, exposing the deep-rooted challenges in our societal structures. We must take decisive and solutionoriented steps to prevent such crimes and build a future where women and children are truly safe.

As the founder of PARI Foundation, I have dedicated my life to advocating for survivors of rape and sexual violence. On December 16, 2024, PARI took a significant step forward by convening the First-Ever National Convention on the Prevention of Violence Against Women and Children. This landmark event marked a turning point in our efforts to combat sexual violence, bringing together policymakers, legal experts, civil society organisations, educators and survivors to discuss concrete measures for prevention, response and rehabilitation. At the heart of this initiative was the launch of "Agaaz", a programme focused on a comprehensive, solution-driven approach to addressing gender-based violence.

One of the most pressing areas of reform is education. Schools and universities must play a proactive role in fostering gender sensitivity. Mandatory workshops and seminars should be conducted regularly for students, teachers and parents to create awareness about gender equality, consent and bystander intervention. Prevention of Sexual Harassment (POSH) training must be compulsory

for all school and college staff to ensure compliance with the law, while Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) training should be a requirement for all teachers and administrators, equipping them with the knowledge to protect chil-

Beyond just policies, schools should incorporate gender studies and emotional intelligence training into their curriculum, helping young minds develop respectful and healthy perspectives on relationships. Digital safety education is also critical, ensuring students understand the risks of cyberstalking, online harassment, and digital consent.

Understanding criminal psychology and the media's influence is crucial to combating sexual violence. Research must be expanded to examine the motivations, triggers and behavioural patterns of sexual offenders, helping develop targeted prevention strategies. The media's portrayal of gender dynamics must also be critically evaluated, with efforts to promote responsible storytelling that challenges toxic masculinity and harmful stereotypes.

Additionally, news reporting of sexual violence needs to be reformed. Sensationalised or insensitive coverage often leads to re-victimisation of survivors and reinforces rape culture. The media should follow ethical guidelines in reporting cases with dignity, ensuring that survivors' identities and rights are

Survivors of sexual violence need more than just

legal justice-they need holistic support to rebuild their lives. Rape Crisis Centers (RCCs) should be established in every city, town, and village, providing medical, legal, financial and psychological assistance to survivors. Vocational training and educational support should be offered to help them regain indepen-A national movement must be



initiated to eradicate victimblaming, shifting societal attitudes toward supporting and empowering survivors. Public campaigns should be launched to challenge myths surrounding rape, educate communities on the importance of believing survivors, and encourage bystander intervention to prevent violence.

Police reforms are equally urgent. The inefficiency and insensitivity of law enforcement often discourage sur-

vivors from reporting crimes. Dedicated emergency dial numbers should be staffed with personnel trained to handle sexual violence cases with empathy and

First responders and forensic teams must adhere to strict protocols for evidence collection, post-

mortems, and forensic investigations. Special Investigation Units (SIUs) should be created within police departments, comprising forensic experts, counsellors and legal advisors specifically trained to handle sexual violence cases. Mandatory gender sensitisation training for all police personnel must be conducted during induction and as annual refresh-

The workplace should be a space of safety and dignity for all, yet harassment and violence persist. POSH training and audits must be strictly enforced across all organisations, ensuring compliance with antiharassment policies. Internal Committees (ICs) should undergo annual audits to assess their effectiveness in handling sexual harassment complaints.

Special protections should be introduced for women labourers and construction workers, ensuring access to safe working conditions, legal recourse, and healthcare facilities. Shelter homes for homeless women and children must be set up across urban and rural areas, providing them with a secure environment. Workplaces must offer safe and affordable childcare facilities to support working mothers.

The media and digital platforms wield immense power in shaping perceptions and behaviours. A nationwide ban on pornography must be considered, given its proven link to increased sexual violence. Research suggests that a significant percentage of sexual violence perpetrators have been influenced by pornographic content. OTT platforms must be sub-

ject to stringent regulations regarding the depiction of sexual violence, preventing the glorification of such acts. The media should actively promote positive narratives that challenge regressive gender norms and advocate for women's safety and dignity.

At the same time, online safety laws must be strengthened to curb cyber harassment, deepfake pornography, and digital sexual violence. Social media platforms should be held accountable for removing exploitative content and ensuring survivor

While policy reforms and legal mechanisms play crucial role in addressing sexual violence, true change will only come when society as a whole rises against this menace. 'Women and Child Safety Mission 2029' envisions an India where, by 2029, women and children can live free from the fear of violence. This mission calls for multi-sectoral collaboration, involving the government, businesses, media, educational institutions, law enforcement, and civil society. I urge every citizen, policymaker, and stakeholder to join hands in this fight. We must demand swift and uncompromising justice for rape survivors and implement meaningful changes to prevent future crimes. Together, let us ensure that "Agaaz" is not just an initiative, but the beginning of a safer, more just India for all.

(The writer is rape victim activist & founder PARI Foundation;

views are personal)







Trump delays Mexico, Canada tariffs amid trade tensions

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Washington

resident Donald Trump on Thursday postponed 25 per cent tariffs on many imports from Mexico and some imports from Canada for a month amid widespread fears of the economic fallout from a broader

The White House insists its tariffs are about stopping the smuggling of fentanyl, but the taxes proposed by Trump have caused a gaping wound in the decades-old North American trade partnership. Trump's tariff plans have also caused the stock market to sink and alarmed US con-

In addition to his claims about fentanyl, Trump has insisted that the tariffs could be resolved by fixing the trade deficit and he emphasised while speaking in the Oval Office that he still plans to impose "reciprocal" tariffs starting on April 2.

"Most of the tariffs go on April the second," Trump said before signing the

orders. "Right now, we have some temporary ones and small ones, relatively small, although it's a lot of money having to do with Mexico and Canada

Trump said he was not looking to extend the exemption on the 25 per cent tariff for autos for another month.

Imports from Mexico that comply with the 2020 USMCA trade pact would be excluded from the 25 per cent tariffs for a month, according to the orders signed by Trump. Auto-related imports from Canada that comply with the trade deal would also avoid the 25 per cent tariffs for a month, while the potash that US farmers import from Canada would be tariffed at 10 per cent, the same rate at which

Roughly 62 per cent of imports from Canada would likely still face the new tariffs because they're not USMCA compliant, according to a White House official who insisted on anonymity to preview the orders on a call with reporters. Half of

Trump wants to tariff Canadian energy

compliant would also be taxed under the orders being signed by Trump, the official

Mexico President Claudia Sheinbaum has planned to announce any retaliatory measures on Sunday, but Trump credited her with making progress on illegal immigration and drug smuggling as a reason for again pausing tariffs that were initially supposed to go into full effect in February.

"I did this as an accommodation, and out of respect for, President Sheinbaum," Trump said on Truth Social. "Our relationship has been a very good one, and we are working hard, together, on the Border."

Trump's actions also thawed relations with Canada somewhat, after its initial retaliatory tariffs of \$30 billion Canadian (US\$21 billion) on US goods. The government said it had suspended its second wave of retaliatory tariffs on additional U.S. goods worth \$125 billion (US\$87 billion).

Major US stock markets briefly bounced off lows after Commerce Secretary Howard

imports from Mexico that are not USCMA Lutnick previewed the month-long pauses on CNBC on Thursday. Significant declines already seen this week resumed within an hour. The S&P 500 stock index has fallen below where it was before Trump was elected.

> Asked whether the stock market decline was due to his tariffs, Trump said: "A lot of them are globalist countries and companies that won't be doing as well because we're taking back things that have been taken from us many years ago."

> Sheinbaum said she and Trump "had an excellent and respectful call in which we agreed that our work and collaboration have yielded unprecedented results," on a post on the social media platform X, for-

Mexico has cracked down on cartels, sent troops to the US border and delivered 29 top cartel bosses long chased by American authorities to the Trump administration in a span of weeks.

At a press conference, Sheinbaum elaborated on her call with Trump Thursday, saying that she told the president that Mexico was making great strides in fulfilling his security demands.

"I told him we're getting results," Sheinbaum said. But the US imposed the tariffs, so she asked Trump "how are we going to continue cooperating, collaboratng with something that hurts the people of Mexico?" She added that "practically all of the trade" between the US and Mexico will be exempt from tariffs until April 2.

She said the two countries will continue to work together on migration and security, and to cut back on fentanyl trafficking to the US.

From January to February, the amount of fentanyl seized at the border dropped more than 41 per cent, according to Sheinbaum, citing data from US Customs and Border Protection. She cited the dip as meeting a commitment made to Trump.

Still, relations between the United States and Canada remain frosty because of the tariff pressures.

A senior Canadian government official

said Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's call on Wednesday with Trump became heated. The US president used profanity while complaining about protections in Canada's dairy industry. The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity as they were not authorised to speak publicly about the call, said Trudeau did not use profanity.

Ontario Premier Doug Ford, the leader of Canada's most populous province, said that starting Monday the province will charge 25 per cent more for electricity shipped to 1.5 million Americans in response to Trump's tariff plan. Ontario provides electricity to Minnesota, New York and Michigan.

"This whole thing with President Trump is a mess," Ford said Thursday. "This reprieve, we've went down this road before. He still threatens the tariffs on April

Ford has said that so long as the threat of tariffs continue, Ontario's position will

Judge orders Trump administration to pay nearly \$2 billion in USAID and State Dept. debts

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Washington

federal judge on Thursday gave the Trump administration until Monday to pay nearly \$2 bil-Alion owed to partners of the US Agency for International Development and the State Department, thawing the ad ministration's six-week funding freeze

US District Judge Amir Ali ruled in favour of nonprofit groups and businesses that sued over the funding freeze, which has forced organisations around the world to slash services and lay off thousands of workers.

Ali's line of questioning suggested skepticism of the Trump administration's argument that presidents have wide authority to override congressional decisions on spending when it comes to foreign policy, including for-

eign aid.

"It would be an "earth-shaking, country-shaking proposition to say that appropriations are optional," Ali

"The question I have for you is, where are you getting this from in the constitutional document?" he asked a government lawyer, Indraneel Sur.

Thursday's order is in an ongoing case with more decisions coming on the administration's fast-moving termination of 90 per cent of USAID contracts worldwide. Ali's ruling comes a day after a divided Supreme Court

rejected the Trump administration's bid to freeze funding that flowed through USAID. The high court instructed Ali to clarify what the government must do to comply with his earlier order requiring the quick release of funds for work that had already

The funding freeze stemmed from an executive order signed by President Donald Trump on January 20. The administration appealed after Ali issued a temporary restraining order and set a deadline to release payment

WTO chief says US concerns on tariffs need to be heard

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA Geneva

¬he World Trade Organisation chief urged America's global trading partners on Friday to listen to US concerns about tariffs and engage in dialogue with Washington rather than embrace tit-for-tat measures on tariffs

WTO Director General Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala said it's important for trade partners not to panic but to embrace dialogue in reaction to President Donald Trump's threats in recent days to impose tariffs on close trade partners.

Trump's tariffs targeting Mexico, Canada and China launched trade wars and caused the US stock market to plunge this week. They also triggered confusion because Trump delayed some of the tariffs on Canada and Mexico soon after announcing them.

