

# Che Statesman

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'DEFEAT PAVES THE WAY FOR THE FUTURE; INDIA **BLOC TO GROW STRONGER'** 



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REDDY URGES SOUTHERN STATES TO UNITE TO PROTECT THEIR RIGHTS

WHAT WAS IN IT FOR THE CORPORATE SECTOR?

PEOPLE'S PARLIAMENT, ALWAYS IN SESSION

ROHIT'S TON HELPS INDIA BEAT ENGLAND BY FOUR WICKETS

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## **New CM of Delhimay** take oath after PM returns from USA

**STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, 9 FEBRUARY** 

A crucial meeting was held here on Sunday at the residence of Union Home Minister Amit Shah, where discussions were held regarding the government formation in Delhi.

Union Minister and BJP President JP Nadda also attended the meeting which was held a day after the party's assembly polls, where it wrested power from the Aam Aadmi seats in the elections.

for Delhi. The high-level new government is formed. meeting at Shah's residence also discussed who will be the next Chief Minister of Delhi, sources said.

the Chief Ministerial candidate, BJP candidate from the New Delhi assembly seat Parvesh Verma said the party's decision on the CM's face will be acceptable to everyone. "In our party, the legislative party decides (CM's face) and then the party leadership approves it. So the party's decision will be acceptable to

everyone,' he said. Meanwhile, according to sources, the swearing-in ceremony of the new Delhi Chief the post. Minister is likely to be held after 13 February after Prime Minister Narendra Modi returns from the United States.

Earlier, following the resignation of Delhi Chief Min-



ceded defeat in the assembly elections, Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena dissolved the seventh legislative assemhistoric win in the Delhi bly, paving the way for a new government.

An official communication Party by winning 48 out of 70 from Raj Niwas said the incumbent chief minister The BJP is yet to announce has been asked by the LG to the Chief Ministerial face continue on the post till the

"In exercise of the power conferred upon me by subsection (2)(b) of section 6 of the Government of National On Saturday, speaking on Capital Territory of Delhi Act, 1991, I, Vinai Kumar Saxena, Lieutenant Governor of Delhi, hereby dissolve the Seventh Legislative Assembly of the National Capital Territory of Delhi with effect from February 8, 2025." the LG's order said.

> Atishi, who resigned as chief minister, has been serving in the capacity since September last year following the resignation of then chief minister Arvind Kejriwal from

> The BJP has won the justconcluded Delhi assembly polls, the results of which were declared on Saturday, with a historic mandate, is returning to power in the national capital

## Decisive blow: 31 Maoists and two security personnel killed in Chhattisgarh gunbattle

**SHISHIR ROY CHOWDHURY** RAIPUR, 9 FEBRUARY

n a decisive blow to Left Wing Extremistin surgency, security forces in Chhat-Lisgarh killed as many as 31 Maoists on Sunday morning in a major operation conducted along the Chhattisgarh-Maharashtra border, official sources said. Two security personnel lost their lives, while two others were injured in the encounter.

Over 1,000 security personnel National Park area of the Bijapur



All 31 bodies of the Naxals

have been recovered and are currently undergoing identification as search operations continue across the region.

According to official sources, acting on credible intelligence regarding a significant Maoist presence, the forces from the Bastar Fighters, District Reserve Guard (DRG), and Special Task Force (STF) launched an expansive operation that quickly encircled the enemy. In the ensuing clash, the security forces eliminated 31 insurgents

quantity of arms and explosive materials. Among the recovered items were automatic rifles, grenade launchers, and other lethal weaponry.

Two personnel, one each from DRG and STF, died during the encounter, and two more personnel sustained injuries. The injured have been airlifted to Raipurfor advanced medical treatment and are reported to be in stable condition.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah lauded the operation, stating: "In the pursuit of a

Naxal-free India, our security forces have achieved a major success in Bijapur. In this operation, we have neutralised 31 Naxalinsurgents and recovered a large quantity of weapons and explosive material. Today, while we celebrate this victory, we also mourn the loss of two brave soldiers. The nation will always be indebted to these heroes. I extend my heartfelt condolences to their families and reaffirm our commitment to eradicating Naxalism from our country by March 31, 2026."

## ister Atishi after the AAP after 27 years ousting the AAP. Manipur chief minister BirenSinghresigns

**STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE** IMPHAL, 9 FEBRUARY

The Manipur Chief Minister, Nongthongbam Biren Singh, on Sunday tendered his resignation to Governor Ajay Bhalla, 21 months after the state was first plunged into prolonged conflict during which more than 250 people have lost their lives and 60,000 have been rendered homeless, with the state itself left emo-

tionally and physically divid-

Biren Singh, accompanied by BJP MP Samit Patra, the party in-charge of Manipur submitted his resignation shortly after 5 p.m. to Govenor Bhalla at the Imphal Raj Bhawan today.Both he and the Governor had returned to Imphal today afternoon withdrawn from the coalition from New Delhi where they government led by Biren had been summoned yesterday Singh and were to be seated by the Union Home Minister Amit Shah. Biren Singh had been in the eye of the storm beginning from 3 May 2023 when the ethnic conflict broke out between the tribal Kukis and the Meiteis which had led to the present state of affairs. The clamour for Biren Singh's resignation had been mounting since mid-May 2023 and he had at one point staged a resignation drama where he was waylaid en route to the Raj Bhawan and his resignation letter torn by a crowd of women folks.

unfolding since 3 February after Union Home Minister Amit Shah summoned Speaker Th Satybrata Singh and dissident minister Y.Khemchand and MLA Th Radheshyam and CM Biren Singh to Delhi.

None of them could meet Amit Shah and Mr Singh and his entourage had returned home after taking a dip at Prayagraj in the Kumbh Mela that is currently on.

Then out of the blue Mr Singh was summoned yesterday and he caught a char-



tered flight to the capital. Prior to this the threat of

a no-confidence motion had been looming large over Biren Singh in the Assembly Session scheduled to start from tomorrow. The motion was on the cards of the Opposition Congress Party which has only five MLAs in the House. But then the six MLAs of the National Peoples Party had in the opposition benches in

the House tomorrow. The Congress was so confident of garnering support from dissenting BJP MLAs that they had even stated that they were going to launch a 'Brahmastra' which will destroy one of the 'double engines'

of the BJP. According to informed sources, upon arrival in Imphal, Sambit Patra is said to have instructed the BJP State President to summon a meeting of the BJP legislators at the BJP's Imphal headquarters The latest drama began but apparently none turned up. Hence the decision by Biren Singh to put in his papers post haste.

> It is not known as to who will succeed him but in all likelihood Manipur will be put under President's Rule, keeping the Legislative Assembly under animated suspension. Reliable sources indicate that along with his resignation, Biren Singh has recommended placing the Assembly under animated suspension, though details regarding this proposal remain unclear.



### **THUMBNAILS**



Book lovers throng New Delhi World Book Fair-2025 on Sunday.

BJP leaders pay courtesy visit to LG after Atishi resigns: After the defeat of AAP in the Delhi assembly elections and moments after Atishi tendered her resignation as Chief Minister, a group of BJP leaders paid a courtesy visit to Lieutenant Governor VK Saxena. Parvesh Verma, who won from the New Delhi Assembly seat; Arvinder Singh Lovely, elected from the Gandhi Nagar Constituency and Kailash Gahlot, the winner from Bijwasan seat, were among the leaders who met Saxena at Raj Niwas, the official residence of the Delhi Lieutenant Governor. Speaking to reporters, Kailash Gahlot said, "I am here just for a courtesy meeting with the LG." Arvinder Singh Lovely, while leaving the Raj Niwas, also said, "It was just a courtesy meeting." BJP candidate Parvesh Verma defeated AAP's Arvind Kejriwal by a margin of 4,089 votes, while Arvinder Singh Lovely defeated AAP's Naveen Chaudhary by 12,748 votes. Kailash Gahlot won against AAP's Surender Bhardwaj with a margin of 11,276 votes.

Haryana CM Nayab Singh Saini slams AAP for "depriving" people of Centre's scheme: Haryana Chief Minister Nayab

Singh Saini on Sunday lauded the BJP's victory in the Delhi Assembly elections, calling it a historic mandate by the people and said that people (AAP government) who had come in to power by resorting to lies were deprived of their power. "The people of Delhi have given a historic mandate in these elections. They were deprived of the policies that PM Narendra Modi had implemented across India. Now, they will also benefit from them," Saini said. He further said, "The people who had come to power by resorting to lies were shown the way out by the people of Delhi." Saini also took a swipe at AAP convener and former Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal over the issue of pollution in the Yamuna River, which had been a focal point during the

Bisht vows development in Mustafabad, says will rename constituency: BJP's winning candidate from Mustafabad, Mohan Singh Bisht on Sunday, reaffirmed his pledge to work for the development of his constituency and rename it after securing victory in the assembly elections. "I work for the development of my constituency based on my experience of 25 years. I had said that if I win I'll change the name of Mustafabad to Shiv Puri or Shiv Vihar. I'll do it," Bisht said.

NIFTEM-K transfers technology for rapid pesticide detection kit: New Delhi, Kundali. India - NIFTEM-K has successfully



election campaign.

transferred its pioneering technology on "Rapid Pesticide Detection Kit for Tea to ARF Lifesciences LLP, Faridabad. This Nano-Biosensor-based kit enables on-site pesticide detec-

tion within minutes, strengthening selfcompliance and self-belief among farmers and processors. This revolutionary technology provides instant safety assurance, making pesticide monitoring more accessible and efficient. Dr Harinder Singh Oberoi, Director, NIFTEM-K, stated that with a projected production of over 1,00,000 kits per season, this innovation is set to transform pesticide monitoring across the tea

## Atishiresigns as CM; LG dissolves Delhi assembly

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI, 9 FEBRUARY** 

ollowing the resignation of Delhi Chief Minister Atishi after the AAP ceded defeat in the assembly elections, Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena dissolved

the seventh legislative assembly,

paving the way for a new gov-

ernment.

is formed.

In an official communication from the Raj Niwas, the incumbent chief minister has been asked by the LG to continue on the post till the new government

"In exercise of the power conferred upon me by sub-section (2)(b) of section 6 of the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi Act, 1991, I, Vinai Kumar Saxena, Lieutenant Governor of Delhi, hereby dissolve the Seventh Legislative Assembly of the National Capital Territory of Delhi with effect from February 8, 2025." the LG order said.

minister, has been serving in mandate, returning to power in the capacity since September the national capital after 27 years last year following the resignation ousting the AAP.



of then chief minister Arvind Kejriwal from the post. Atishi became the third woman chief minister of Delhi after Sushma Swaraj and Sheila Dikshit.

The BJP has won the justconcluded Delhi assembly polls, the results of which were declared Atishi, who resigned as chief on Saturday, with a historic

Despite AAP's overall poor performance at the hustings, Atishi managed to retain her Kalkaji seat defeating her nearest the populist schemes and sub-BJP rival Ramesh

Bidhuri by a narrow margin of 3,521 votes. However, her victory was one of the few positives for AAP in an otherwise devastating election where senior leaders such as Manish Sisodia,

The BJP has won the just-concluded Delhi assembly polls, the results of which were declared on Saturday. with a historic mandate, returning to power in the national capital after 27 years by ousting the AAP

Arvind Kejriwal faced unexpected defeats. BJP's landslide victory in the elections marks a decisive shift in Delhi's political landscape, indicating that the party's election promises resonated more with voters than AAP's welfare-driven model.