Okonjo-Iweala said there was no cause for panic, preferring to describe the threats and reversals as "disruptions"

"I think we need to listen to the United States and listen to what their concerns are, and say, how can we also help them deal with their concerns," she said, speaking during a discussion alongside former German Chancellor Angela Merkel at the WTO headquar-

'Thirty years ago, when this system was put in place, the US bound its tariffs at a rate that was quite low, maybe around 2.5%, to benefit its population and the outside world. And it has benefited," she said "Now the US is saying this doesn't work for me anymore." Okonjo-Iweala said she favours an approach of dialogue over one that is tit for tat and cautioned that there's a lot of trade that continues and which is not impacted by change in Washington.

"Let's remember that there is 80% of world trade going on among other members of the WTO," she said. "They are trading among themselves according to the rules that exist."

SpaceX Starship breaks apart during test flight with another explosion

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Bronsville (US)

early two months after an explosion sent flaming debris raining down on the Turks and Caicos, SpaceX launched another mammoth Starship rocket on Thursday, but lost contact minutes into the test flight as the spacecraft came tumbling down and

This time, wreckage from the latest explosion was seen streaming from the skies over Florida. It was not immediately known whether the spacecraft's self-destruct system had kicked in to blow it up.

The 403-foot (123-meter) rocket blasted off from Texas. SpaceX caught the first-stage booster back at the pad with giant mechanical arms, but engines on the spacecraft on top started shutting down as it streaked eastward for what was supposed to be a controlled entry over the Indian Ocean, half a world away. Contact was lost as the spacecraft went into an out-of-control spin.

Starship reached nearly 90 miles (150 kilometers) in altitude before trouble struck and before four mock satellites could be deployed. It was not immediately clear where it came down, but images of flaming debris were captured from Florida, including near Cape Canaveral, and posted online. The space-skimming flight was supposed to



The booster of SpaceX's mega rocket Starship is recaptured during a test flight from Starbase in Boca Chica, Texas on Thursday.

"Unfortunately this happened last time too, so we have some practice at this now," SpaceX flight commentator Dan Huot said from the launch site.

SpaceX later confirmed that the spacecraft experienced "a rapid unscheduled disassembly" during the ascent engine firing. "Our team immediately began coordination with safety officials to implement pre-planned contingency responses," the company said in a statement posted online. Starship didn't make it quite as high or as far as last time. NASA has booked Starship to land its astronauts on the moon later this decade. SpaceX's Elon Musk is aiming for Mars with Starship, the world's biggest and most powerful rocket.

Like last time, Starship had mock satellites to release once the craft reached space on this eighth test flight as a practice for future missions. They resembled SpaceX's Starlink internet satellites, thousands of which currently orbit Earth, and were meant to fall back down following their brief taste of space.

Starship's flaps, computers and fuel system were redesigned in preparation for the next big step: returning the spacecraft to the launch site just like the

During the last demo, SpaceX captured the booster at the launch pad, but the spacecraft blew up several minutes later over the Atlantic. No injuries or major damage were reported.

According to an investigation that remains ongoing, leaking fuel triggered a series of fires that shut down the spacecraft's engines. The on-board selfdestruct system kicked in as planned.

SpaceX said it made several improvements to the spacecraft following the accident, and the Federal Aviation Administration recently cleared Starship once more for launch.

Starships soar out of the southernmost tip of Texas near the Mexican border. SpaceX is building another Starship complex at Cape Canaveral, home to the company's smaller Falcon rockets that ferry astronauts and satellites to orbit.

Musk tells Republican lawmakers he's not to blame for federal firings

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA Washington

been done.

t's not his fault. Billionaire Elon Musk is telling Republican lawmakers that he is not to blame for the firings of thousands of federal workers, including veterans, as pushes to downsize the government. Instead, he said in private talks this week that those decisions are left to the various federal agen-

The message from one of President Donald Trump's most influential advisers came as Republicans publicly support Musk's work at the so-called Department of Government Efficiency digging up waste, fraud and abuse but are privately raising questions as personnel cuts ripple through communities across the nation.

"Elon doesn't fire people," said Rep. Richard Hudson, R-N.C., after a dinner-time pizza meeting with Musk in the basement of the Capitol.

"He doesn't have hiring and firing authority," added Hudson, who leads the House Republicans' campaign arm. "The president's empowered him to go uncover this information, that's it."

It's a remarkable shift of emphasis away from the chainsaw-wielding tech entrepreneur whose vast power has made him an admired, revered and deeply feared figure in the second Trump administration.

The Republican president weighed in Thursday after a Cabinet meeting, saying he has instructed department secretaries to work with DOGE but to "be very precise"



about which workers will stay or go. We say the scalpel; rather than the 'hatchet, Trump said on social media. "It's very important that we cut levels down to where they should be, but it's also important to keep the best and most productive people"

He said Musk and Cabinet officials will meet every two weeks to advance their cost-cutting goals. The comments come amid mounting legal disputes over Musk's attempts to centralize management of the government workforce and bypass the traditional role of Congress to appropriate federal dollars.

For example, the White House's Office of Personnel Management directed federal agencies to fire probationary workers, who lack full civil service protection. The scorched-earth approach led to deep cuts that have occasionally been reversed, such as when workers on nuclear weapons programs were brought back on the job.

concerns that layoffs violated the law, leading administration officials to insist that it was individual agencies not Musk or the Office of Personnel Management calling the

Rep. Carlos Gimenez, R-Fla., said Musk told lawmakers that "some of the folks that were the probationary people, he didn't fire them, they were actually supposedly fired by the agencies and they messed up."

Did Musk actually say "they messed up?" "Well, if they were in fact, you know, critical people, and the agency did the firing, then yeah, they messed up," Gimenez said. "But

Musk and his team have burrowed into agencies, accessing sensitive data and rattling career officials with their demands. Top officials, including at the Social Security Administration, abruptly stepped down after refusing to comply with Musk's team. Tens of thousands of workers accepted an offer to resign early and more are facing potential layoffs.

"We're making good progress," Musk said late Wednesday as he dashed through the halls of the Capitol. The richest person in the world, Musk is known as a driven, demanding executive who is willing to take bold risks, often with great rewards. His enterprises include the rocket company SpaceX, electric vehicle manufacturer Tesla and social media platform X, known the world over. But his perch at DOGE is Musk's first pub-

lic foray into the grit of governing. The speed A federal judge in San Francisco expressed and scale of the cuts, which are being challenged in dozens of court cases, are intro ducing businessman to the concept of political blowback

When the topic of the fired federal workers came up during a Senate lunch, Musk deflected blame.

"I would say that there was an argument that that's not coming from DOGE, it's actually coming from individual agencies," said Sen. Rand Paul, R-Ky. Another Republican, Rep. Andy Barr of Kentucky, said that Musk went so far as to emphasize that not only had DOGE not recommended mass termination of probationary employees, but that he thought some federal agencies were either incompetent or sabotaging the effort. Musk told them he wanted more precise terminations of those not performing.

'The point that he was making is that DOGE had not made recommendations for acrossthe-board cuts of all probationary employees at every agency," Barr said.

"But the agencies had implemented it improperly through either incompetence or in a handful of cases actual malicious efforts to sabotage and create a public relations problem for DOGE."

In fact, scores of fired workers are being recalled back to work across the federal agencies. This week, about 180 employees at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention were being told they could come back, in an email that said: "Read this email

The infection progressed into a complex respiratory tract

Francis has issued written messages from the Gemelli,

including some that sounded very much like him. But even

Vatican officials had been clamouring to hear his voice, say-

ing the pope's calls for peace are particularly needed at a time

art of informal and direct communication, often recording

More than any pope before him, Francis has mastered the

infection and double pneumonia that has sidelined Francis

for the longest period of his 12-year papacy and raised ques-

tions about the future of his papacy.

of such global conflict and war.

Unexploded WWII bomb in Paris halts Eurostar travel



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Paris

→he discovery of an unexploded World War II-era bomb near the tracks severed Paris' high-speed rail links with London and Brussels on Friday, dashing travellers' weekend getaway plans and causing cascading disruptions to scores of other trains to and from France's busiest railway station, the Gare du Nord in Paris. Eurostar, operator of the sleek speedy trains that usually make rail travel between the UK and the continent a breeze, announced the cancellation of all its services to and from its hub in the French capital.

Bright red signs warning of service disruptions greeted rail users at the usually humming Gare du Nord station, their travel plans thrown into disarray during the morning rush

The repercussions quickly rippled beyond France's borders. In Brussels, trains to Paris were cancelled until at least Friday afternoon.

"There's no solution, we're going to call the hotel and stay one more day. And change our train ticket," said Michel Garrot, a retired Parisian who was visiting the Belgian capital with his wife. At London's St. Pancras station, travellers who'd been looking forward to Paris' charms found their plans dashed.

"We're looking up flights, but our options are limited," said Lauren Romeo-Smith, part of a group on

their way to a birthday weekend. Eurostar, which runs passenger trains through the Channel Tunnel between Britain and the continent, said its "sincerely apologizes for the

inconvenience this may cause. "We appreciate everyone's patience and cooperation during this time," it

Passengers at St. Pancras were advised to take the train to Lille in northwest France, or fly to Paris.

Fridays are invariably busy at St. Pancras, Eurostar's London hub, as thousands of people leave and arrive for weekend breaks.

French national rail operator SNCF says the Gare du Nord habitually sees 700,000 travelers per day, making it the busiest rail hub in both France and Europe. As well as towns and cities across northern France and the Paris suburbs, the station also serves Paris' main airport and international destinations including London, Brussels and cities in the Netherlands. Bombs left over from World War I or World War II are regularly discovered around France but it is very rare to find them in such a people-packed location. The SNCF said rail traffic was stopped at the

request of police. The bomb was discovered around 4 a.m. by workers doing earth-moving work near the tracks in the Seine-Saint-Denis region that borders Paris to the north. Bomb disposal experts were sent to the site.

French Transport Minister Philippe Tabarot said traffic would be strongly disrupted' throughout the day with only limited service resuming in the afternoon, and urged travelers to postpone their trips.

Tabarot, speaking on broadcaster Sud Radio, said local residents and people near the train stations should have "no fear" of a risk of explosion, stressing the procedures in place for disruption and understands the defusing and removing such bombs.

Pope thanks people for their prayers 'from the bottom of heart'

The Vatican has given twice-daily updates on Francis'

of him since the morning of Feb. 14, when he held a hand-

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Rome

weak and breathless Pope Francis thanked people for their prayers for his recovery in a remarkable audio message broadcast Thursday, the first public sign of life from the 88-year-old pope since he was hospitalised three weeks ago with double pneumonia.

Francis' feeble voice, discernible through his laboured breaths and in his native Spanish, was recorded Thursday from the hospital and broadcast to the faithful in St. Peter's Square who had gathered for the nightly recitation of the "I thank you from the bottom of my heart for your prayers

for my health from the square, I accompany you from here," he said, his soft voice piercing the hushed square. "May God bless you and the Virgin protect you. Thank you." For anyone used to hearing Francis' voice, which is often

so soft it sounds like a whisper, the audio was an emotional punch to the gut that hammered home just how sick he medical condition, but has distributed no photos or video

The cardinal presiding over the prayer, Cardinal Ángel ful of audiences at the Vatican before being admitted to Fernández Artime, had told the crowd at the start of the ser-Rome's Gemelli hospital for what was then just a bad case



beautiful gift" to share. The clearly surprised crowd applause and then applauded again after Francis' final

vice that he had

beautiful news, a

of bronchitis.

Gracias.' Fernández Artime, for his part, bowed his

cell phone videos for visitors to bring home to their comhead as he lis-For the considerable effort it must have taken, the audio message made clear that he understood the power of his part of one lung removed as a young man.

Doctors on Thursday reported that Francis was in stable condition, with no new respiratory crises or fever. He continued his respiratory and other physical therapy Thursday, worked, rested and prayed from the 10th floor papal suite at Rome's Gemelli hospital.

voice, even in its weakened state.







EU leaders dismiss Trump's NATO doubts, pledge spending

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA Madrid

uropean Union leaders on Friday downplayed scepticism from US President Donald Trump about sol-✓ idarity among NATO members a day after they backed plans to spend more on defence amid wavering US support.

After European leaders committed Thursday to freeing up hundreds of billions of euros for security, Trump said he was "not so sure" that the military alliance would come to the United States' defence if the country were attacked.

"We are loyal and faithful allies," French President Emmanuel Macron said late Thursday in response, expressing "respect

and friendship" toward US leaders and adding that France was "entitled to expect the same". Maris Riekstins, Latvia's ambassador to NATO, stressed the military alliance remained the most important platform for addressing transatlantic security issues. He emphasised the commitment from his country which shares a nearly 300km (186-mile) border with Russia to defence spending.

The Baltic country last month said spending should be increased to 4% of GDP next year and move toward 5%.

Trump's repeated warnings that he would make European allies face the threat of Russia alone has spurred countries that for decades faltered on defence spending to find ways to bolster their security and back Ukraine in its war against

On Thursday, EU leaders signed off on a move to loosen budget restrictions so that willing EU countries could increase their military spending.

Following the emergency talks in Brussels, Trump again suggested that the US could abandon its NATO commitments if member countries didn't meet the alliance's defence spending targets. He expressed doubt that other allies will come to the defence of the US though they have done so after the Sept 11, 2001 attacks, the only instance in which the Article 5 mutual defence guarantee was invoked. The

US president has criticised the alliance for 23 countries were expected to meet last year years, arguing that European members have not contributed enough toward their own

In Spain, Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez said his country would raise defence spending to reach NATO's target faster than previously committed. But he did not specify when the eurozone's fourth-largest economy and NATO laggard would hit the 2% of GDP military spending target. Spain spent an estimated 1.28% of GDP on defence last year. Italy and Belgium also spent less than the 2% target last year, according to NATO estimates.

NATO members pledged in 2014 to pend at least 2% of GDP on defence, which

amid concerns about the war in Ukraine. Spain, which ranked last among NATO members for the share of GDP it contributed to the military, previously said it would reach that target by 2029.

Sánchez emphasised Spain's commitment to European security and to backing Ukraine though he stated that the security threats faced by the southern European nation were of a different nature than what European allies on the bloc's eastern front face from Russia.

Still, he said, "it's clear that we all have to make an effort and an accelerated effort."

Though he did not name Trump, the Spanish leader on Thursday argued for a stronger, more unified Europe, saying that "while some (leaders) raise walls and tariffs, we build bridges and close trade agreements".

Meanwhile, Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni made comments that appeared to backtrack on previous support for Ukraine joining NATO. She argued that extending the alliance's mutual defence guarantees to Ukraine without granting it membership would ensure "stable, lasting and effective security".

Sweden on Friday marked its first anniversary as a member of NATO, with posts on social platform X from Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

Boy with loaded shotgun boarded plane in Australia but tackled by former boxer

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA Melbourne

17-year-old boy with a loaded shotgun boarded a plane at an Australian airport before being restrained by a pilot and two passengers, police said Friday.

The boy was disarmed and detained before police arrived on the scene Thursday at Avalon Airport in Victoria

Barry Clark, a passenger who tackled the suspect, said the boy had posed as a maintenance worker and became agitated when questioned by a flight attendant at the plane's entrance.

"I looked up and then within a second I saw the barrel of a shotgun and I thought to myself that ain't a tool that should be on a plane," Clark told Network 10 television. "When I saw the complete gun I said: we're in trouble here," Clark said.

"Then I saw it (move) towards her chest and so I thought, well, I've got to do something — this is all happening in a matter of seconds," Clark added.

Passenger takes on suspect: Clark, a former professional boxer and sheep shearer, said he snuck up behind the boy then

away in different directions so that she would not be hit if the gun discharged.

"I then proceeded to do what I had to do and just put him in a bit of a lock, got his hand and twisted it and put it up in his back, threw him to the floor and then put my knee in his back and held him in a position where he couldn't get out," Clark said.

Victoria Police Superintendent Michael Reid told reporters the boy from Ballarat in regional Victoria had climbed through a hole in the airport's security fence before making his way to the plane's stairs.

Reid credited Clark, the pilot and another passenger with restraining the boy. "This would have been a very terrifying incident for the passengers of that plane and Victoria Police really commend the bravery of those passengers who were able to overpower that male," Reid said. Sydney-bound Jetstar Airways Flight 610 was carrying about 150 people and no one was hurt, police said. The flight was

Counterterrorism police not involved in the investigation: An investigation was being carried out by crime squad detectives with no involvement from the

police force's counterterrorism unit.

The boy has been charged with multiple offenses including unlawfully taking control of an aircraft, orchestrating a bomb hoax and possessing a firearm, a police statement said. He was remanded in custody to appear in a children's court on a date to be determined.

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said Australian airports had robust security.

"This incident is concerning for members of the public. I commend the work of police and aviation officials in responding to it quickly," Albanese told reporters.

Avalon Airport's chief executive Ari Suss said his organisation was working with Victoria Police in response to the emergency. "As part of our ongoing commitment to security, we have implement ed further measures across the airport, including within the terminal and surrounding areas," Suss said in a statement.

"We continue to work closely with authorities to maintain a safe and secure environment for all travellers," he added.

Jetstar, a budget subsidiary of Sydneybased Qantas Airways, said it was working with police and the airport to understand what happened.

Courts orders release of impeached South Korean president from jail

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Seoul

South Korean court on Friday ordered impeached President Yoon Suk Yeol to be released from jail, a move that would allow him to stand trial for his rebellion charge.

Yoon was arrested and indicted in January over his short-lived imposition of martial law late last year.

The hearings in his separate impeachment trial at the Constitutional Court concluded in late February, and that court is expected to rule soon on whether to formally remove him from office or reinstate

The Seoul Central District Court said it accepted Yoon's request to be released from jail because the legal period of his formal arrest expired before he was indicted for alleged rebellion in connection with the martial law decree in late January. The court also cited the need to resolve questions over the legality of the investigations on Yoon. Yoon's lawyers have accused the investigative agency that detained him before his formal arrest of lacking legal authority to probe rebellion

Investigators have alleged that the

martial-law decree amounted to rebellion. If he's convicted of that offense, he would face the death penalty or life imprisonment. Yoon's defence team welcomed the court's decision and urged prosecutors to release him immediately. The presidential office also welcomed the court's decision, saying it hopes Yoon will swiftly return to work.

However, South Korea law allows prosecutors to hold a suspect temporarily while they pursue an appeal.

The main liberal opposition Democratic Party, which led Yoon's Dec. 14 impeachment, called on prosecutors to immediately appeal the court's ruling. Yoon's martial law decree, which involved the dispatch of troops and police forces to the National Assembly, evoked traumatic memories of past military rules among many South Koreans. The decree lasted only six hours, after enough lawmakers managed to get into an assembly hall and voted to overturn it unanimous-

Yoon later argued his decree was only meant to inform the people of the danger of the main liberal opposition Democratic Party, which undermined his agenda and impeached top officials, and

said he dispatched troops to the assembly only in order to maintain order. But some top military and police officers sent to the assembly have told Constitutional Court hearings or investigators that Yoon ordered them to drag out lawmakers to obstruct a vote on his decree or detain

If the Constitutional Court upholdsYoon's impeachment, he will be officially thrown out of office and a national election will be held to choose his successor within two months. Massive rallies by opponents and supporters of Yoon have filled the streets of Seoul and other major South Korean cities. Whatever the Constitutional Court decides, experts say it will likely further polarize the country and intensify its conservative-liberal divide.

Yoon is the first South Korean president to be arrested while in office. South Korean law gives a president immunity from most criminal prosecution, but not for grave charges like rebellion or treason. By law, a president in South Korea has the power to put the country under martial law in wartime and similar emergency situations, but not for grave charges like

Police in Bangladesh use batons, teargas to disperse rally by banned Islamist group

Iran summons British envoy over

baseless' allegations of interference

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA Dhaka

olice used batons and stun grenades on Friday to disperse thousands of members of the banned Hizbut Tahrir group as they marched near Bangladesh's main Baitul Mokarram Mosque in the country's capital. Police said many people were injured and

several protesters were arrested during the violence which came after weekly prayers. Masud Alam, a deputy commissioner of

Dhaka Metropolitan Police, said attempts were made to disperse the rally after marchers broke away from the police barricade. Witnesses said scores of people were injured. The incident happened as between 3,000 to

5,000 protesters joined the procession, chanting slogans such as "Freedom has one path, Khilafat, Khilafat" and "Naraye Taqbir, Allahu Akbar".

The Islamist group had mounted a social media campaign in recent days and distributed leaflets and used posters across Dhaka urging people to join the procession, dubbed "March for Khilafat".

Hizbut Tahrir says it wants unification of

ran's foreign ministry summoned the

British ambassador over what it described

as "baseless" accusations by UK officials

against the government, Iran's state-run IRNA

news agency said Friday. IRNA said the min-

istry summoned Hugo Shorter, the British

ambassador to Tehran, in response to the

repeated baseless accusations by senior British

officials and the allegation that Iran is attempt-

NAME OF WORK NOTICE TENDER

SUPPLY OF INTERACTIVE PANEL FOR SMART CLASS ROOM

FOR DEPARTMENT OF CSE, INDIRA GANDHI UNIVERSITY

ing to interfere in the UK's internal affairs.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA Tehran

all Muslim countries over time in a unitary Islamic state or caliphate, headed by a caliph elected by Muslims. Its supporters believe this is an obligation decreed by Allah, warning that Allah will punish those Muslims who would overlook this duty. It also wants the introduction of Sharia law.

The group was banned in 2009 as a "threat to public security" by the government of former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina under an anti-terrorism law.

Hasina was forced to flee last August after weeks of protests over a quota system for allocating government jobs turned into a broader challenge to her 15-year rule and an interim government was established under Nobel Peace laureate Muhammad Yunus. Hasina has been in exile in India since her ouster.

Bangladesh, a nation of about 170 million people, is largely Muslim-majority and is governed by mostly secular laws based on British common law. But many Islamist groups and hardline political parties want to establish tough Sharia law in the country, which has experienced terrorist attacks in the

Iran's formal protest was conveyed to him,

IRNA said. On Tuesday, UK Security Minister

Dan Jarvis announced that Britain will place

the whole of the Iranian state – including Iran's

intelligence services and the Revolutionary

Guards — on the highest level on its foreign

influence watchlist. In a statement to

Parliament, Jarvis said direct action by Iran

against UK targets "has substantially increased

over recent years," and the Iranian government

was targeting journalists, dissidents and

www.igu.ac.in

DETAILS/EMAIL

Jewish and Israeli people.