The results also indicate that sidies may no longer be enough to ensure electoral success. With this victory, the BJP has further strengthened its dominance in North India as the party is in power in all neighbouring states, including Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Satyendar Jain, and party chief Uttarakhand, and Rajasthan.

## Delhi poll process concludes with ECI submitting list of winning candidates to LG

**STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE** 

**NEW DELHI, 9 FEBRUARY** 

The Election Commission of India (ECI) on Sunday officially concluded the process of Delhi Legislative Assembly Elections 2025 with the submission of a list of newly-elected candidates to Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena. An official communication

from the office of the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) stated, "ECI has officially concluded the process of Delhi Legislative Assembly Election 2025, with the submission of the "Due Constitution Notification" containing the list of newly elected candidates to the Lieu-Vinai Kumar Saxena".

voter turnout of 60.42 per cent reflecting the active participation of Delhi's electorate.

shift, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has regained power in Delhi after 27 years, securing 48 out of the 70 assembly days.

seats. The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), which had been in power for the past decade, won 22 seats. Notably, several prominent AAP leaders, including former Chief Minister tenant Governor of Delhi, Arvind Kejriwal, Manish Sisodia, and Saurabh Bharadwaj, The elections witnessed a lost their respective con-

With the submission of the "Due Constitution Notification", the path is now clear In a significant political for the formation of a new government. The BJP is expected to announce its chief ministerial candidate in the coming

stituencies.

## formation in Delhi take place at Shah's residence

**STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE** 

**NEW DELHI, 9 FEBRUARY** 

A crucial meeting was held here on Sunday at the residence of the Union Home Minister, Amit Shah, where discussions were held regarding the government formation in Delhi. The Union Minister of Chemicals&Fertilisers and BJP President JP Nadda also attended the meeting, which was held a day after the party's historic Minister is likely to be held win in the Delhi assembly polls, where it wrested power from the Aam Aadmi Party by winning dra Modi from the United 48 out of 70 seats in the elections. States. The Prime Minister will The high-level meeting at embark on a crucial five-day-Shah's residence also discussed who will be the next Chief Minister of Delhi, sources said. February 10 to attend the AI The BJP is yet to announce Summit in Paris. PM Modi the Chief Ministerial candidate will visit the US on February for Delhi.

On Saturday, speaking on US President Donald Trump.

the Chief Ministerial candidate thewinnerfrom the New Delhi assembly seat, Parvesh Verma said the party's decision on the CM's facewill be acceptable across the party. "In our party, the legislative party decides (CM's face) and then the party leadership approves it. So the party's decision will be acceptable to everyone,' he said. Meanwhile, according to the sources, the swearing-in ceremony of the new Delhi Chief after 13 February, after the return of Prime Minister Narenlong two-nation visit to France and the United States from

12-13 at the invitation of the

## Discussions on government Delhi's vote signals a shift towards progress, no more allegations, only governance: Kiran Bedi

**STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, 9 FEBRUARY** 

Former Puducherry Lieutenant Governor Kiran Bedi, commenting on Delhi's recent electoral outcome, stated that the capital city's vote represents a clear demand for an "overhaul," emphasising the need to shift focus from accusations to governance and development.

Speaking to the media a day after the Bharatiya Janata Party's victory in the Delhi Assembly elections, Bedi called for addressing key issues such as public health, safety, and cleanliness, noting that the era of political blame games

Delhi, suggesting the Yamuna River a model for the world." could be developed into a waterfront



private contractors be held account- connection to the city's need for losing their contracts.

will make Delhi healthy, safe, and clean. The public wants improvement, better civic amenities, and In a post on X, Bedi offered a a trustworthy government. No vision for a cleaner, more sustainable more downfall, Delhi must become

area similar to the Sabarmati, while Delhi was in a state of decline, and also emphasising the need for with the new mandate, it was time improved sewage treatment plants for the city to change its trajectory. (STPs) to prevent contamination As a long-time resident of Old of the river. She also proposed that Delhi, Bedi expressed a personal fare.

Delhi healthy, safe, and clean. The public wants improvement, better civic amenities, and a trustworthy government. No more downfall, Delhi must become a model for the world"

"Now we will make

able for delivering results or risk transformation. She also expressed concern over the discontinuation Bedi further stressed, "Now we of central government schemes such as Swachh Bharat Abhiyan in the region, which she believes hindered progress.

With the BJP securing a significant win, Bedi stated that the incoming government faces a big responsibility She echoed the sentiment that to deliver on the aspirations of the people. "This vote is for an overhaul," she concluded, underscoring the importance of a fresh start for Delhi's governance and public wel-

## Topleadership to decide CM's face of Delhi, says Sirsa **NEW DELHI. 9 FEBRUARY**

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Manjinder Singh Sirsa on Sunday said that the Chief Minister face in Delhi will be decided by the top leadership of the party, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi and party's national president JP Nadda.

He said that the Chief Minister of Delhi will be the one who implements the vision laid down by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

"The Chief Minister (face) will be decided by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, (BJP) National President and Union Home Minister. Delhi is a very important state and whoever is capable of implementing the vision laid down by PM Modi will be the Chief Minister," Sirsa, who won the 2025 Delhi assembly elections from Rajouri Garden seat,

told ANI. Hitting out at caretaker Chief Minister Atishi and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) chief Arvind Kejriwal, the BJP leader said that AAP government in Punjab must fulfil their promise to

they will ensure accountability from BJP and reminded them of their promises of depositing Rs 2,500 to women this year.

## Kejriwal meets newly elected AAP MLAs and discusses future strategy, BJP's accountability

**STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE** 

**NEW DELHI, 9 FEBRUARY** 

Kejriwal met 22 newly elected members of the Delhi Legislative Assembly, along with caretaker Chief Minister Atishi, at his Ferozshah Road residence today to discuss the party's future course of action following its recent defeat in the Delhi Assembly elections. The meeting aimed to reflect on the loss and strategise on how AAP will continue its political journey as a strong and constructive opposition. Atishi, who successfully defended her Kalkaji constituency seat against BJP's Ramesh Bidhuri,

Aam Aadmi Party's supremo Arvind



Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) fulfills its promises to the people of Delhi. "The AAP will play the role of a constructive opposition and ensure that the BJP pays ₹2,500 per month to women by March 8, as promised, provides 300 units of free electricity, initiatives," she said.

goal would be to ensure that the tions, describing the process as Yamuna river in 5-7 months.

unprecedented. "Such an election would have never happened in the history of Delhi. Money and liquor were being distributed openly, police were involved, and anyone complaining about it was jailed," she claimed.

After the meeting, AAP leaders Sahiram Pahalwan and Sanjeev Jha emphasised that Kejriwal had directed them to ensure the fulfillment of BJP's promises. "We are committed to ensuring that the work carried out in the last 10 years in Delhi continues," said Jha. "Our job as MLAs is to serve the people and hold the ruling and continues other public welfare party accountable," he added further. Anil Jha, the AAP candidate Atishi also raised concerns who won from the Kirari conaddressed the media after the about the alleged malpractices stituency, also commented, noting meeting, stating that AAP's primary and irregularities during the elective BJP's pledge to clean the

## Delhi BJP holds meetings of newly elected MLAs

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, 9 FEBRUARY

Delhi BJP Chief Virendra Sachdeva, along with party's National General Secretary (Organization) B L Santosh, and other functionaries, held a brief interactions with all 48 newly-elected MLAs of the saffron party at the party office on Sunday.

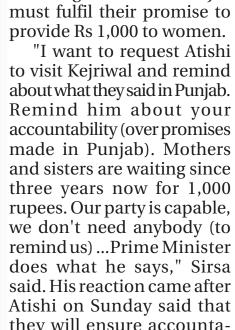
In the meetings, the senior last evening and stated that leaders provided the MLAs with without wasting time, efforts guidance on working within should begin to build a develproper organisational and administrative frameworks. They emphasised that they should maintain complete transparency who defeated former chief in their working style.

Modi's victory message given residence.



oped Delhi, in line with the prime minister's vision.

Meanwhile, Pravesh Verma, minister Arvind Kejriwal, met The leaders drew attention with party's National President to Prime Minister Narendra JP Nadda at the latter's official



## BJP MLAs will introduce Modi's schemes in Delhi: Parvesh Verma

**STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, 9 FEBRUARY** 

A day after the results of the Delhi assembly polls, Parvesh Verma asserted on Sunday that all the BJP MLAs would work day and night with the blessings of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and would bring all

his schemes to Delhi. The BJP leader, who earned the tag of 'giant killer' after defeating AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal from the New Delhi constituency, said "We have to do a lot of developments but we have lots of challenges too... Nobody looked for development of Delhi Dehaat... A lot of things will be done in Delhi. Our 20-22 hours will will work day and night with the good government to come. blessings of PM Modi and will take

polls, Verma assured that the gov- on the same note, we will do all the ernment to be formed by his party work with honesty and utmost deterin the city would work with honesty mination," Verma said while address-

all his schemes to Delhi."



role was only till the elections, from Delhi's victory, not just mine. The here onwards, we - all the BJP MLAs whole of Delhi was waiting for a

The BJP government under the leadership of PM Modi in the country 8 will be written in golden letters in Hailing the BJP's huge win in the is working for the country. In Delhi,

be dedicated to Delhi. Your (people) and utmost determination. "This is ing the public in his native village blows and a drastic reduction in its Mundka. "Yesterday, the entire Delhi, especially the areas of outer Delhi, The Congress continued its dismal made the BJP win.

This reminds us of 1993. February for the third time in a row. the history of Delhi," he added.

BJP stormed to power in the Delhi polls, winning a two-thirds majority,

numbers in the 70-member assembly. run as it failed to open its account

Paying floral tributes to his father at Dr Sahib Singh Verma Samadhi Sthal in his native village in Mundka, Parvesh Verma expressed his resolve with the ruling AAP suffering major to complete his "unfinished works".

Late Sahib Singh Verma served Delhi as chief minister.

Talking to media persons, the BJP leader said, "My father's life is an inspiration for me. The way the people of Delhi have blessed us, all

Delhi as per the vision of PM Modi." During his visit to Mundaka on Sunday morning, he visited the Dada Bhairav Temple to offer prayers.

the MLAs of Delhi will work to beautify

The BJP won 48 seats in a historic mandate, returning to power in the national capital after 27 years. Several AAP leaders, including former Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, lost in their strongholds, with Chief Minister Atishi managing to retain her seat. The verdict came months after the BJP-led coalition swept the Maharashtra polls and the party won Haryana, consolidating its domination of national politics. The Congress, which was hoping for a revival in the national capital, again failed to win any seat. The party, which ruled Delhi for 15 years from 1998, registered a hat-trick zero tally in the assembly

## 18-year-old held for knife attack on girlfriend's friend over suspicion of infidelity

**NEW DELHI, 9 FEBRUARY** 

An 18-year-old boy was arrested in a case of attempted to murder for assaulting his girlfriend's male friend with a knife on the suspicion of her fidelity in the Jahangirpuri area of North West Delhi, the

police said on Sunday. According to the cops, the information about a youth admitted to the hospital with serious stab wounds on several parts of the body including chest, abdomen, hand, shoulder, and head at the Jahangirpuri police station.