(APPROX.) IN

RUPEES

3 LACS

Notice is hereby given to General Public that a Loan was advanced by PNB Housing Finance Limited (PNBHFL) to Mr. Mustaq Qureshi (since deceased) S/o Late Nanna against mortgage of "All that piece and parcel of property bearing House Tax Water Tax No. 19/5, admeasuring area 121.19 sq.mtrs. Mathura Darwaja, Vrindavan, Tehsil and District Mathura, Uttar Pradesh, property bounded as: East: House of Ram Chand, West: Gali, North: Gali, South: Nanna Thekedar' owned by Mr. Mustaq Qureshi (since deceased). PNBHFL has assigned the said loan account to Kotak Mabidea Bax Limited along with the security interact in groce of other security. Thekedar" owned by Mr. Mustaq Qureshi (since deceased). PNBHFL has assigned the said loan account to Kotak Mahindra Bank Limited along with the security interest in respect of the said property vide Deed of Assignment dated 04.03.2023. Post the death of borrower named above, Mr. Ishtaq S/o Late Mustaq Qureshi have settled the loan account. Bubsequent to the settlement of the loan account, the following legal heirs of the deceased borrower i.e. Mrs. Haseena (Wife), Mr. Ishtaq (Son), Mr. Aspak (Son), Mr. Ishtaq (Son), Mrs. Farzana W/o Mr. Mohd. Chand (Daughter), Mrs. Rihana W/o Mr. Sahjad (Daughter) and Mrs. Shahin Begum W/o Mr Md Ikram Qureshi (Daughter) have approached and represented that they are the only legal heirs of the deceased Mr. Mustaq Qureshi and have accordingly requested for release of the title documents of the mortgaged property in favour of Mr. Ishtaq S/o Late Mustaq Qureshi to the exclusion of other legal heirs. In case anybody has any claim or ownership interest over the above mentioned property, they may get in touch with Mr. Sumit Sinha, Kotak Mahindra Bank Ltd., 7th Floor, Plot No.7, Sector-125, Noida, Uttar Pradesh- 201313. Mobile: +919810616493, the officer of the Bank with proof of the same within seven days from receipt +919810616493, the officer of the Bank with proof of the same within seven days from receipt of this public notice failing which the Bank would be handing over the title documents of the mortgaged property to Mr. Ishtaq S/o Late Mustaq Qureshi.

Authorised Officer

Place: Noida , Date: 08.03.2025



LOST & FOUND

I. Tarun Saxena S/o Kripa Shankar Saxena R/o-134, Vivekanand Puri, Sarai Rohilla, Malka Ganj, Delhi-110007, have lost my Reliance Industries Ltd certificate Folio No-103375013, finder may please contact-7042193680.

PD(1646)C

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Maina, Mother of No. 10136707P RFN Kuldeep Singh, R/o- PO- Jakhod Khera, Dist- Hisar, Haryana-125002, have changed my name from Maina to Maina Devi, vide affidavit dated 07/03/2025 before Notary Public Delhi.

PD(1639)C No.16018614N Hav Sudheer Kumar Singh, R/o-Vill & Post- Rajapur, Teh-Muhammadabad, Dist- Mau, U.P., have changed my son's name from Rajvir Singh to Rajveer Singh, vide affidavit dated 07/03/2025 before Notary Public Delhi.

PD(1640)C No.15429106P L/NK Rathod Vikramsinh, Serving at- Base Hospital, Delhi Cantt- 110010, declare that in my service records, my father's name is wrongly recorded as Rathod Bharatbhai. His correct name is Rajput Bharatbhai Manubhai, vide affidavit dated 07/03/2025 before Notary Public Delhi.

PD(1641)C

I, No.15429106P L/NK Rathod Vikramsinh, Serving at- Base Hospital, Delhi Cantt- 110010, declare that in my service records, my mother's name is wrongly recorded as Lila Ben, Her correct name is Rajput Lilaben Bharatbhai, vide affidavit dated 07/03/2025 before Notary Public Delhi.

I, Sunil Prasad, Father of-No.14877909W NK/MT Prasad Rahul Sunil, R/o-Room No. 366, Jadhav Sankul Ambad Link Road, Nashik, Maharashtra-422010, have changed my name from Sunil Prasad to Sunil Ramji Prasad, vide affidavit dated 07/03/2025

PD(1642)C

PD(1643)C

PD(1644)C

I, Ranju, Mother of No. 14877909W NK/MT Prasad Rahul Sunil, R/o- Room No. 366, Jadhav Sankul Ambad Road, Nashik, Maharashtra- 422010, have changed my name from Ranju to Ranjudevi Sunil Prasad, vide affidavit dated 07/03/2025 before Notary Public Delhi.

before Notary Public Delhi.

I, Amit Kumar alias Amit Mittal, S/o Devendra Kumar Mittal, R/o D-15, Sector 27, Noida, 201301 have changed my name from Amit Kumar alias Amit Mittal to Amit Kumar Mittal. Henceforth I would be known by the name of Amit Kumar Mittal for all future

purposes.

PD(1645)C

Notice is hereby given to the General Public that SI Dharmendra S/o Late Sh. Mukesh Kumar Gupta the owner of Built Up entire one Flat Bearing PV no. G-1, on Ground Floor, measuring area 50 Sq. Yd Built-on Property No. S-470, out of Killa No. It situated at Abadi of Sehool Block, Shakarpur, in arc of Village Shakarpur Klas, Illaqa Shahdara, Delh 110992, by virtue of Relinquishment Deed date 19,03,2019, regd. as Doc. No. 1482, executed b Smt. Rani Gupta and Smt. Dipit Gupta, same to finance by SMFG India Credit Company Limited General public hereby informed that if anybody ha any charge-interest/title in the said property or an kind of dispute kindly inform the undersigned writing on the below mentioned address with 7 days of the present. Sahu Ray Pathak, A. W. Fern Schulz Ray Sahus Ray Sahus Ray Sahus Ray Sahus Kand Languran, Chazinhad Lemait sgassociatespl@mail.com, Ph. 701172764, 012044408

PARADIP PORT AUTHORITY TENDER CALL NOTICE NO. EM/WS-07/2025

File No.EM/WS/TECH-05/2024/363 Dt.06.03.2025

Name of the work "Grant of license for Sup-ply, Installation, Commissioning, Operation & Maintenance of 02 nos. 100 Ton Capacity HMC's for a period of 05 years" Last date and time of submission of bid: 15.04.2025 up to 18.00 Hrs. Refer our website for details: https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app

Executive Engineer (M) Workshop Division-I Paradip Port Authority PPA/PR/68/2024-2025 dtd.07/03/2025



Corrigendum-I to the e-tender call notice No.EM/MCHP-04/2025 for the Work "Design, Fabrication, Supply, Erection and Commissioning of one no. of Stacker of 4000 PH Capacity" is as follows:

Document download end date: 19.03.2025 17:15hrs instead of 12.03.2025, 17:15hr Bid Submission end date: 19.03.2025 upto 17:15hrs instead of 12.03.2025, 17:15hrs (iii) Bid Opening date: 24.03.2025 at 10:00hrs instead of 17.03.2025, 10:00hrs

All other terms and conditions of the original tende mains unchanged.

PPA/PR/67/2024-2025

PUBLIC NOTICE

is hereby given on behalf of my Client I er Singh S/o Lt. Sh. Hardeep Singh F No. 2171, Sector-26, Faridabad, Sect aryana-121008 for the cancellation House No. 2171. Sector-26, Faridabad, Sector-29, Haryana-121008 for the cancellation of agreement to sell dated November 25, 2024 entered between my Client and Ms. Sapna D/c Sh. Jagdish R/o C-11, Dr. Ambedkar Nagar, Sector-5, Pushpa Bhawan, New Delhi-110062 (herein after referred to as "the buyer") in respect of property bearing no. R-25, Khirki Extension Malviya Nagar, New Delhi-110017 (herein after referred to as "the Property"). That due to the non compliance of the terms and conditions of the agreement to sell by the buyer, my Client does not want to sell the property to the buyer and cancelled the above mentioned agreement to sell vide this public notice and cancelling the same with immediate effect. My clients, therefore, is hereby cautioned the general public at large to not to deal with the buyer for the property will not be binding on my clients, whatsoever maybe the cause or reason, if anyone chooses to deal with the property, it shall be at his/her on risk and Peril.

RAMAN KUMAR, ADVOCATE

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform the general public that the Bank of Baroda, branch at Main Road, A G Colony, Patna, Bihar-800023 intends to accept the undermentioned properties standing in the name of by Sh. Naveen Kumar Singh S/o Sh. Krisneshwar Kumar Singh, as a security for the loan/credit facility requested by M/s Horizon Construction.

Anyone with any right/title/interest/ claims over the undermentioned property is advised to approach the Bank within 10 days along with necessary proof to substantiate the claim. If no response is received within 10 days, it is presumed that the property is free from any charge/claim/encumbrance, and the Bank shall

proceed with the mortgage. Details of the Property-1: -The leasehold Shop No. LG-32B3 having a super area of 6248 Sq. feet or 580.45 Sq. mt. and Carpet area of 4998 Sq. feet or 464.32 Sq. Mt. situated at Lower Ground Floor,

Metro" built on GH Eco City, Plot no. C and D Boundary/Survey No. / Reg. No. / Extent

Regd. Lease Deed registered in the office of Sut Registrar-II, Noida at Book No I Volume No. 1266 on pages 253/286 Document No 2258 date 01-04-2022. Branch Details/Contact No.: - Mr. Ankush Kuma

Branch Manager Contact: +91-8660837799 Bank of Baroda, A G Colony Branch, Patna, Bihar - 800023 Advocate Details/Contact: - Deepak Singh, Delhi High Court Contact: 9999170066

Office of the Managing Director Uttarakhand Co-Operative Dairy Federation Ltd. Mangal Parao, Haldwani - 263139 (Nainital) Uttarakhand

पत्रांक : सी-5540 / यू0सी0डी0एफ0 / निविदा / 2024-25 Tender Notice Short Term Tender Notice no. 34/UCDF/2024-25, Date-07.03.202 Following Short Term tenders are invited in two bid system by the undersigned, from experienced, reputed and financially sound Manufacturers Firms so as to reach this office on or before 17.03.2025 up to 2.00 PM. The tenders will be opened on the same day at 3:00 PM.

Name of Work

1. Supply of Frozen Green Peas & Cut vegetables 2. Renovation work of ETP at Champawat and Dehradun Milk Union.

PUBLIC NOTICE Property no e 1, greater Kailash Enclave 1, New Delhi 110048 PUBLIC NOTICE Notice is hereby given to the general public tha

of my commitments and not concluding the deal. The general public is hereby informed that the said property has been and is completely free from any and all encumbrances and no one other than the present legal and registered co owners have any inght, interest or claim whatsoever in the subject property. There was no arrangement WHATSOEVER and no agreement ever signed or executed with any one. The information and allegations made by Prabhakar Thakur are completely baseless, wholly malicious and total untruths to defame, malign and torment us with a seeming malafide and dubious intent to frighten, harass and blackmail senior citizen owners and other co owners to commit fraud and illegally grab our property and extort money. Public need not take note of the same AS Asiava Soul

eed not take note of the same CA Saniay Soo

CARS24 Financial Services Private Limited (hereinafter referred to as 'the Company') has infortunately lost its original NBFC Certificate bearing Certificate no. N-14.03493. The certificate was misplaced during the relocation of the Company's corporate office from the 4th Floor, Plot No. 65, Landmark House, Sector 44, Gurugram, Haryana – 122002 to the new address at the 06th Floor, SAS Tower, Ch Gurugram, Haryana – 122001. The certificate is untraceable, and a statutory warning has beer issued to the public restraining its misuse. Any misuse will result in strict legal action, including return the certificate to the undersigned. This CARS24 Financial Services Private Limited CIN Nn. U65990HR2018PTC075713 Name: Harsh Nangalia Address: 10th Floor, Tower B, Unitech Dyber Park, Sector- 39, Gurgaon, Harvana, India 122001 Email:-harsh.nangalia@cars24.com

and nbfc.compliance@cars24.com Contact

THE KANGRA CO-OPERATIVE BANK LTD.

APPENDIX IV [See rule 8(1)] POSSESSION NOTICE (For immo

The undersigned being the Authorised officer of "The Kangra Co-operative Bank Ltd.", Head office at, C-29.Community Centre, Panisha Road, Janak Puri, New Delhi - 110058, having its registered office at 1916, Chuna Mandi, Pahar Ganj, New Delhi-110055, under The construction of the Financial Assets & Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002, (54 of 2002) and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with rule [3] of The Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, the Bank had issued a dem dated 24-03-2021 calling uponthe borrower's Mortgagor Sh.Birendra Kumar S/o.Sh.Kamal Singh R/o.H.No.115,Gali No.8, Meethapur Extn.,Dharam Shala Road, Badarpur, New Delhi-44, calling upon the sureties namely: Sh.Devender Singh R/o. H.No.A-285/9, Sourabh Vihar, Hari Nagar Extn., Jait Pur, Delhi-110044 also at Sh.Devender Singh C/o. M/s. Chanchal Enterprises, A-262, Saurabh Vihar, Jaitpur, Delhi-110044 and Sh.Santosh Supta S/o. Sh. Manoj Kumar Gupta, A-126, Pulpehladpur, New Delhi-110044, to repay the ntioned in the notice being Rs.14,05,658/- (Rupees Fourteen Lakhs Five Tho Six Hundred and Fifty Eight Only), together with further interest, penal interest, and other harges as are applicable to this Loan account from time to time, from the date of the notice till the date of payment, with in 60 days from the date of receipt of the notice.

The above mentioned borrower, mortgagor& sureties having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower, mortgagor, surefies and the public in general that the Bank has taken possession of the property described here in below in exercise of powers conferred under sub-section (4) of section 13 of The Securitisation and Reconstruction of the Financial Assets & Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002, read with rule [8] of The Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, on this 04th day of March 2025.

The borrower, mortgagor & sureties in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the mortgaged property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of "The Kangra Co-operative Bank Ltd.", for an amount of Rs.14,05,658i- together with further interest, penal interest and other charges as are applicable to this Loan account from

time to time, from the date of notice till the date of realization together with all the costs incurred by the Bank in realizing the said amount. The borrower, mortgagor & sureties attention is also been invited towards provisions of Sub Section (8) of Section 13 of The Securitisation and Reconstruction of the Financial Assets & Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002, in respect of time available, to redeem the below

> DISCRIPTION OF THE PROPERTY All that part and parcel of the BUILT UP RESIDENTIAL HOUSE NO.

built-up residential ouse with total area neasuring 26.56 Sq.

mentioned mortgaged property/Secured Asset.

PLACE : DELHI

R-175, TOTAL AREA MEASURING 26.56 SQ. MTRS. COVERED AREA 10 SQ. METERS, CONSISTING ONE ROOM, WITH TOILET AND BATHROOM SITUATED AT RESIDENTIAL COLONY NANDGRAM (NAND NIKUNJ) TEH. & DISTT GHAZIABAD, UTTAR PRADESH. Falling Under the Registration of Sub-Registrar III,

Bounded as under :- East : Plot No.176. West : Plot No. 174. North : Road 4.57 Meteres Wide, South: Plot No. 194.

AUTHORISED OFFICER THE KANGRA CO-OPERATIVE BANK LTD.

PANKHA ROAD, JANAKPURI, NEW DELHI-58. Phone No.9013568418, 9013568419.

10/T.Sec./EE/W.W.D. 2025_UAD 1,39,12,960/-69,565/-04.04.2025 /2024-25 First call _407691_1 Pipeline 315mm dia, 200mm dia ,110mm dia at J.K. Hospital under Zone 18 Ward 82 Executive Engineer (WWD) Municipal Corporation, Bhopa T.N. 1439/024/025

Water Work Department Municipal Corporation Rest House, Shyamla Hills, Bhopa Ph. No. 0755-2701669 NOTICE INVITING e-TENDER Online tenders are being invited for the following works. The bidder can obtained detailed information and

GOVERNMENT OF HARYANA TENDER NOTICE

DATE CLOSING

05.03.2025

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION KINDLY VISIT: www.haryanaeprocurement.gov.in or www.etenders.hry.nic.in RO 32674-1-27-7

OFFICE OF THE MUNICIPAL CORPORATION, BHOPAL

ender documents on website http://mptenders.gov.in. Corrigendum for this NIT shall not be issued separately in newspapers Comgendum regarding correction can be seen on the website http://mptendersgov.in

Earnest Details of Work Estimated (EMD) End Date





Empowered Indian woman shines out in the new global order

year, around International Women's Day, discussions on women's empowerment resurface, creating a platform to reassess the meaning and significance of this global observance. Over the years, the connotations of Women's Day and the activities surrounding it have evolved, redefining our understanding of what it means to empower women.

As we celebrate this day, it's important to explore the deeper meaning and history of Women's Day, alongside its contemporary sig-

When we talk about women's empowerment in the global context, it's essential to view it through the lens of various cultural and societal dynamics. There was a time when Indian women were broadly clubbed under the category of Third World Women, a term given by the World Bank.

It defined third-world women as "Universally unproductive, economically inactive, house-bound, tradition-bound, lacking skills and perceived to be relegated to lower-status tasks than men.

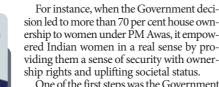
From this time to the current context, when the President of the World Bank Malpass praised the Indian Government's efforts toward women's empowerment feels

In fact, India is now actively rewrit-

ing every stereotype that once defined Indian women, reclaiming narratives of progress, independence and economic par-

KAMINENI

In the Indian scenario, the idea of women's empowerment has been conceived differently in the last one decade. A notable shift occurred when Prime Minister Narendra Modi moved the discourse from women's development to women-led development, a tectonic shift was witnessed in the policymaking and governance approach of the



One of the first steps was the Government focused on addressing the vulnerabilities of Indian women, prioritising their safety, dignity, and basic needs through welfare-centric

Initiatives such as the provision of toilets under the Swachh Bharat Mission and tap water connections under the Jal Jeevan Mission have not only brought immense relief but also restored a sense of dignity to crores of women, enabling them to lead healthier, more secure lives.

Once these foundational needs were secured, the Government adopted an agencycentric approach, one that empowers women to unlock their potential. This shift has been crucial in enabling

women to take charge of their futures. This is just the beginning of impactful decision-



While recognising the presence of the majority of Indian women in the informal economy, the Government has brought an array of initiatives towards boosting their capabilities. Be it disbursing 68 per cent of the sanctioned Mudra loans to women entrepreneurs, the government is creating a set of women entrepreneurs. Additionally, women make up 77.7 per cent of the beneficiaries under the Stand-Up India.

Underscoring the angle of women-led rural

prosperity the Government is organising over 10 crore women in the country into 90.87 lakh SHGs. These steps already started showing multiplier effects as they are enhancing women's self-esteem, personality development, and contribution towards the economy. An upward trend has been witnessed in women's labour force participation in rural areas as it has increased from 24.6 per cent

in 2017-18 to 47.6 per cent in 2023-24. Moreover, Lakhpati Didis are now seen as role models for financial independence, empowerment, and leadership, inspiring other women in their communities to follow the path. From creating startups to providing employment, female entrepreneurs are now playing a crucial role in achieving the goal of Aatmanirbhar Bharat.

The Government has successfully worked to improve the ease of doing business for women entrepreneurs. This has hugely helped women entrepreneurs in empowering themselves and generating large-scale employment opportunities at the grassroots level. This is reflected by the fact that nearly half of the start-ups in India have at least one female director.

The real essence of Women's Day is beyond offering grandstanding gestures. It is about the holistic development of women from all walks of life. Now, every day is women's day in India as women are leading the development journey and expanding new horizons. Whether it is in space exploration.

(The author is the Promoter Director, Apollo Hospitals Enterprise Limited, Executive Chairperson, Apollo Health Co Limited)

New SEBI chairman promises conflict of interest disclosure framework

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA Mumba

apital markets regulator Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) new chairman Tuhin Kanta Pandey on Friday promised to come out with a framework where Sebi board members will have to reveal conflict of interest to the

Addressing his maiden public event, Pandey, who took charge as the SEBI chairman on March 1, said this is essential from the point of view of transparency and added that such moves will help the regulator gain trust of the ecosystem.

It can be noted that last year, US-based short seller Hindenberg had made specific allegations against Pandey's predecessor Madhabi Puri Buch circling around potential conflicts of interest based on whistleblower documents.

These allegations included her personal investments in an offshore fund where an affiliate of the Adani Group, which SEBI was investigating, was a co-investor.

In response to those, SEBI had said that Buch had made "relevant disclosures" and recused herself when required and the allegations against Adani Group were duly investigated.

"I think we need to be more transparent on various other measures, including,

SEBI Chairman Tuhin Kanta Pandey at the Global Wealth Summit 2025 in Mumbai

for example, on the conflict of interest of the board and so on. And we will be coming forward with our

own plan to further transparently, you know, reveal these conflict of interest, etc, to the public," Pandey said.

"I think trust and transparency extends to Sebi itself. We need to not only create trust of all stakeholders in us, but we also need to maintain that trust," Pandey said, speaking at Moneycontrol's Global Wealth Summit 2025.

Amid concerns over heightened foreign institutional investor outflows, the SEBI chief said the capital markets regulator is further rationalising the regulations governing their operations.

"We at SEBI are conscious about the need to create a conducive environment to attract foreign capital. We will be happy to engage with FPI and AIF industry participants to address their difficulties and further rationalise regulations to promote ease of operation," he said.

We need to have both domestic and foreign capital to support the growth momentum, he said, adding that India is a bright spot for long-term investments.

The country has attracted global investments, across equities, debt and private equity spaces over the years, Pandey said acknowledging that the presence of such long-term foreign capital would further support infrastructure growth, innovation and entrepreneurship in India.

"As we face global headwinds in terms of geoeconomic fragmentation, tariff issues and elevated uncertainties, we need to build upon our resilience and strength to sustain our growth," Pandey said.

A high level of sustained growth, low current account deficit, low external public debt, healthy bank balance sheets, fiscal consolidation road map, continuing push on Government capex and infrastructure and forex reserves buffer are some key pillars of support for India's resilience against exogenous shocks, he added.

He also promised that SEBI will be willing to relook at redundant and outdated regulations which are not serving any pur-

Swiggy expands food delivery service to 100 railway stations

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA New Delhi

nwiggy on Friday said it has expanded its food delivery service, in part-nership with IRCTC, to 100 railway stations across 20 states in India.

In the coming months, the food and grocery delivery platform will continue to expand its reach to more stations across the length and breadth of the country, Swiggy said in a statement.

Train journeys are an integral part of

India's culture, and food plays a central role in that experience. Expanding Swiggy Food on Trains to 100 stations allows us to serve passengers with greater convenience and access to a diverse range of meals from across the country," Deepak Maloo, Vice President, Swiggy Food Marketplace, said. Swiggy joined hands with the Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) in March 2024 to deliver food on train.