In a statement to the police, the girl, who is witness to the assault, said she was in a relationship with the assailant for the past one-and-a-half years

**STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE** and the victim was her friend. Seeing her with her friend, her boyfriend grew suspicious about their relationship and started beating and stabbing him in a fit of rage. Based on the statement of

> the witness, an FIR, under sections of BNS, including attempt to murder, was registered at the Jahangirpuri police station and an investigation into the matter has been taken up. On the basis of the infor-

mation collected, a manhunt for the culprits was launched with raids at several possible hideouts.

The accused was eventually apprehended from K-Block, Jahangirpuri. Duringinterrogation, he confessed to his involvement in the case.





## A BUDGET FOR A BETTER TOMORROW



## **EMPOWERING MIDDLE-CLASS** LIKE NEVER BEFORE

- No income tax: Income up to ₹12 lakh per annum and up to ₹12.75 lakh per annum for Salaried Class (including Standard Deduction of ₹75,000)
- The taxpayers can now claim NIL annual value for two self-occupied properties.
- The period for filing the updated return has been extended from 24 to 48 months.
- National Savings Scheme (NSS) withdrawals are tax-free for deposits made on or after the 29th Aug, 2024.
- NPS Vatsalya contributions to get tax benefits like the NPS account.



## RELIEF IN TDS/TCS RULES

- Limit for tax deductions on interest for senior citizens to be doubled from ₹50,000 to ₹1 lakh.
- The annual limit of ₹2.40 lakh for TDS on rent will now be ₹6 lakh, benefiting small taxpayers.
- The threshold to collect Tax at Source (TCS) on remittances under RBI's Liberalised Remittance Scheme (LRS), is increased from ₹7 lakh to ₹10 lakh.
- Removal of TCS on remittances for educational purposes.
- No prosecution for delayed TCS if paid at any time on or before the time prescribed for filing the quarterly TCS statement.
- Higher TDS deduction will apply only in non-PAN cases.



## TAX REFORMS TO **FUEL UP BUSINESSES**

- Determination of arms length price of international transaction for a block period of three years is proposed to streamline transfer pricing process.
- **Expanded Safe Harbour Rules to reduce litigation** and provide certainty in international taxation.
- New Presumptive taxation regime for non-residents engaged in providing services or technology to a resident company engaged in electronic manufacturing.
- New Safe Harbour Rule for non-residents who store components for supply to specified electronics manufacturing units.





## REDUCING **COMPLIANCE BURDEN**

To reduce the compliance burden for small charitable trusts/institutions, the period of registration is increased from 5 years to 10 years.



## **BOOSTING EMPLOYMENT** AND INVESTMENT

- Tonnage tax Scheme extended to Inland Vessels registered under the Inland Vessels Act 2021.
- The benefit under section 80 IAC is extended for five years and the eligible start-ups incorporated before April 1, 2030 can claim the benefit.
- As a measure to boost infrastructure funding, the deadline for investment in Sovereign Wealth Funds and Pension Funds has been extended to 31.03.2030.
- Specific benefits for ship-leasing units, insurance offices, and treasury centers of global companies set up in the IFSC.
- To claim benefits, the cut-off date for commencement in IFSC has also been extended by 5 years to 31.3.2030.
- · Certainty of taxation to Cat I and Cat II AIFs for investments in infrastructure and other such sectors on the gains from securities.

For Website



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CBC 15401/13/0018/2425

# Hindu temples must be freed from govt control, says VHP

A resolution to this effect was adopted on Sunday following a 3-day Kendriya meeting at the Mahakumbh

**STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE** 

MAHAKUMBH NAGAR, 9 FEBRUARY

The Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP) has firmly resolved to free Hindu temples from government control under all circumstances.

A resolution to this effect was adopted following a threeday Kendriya meeting that ended at the Mahakumbh here on Sunday. Around 950 delegates from India and abroad attended the meeting and also formulated a comprehensive action plan to

achieve this objective. VHP's international president Alok Kumar stated on Sunday that in the first phase of the Mandir Mukti Movement, VHP activists, along with other Hindu organisations, will submit representations to the chief ministers of each state, demanding the handover of Hindu temples

to the Hindu society.

He further stated that large public gatherings would be organised in North and South Bharat to reinforce these demands.

In the second phase of the movement, influential individuals will hold meetings in state capitals and major cities to generate widespread public support for the cause, he said.

In states where this issue is gaining traction, VHP activists will meet with members of legislative assemblies and councils during upcoming sessions and urge them to influence political parties to push for temple liberation.

Addressing a media conference at the Prayagraj Maha Kumbh Mela camp, the VHP international president also said that the meeting unanimously agreed that temple management should have complete independence and that any external control over

temple administration would be unacceptable.

He clarified that under the Mandir Mukti Movement, the VHP is focusing solely on temples currently under government control and not on other temples.

The VHP firmly believes that temple funds should be utilised exclusively for Hindu religious purposes. For this, a transparent system of accounts and auditing must be implemented, he said,

adding that the entire Hindu society should be involved in temple management and that temple trusts must also have representation for women and SC/ST communities.

The VHP president emphasised that there would be no reduction in the salaries of priests, purohits, and other temple staff and that their wages should not be lower than the minimum wage set by the government.

He also mentioned that when meeting state chief ministers, a draft of a specially designed Temple Liberation Law for each respective state would be presented.

Representatives from all states of the country, as well as from the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, Germany, Hong Kong, Mauritius, South Africa, France, Thailand, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bangladesh, Guyana, and other countries, attended this meeting.

During the meeting, the

delegates expressed their commitments to Panch Parivartan (five key aspects)~environmental conservation, social harmony, family values, civic responsibilities, the spirit of Swadeshi, and selfrespect~integrating these into moral values, conduct, and culture of society. Various major issues impacting the global Hindu community were also discussed.

## Beneficiaries of reservation should never forget society's support:VP

"This initiative started in

1999, with prominent mem-

bers of society present. I was

one of them. We laid the

foundation here in this sacred

land, Devnagari, Mewar's

Haridwar, and achieved suc-

cess, and today the results of

that effort are visible in the

administrative services of the

country and the state," the

reservation on the basis of

social justice are now in key

positions in the government, he said. "My request to them

is — look back and never

forget that the support and

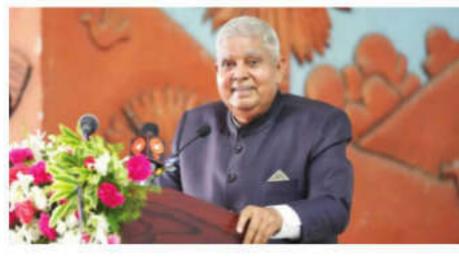
efforts of this society gave us

social justice... Whenever

there is a movement, especially

Those who benefitted from

vice-president said.



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI, 9 FEBRUARY** 

Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar said on Sunday that those who have benefitted from reservations should never forget the efforts and support of society.

The vice-president was speaking at the Akhil Mewar Region Jat Mahasabha in Chittorgarh.

Remembering the Jat reservation movement 25 years ago, Dhankhar said: "I am here 25 years later, and 25 years ago, a great work was done here. The struggle for social justice began, and Jats and some other castes received reservations."

related to reservations, people become terrified, become violent, and fall victim to accidents," the vice-president

"But on this sacred land, my head is held high, and my chest is broad with pride because our movement for social justice is the world's greatest example. There was no disorder, no violence,"

Dhankhar said. The Vice-President said farmers are the providers and should not depend on anyone's help. "When the economic situation of farmers improves, the country's situation improves. After all, farmers are the providers, and they should not look to anyone or depend on anyone for help because farmers, with their strong hands, possess political strength and economic capability," he said.

"No matter what happens, no matter how many obstacles arise, no one can undermine the role of farmers in India's journey towards development. Today's governance system bows to the farmers," the Vice-President emphasised.

## Budget session of UP legislature to begin on 18 February



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE LUCKNOW, 9 FEBRUARY

The budget session of the Uttar Pradesh legislature will commence on 18Feb-

On the opening day, Governor Anandiben Patel will address the joint session of the legislature at 11 a.m. The Vidhan Sabha secretariat issued a notification to this effect here on Sunday.

The budgetary proposals of 2025-26 for the second term of the Yogi Adityanath government are expected to be tabled on 20 Febru-

Sources said that the tenure of the budget session would be around a fortnight. The size of the state budget is expected to be over Rs 8 lakh crore. In the previous budget, the UP govt tabled a budget of over Rs 7.66 lakh crore.

The session is likely to be stormy with the opposition all set to raise the Kumbh stampede incident and other burning issues

## Noida International Airport partners with Uttarakhand Transport Corporation for seamless religious tour

**STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE** 

**NEW DELHI. 9 FEBRUARY** 

Noida International Airport (NIA) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Uttarakhand Transport Corporation (UTC) today to provide seamless bus services to key destinations in Uttarakhand, including religious spots. This strategic partnership will ensure direct connectivity between NIA and major Uttarakhand cities, including Dehradun, Rishikesh, Haridwar, and Haldwani, once the airport begins commercial opera-

The airport's strategic location along the Yamuna Expressway ensures smooth road access to Delhi-NCR, Noida, and Western Uttar Pradesh, making it a key gateway for North India.



Speaking on the collaboration, a senior official of the Uttarakhand Transport Corporation said, "By integrating road and air transport, we aim to provide travellers with efficient, reliable transport options while promoting tourism and economic growth in

Uttarakhand."

Christoph Schnellmann, CEO of Noida International Airport, highlighted the initiative's broader impact: "This partnership will not only enhance passenger convenience but also drive tourism and economic growth by improving accesThe airport's strategic location along the Yamuna Expressway ensures smooth road access to Delhi-NCR, Noida, and Western Uttar Pradesh, making it a key gateway for North India.

sibility to key destinations." Swami Paramatmananda, Mahamandaleswar of Panchayeti Mahanirbani Akhada, said monks of several Akhadas have urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi for hassle-free journeys for pilgrims and travellers to reach religious sites. "These initiatives will really help holy pilgrimages. This kind of initiative should be implemented for other airports also," he said.

## Defeat paves the way for future, INDIA bloc to grow stronger: Akhilesh Yadav

**STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE** LUCKNOW, 9 FEBRUARY

Samajwadi Party (SP) president Akhilesh Yadav has asserted that the INDIA bloc is strong and will become even stronger in the future.

"Every defeat is a lesson, and learning from it paves the way for the future," Yadav said while addressing the media in Agra on Sunday.

Yadav was reacting to the INDI alliance's defeat in the Delhi Assembly polls.