80 per cent women-led businesses face challenges: Report

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA Mumbai

round 80 per cent of women-led businesses encounter difficulties with international payments, while 60 per cent struggle with complex regulatory compliances, according to a report.

Despite their increasing role in the economy, women-led enterprises constitute just 15.4 per cent of India's 58.5 million businesses, the report on growing ambitions of women entrepreneurs in cross-border trade stated. The report stated that a poll of more

than 300 women entrepreneurs highlighted four major challenges, including international payments and compliances, that women face while expanding their businesses globally.

Around 60 per cent of women entrepreneurs struggle with export laws, trade regulations, and complex compliance requirements, the report prepared by Aspire For Her and payment solutions provider Payoneer

Limited access to financial resources

are the other major challenges, it added.

"Many women entrepreneurs face funding shortages and payment delays, restricting their ability to scale globally.

Due to challenges in securing business loans and trade credit, a significant number of women-led businesses struggle to expand," the report highlighted. High shipping costs, customs delays, and unreliable logistics partners are also major challenges in cross-border trade.

"Removing these obstacles, whether in financial accessibility or regulatory complexities, can be transformative. The key is to build an ecosystem that enables women-led businesses to scale beyond borders and make a lasting contribution to the global economy," said Madhura Dasgupta Sinha, Founder and CEO of Aspire for Her.

Gaurav Shisodia, Vice President of Payoneer India, said the payment solutions provider is looking to provide expert guidance, locally hosted workshops, and tools to women entrepre-

Gold slips below ₹89,000 mark on muted demand

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA New Delhi

dold price slipped below ₹89,000 per 10 grams in the national capital on Friday due to subdued domestic demand, according to the All India Sarafa The precious metal of 99.9 per cent puri-

ty dipped by ₹200 to ₹88,900 per 10 grams registering its second day of decline. Gold of 99.5 per cent purity also went

lower by ₹200 to ₹88,500 per 10 grams. Traders said reduced demand from local jewellers as well as retail buyers led to the fall in gold prices.

However, silver climbed by ₹500 to ₹99,500 per kilogram extending the gains for the fourth straight day. In the past four sessions, the white metal had advanced by ₹3,100. In futures trade on the MCX, gold for April delivery slipped by ₹50 to ₹85,983 per 10 grams. On the global front, gold futures were trading flat at \$2,929.30 per ounce. Meanwhile, spot gold rose USD 10.14 or 0.35 per cent to \$2,921.94 per ounce. Silver futures, however, in the Asian market hours quoted 0.17 per cent lower at \$33.28 per ounce.

Rupee jumps 20 paise against USD

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA Mumba

¬he rupee rebounded sharply and settled with a gain of 20 paise at 86.92 tled with a gain of 20 page in 1 (provisional) against the US dollar on Friday, as the American currency index declined to its five-month-low level and crude oil prices eased on lower demand expectations.

Volatile domestic equity market senti-ment and uninterrupted outflow of foreign capital, however, weighed on the domestic currency, forex traders said, attributing the foreign investors' outflow to an increased risk aversion due to tariff ambiguity worldwide. At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 87.13 and touched the intra-day low of 87.22 against the greenback. The unit strengthened

during intra-day trade to 86.88 before ending at 86.92 (provisional) against the dollar, 20 paise higher from its previous close.

The rupee had settled 6 paise lower at 87.12 against the US dollar on Thursday, snapping its three-session rally. It had gained 31 paise in the preceding three consecutive sessions.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading lower by 0.43 per cent at 103.58, close to the level seen on November 5, 2024. Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, went up by 1.41 per cent but stayed at six-month low levels of \$70.44 per barrel in futures trade." The profit booking in crude oil seems to have driven prices higher," said Mohammed Imran, research analyst, Mirae Asset Sharekhan.

Women envoys hail diverse workforce at Adani Green Energy

experiences.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Khavda

delegation of women envoys from nine countries, including those from Aluxembourg, Romania and Slovenia, took stock of Adani Group's renewable energy and other projects in Gujarat and lauded female workforce participation at these facilities.

While interacting with women engineers at Adani Green Energy's 30-GW clean energy plant at Khavda in Kutch district, the delegates emphasised how implementation of diversity at workplaces is key to the economic growth of a country.

During their tour to the facility on Wednesday, ahead of the International Women's Day, the seven ambassadors and two high commissioners also interacted with women members of Self Help Groups (SHG) supported by Adani Foundation, the philanthropic arm of the ports-to-energy conglomerate.

"The ambassadors saw firsthand how the renewables project is integrating cutting-edge technology with sustainable development, including the Energy Network Operations Centre (ENOC) overseen by women engineers," the Adani group said in a statement.

At Mundra Port, which handles nearly 11 per cent of the country's maritime cargo and 33 per cent of its container traffic, the visiting envoys explored the Electronics Manufacturing Cluster (EMC) in the Mundra Special Economic Zone (SEZ), where global players are investing in advanced manufacturing.

The delegation members included Ina

Krisnamurthi, Ambassador of Indonesia to India, Marje Luup (Estonia), Diana Mickeviciene (Lithuania), Ana Taban (Moldova), Mateha Vodeb Ghosh (Slovenia), Sena Latif (Romania), and Peggy Frantzen (Luxembourg).

Besides, Seychelles High Commissioner Lalatiana Accouche and Lesotho High Commissioner Lebohang Valentine Mochaba were also part of the delegation.

"It was impressive to see the workforce of the Adani Foundation. We saw young

and brought to laboratories here. They are contributing to their family welfare but. To the whole social and economical development of India. It is a very good news for the whole world," Romanian Ambassador Latif said while sharing her

She said the Adani group has transformed a non-cultivable land into solar plants, manufacturing sites and functional cities that not only created jobs but provided energy for the region and India.

She further said Romania is looking for opportunities to cooperate with India.

My message to you is that as a woman you are engineer of the society you are living in, engineer of your family. You have to be brave, you have to be focused, and have lead the nation in important roles," Lesotho's High Commissioner Mochaba told the women engineers.

Mickeviciene, Ambassador of Lithuania, said it was "very inspiring" to see how a barren, waste land has suddenly become a platform to serve the country - not just the limited community but to entire

"Women are working at all positions in the group from operational level to the top management. So it's empowering that women are at forefront of green transformation of India," she said, adding that the group is also supporting SHGs women who make various handicraft items and are able to support their families.

Seychelles Ambassador Accouche said she is the first women from her country to become a high commissioner in India.

"I thank management (Adani Group's) for this. Women will play most important role in the education and growth of chil-

Estonia's Ambassador Luup also said, "It was very interesting to see woman working in diverse areas. It was impressive to see production of solar panel at such a large scale and participation of women

On International Women's Day she said her message to Indian women will be "it is always important to dream big to engineers just recruited from the campus achieve them one day".

Sensex, Nifty flat amid trade war fears

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA | Mumbai

quity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty surrendered early gains to close almost flat in a volatile trade on Friday as uncertainties over the global trade war sapped investors' risk appetite.

Besides, a bearish trend in global markets and persistent foreign fund outflows also hit investor sentiments, traders said.

Snapping its two-day winning streak, the 30-share BSE Sensex slipped 7.51 points to end at 74,332.58. During the mid-session, it climbed 246.34 points or 0.33 per cent to hit an intraday high of 74,586.43.

However, the broader Nifty of NSE edged up 7.80 points to close at 22,552.50. During the day, the 50-share barometer rose 89 points or 0.39 per cent to hit a high of 22,633.80.

During the week, the BSE Sensex climbed 1,134.48 points or 1.55 per cent high, and the NSE Nifty rose 427.8 points or 1.93 per cent.

"The global market is experiencing a heightened uncertainty due to United States (US) tariff impositions and counter threats from its peers. This ambiguity has led to increased risk aversion and diminished appeal of equities. EMs have been particularly affected, experiencing significant out-

"Lately, the S and P 500 index is showing signs of a deeper correction, reflecting concerns about the potential impact of tariffs on the US economy. In contrast, Indian markets have demonstrated resilience off-late despite looming trade war," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services, said.

From the Sensex pack, Zomato, IndusInd Bank, NTPC, Infosys, HCL Technologies, Titan, Power Grid, Hindustan Unilever, Tech Mahindra and ITC were among the



On the other hand, Reliance Industries, Nestle India, Tata Motors, Adani Ports, Tata Steel, UltraTech Cement and Kotak Mahindra Bank were the laggards.

As many as 2,512 stocks advanced while 1,468 declined and 134 remained unchanged

"The key equity benchmarks ended sideways on Friday as market sentiment remained cautious, with concerns over US tariffs and fluctuating trade policies unsettling global financial markets. In a volatile day of trade, after opening weak, the indices recovered as buying interest emerged in select

blue-chip stocks, including Reliance Industries and Tata Motors, along with oil and gas companies by midday," Devarsh Vakil, head of prime research, HDFC Securities, said. The BSE smallcap gauge rose 0.75 per cent,

while the midcap index slipped 0.30 per cent. Among the BSE sectoral indices, Consumer Durables, Utilities, Focussed IT, Realty, IT, Teck, Power, Services and Healthcare were the laggards.

Commodities, Energy, FMCG, Industrials, Telecommunication, Auto, Capital Goods, Metal and Oil and Gas were the gainers.

aerodrome license

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Noida

NIA awaits

he Noida International Airport (NIA) on Friday said it has submitted the application for the aerodrome license and is working closely with aviation and security regulators to complete all necessary steps as it prepares for starting operations.

"We are in discussion with the State Government for the inauguration of the airport," it said in a statement. The airport was scheduled to start operations from April this year. Yamuna International Airport Pvt

Ltd (YIAPL), a wholly-owned subsidiary of Zurich Airport International AG, is developing the airport. The foundation stone for the project was laid in November 2021 and validation flight was successfully completed in December 2024. NIA said the Airports Authority of

India (AAI) is making progress with its

work in the air traffic control tower, and

construction of the passenger terminal and associated infrastructure is progressing well. "We have submitted our application for the aerodrome license and are working closely with the aviation and security regulators to complete all necessary steps, including the publication

of the Aerodrome Information

Publication (AIP). We are in discussion with the state government for the inauguration of the airport," the statement said. In the first phase, the airport will have a capacity to handle 12 million passengers in the



The world Is HER stage In a world that often asks women to be quiet, they turn their music into a roar, says SAKSHI PRIYA

he walks with a tune in her heart. de Haas and Chinmayi Tripathi, who have Sometimes it's soft, a quiet comfort. Other times, it's bold, full of fire. But it's always there, her own story. A woman's voice should be heard and felt. It's in the music she creates, the words she writes, the art she shapes. It's in every step she takes towards something bigger than herself.

Women have always been at the heart of creativity, yet their stories haven't always been told the way they ought to be. They have broken barriers, redefined spaces and filled the world with art that speaks louder than words ever could.

This International Women's Day, we celebrate two remarkable artists, Saskia Rao their passion.

each carved their own path in music. Saskia introduced the Indian cello to the world, blending cultures through sound, while Chinmayi has breathed new life into poetry through song, keeping old traditions alive in a way that feels fresh and urgent.