Commenting on the SP's loss in the Milkipur assembly bypoll, he remarked: "Those who are celebrating by manipulating votes should understand that the false victory in Milkipur cannot compensate for the BJP's historic defeat in Ayodhya during the Lok Sabha elections. The

BJP's loss in Ayodhya is recorded in history and cannot be erased by Milkipur." Yadav further alleged that

the BJP had resorted to unfair means to win the by-election but insisted they would not secure 400 seats in the 2027 Uttar Pradesh Assembly polls. Criticising the BJP gov-

ernment over the recent stampede incident, Yadav accused the administration of concealing the actual death toll in the Kumbh tragedy.

"They are suppressing the number of casualties to avoid paying compensation. A large number of pilgrims lost their lives during this Kumbh, including those who perished in accidents while traveling for the Mahakumbh. The government must extend support to all the affected families," he demanded.

## President to take holy dip at Sangam today

PRAYAGRAJ, 9 FEBRUARY: President Droupadi Murmu is set



### **LEGAL NOTICE**

IN THE HIGH COURT OF DELHI AT **NEW DELHI Notice under Order V Rule 20 Code** of Civil Procedure CM No. 68418/2024 in CM(M) 933/2023 Petition against the order Dt. 13/01/2023 passed by Mr. Arun Kumar Garg, Additional District Judge-05, Central District, Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi in RCA DJ No. 37/2020. **ASHWANI GUPTA** 

TALA RAM KAMBOJ & ORS.

1. Tala Ram Kamboj S/o Sh. Khaira Ram Kamboj 2. Raj Kumar Kamboj S/o Shri Goma Ram Kamboi Both R/o Village Gidranwaali, P.O. Maujdint Road, Teh. & District Sirsa, Haryana-125055.

3. Tasty Bite Eatables Limited Having Registered Office At: 201-202 Mayfair Tower, Wakdewadi, Shivajinagar, Pune, Maharashtra-411005. 4. Karvy Computershare Private

Having Registered Office At: Karvy House, 46, Avenue 4, Street No.1, Banjara Hills, Maharashtra-500034. Whereas the above noted petitioner has presented a petition Under Article 227 of Constitution of India which was listed before the Court on 30/05/2023 and the Court ordered issuance of notice to you. And whereas it has been proved to the satisfaction of the Court that you cannot be served in the ordinary manner. Notice is hereby issued that if you wish to defend the above mentioned petition you may cause an appearance to be entered on your behalf either in person or through an advocate duly appointed by you for the purpose before the Court of Joint Registrar on 12/02/2025 at 11:00 am.

If no appearance is made on your behalf, by yourself, your pleader or someone by law authorised to act for you in the said petition on the aforementioned date, no further notice of the subsequent date of hearing of the said petition will be given and the same will be heard and determined ex-parte in your absence.

Given under my hand and the seal of this Court on 21st Jan' 2025. Assistant Registrar for Registrar General

to visit the sacred city of Prayagraj on Monday, where she will take a holy dip at the Triveni Sangam.

During her eight-hour visit, she will witness the grandeur of the Mahakumbh and its deep spiritual significance. She will also offer prayers at the revered Akshayavat and Bade Hanuman Temple. Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath will be present on this occasion. President Murmu will begin her day at the Sangam Nose, where she will take a ceremonial dip at the confluence of the Ganga, Yamuna, and the mystical Saraswati, reaffirming the deep-rooted faith in

## Liquor to become costlier in Jharkhand: Govt to exit retail business, hand over sales to private players

**SHASHI SINGH** RANCHI, 9 FEBRUARY

The Jharkhand government has decided to exit the liquor retail business. Under the new Excise Policy 2025, liquor retail sales will be entirely handed over to private traders from 1 March.

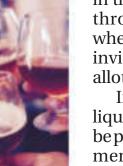
The state-owned Jharkhand Beverage Corporation Limited (JSBCL) will now be restricted to wholesale operations only. Along with this, the government has announced an increase in liquor prices. An additional excise tax has been imposed under the new policy, leading to a price hike ranging from Rs 5 to Rs 100.

Jharkhand's Minister for Excise and Prohibition, Yogendra Prasad, told The Statesman private traders. Liquor shops new policy, liquor prices will notified.



that this decision was taken after a departmental review. He expressed confidence that this shift would result in a positive increase in government revenue and bring more

into effect, the government will completely withdraw from retail liquor sales, leaving the business in the hands of



transparency to the system.

Once this policy comes

in the state will be allocated through a lottery system, where applications will be invited, and shops will be allotted to selected traders.

In addition to traditional liquor shops, sales will now be permitted in malls, departmental stores, and model shops. Departmental stores with an area of over 2,000 square feet will be allowed to allocate 10 per cent of their space for liquor sales, while malls larger than 50,000 square feet will be able to set up dedicated liquor stores of 200 square feet. Air-conditioned model shops will also be introduced, where customers can consume liquor on the prem-

Under the government's

see an inevitable hike. The price of liquor costing up to Rs 90 will increase by Rs 5, liquor priced between Rs 91 and Rs 950 will rise by Rs 10, those between Rs 951 and Rs 1950 will see a Rs 50 hike,

and liquor priced above Rs

1951 will become costlier by

Rs 100. The decision has received mixed reactions from experts. make the market more comto uncontrolled price hikes. invited public suggestions

Some believe this move will petitive and convenient for consumers, while others fear that privatisation could lead The state government has and objections regarding the new policy until 16 February, after which it will be officially

exits will be routed through

the Civil Lines side, using

sion PRO Amit Singh, this

measure aims to prevent con-

gestion and streamline pas-

senger movement. To further

facilitate the travel experience,

colour-coded tickets and des-

ignated shelter slots have

According to Railway Divi-

Platforms 6 and 10.

27770781 Sunil Kumar

Ground Floor, Zenith House, Keshavrap Khadye Marg,

Mahalaxmi, Mumbai - 400034

HDB FINAL AUCTION CUM SALE NOTICE FOR GOLD ORNAMENTS

public, in general are hereby informed that the below mentioned accounts are overdue, an ers/account holders have not responded /complied with the communication, and notice send by HDB Financial Services Limited (the "Company") requesting the borrower lear his/her/their dues as per the documents in respect of the below mentioned loan signed, ccepted by the borrower(s) (such documents, collectively "loan agreeement") and therefore defaulted in terms thereof. The Company has in excercise of its rights as a pledgee, decided to enforce the pledge and therefore hold a public auction of the gold ornaments pledged to the company as security for the loan for the purpose of selling the same and realizing/recovering the dues owned by the borrower(s) to the company. The auction will be conducted on/after 14-02-2025 at the below mentioned local branch of HDB Financial Services Limited from

29-09-22

11.00 am onwards on the date and branches mentioned in the below table;

28408417	Shekhar Babu	21-10-22	19295	Delhi Ncr-Burari
42926221	Chaman Lal	14-12-23	7289	Delhi-Adarsh Nagar
51720028	Ashwani So Shridev	12-07-24	14702	Delhi-Adarsh Nagar
47557240	Raj Kumar	09-04-24	8468	Delhi-Badarpur
49701464	Pankaj Kumar	22-05-24	17820	Delhi-Badarpur
42132381	Deepak Kumar	24-11-23	24782	Delhi-Bhajanpura
47273217	Sonpal So Munshisingh	04-04-24	42354	Delhi-Bhajanpura
20312838	Dipanshu Singh	15-12-21	30797	Delhi-Dilshad Garden
25429241	Mahender Ram Dhan	01-07-22	16098	Delhi-Dilshad Garden
26016053	Radha Devi	22-07-22	13133	Delhi-Dilshad Garden
43985991	Sheela Shukla	12-01-24	26696	Delhi-Dilshad Garden
51573602	Urmila Wo Moolchand	10-07-24	14612	Delhi-Dilshad Garden
53559871	Aamir Abbasi	17-08-24	22176	Delhi-Dilshad Garden
24494261	Vijay Kumar	29-05-22	20671	Delhi-Jagatpuri
18836028	Rishipal Yadav	26-10-21	6343	Delhi-Kailash Nagar
41112566	Afsar Mohmad	07-11-23	12844	Delhi-Kailash Nagar
44444710	Jitendra Jain	02-02-24	25042	Delhi-Kailash Nagar
45101041	Lajpat Rai Jain	28-02-24	15832	Dolhi-Kailash Nagar
48502193	Sachin Jain	26-04-24	52268	Delhi-Kailash Nagar
49335593	Anil Kumar	13-05-24	9093	Delhi-Kallash Nagar
21414783	Ghan Shyam	25-01-22	10659	Delhi-Kashmiri Gate
29438491	Soni Virendersingh	24-11-22	11931	Delhi-Malviya Nagar
50177220	Sunil Singh	04-06-24	16196	Delhi-Nai Sadak
52277819	Priya Singhal	24-07-24	14439	Delhi-Nangloi
54137821	Rohit So Satish	30-08-24	40950	Delhi-Narela
31131932	Dhananjay Kumar Barnwal	28-01-23	72260	Delhi-Patel Nagar
51330343	Shivani Do Karamveer	04-07-24	39176	Delhi-Ramesh Nagar
39246252	Ashok Kumar	20-09-23	11733	Delhi-Rohini
42540913	Deepak So Hari	05-12-23	26466	Dethi-Rohini
52066351	Bhupender So Chhote	19-07-24	7182	Delhi-Rohini
54539540	Darshna Devi	16-09-24	7479	Delhi-Rohini
47556623	Md Anwar Alam	12-04-24	18788	Delhi-Sadar
43716190	Sunil Kumar	05-01-24	7293	Delhi-Tilak Nagar
53852657	Onkar Singh	23-08-24	58898	Delhi-Tilak Nagar
*******		10.10.00	00.00	B. B. L. S.

The auction shall be conducted on an "AS IS WHERE" and "AS IS WHAT IT" basis and th Company is not making and shall not make any representation or warranties as regards the quality, purity, caratage, weight or valuation of the said gold ornaments. It shall be the sole and absolute responsibility of the potential purchaser to verify, examine and satisfy themselves about the quality, purity, caratage, weight or valuation of the said gold ornaments prior to placing their bid and for such purpose it shall be open to potentia purchasers to examine, at their sole cost and expense, and at the address set out herein above, the gold ornaments whether with or without expert advice 45 minutes prior to the time stipulated for the conduct of the auction. All the bid shall be subjected to such minimum reserve price as the company may deem fit to fix in this regards. The auction process and sale (if any) pursuant to such auction shall be subjected to such further terms and condition as the company may at sole discretion deem fit to impose.

If the borrower(s) mentioned above pays the amount due to the Company in terms of the loan agreement in his individual loan account in full before the auction as mentioned above, the pledged ornaments securing the said loan may be withdrawn from the said auction without further notice. Please note the it is the absolute discretionary power of the undersigned authorized officer of the company, either to postpone or to cancel the auction proceeding without prior notice and without assigning any reason thereof and to reject any or all the bids or offer without assigning any reason for the same.

Place : DELHI Date: 10-02-2025

**Authorised Officer** (HDB Financial Services Ltd)

Delhi-Uttam Nagar

## Huge rush of pilgrims for Mahakumbh leads to traffic jams in Prayagraj Side via Platform No. 1, while

STATESMAMN NEWS SERVICE

MAHAKUMBH NAGAR. 9 FEBRUARY

The Mahakumbh drew a huge crowd of devotees on Sunday, leading to massive jam in all the entry points to Prayagraj. According to Mela authorities, 1.09 crore pilgrims have bathed in Sangam till 2 p.m. even as there was a huge rush on all the ghats (riverbanks). All the routes to Sangam remained jammed and vehicles were stranded on a stretch of 10 to 15 km for a long time.

Vehicles were stuck everywhere on the road due to the jam throughout the city prompting the authorities to implement an Emergency Crowd Management Plan to clear the traffic at Prayagraj Junction. Sources said there was a 10-15 km long line of vehicles from Varanasi, Lucknow, Kanpur and Rewa to

Prayagraj. In the morning, a fire broke



out in Sector-19 of the Mahakumbh in which a Kalpwasi tent was burnt. Fire personnel extinguished the fire. Meanwhile, even after the

completion of the Amrit Snan

festivals, the influx of devotees

to Prayagraj for a holy dip in

unabated. In the 26 days since the commencement of Mahakumbh 2025, over 42 crore pilgrims have bathed in the Triveni Sangam. With the number of visitors from across the country and abroad

the sacred Sangam continues

Railway decided to extend the single-direction movement plan until further notice to ensure smooth and safe rail travel. Under this plan, entry to Prayagraj Junction will be allowed only from the City

steadily rising, the Prayagraj

been introduced. These shelters, categorised based on passengers' destinations, are equipped with temporary ticket counters, toilets, and waiting areas. Additionally, reserved ticket holders will be granted entry through Gate No. 5. Passengers are advised to arrive well in

> In collaboration with civil police, local taxi, auto, and e-rickshaw drivers have been urged to adhere to the single-direction plan to prevent traffic congestion and

advance of their scheduled

train departures.

## Moditoembarkon 5-day 2-nation visit to France, USA starting today

PM will visit the USA on 12-13 February at the invitation of US President Donald Trump

**STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, 9 FEBRUARY** 

rime Minister Narendra Modi will embark on a crucial five-day two-nation visit to France and the United States from Monday to attend the AI Summit in Paris and meet President Donald Trump in Washington.

Mr Modi will be on a three-day France visit from 10 February at the invitation of French President Emmanuel Macron. He will co-chair the Artificial Intelligence (AI) Action Summit with Macron on 11 Febru-

PM Modi will attend a dinner hosted by President Macron at the Elysee Palace in honour of visiting heads of government and heads of State on 10 February, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri announced in a special press briefing on 7 February.

After the AI summit on 11 February, there will be a bilateral component to the visit and PM Modi and Pres-

ident Macron will address the India-France CEOs forum.

PM Modi and President Macron will hold discussions in both the restricted and delegation level talks format. On 12 February, the two leaders will visit the war cemetery and will pay tribute to the sacrifices made by Indian Soldiers in World War

The two leaders will jointly inaugurate the Consulate General of India in Marseille and will pay a visit to Kadash which is the site of the international thermal nuclear experimental reactor.

India and France have traditionally enjoyed close and friendly relations and share a deep and enduring Strategic Partnership (SP) covering all aspects of bilateral cooperation which involves a strategic component.

After wrapping up France visit, PM Modi will travel to the USA.

Mr Modi's visit to the USA will provide an opportunity to build on the strong India-US Global Comprehensive



Strategic Partnership and set an ambitious agenda for a mutually beneficial and trusted relationship across all sectors, an official statement said.

Mr Modi will visit the US on 12-13 February at the invitation of US President Donald Trump. This will be the Indian leader's first visit to the US after the inaugu-

ration of Mr Donald Trump as the 47th President of the country on 20 January.

"The fact that the PM has been invited to visit the US within barely three weeks

of the new administration taking office shows the importance of the India-US partnership and is also reflective of the bipartisan support that this partnership enjoys in the US," Mr Misri said.

The PM will be amongst the first few world leaders to visit the US following President's Trump inauguration during his second term.

President Trump spoke with Mr Modi on 27 January when he discussed immigration and stressed on the importance of India buying more American-made security equipment and fair bilateral trading ties. This is the first meeting between the two leaders after President Trump assumed office for his second term.

Previously, PM Modi visited the USA in June 2017 and hosted President Trump for a state visit to India in February 2020.

The two leaders have also spoken on the phone twice since November 2024 (on 6 November 2024 and 27 January 2025).

## CM Nitish visits Maner Dargahas his silence over Waqf Bill baffles Muslims

**IMRAN MOJIB** 

PATNA, 9 FEBRUARY

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar visited the historic Maner Sharif Dargah in Patna on Sunday to participate in the 756th Urs celebrations of Sufi Saint Makhdoom Shah Kamaluddin Ahmed Yahva Maneri.

Maner Sharif Khanqah incharge Syed Shah Tariq Suharwardi Ainayatullah Firdausi and other devotees welcomed the Chief Minister and felicitated him by presenting a cap and a handkerchief. He spent some time in the spiritual atmosphere, offered a 'chadar' with reverence and prayed for the peace, development and prosperity of Bihar.

Kumar has been a frequent visitor to Maner Sharif Dargah, a symbol of Bihar's Ganga-Jamuni culture and mutual brotherhood, on the occasion of Urs. It reflects his resolve to strengthen religious harmony in the state and for the development of Bihar.

However, this visit bears special significance in the current political atmosphere. Muslims across Bihar are upset by the JDU's stand on the proposed Waqf Amendment Bill, which has been termed as the central government's attempt to take control of mosques and dargahs.

Muslim community leaders have described it as an attempt to dismantle the Waqf system and further marginalise Muslims.Nitish Kumar's close aide and Union Minister Rajiv Ranjan Singh alias Lalan Singh

was the most vociferous among the BJP allies in backing the contentious Waqf Amendment Bill in the Lok Sabha. While the party's Muslim

faces openly criticised the Bill, a few other JDU leaders said that Muslim apprehensions must be addressed before it is finalised. Kumar's continued silence has baffled Muslims, who have been supporting the JDU despite its alliance with the BJP. Recently, an RJD leader had erected huge hoardings across Patna accusing the chief minister of backstabbing Muslims over the Waqf Amendment Bill.

The sentiment is growing among common Muslims.

Navendu, veteran journalist and a keen political observer, said that former chief minister Lalu Prasad Yadav used to be the most popular political leader among Muslims.

Today, Nitish Kumar is the first choice of Muslim voters in Bihar. He has made genuine efforts to uplift the Muslim community in the state and it has won him immense admiration. But his continued silence over the Waqf bill might alter his reputation, he said.

## Mounting public pressure forced Biren Singh to resign: Rahul Gandhi

**AGENCIES** 

**IMPHAL, 9 FEBRUARY** 

Leader of the Opposition (LoP) Rahul Gandhi reacting to the Manipur Chief Minister N.Biren Singh's resignation, said that he quit the post following "mounting public pressure".

The LoP, who visited Manipur three times after the ethnic violence broke out on May 3, 2023, in a post on the X said: "For nearly two years, BJP's CM Biren Singh instigated division in Manipur. PM Modi allowed him to continue despite the violence, loss of life, and the destruction of the idea of India in Manipur."

He added that the resignation of Biren Singh shows that mounting public pressure, the SC investigation and the no-confidence motion by the Congress have forced a reckoning.

"But the most urgent priority is to restore peace in the state and work to heal the wounds of the people of Manipur. PM Modi must visit Manipur at once, listen to the people and finally explain his plan to bring back normalcy," he said.

The LoP's third visit came during the second leg of his Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra, which started from Manipur on Jan-

uary 14 last year. The 67day-long Yatra ended in Mumbai covering 85 districts of

14 states.

The Congress kicked off the Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra from Manipur with a promise to "bring peace and harmony" to the ethnic violence-hit

LoP Rahul Gandhi in his speech in the parliament and outside the parliament urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to visit Manipur and restore peace and normal-

Meanwhile, Congress General Secretary and parliament member Jairam Ramesh said that the Congress was all set to move a no-confidence motion against the Chief Minister and his Council of Ministers in the Manipur Assembly on Monday and sensing the climate, the Manipur CM has resigned.

"This was a demand that the Congress has been making since early May 2023, when Manipur erupted. The Chief Minister's resignation was belated. The people of Manipur now await a visit by our Frequent Flier PM who is off to France and the USA now - and who has found neither the time nor the inclination to go to Manipur these past twenty months," Ramesh,

who also visited Manipur several times during the past two years after the ethnic violence started, said in a post on the X.

Over 250 people including women and children were killed, over 1,500 injured and over 70,000 people displaced after the ethnic violence broke out on May 3 last year after a 'Tribal Solidarity March', organised in the hill districts to protest the Meitei community's demand for Sched-

> uled Tribe status. The rioting also left thousands of houses, government and non-government properties, and religious installations destroyed or damaged.

Over 60,000 Central security forces, including the Army and Assam Rifles, have been deployed in Manipur following the outbreak of violence.

In view of the ethnic strife in Manipur, approximately 50,650 men, women and children belonging to different communities have been displaced and are now sheltered in 350 camps set up in schools, government buildings and auditoriums in Manipur.

Thousands of displaced people, mostly belonging to Kuki-Zo tribals, also sheltered in Mizoram, Assam, Nagaland and Meghalaya.

## 6.39 cr villagers gained digital literacy under DISHA scheme in 2017-24: Jitin Prasada

**AGENCIES** 

As many as 6.39 crore people were imparted digital literacy between 2017 and 2024

**NEW DELHI, 9 FEBRUARY** 

under the Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan (PMGDISHA), enabling them to send messages and attach files on mobile phones, according to Minister of State for Electronics and Information Technology Jitin Prasada.

The beneficiaries under the DISHA scheme also included field level government functionaries namely Anganwadi and ASHA workers and authorised ration dealers, said Prasada in a recent reply in Rajya Sabha.

Highlighting the outcomes of the scheme, he said that the maximum number of 1.45 crore people in Uttar Pradesh were imparted digital literacy. It was followed by 74.12 lakh beneficiaries in Bihar.

Maharashtra with 53.23 lakh beneficiaries, Madhya Pradesh with 50.69 lakh and Rajasthan with 39.70 lakh beneficiaries were the other major participating states under the scheme, he said.

He said a survey conducted by the National Sam-

ple Survey Office (NSSO) between July 2022 and June 2023 had shown that among persons aged 15-24 years, around 78.4 per cent reported execution skill of sending messages - e-mail and SMS - with attached files like documents, pictures and

The Minister said the Survey also showed that about 94.2 per cent of rural households and about 97.1 per cent of urban households possess telephone and/or mobile phone.

He said the PMGDISHA scheme was officially concluded on 31 March, 2024, after the Survey indicated the successful achievement of its objectives ranging from rise in smart-phone usage, internet penetration, and digital engagement in rural areas.

The Minister said as many as 1.74 lakh Anganwadi workers, 54,329 ASHA workers and 12,154 ration dealers were trained under the DISHA scheme.

Presenting state-wide data, Prasada said a maximum of 30,642 Anganwadi workers benefitted in West Bengal, followed by 27,125 in Tamil Nadu and 18,630 in Uttar Pradesh.