Their journeys are different, but the heart of what they do is the same. They create with purpose, challenge expectations, and bring something beautiful into the world. Here, in their own words, they share what it means to be a woman in music, the struggles they have faced and the moments that make it all worthwhile. Their music is a reflection of their strength, their stories and

CELEBRATING THE STRENGTH, RESILIENCE AND BRILLIANCE

On this International Women's Day, we extend our warmest wishes to all our readers. We deeply appreciate the invaluable contributions of women to society, those who inspire, lead and shape the world with their strength and determination. Today, we celebrate your achievements, honour your dedication and acknowledge the profound impact you make in every sphere of life.

To our esteemed readers of the Pioneer, may this day serve as a reminder of the importance of equality, respect and empowerment. Together, let's continue encouraging a future where

true impact of your music?

If you could change

one thing for

classical music what would it be?

Despite the progress

made by female classical musicians, we still

operate in a patriarchal structure. I wish for

focus on their personal journey. From

prioritising themselves is selfish. But

true selves, we lose ourselves. Today,

we have strong female role models in Indian classical music who

inspire young artists to

embrace their true selves

AS A WOMAN. YOU

ONCE. RESILIENCE

IS EMBRACING EVERY

CAN BE SILLY,

VULNERABLE.

STRONG AND

JOYFUL ALL AT

when we play roles instead of being our

childhood, women are taught that

women not to feel pressured to play roles but to

women in

Chinmayi Tripathi: Reviving Poetry through Music

Singer-songwriter Chinmayi Tripathi is redefining contemporary Indian music by blending poetry with melodies, giving new life to the works of renowned poets. She is also one of the few musicians playing the dotara, a Bengali folk instrument, bringing its unique sound to modern audiences. Through her music, she challenges gender stereotypes in the industry and creates a space for poetic storytelling.

Music and poetry have long been tools of resistance and selfexpression for women. How has your journey as a female artist shaped your perspective on gender and creativity? It has made me much more sensitive to the fact that it is not easy for anyone out here! Every one is constantly dealing with a lot of insecurities, trying to hustle, stay sane and stay creative at the same time — both men and women. However, being a woman there are other issues you have to deal with For example, women in music are often not taken seriously as composers or lyricists. It is assumed that if a woman is a musician, she must be a singer, not a composer or songwriter. There is also immense pressure to look glamorous on stage and in videos. These outdated notions force women to fit into rigid roles. But the world is changing. The key is to embrace your individuality, own it fearlessly and stay true to your art. That's all that matters.

Your work revives the words of renowned poets through music. Is there a particular poem that speaks to the experience of womanhood?

Kaifi Azmi's *Aurat* always comes to mind: उठ मेरी जान, मेरे साथ ही चलना है तूझे लड़खड़ाती कहाँ तक कि संभालना है तुझे

Beyond this, contemporary poets like Anamika, Jacinta Kerketta and Babusha Kohli, as well as the poetry of Vinod Kumar Shukla, speak to universal human experiences beyond class, creed and gender. Their words shake your soul and change the way you see the world.

every woman's potential knows no limits.

Wishing you a day filled with joy, recognition and the appreciation you truly deserve!

SARIKA'S JOURNEY WITH THE CELLO

Saskia Rao is a musician who speaks through the strings of her cello, bringing Indian and Western classical music together in a way that feels both natural and groundbreaking. With deep emotion and a quiet determination, she has redefined how the cello is heard in India, making it sing with the soul of a sitar and the depth of a sarod.

As a woman playing the cello in Indian classical music, which is not very common, when did you realise this was your path?

Was it an instant connection or a gradual process? I realised my path in music when I was around 12 years old. I loved playing the cello and knew this was what I wanted to do for life. My connection to Indian classical music came later when I studied music and encountered a class on it. I was especially drawn to the Dhrupad style. The combination of strict structure and complete freedom of expression in Indian classical music fascinated me. Over the next ten years, I immersed myself in this world, earning the freedom to express through rigorous practice. The connection was instant, but my decision to pursue it professionally over Western classical music came gradually.

Did you face resistance or doubt while pursuing something unconventional?

As an artist, doubt is necessary; it pushes you to work harder. However, as a woman and a non-Indian in this field, I had to learn not to make people's prejudices make me doubt myself. My growth comes from my Gurus, peers and audience, not from societal bias. Over 35 years, I've been grate-

ful for all experiences, as they shape me both as artist. Instead of ignoring doubt, I try to understand the lesson behind it before releasing it.



The dotara is not a widely played instrument, especially by women. What does it mean to you to reclaim and redefine its space in contemporary music?

A lot of Indian music instruments are becoming extinct, as live music in general is getting replaced by electronic music very rapidly. However, you cannot exactly replace a live instrument as it is a living creature, it breathes, it has its own moods, emotions and soul. Dotara is not just an instrument for me, it is something like an extension to my body when I sing and therefore inseparable

On this Women's Day, what message would you like to give to young women struggling to find their voice, whether in music, poetry or life in general?

There are much more avenues today to display/distribute your work. On the Internet, it's very easy to get likes or views now to but still difficult to create a sustainable revenue stream out of it. So I would just say that whatever art you pursue, avoid shortcuts in it to get famous or achieve success quickly-invest in yourself, in your training and practising your art even if it takes years and then go all out to explore technology and all the other avenues to pursue your goals.

A CELEBRATION OF PRESENCE

For Olympe, this exhibition is deeply personal. It is a love

shared and the resilience they carry. It is about women who

do not need permission to take up space, who shape their

weight of history on their shoulders. The exhibition invites

you to step closer, to feel the energy of the women who live

within these portraits. They are here, vivid, unyielding, their

letter to the women she has met, the stories they have

own paths, who exist in the present while carrying the

stories work into every brushstroke.

The Power in Their Gaze

A powerful tribute to modern Indian women through evocative silk portraits, embracing tradition and strength, writes SAKSHI PRIYA

raped in silk, caught in quiet yet powerful moments, the women in **Olympe** Ramakrishna's portraits do not merely gaze back, they demand to be seen. Each expression, each stance, carries a story of strength, ambition and grace, woven into the fabric of contemporary India. This International Women's Day, the Franco-Indian artist brings her deeply personal series Women of Urban India curated by

Shankar Tripathi, a tribute to the modern Indian woman, capturing her essence with every brushstroke. There is something deeply intimate about her work. The twelve por-

traits, printed on panels of raw silk, seem to float in the air, shifting gently as if breathing. Suspended like saris drying under the sun, they are not confined by frames or barriers, they exist in their own space, free and fluid, much like the lives they reflect.

A Journey Through Two Worlds

Olympe Ramakrishna was born in Normandy, France, but her art has always felt at home in India. Her journey began in the ateliers of Paris, studying the human form under the influence of Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres, Henri Rousseau and Paul Gauguin. The classical precision of European portraiture meets the rich vibrancy of Indian tradition in her work, creating a language that is uniquely hers. She studied at the Beaux-Arts in Paris, the Académie de

la Grande Chaumière and the Atelier Artmedium, before moving to London's Battersea Art Centre. But it was in India that she found her muse, where the deep reds, earthy browns and golden ochres gave new life to her canvases.

For **Olympe**, silk is fabric that carries history, memory, identity. By choosing to print her portraits on silk, she transforms the sari from something worn into something that holds stories, wrapping itself around the spirit of the women she paints.

Women Who Speak Without Words

Her muses are women she has met, women whose stories she carries within her. Among them are Shushika, Roopashree, Charisma, Lux and Romi, each one captured in a moment of quiet power. Shushika, draped in deep red, holds

herself with the grace of a dancer, every line of her body telling a story of discipline and devotion. Roopashree's gaze is steady, her presence filling the space around her. Charisma leans slightly forward, caught in

thought, while Lux stands tall, shoulders back, looking out towards something unseen. Romi, her expression soft but knowing, seems to hold a secret within her eyes.

Art That Moves With You Walking through the exhibition

is like stepping into a world where time slows down. The silk panels shift with the slightest movement, making the portraits feel alive. The women in her art are constantly moving, much like the women they represent, navigating a world that is always changing, always demanding.

Exhibitions open from 8 March to 18 March 2025 Galerie Romain Rolland, Alliance Française de Delhi, 72, KK Birla Lane, Lodhi Estate, New Delhi

Get in touch at vivacity@dailypioneer.com

Women tennis players now eligible for paid maternity leave

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA Washington

regnant players on the women's tennis tour now can receive 12 months of paid maternity leave, and those who become parents via partner pregnancy, surrogacy or adoption can get two months off with pay, under a program sponsored by the Public Investment Fund of Saudi Arabia and announced Thursday by the WTA. "Independent contractors and selfemployed individuals don't typically have these kinds of maternity benefits provided and available to them. They have to go out and sort of figure out those benefits for themselves," WTA CEO Portia Archer said. "This is really sort of novel and groundbreaking." More than 300 players are eligible for the fund, which is retroactive to Jan. 1. The WTA would not disclose how much money is involved.

The programme, which the WTA touted as "the first time in women's sports history that comprehensive maternity benefits are available to independent, selfemployed athletes," also provides grants for fertility treatments, including egg freezing

It's part of a wider trend: As women's

sports rise, there is an emphasis on meeting maternity and parental needs.

How many mothers are on the women's tennis tour now? The WTA says 25 moms are active on tour; one, Tokyo Olympics gold medalist Belinda Bencic, won a title last month after returning from maternity leave in October.

More and more pros in tennis have returned to action after having children, including past number one-ranked players and Grand Slam title winners such as Serena Williams, Naomi Osaka, Kim Clijsters, Caroline Wozniacki and Victoria

Azarenka, a member of the WTA Players' Council, which Archer acknowledged played a key role in pushing for this fund, thinks these benefits will encourage lower-ranked or lower-earning athletes to take as much time off as they feel they need after becoming a parent, rather than worrying about losing out on income while not entering tournaments.

"That's certainly one of the aims of the programme: To provide the financial resources, the flexibility, the support, so that these athletes, regardless of where they're ranked, but particularly those who earn less, will have that agency. To decide



when and how they want to start their families," Archer said.

And, Azarenka said, this could lead some players to decide to become parents before retiring from the sport for good.

"Every feedback we've heard from players who are mothers, or who are not mothers, is like, Wow, this is an incredible opportunity for us," said 2012 and '13 Australian Open champion Azarenka, whose son, Leo, is 8. "I believe it's really going to change the conversation in sports. But going beyond sports, it's a global conversation, and I'm happy that we're (part of it)."

Other steps the WTA has taken in recent years to benefit players include steering more women into coaching, implementing safeguarding, attempting to stem cyberbullying, and increasing prize money with an eye to pay that equals what

men receive in the sport.

What role does Saudi Arabia have in tennis?The Public Investment Fund, or PIF, became the WTA's global partner last year, after much public debate — Hall of Famers Chris Evert and Martina Navratilova were among the critics — over questions about LGBTQ+ and women's rights in Saudi Arabia.

The kingdom now hosts the seasonending WTA Finals and an ATP event for rising stars of men's tennis. The PIF spon-

sors the WTA and ATP rankings. "We wouldn't have been able to provide the benefits were it not for this relationship and the funding that PIF provides,"

What are maternity leave policies in golf, soccer and basketball?

Archer said.

In golf, which like tennis is an individual sport without guaranteed salaries, the LPGA introduced an updated maternity leave policy in 2019 that lets athletes have the same playing status when they return.

In soccer, both the NWSL and the U.S. Women's national team have collective bargaining agreements that allow for pregnancy leave and parental leave; the NWSL pays the full base salary while an

athlete is pregnant.
In basketball, the WNBA's CBA guarantees full pay during maternity leave.