### 'Stop worrying about threat to **RJD** from Congress'

**AGENCIES** PATNA, 9 FEBRUARY

Leader of Opposition in Bihar Assembly Tejashwi Yadav on Sunday asked Prime Minister Narendra Modi to focus on the sinking economy before flagging the threat to his Rashtriya Janata Dal from ally Congress. "He should be more

worried about the economy or the entire state rather than expressing fears over our party's future," Tejashwi Yadav told IANS in response to PM Modi's warning that the "predatory politics" of the Congress will spell doom for its allies.

During his speech on Saturday after the BJP's victory in the Delhi Assembly elections, the PM said that in Bihar, the Congress was trying to use caste issues to eat into the RJD's vote bank.

PM Modi accused the Congress of a habit of shortening others' lives. He said the Congress is prone to steal the agenda and slogans of its own allies in states and try to edge past them in their own strongholds.

## Two centres of development to be established in Vidarbha: Maharashtra CM Fadnavis

**AGENCIES** 

NAGPUR, 9 FEBRUARY

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis and Union Minister Piyush Goyal on Sunday attended the closing ceremony of the Advantage Vidarbha 2025.

Speaking at the closing ceremony, Fadnavis said that two centers of development would be established in Vidarbha, one in Nagpur and the other in Amravati.

Further, he stated that these development centers would have a positive impact in the nearby districts. "We want to ensure devel-

opment in every area...We will establish two centres of development in Vidarbhaone will be in Nagpur and the other in Amravati...This will have a very positive impact on the nearby dis-

PM Modi to lead the 8th edition of Pariksha

Pe Charcha with insights from leading experts

tricts..." Fadnavis said at the closing ceremony.

He also requested Union Minister Nitin Gadkari for organizing a business conclave in Vidarbha dedicated to tourism to showcase the opportunities and possibilities in the field.

"There are huge possibilities in the field of tourism and I would like to request Nitin ji that in the coming days, we want to organize a business conclave dedicated to tourism in Vidarbha through which we will be able to showcase the tourism opportunities and possibilities

Advantage Vidarbha in it's second edition is a premier platform for fostering industrial development, business opportunities and investments in Vidarbha as a part of Maharashtra.

in the field of tourism here...'

## INS Tushil strengthens India-Seychelles ties during historic West Africa voyage

**STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, 9 FEBRUARY** 

In a significant step towards reinforcing India's ties with Seychelles, the Indian Navy's *INS Tushil* made a successful port call at Port Victoria, marking a milestone in its maiden passage around the West Coast of Africa. The ship was welcomed by officials from the High Commission of India (HCI) and representatives from the Indian Navy detachment stationed in the island nation.

During the port call, Captain Peter Varghese, Commanding Officer of *INS* Tushil, hosted prominent dignitaries, including Kartik Pande, the High Commissioner of India to Seychelles, and Major General Michael Rosette, Chief of Defence Forces of the Seychelles Defence Forces. The visit also included a demonstration of the NISHAR—MITRA Terminal, highlighting the evolving cooperation between the two nations.

India and Seychelles share a long history of close diplomatic and defence relations, dating back to Seychelles' independence in 1976. A contingent from *INS Nilgiri* had participated in the country's first Independence Day



latest visit from INS Tushil further solidifies the enduring friendship and cooperation between the two nations, both of whom play key roles in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).

As part of India's ongoing commitment to strengthening its relations in the Indian Ocean, the visit of INS Tushil is a testament to the growing strategic partnership between India and Seychelles, with a focus on defence cooperation, maritime security, and regional stability. The port call is seen as a significant moment in advancing the bilateral relationship, fostering stronger people-to-people ties, and enhancing collab-

oration in the region's shared

security interests.

## PDP leader Iltija Mufti claims being detained in Jammu before her press conference

**STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE** JAMMU. 9 FEBRUARY

PDP leader Iltija Mufti was on Sunday detained after returning from Billawar, where she had gone to offer condolences to the family of Makhan Din, who had recently committed suicide after allegedly being tortured by police during questioning over a terrorist attack in which four soldiers were killed.

The police denied that Makhan Din, a 25-year youth, was tortured during questioning. Kathua District Magistrate and the police have ordered separate inquiries into his death.

In a video post on X, Iltija claimed that she was detained in the circuit house. In the video, she is seen asking a police officer why she was not being allowed to leave the circuit house complex.

Iltija, the daughter of former CM Mehbooba Mufti, was not allowed to address a press conference. The gates of the circuit house were closed by policemen, as seen in the video. Iltija wrote on X: "Detained

at Circuit House Jammu

now. All this because

@JmuKmrPolice wanted me

to cancel my press conference

scheduled for 4 pm. This is

Naya Kashmir and the true

face of it. The elected government is too busy hosting a lunch in Delhi to care about victims of human rights violations".

Mehbooba Mufti also took to social media and wrote on X: "Visiting and offering solace to the families of victims has now been criminalised. This is evident from the latest actions of the police, who have detained Iltija at the Circuit House in Jammu, preventing her from addressing a press conference. This blatant disregard for our democratic rights as free citizens highlights a dis-

It appears that the ruling party's understanding of democracy extends only as far as holding elections and forming a government, with little regard for the fundamental freedoms that under-

turbing trend.

pin a true democracy. Very unfortunate and ironical that one NC minister's visit to Bilawer was facilitated by police and Iltija is being punished for the same." Earlier in the morning,

Mehbooba wrote on X: "Finally Iltija managed to reach Bilawer in Kathua to meet the bereaved family of Makhan Din, who was driven to suicide by police torture. It's deeply saddening that she had to endure so many obstacles and travel like a fugitive just to offer comfort to the victim's family. The ruling party has shirked responsibility conveniently attributing all issues to the Lieutenant Governor. However, as a responsible opposition PDP will always strive to reach out to the people to offer solace".

### STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI. 9 FEBRUARY

Examinations often bring stress to students and their families, but Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "Pariksha Pe Charcha" (PPC) initiative has been reshaping the narrative around exams, stated the Ministry of Education

(MoE). Scheduled for 11 a.m. on 10 February, the 8th edition of PPC will continue to provide a unique, interactive platform where the Prime Minister directly engages with students, teachers, and parents," stated a release from the MoE. The initiative has evolved into a nationwide movement, emphasizing innovative ways to manage exam-related anxiety while promoting a celebratory attitude toward learn-

ing and life. This year's PPC has already set a new benchmark, with over 5 crore participants, showcasing its impact as a Jan Andolan. With 36 students selected from various educational institutions, including State and UT Board Government schools, Kendriya Vidyalayas, Sainik Schools, Eklavya Model Residential Schools, CBSE, and Navodaya Vidyalayas, PPC 2025 highlights the diversity and widereaching influence of the pro-



gram, it added.

The event will feature seven insightful episodes, each addressing key aspects of life and learning, with contributions from renowned personalities. In the "Sports & Discipline" episode, sports icons M.C. Mary Kom, Avani Lekhara, and Suhas Yathiraj will discuss goal setting, resilience, and stress management. Actress and mental health advocate Deepika Padukone will focus on emotional well-being and selfexpression in the "Mental Health" segment. In the "Nutrition" episode, experts like Shonali Sabherwal, Rujuta Diwekar, and Revant Himatsingka will provide tips on healthy eating and maintaining overall well-being.

Further episodes will cover essential topics such as "Technology & Finance," featuring Gaurav Chaudhary (Technical Guruji) and Radhika Gupta, who will explore tech-based learning tools and financial literacy. "Creativity & Positivity" will see Vikrant Massey and Bhumi Pednekar inspiring students to cultivate a positive mindset, while "Mindfulness & Mental Peace" will feature Sadhguru, offering practical techniques for mental clarity. The final episode, "Stories of Success," will feature toppers from prestigious exams like UPSC, IIT-JEE, CLAT, and CBSE, along with past PPC participants, sharing how the initiative shaped their preparation and mindset.



## TheStatesman

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### Dalí's India

he arrival of Salvador Dalí's artworks in India for the first time is not just an artistic milestone ~ it is a moment of cultural introspection. While Dalí never visited the country, his fascination with India's mysticism, coupled with his surrealist imagination, created a unique artistic connection. This exhibition in Delhi, bringing over 200 of his original works, allows Indian audiences to experience the world through the eyes of one of the most eccentric and thought-provoking artists of the 20th century. Dalí was not just a painter; he was an enigma. His art, heavily influenced by Sigmund Freud's theories on the subconscious, invited viewers into dreamlike worlds where reality melted into bizarre yet compelling forms. Elephants with impossibly long legs, disjointed human figures, and floating eyeballs were not just artistic quirks but reflections of a deeper psychological exploration. His works force the viewer to abandon rationality and embrace the unexpected. That a man so deeply fascinated by dreams and the subconscious was drawn to India is unsurprising. The Western world's romanticised vision of India as a land of mysticism, gurus, and spiritual transcendence reached its peak in the 1960s and 70s ~ an era when Dalí was still producing and engaging with new ideas. Though he never walked Indian streets or witnessed its chaotic yet harmonious contrasts first-hand, the country still found its way into his art. Some of his sketches were inspired by photographs taken by his friend and publisher, Pierre Argillet, on an Indian sojourn during this period. Dalí's India, therefore, exists not as a literal representation but as an imagined landscape shaped by second-hand experiences and his own surrealist lens. This exhibition is a reminder that art is not bound by geography. While Dalí's name has long been revered in European and American art circles, his work has never before been given a dedicated platform in India. This delay raises an important question: Why has a country with a thriving artistic tradition and deep engagement with surrealist themes taken so long to host such a collection? Indian art, from its mythological paintings to its modernist expressions, often embraces the surreal. Yet, global conversations around surrealism have historically been dominated by Western artists, despite the presence of equally thought-provoking Indian counterparts. Bringing Dalí's art to India is more than just an exhibition; it is an invitation to explore the intersections of cultural imagination. Indian audiences will not only see Dalí's perspective on surrealism but will also find echoes of their own artistic traditions ~ where the mythical and the real constantly intertwine. Whether in temple carvings that depict gods with multiple arms or in folk paintings that blur the lines between dream and reality, surrealism has long existed in India's visual culture. This long-overdue exhibition is an opportunity to reclaim surrealism not as a foreign import but as part of a larger, global artistic conversation ~ one that India has always belonged to, whether acknowledged or not.

## **Short-term gains**

he recent 30-day suspension of American tariffs on Mexican and Canadian goods underscores the unpredictability of trade policy under US President Donald Trump. His high-stakes approach to economic negotiations ~ leveraging American economic might to extract concessions ~ has once again yielded short-term gains. However, the broader consequences of this approach, both politically and economically, remain uncertain. President Trump can claim a victory by securing commitments from Mexico and Canada on border security and fentanyl trafficking, key issues for his administration. By positioning himself as a tough negotiator, he reinforces his image as a leader willing to use economic pressure to achieve domestic policy goals. However, his threats of sweeping tariffs have introduced a level of instability that could have lasting repercussions. For Canada, the tariff delay provides temporary relief, especially as its leadership faces political transitions. Border security measures and anti-fentanyl initiatives were already in motion, but the latest agreement adds further commitments. Canadian businesses, however, remain on edge, knowing that Mr Trump's approach to trade remains fluid. The economic relationship between the two neighbours, traditionally built on stability and mutual benefit, has become increasingly fragile due to these recurring threats. Mexico, under President Claudia Sheinbaum, managed to secure a short-term victory by negotiating a 30-day pause on tariffs, effectively averting a potentially devastating economic blow. This reprieve was a result of a tense negotiation in which Ms Sheinbaum agreed to deploy 10,000 National Guard troops along Mexico's northern border. Their primary mission would be to curb illegal immigration and address the smuggling of fentanyl into the US, critical issues for the Trump administration. In addition to this border security agreement, President Sheinbaum also committed to address the trafficking of high-powered firearms into Mexico to curb cartel violence. While this agreement buys Ms Sheinbaum time and temporarily shields Mexico from trade hostilities, it remains conditional. The real challenge now lies in converting this fragile, temporary truce into a permanent solution. With Mr Trump's unpredictable approach to trade, the looming threat of renewed tariffs remains. The broader concern is the uncertainty this strategy creates for businesses and investors. A stable trade environment is essential for long-term economic planning. The mere threat of tariffs can cause companies to reconsider supply chains, delay investments, and explore alternative markets. Moreover, this approach to trade policy risks alienating key allies. While Mr Trump prioritises domestic political gains, his aggressive tactics could push Canada and Mexico to deepen trade ties with other global partners. If US trade relationships become unreliable, businesses may seek more predictable alternatives, weakening North America's economic integration. In the short term, Mr Trump's brinkmanship has given him leverage, but it has also sowed doubt about the reliability of US trade policy. If this strategy continues, the long-term consequences ~ economic uncertainty, damaged alliances, and shifting global trade patterns ~ may outweigh the shortterm wins.

## Relations reset~I

Critics have noticed Prabowo's recent moves, including a recent expansion of the military command structure. This is a worrying lurch towards remilitarization in the world's largest Muslim-majority country. Critics who question that Prabowo is not abiding by civil supremacy believe he wants to restore the glory of the military, where various kinds of civic works can be done by the military as he feels those would be faster and more effective. Prabowo's reliance on the military is raising concerns about the undoing of democratic reforms that sprang up after Suharto was ousted



**RAJARAM** 

**PANDA** 

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t this year's 76th Republic Day celebration on 26 January, India invited the President of Indonesia, Prabowo Subianto to be the Chief Guest. Indeed it was a strategic move on the part of the Narendra Modi government to engage with the Southeast Asian nation with the largest Muslim population in the world, and thereby deepen cooperation with the members of the Asean bloc. It transpired that energy, food security, defence and security ties emerged as the centrepieces of discussion.

Both sides are aware that their engagements - both bilaterally on issues of trade and maritime security and on the global stage through forums such as the G-20 and minilaterals such as the India-Australia-Indonesia group - have brought the two countries into a closer, complementary and mutually beneficial partnership.

This two-part article shall address two separate issues in order to posit the India-Indonesia partnership in perspective. The first part dwells on Prabowo's handling of the domestic situation as the success or failure of his measures shall impact his foreign policy and relations with Indonesia's partner countries. The second part examines the outcome of Prabowo's India visit and what it brought to the table for providing dividends to both sides.

The initial evaluation of Prabowo's policy choices raises questions on his over-reliance on the military to sustain his democratic structure. By making his choice of officials in critical positions, the President has given people reason to worry if the political culture of past authoritarian leader Gen Suharto who lost power three decades ago is making a re-run. There are enough signs in peoples' unease that see a flashback of Suharto in Prabowo turning to the once-all powerful military to carry out a governing vision.

Prabowo was Indonesia's former defence minister. People now suspect that as President he would be replacing civilian functions with the military, thereby

raising comparison to the Suharto-era doctrine called dwifungsi (dual function) that allowed the armed forces to crush dissent and dominate public life.

The fears of the people are not without reasons. After Probowo stormed into the highest office of Presidency three months ago with a landslide

election victory, he quickly expanded the armed forces roles in several public areas, including running much of his flagship project to serve free school meals. For now Prabowo has the support of allies. The allies in parliament are also preparing legislation that would allow Prabowo to appoint active military

officers into senior government positions, dismantling some of the safeguards put in place after Suharto was overthrown in 1998 following an economic crisis and popular uprising.

Since Prabowo's resounding victory in last year's election was largely driven by younger voters, a generation with little or no memory of Suharto's military-backed "New Order" regime, he feels emboldened to face the opposition.

As the son-in-law of Suharto, Prabowo was a special forces commander under the former's repressive 32-year reign and was later dismissed from the military amid unproven allegations of human rights abuses. Supporters of Prabowo, who denied past rights abuses, say tapping the military for important projects offers efficiencies.

Critics have noticed Prabowo's recent moves, including a recent expansion of the military command structure. This is a worrying lurch towards remilitarization in the world's largest Muslim-majority country.

Critics who question that Prabowo is not abiding by civil supremacy believe he wants to restore the glory of the military, where various kinds of civic-

works can be done by the military as he feels those would be faster and more effective. Although not replicating the "dual function" of the past, Prabowo's early reliance on the military is raising concerns among Indonesian observers about the undoing of democratic reforms that sprang up after Suharto was ousted. Analysts

> suspect many of Prabowo's actions replicate what existed under his late father-in-law Suharto. **Under Suhar-**

to, there were no checks and balances. The military was also involved in business. The same pattern, if chosen by Prabowo now, could erode democratic oversight of government institu-

tions, affecting policy making. During his first 100 days in office, Prabowo enjoyed 91 per cent approval ratings. That is being dissipated after the armed forces started taking charge of large projects.

In the past three months that Prabowo has been in office, he has handed over large projects to the armed forces, the most visible example being the \$28 billion signature project to provide free meals.

Air Force Col. Satrya Dharma Wijaya is a case in point. His usual job is aircraft maintenance, but since November he has been busy ordering stoves, refrigerators and frying pans to cook meals for thousands of children at a base in Indonesia's capital, Jakarta.

The military is now running 100 of the 190 kitchens operated by the project's launch in collaboration with the newly formed National Nutrition Agency, cooking and delivering food for 570,000 children.

A plan is underway for the military to form 100 special "territorial development" units assigned to farming, fisheries and animal husbandry. Prabowo has also moved swiftly to vastly expand other military-run

projects established when he was defense minister.

Prabowo has also developed a programme whereby soldiers are required to clear land for cultivation. This has increased fifty-fold, boosting Indonesia's food security from an initial 60,000 hectares to a projected 3 million hectares ~ an area about the size of Belgium.

He has also ordered the expansion of another of his projects, directing the Air Force to convert its idle land into rice and corn fields to be managed by soldiers and villagers to supply food for the free-meals project. Other projects include nationwide extension of a small military civil-works initiative involving laying water pipes for irrigation in remote areas.

With a military background Prabowo justifies that turning to soldiers to help run large programmes is effective, as according to him the army follows a strong chain of command and that rules are in place to prevent military repression. The people are assured that there is no question of a return to the New Order of the Suharto era.

Be that as it may, the key area of concern remains when legislation as planned is passed allowing Prabowo to appoint active duty military officers to top government jobs for the first time in decades.

Since the President's coali tion controls 74 per cent of seats in parliament, passing of the law would not be difficult. The president has already tapped former military officers for top roles such as Foreign Minister Sugiono, who served in the army's special force before retiring.

Prabowo's Gerindra party would be free to appoint active officers anywhere in the government. If such strategic programmes that are normally run by persons who are disciplined and experienced are to be passed on to the military, this would indicate a return to the Suharto era and a murder of democracy. The fear of militarisation under Prabowo with centralisation of power would mean democratic backsliding.

(To be concluded)

**OF THE** 



## S ASIAN VOICES

## Stormy outlook for exports

outh Korea's exports tumbled in January, ending a 15-month growth streak that led to its first trade deficit in 20 months. The turnaround has come at a time when the export-dependent country is likely to confront a global tariff war signaled by the imposition of new tariffs by US President Donald Trump. On an on-year basis, Korea's out-

bound shipments dropped 10.3 percent to \$49.1 billion and imports fell 6.4 percent to \$51 billion last month, according to data released by the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy on Saturday. The figures resulted in a trade deficit of \$1.89 billion. Semiconductors, the country's

flagship export item, fared well in January, logging \$10.1 billion in exports, or an 8.1 percent increase on-year. It is notable that chip exports have continued to top \$10 billion for nine months in a row.

The solid record of chip exports is largely attributed to the strong demand for chips produced in Korea, especially the high-end lineups including highbandwidth memory and double data rate-based memory chips needed to power data centers and artificial intelligence development.

Despite chips' strong showing, Korea's export pace slowed in January. The long Lunar New Year holiday last week reduced the number of business days. Some business operators in retail and other sectors complained that the government's decision to designate Jan. 27 as a temporary holiday to ext-

## 뻬 The Korea Herald

end the Lunar New Year holiday cut into their revenues.

Further, there is major concern about the potential impact of China's DeepSeek breakthrough AI solution on Korea's chip industry. Shares of chipmakers listed on the Korean stock market retreated Friday when investors reacted negatively to the news that the demand for high-end AI chips could weaken since DeepSeek demonstrated it can build an advanced AI system with fewer chips and less money.

Some experts, including those from the trade sector, said that skeptical views about the need for HBM chips might prevail in the short term, but the possibility of developing AI systems in a cost-effective way will benefit Korean chipmakers in the long run.

But it is far from encouraging that Korea's exports to major trading partners all declined last month. Exports to China dropped 14.1 percent on-year

to \$9.2 billion. Exports to the United States also fell 9.4 percent to \$9.3 billion. Even though the January figures declined, Industry Minister Ahn Duk-geun stressed on Saturday that export momentum continues, citing a 7.7 percent on-year increase in daily average exports. Ahn also noted that the ministry will monitor changes in US trade policies under the Donald Trump

Later in the same day, Trump announced the United States would place 25 percent tariffs on Canadian and Mexican imports, while slapping 10 percent on goods from China,

beginning from Tuesday. Trump's order on tariffs is widely feared to trigger a global trade war beyond Canada, Mexico and China. Korea is not immune from the massive trade battle in consideration of its close trade ties with its two biggest trading partners ~ the United States and China. Trump's announcement itself is not a surprise because he has made these threats since before he won the US presidential election last year.

But it still worries many policymakers and business leaders around the world, considering the broad impact of a trade war involving multiple retaliatory tariffs.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

editor@thestatesman.com

## SC's rap

**SIR,** The Supreme Court's censure on Tuesday of the politicisation of sports administration in the country strikes at the heart of a festering problem. By directing the Centre to ensure the participation of the women's kabaddi team at the Senior Asian Championship in Iran, the court laid bare the tangled web of political and bureaucratic interference

strangling Indian sports bodies. The Amateur Kabaddi Federation of India's disaffiliation from the International Kabaddi Federation is emblematic of this rot, leaving athletes in limbo despite their

potential to bring home glory. This isn't an isolated incident. The Wrestling Federation of India's (WFI) quiet return to the residence of former president Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh ~ facing sexual harassment charges ~ exposes how entrenched political figures maintain a vice-like grip over



sports federations.