For tennis, Azarenka said, the PIF WTA Maternity Fund Program is "just the

It's an incredible beginning. Monumental change," she said. "But I think we can look into how we can expand this fund for bigger, better things.

Aravindh inches closer to Prague Masters title



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Prague

randmaster Chithambaram came within strik-ing distance of winning his first major tournament after an easy draw with David Navara of Czech Republic in the eighth and penultimate round of Prague Masters tournament here.

With this result, Aravindh took his tally to 5.5 points, maintaining a half-point lead over compatriot R Praggnanandhaa, who drew with Vietnam's Quang Liem Le.

In the final round, Aravindh will face Ediz Gurel, while Praggnanandhaa has a tougher challenge against Anish Giri of the Netherlands.

After losing two of his first three games, top-seeded Chinese GM Wei Yi bounced back impressively, defeating local favorite Nguyen Thai Dai Van to move into sole third place with 4.5 points.

Vincent Keymer (Germany), Ediz Gurel, and Giri share fourth place with four points each, followed by Quang Liem, Navara, and Sam Shankland, all on 3.5 points.

Dai Van remains at the bottom with 2.5 points. The Berlin defense is normally known to get balanced endgames and this time too, Navara had little trouble reaching an equal endgame. A small oversight by both players at a critical moment briefly offered Aravindh a chance to push for victory, but the opportunity slipped, and both players signed truce in 32 moves.

Praggnanandhaa, playing White, opted for his pet Catalan opening against Le. However, the Vietnamese GM found adequate counter play in the middle game

by cornering the white queen. Praggnanadhaa parted with a pawn for activity but the resulting position was only

good enough to repeat. The game lasted In the Challengers' section, Divya Deshmukh drew with Czech player Nemec Jychym but remained in last place with two points. Meanwhile, Uzbekistan's Nodirbek

Yakubboev regained sole lead with 6.5

points after defeating Richard Stalmach. Results (Round 8)

Aravindh Chithambaram (Ind, 5.5) drew with David Navara (Cze, 3.5); R Praggnanandhaa (Ind, 5) drew with Quang Leim Le (Vie, 3.5); Sam Shankland (Usa, 3.5) lost to Anish Giri (Ned, 4); Wei Yi (Chn, 4.5) beat Nguyen Thai Dai Van (Cze, 2.5); Vincent Keymer (Ger, 4) drew with Gurel Ediz (Tur, 4).

Challengers: Richard Stalmach (Cze, 3) lost to Nodirbek Yakubboev (Uzb, 6.5); Finel Vaclav (Cze, 3.5) drew with Jonas Buhl Bjerre (Den, 6); Nemec Jychym (Cze, 2.5) drew with Divya Deshmukh (Ind, 2) Ivan Salgado Lopez (Esp, 4) drew with Ma Qun (Chn, 4.5); Stamatis Kourkoulous-Arditis (Gre, 3) lost to Marc'andria Maurizzi (Fra, 5).

Chhetri's return reflects bad but gives national team hope



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA New Delhi

escribed as "a wise decision" by the sport's national federation, Śunil Chhetri's return from international retirement at 40 actually reflects badly on Indian football, for it lays bare the paucity of quality strikers in a country of over 1.4 billion.

man who has served the national team with distinction for nearly two decades, eventually ending his glorious career as India's highest-ever goal scorer with 94 strikes to his name.

When he called time on his international career in May last year, Chhetri was the world's third leading scorer among active players, behind Portuguese superstar Cristiano Ronaldo and Argentine icon Lionel Messi.

But Chhetri's long list of achievements in the sport is one thing, and his coming out of retirement less than a year after he decided to leave the scene, is another, and Thursday's surprise announcement certainly carries a negative connotation.

According to the All India Football No amount of praise is too high for the Federation (AIFF), he was coaxed out of retirement by national team head coach Manolo Márquez, who urged him to join his old teammates for the crucial final round of the AFC Asian Cup 2027 qual-

People in the top rung of the AIFF are convinced that the right move has been made by head coach, who is also doing duty as FC Goa's gaffer in the ongoing

Since his retirement, he had continued playing for Bengaluru FC in the ISL. He has so far scored 12 goals from 23 matches this season to become its highest Indian goal-scorer, and it is this performance graph that has driven Márquez to get in touch with Chhetri.

His form in the ISL, in which he has also made two assists besides finding the back of the net a dozen times, has also impressed AIFF president Kalyan

"Sunil's leadership qualities are unmatched. A player of his stature can motivate the entire team. His form too has been impeccable in the ISL, scoring 12 goals, and India can greatly benefit with a striker like him," Chaubey said. Like Chaubey, AIFF secretary general

Anilkumar P too preferred to look at the positive side of the move, and so did the legendary IM Vijayan, who, however, also rued the absence of a striker good enough to lead the team upfront. "It's a wise decision on part of the head

coach to include Sunil Chhetri based on the technical data we received from our experts," Anilkumar told PTI.

"In the ongoing Indian Super League, Chhetri is performing consistently. His inclusion will definitely strengthen the Indian national team.

"We have some important matches coming up soon. We are fully aligned with the coach's decision and hopefully Chhetri can contribute much more to the national team so that we can move to the next level of the Asian Cup 2027," Anilkumar

Chhetri, who made his international debut in 2005 and left the scene as India's most-capped player, has been included in Marquez's list of 26 players for the March FIFA international window.

Vijayan, an Indian football legend in his own right and currently the head of the AIFF's technical committee, sounded excited when asked to share his views on Chhetri's return.

"It's a good decision from the team's point of view. You are asking me that you

are calling back a 40-year-old to play for national team, but there have been similar instances in the past.

"You look at Roger Milla, who came out of retirement (at 38) to help Cameroon qualify for the quarterfinals of 1990 World Cup. Age is not a factor, what matters is fitness, and Sunil remains extremely fit and he is also playing very well," Vijayan told PTI.

However, he acknowledged that the lack of good strikers in India remains a prob-"We have been trying so hard to find

good strikers, but unfortunately, we have not succeeded so far. Most of the top strikers in the ISL are foreigners, so that is how Chhetri's retirement had made head-

lines with FIFA, world football's global governing body, leading the outpouring of tributes for the Indian talisman.

FIFA had earlier in 2022 released a documentary on the long-serving Indian cap-

Titled 'Captain Fantastic', it had three parts - kick off, mid-game and extra

Marquez, who took over the reins after Chhetri's retirement, has not any luck with his strikers as they have not really deliv-

In his first assignment in the Inter-Continental Cup, India were held to a goalless draw by Maldives and suffered a 0-3 defeat to Syria.

In the friendly internationals against Vietnam and Malaysia, India managed two 1-1 stalemates.

Going ahead, the Blue Tigers will play

a friendly match against Maldives on March 19 in preparation for the opening match of the AFC Asian Cup Saudi Arabia Qualifiers Final Round against Bangladesh on March 25.

India have been placed in a qualifying group alongside Bangladesh, Hong Kong, and Singapore for the Asian Cup. In the tournament's previous edition, India had a disappointing run, failing to progress past the group stage after losing all their

AHEAD OF ICC CHAMPIONS TROPHY FINAL

Rohit can turn game with big scores: Sunil Gavaskar



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA New Delhi

egendary Sunil Gavaskar believes Rohit Sharma should not be content ✓ with scoring just 25-30 runs and must focus on building longer innings, as his presence at the crease can have a gamechanging impact for India. In ODI cricket, the Indian skipper has embraced an aggressive approach to give India quick



starts, but this has often resulted in early dismissals

His highest score in the ongoing Champions Trophy is 41 against

Bangladesh in the opening game.
"(If) He (Rohit Sharma) bats for even 25 overs, India will be around 180-200. Imagine if they have lost only a couple of wickets by then; just think what they could do. They could reach 350 or more,"

Gavaskar told India Today.

"He also needs to give it some thought. It's one thing to go out and play aggressively, but there has to be a bit of discretion somewhere to give himself the chance to bat for 25-30 overs.

If he does that, he takes the game away from the opposition. That kind of impact

is match winning." Rohit has managed scores of 20, 15, and 28 against Pakistan, New Zealand, and Australia respectively in the tournament. "And I think, as a batter, are you happy

with scoring 25-30 runs? You shouldn't be! So that is what I would

say to him: Your impact on the team will be even greater if you bat for 25 overs instead of just seven, eight, or nine overs," Gavaskar said.

Nasser Hussain backs NZ

India and New Zealand will face off again in the Champions Trophy final on Sunday, having played the final group A game in Dubai

Former England captain Nasser Hussain has backed New Zealand to win, saying the Kiwis have some tough cricketers who won't choke under pressure. "They will not bottle it, they won't choke.

We were having dinner with [former Australia batter] Aaron Finch and he summed it up pretty well in saying New Zealand are never a side that beat them-

And by that, he means that they will rock up, and they will put in a performance," he told *Sky Sports*.

"All the way through the New Zealand lineup they have some very, very tough cricketers who turn up to every single game and give it their absolute best - that's why they will always be there around semifinals and finals.



Taekwondo champion Jade Jones launches boxing career

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ London

ade Jones, a two-time Olympic gold medalist in taekwondo, is launching a career in boxing. Jones took gold for Britain in 2012 and 2016 and competed in four Games, most recently in Paris last year. But, at the age of 31, she has

announced her move to boxing.

"The dream is to be a world champion. To be a world champion in two sports would be pretty cool," Jones told the BBC.

She will be trained by Stephen Smith, a former British and Commonwealth featherweight champion.

Jones competed in the 57-kilogram category, which would make her a featherweight in boxing.

She was 19 when she won Britain's first Olympic taekwondo gold at London in 2012. She went on to successfully defend the title in Rio de Janeiro four years later.

Jones couldn't achieve a three-peat in Tokyo and last year she was eliminated in the first round in Paris.

"After 20 years of using my feet I am switching it up," she said. "Boxing is good for me. It started as a distraction, but now I am going to go for it because I am just

damage or loss to any person, a purchaser of this publication or not for the result of any action taken on the basis of this work. All disputes are subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of competent court and forums in Delhi/New Delhi only. Readers are advised and requested to verify and seek appropriate advice to satisfy themselves about the veracity of any kind of advertisement befor responding to any contents published in this newspaper. The printer, publisher, editor and any employee of the Pioneer Group's will not be held responsible for any kind of loss, consequences and further product-related damages on such advertisements. Printed and published by Shobori Ganguli for and on behalf of CMYK Printech Ltd., Regd Office:- 201-205, 208-210, 2nd Floor, Pratap Bhawan 5, B.S.Z. Marg, New Delhi-110002 Phone: 011-46035729, 011-69342500 and printed at Jagran Prakashan Ltd, D-210, 211 Sector-63, Noida, Dist. Gautam Budh Nagar (U.P.) -201301, Phone: 0120-4615800 extension 142, Editor-in-Chief Shobori Ganguli AIR SURCHARGE of ₹ 2.00 East: Calcutta, North: Leh West: Mumbai & Ahmedabad South: Bangalore & Chennai. Central : Khajuraho. Lucknow Office: 4th Floor, Sahara Shopping Centre, Faizabad Road, Lucknow-226 016. Telephones: 0522-2346443, 2346444, 2346445.

Although every possible care and caution has been taken to avoid errors or omissions, this publication is being sold on the condition and understanding that information given in this publication is merely for reference and must not be taken as having authority of or binding in any way on the writers, editors, publishers, and printers and sellers who do not owe any responsibility for any