Athletes deserve administrators who understand the demands of the field, not bureaucrats

for clout. It's time for meaningful reform, ensuring that sports bodies are led by those with a genuine passion for athletics. The and politicians exploiting sports apex court's intervention must

serve as a clarion call: let sports be for the sportspersons, not a political playground.

Yours, etc., Khokan Das, Kolkata, 6 February.

### **MIGRATION CAUSES**

**SIR,** This refers to the editorial, "Deportation Drive" (6 February). The deportation of dozens of Indians, believed to be illegal immigrants in the United States, is neither surprising nor unprecedented. Over the past few years, the U.S. government has intensified its Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) operations to identify, detain, and deport individuals without proper documentation. Between June and October 2024, the Department of Homeland Security reported that 1, 60,000 individuals had been deported on 495 international repatriation flights to more than 145 countries, including India. However, the manner and timing should be cause for concern for New Delhi.

To begin with, these deportations coincide with a major crackdown by ICE, spurred by Donald Trump's swearing-in as the U.S. President in January. He has made illegal immigration his "number one priority". India, which has one of the largest populations of illegal immigrants in the U.S., estimated at 725,000 undocumented individuals, will need to prepare for a significant increase in the number of returning migrants. The 'bromance' that India's leader has tried to portray with the American President and his use of terms of familiarity such as 'Trump, my dear friend' have made no difference. India needs to ponder over why so many Indians are taking enormous risks to migrate to the U.S.; it is an issue of mounting unemployment. Our economy has been portrayed as experiencing sustained and fast growth, but employment generation has not been commensurate with this 'economic growth'.

Yours, etc., S S Paul, Nadia, 6 February.

**100 YEARS AGO** 

**OCCASIONAL NOTE** 

Blacks, has asserted the competence of its Rugby by defeating Wales, and that on the famous ground at Swansea, which is supposed to give a great advantage to the home team. Two Scottish tries in the first five minutes must have been a severe blow to the large crowd, which faithfully holds on to its expecta-

tion of a revival of Welsh foot-ball. Pace

in the back division seems to have given

the Scots the victory. While the Scottish

team was at Swansea the London Scot-

tish were going down badly before Cam-

bridge. Oxford on the other hand was

defeated by Richmond. University

games in the Lent term, however, are

not taken over seriously. The 'Varsity

match is over, control is relaxed, and

**MANDALAY RIOT TRIAL** 

JUDGMENT was delivered to-day by

Four accused were acquitted, and

Mr. Moseley in the Mandalay riot case.

eleven convicted; three to seven years,

one to nine, and others to terms ranging

from one to four years' rigorous impris-

onment. One of those sentenced to seven

years is U. Tun Aung Gyaw, the honorary treasurer of the Council Boycott Section.

over disobedience to a police order

regarding the change of route of a pro-

cession in which U. Uttama was being

taken, and resulted in the death of two

policemen; and one pongyi, and

injuries to several people including the

District Superin-tendent of Police, Mr.

Stewart, and some other police officers.

Thirty-three persons were arrested, of

**AMAZON EXPLORERS** 

The riot took place on August 7

men are more free to do other things.

**NEWS ITEMS** 

**CONVICTIONS** 

The other two were pongyis.

**ELEVEN** 

MANDALAY, FEB. 7.

SCOTLAND, which for reasons of its own, declined a fixture against the All

# What was in it for the corporate sector?

**ARUPA DEY BANIK** 

country is not just its soil, a country is its people' With the Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman quoting great Telugu poet and playwright Gurajada Appa Rao, the flavour of this year's budget with focus on Viksit Bharat had a slew of measures aimed at fostering economic growth, enhancing global competitiveness, and promoting inclusive development in India.

With the major share of the pie pliance costs for corporates. being reserved for agriculture and the common mass, the corporate sector felt a slight pang of being slighted. This was perhaps resonated through the stock market being overall indifferent to the consumption boost that the Budget tried to inject.

Having said so, what cannot be ignored is the emphasis on Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) for Viksit Bharat. The budget definitely had a subtle focus on transforming the corporate sector, with significant enhancements in credit availability, tax reforms, and initiatives to promote innovation and entrepreneurship.

budget is the doubling of the credit guarantee cover for MSMEs, which is expected to facilitate an additional credit of Rs 1.5 lakh crore over the

next five years. Additionally, the introduction of customized credit cards for micro enterprises and a new Fund of Funds for start-ups is expected to further support entrepreneurial ventures. Keeping in view the theme of promoting entrepreneurship, the budget also

extended the benefit of a three-year tax holiday to all eligible start-ups incorporated before 1 April 2030.

It is also not an unknown fact that the companies are grappling with huge compliance burdens and tax litigations. The budget promised significant relief by introducing substantial tax reforms, including a new income-tax bill aimed at simplifying the tax structure and reducing litigation. This move is expected to foster a more businessfriendly environment and reduce com-

The budget while emphasizing investment in people and innovation, also brought initiatives such as the establishment of National Centres of Excellence for skilling, expansion of medical education, and the launch of a Deep Tech Fund of Funds, which may involve investment and involvement of both the public and private sector enterprises to yield desired results. These efforts are complemented by sector-specific measures, including support for clean tech manufacturing and the promotion of exports through the **Export Promotion Mission.** 

If one looks closely, what emerges One of the key highlights of the is that the objective was not to reduce the tax burden, but to focus on the Make-in-India concept, wherein the Government aims to promote domestic manufacturing and value addition by increasing the Basic Customs Duty (BCD) on the import of goods and reducing or exempting BCD on components, parts, and capital goods. These sectors are prime ones, often depending on the other tiers or sectors for their sources of production. By targeting these sectors, an overall boost



has been very subtly trickled down to even the lower tiers.

Overall, the Union Budget 2025-2026 has furnished the right ingredients to the corporate to promote economic growth, enhance global competitiveness, and foster a more business-friendly environment. However, what is important is a close Public-Private Partnership to achieve the goals set out in the Budget. It is a time of transformation to achieve that

much-coveted financial stability, followed by growth for the nation. And how that is achieved is something that we all need to wait and watch!

(The writer is a Chartered Accountant.)

whom 29 were tried by a special magistrate who committed 15 to the Sessions on charges of grievous hurt and unlawful assembly.

## **FIRST NEWS RECEIVED BY WIRELESS**

(BRITISH OFFICIAL WIRELESS).

LEAFIELD (OXFORD), FEB. 7. MR. Marcuse, the well-known amateur wireless operator of Caterham Hill, Surrey, yesterday got into communication with the operator of Dr. Hamilton Rice's expedition which is proceeding up the Amazon in Brazil, a distance of about seven thousand miles from England. The transmission was very good, but was interfered with by atmosphere at times. This was the first time that details of the expedi-tion's progress had been received in Europe. The operator with the expe-

"The main party arrived at the junction of the Urari and Urtara rivers on January 19. Progress is slow owing to the extremely difficult physical con¬ditions of the country. The personnel of the expedition numbers over fifty. We have good food and the relay transport is working efficiently. We are unable to use the hydroplane at present. The objects of the expedition have been attained. All well."

di¬tion gave Mr. Marcuse the following

Mr. Marcuse delivered the message to the Royal Geographical Society and received a reply which he will endeavour to transmit this morning to Dr. Hamilton Rice, congratulating the explorer on the great progress recorded.

## **MAJ-GEN. ISACKE**

### **TO COMMAND INDEPENDENT BRIGADE AT DELHI**

(FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT.)

MAJOR-GENERAL Hubert Isacke, who has been selected to succeed Major-General J. H. K. Stewart, D.S.O., in command of the Delhi Independent Brigade Area, was born in 1872 and joined the Royal West Kent Regiment in 1892. He came to India and saw service with the Malakand Field force in 1897-8, being severely wounded in the expedition into the Mohmand country.

His next active service was in South Africa 1899-1902, where his distinguished services were rewarded with two mentions and a brevet majority. He held the appointment, previous to the Great war, of instructor at the Staff College, Quetta. This brought him a brevet Lieutenant-Colonelcy in November, 1913.

After the great War he returned from France to India to take up the duties of Director of Military Training. Thereafter he was appointed to the command of the Dehra Dun Brigade, which he vacated in April, 1923 on promotion to Major-General.

**CAME TO MIND | MANISH NANDY** 

## What we lose and keep

n quick succession, I have lost two persons who occupied irreplaceable places in my life. I, who put so much value on words, suddenly find I have no words to describe my loss.

I am sitting in my study, at my favorite desk, cluttered as usual with pens and papers, glasses and watches, an iPhone and a Bose speaker. Facing me is the window that shows a lawn, two dogs and three trees, a few scattered wispy clouds. All in place, untroubled by a perturbing wind and the untimely snow that changed the scene overnight. All is peaceful except my mind.

Clearly, a price of living long is that the people we care for leave us. The inevitability of life's end, relative brevity of some lives and seeming randomness of longevity are not thoughts that bring me any relief. What I feel is my sense of loss, unembroidered by the sense of injustice that some feel if the loss is occasioned by an accident or happenstance.

The most perceptive of my friends say little, perhaps edified by the experience that words provide scant solace. Those who offer the well-meaning assurance of a reunion in the hereafter or an afterlife seem also to be offering words that ring hollow to my skeptical ears. What my heart longs for is the continuity of the love that the presence of the living meant for me.

My daughter, whom I associate with sparkling eyes, joyous laughter and high spirits rather than serene sagacity, showed an unexpected measure of empathy. She came

unannounced, sat down close wordlessly and held my hand. She lowered her head onto my unaccountably aching shoulder as a strand of her long hair floated to my lips. It was a miraculous balm.

A thoughtful neighbour, just as wise, made a cup of tea and placed it simply, silently next to me. Its warmth and aroma were an abundant supportive message. I knew she had lost two close siblings in the space of weeks and the tea seemed a fragrant code for the analogy of pain that we shared. Hers was at a distance of months while mine was far too close.

Incongruous as it seems so close to their last breath, what I remember most are the happy memories. It was rare to walk with my brother without him playing a prank on me. "Let's go for a walk," he would say and promptly mislead me into a side street where his favorite street vendor was purveying what he wasn't supposed to eat or finagle me into a fancy coffee shop and order the super-calorie cake his doctor had forbidden.

"You haven't seen this spectacular mall," he forced me out of his car and marched into some chosen stores. If I showed the slightest interest in a new cologne or a pair of jeans, he would start whispering to the store clerk and I would later find the jeans and the cologne in my room.

He insisted his wife should cook only what he fancied I would love -"You won't get this in your damned Washington" – and urged his daughter to get me another scotch, though he remained an unmoved teetotaler.

My friend was the ultimate host. In his home, I would have a whole floor when I visited. Breakfast at dawn on the terrace, lunch with friends, coffee at a café where more friends congregated, and evenings where we talked, listened to music together, went to parties and never seemed to stop sharing our cherished thoughts and experiences.

"You must take a look at this," he would say and pass me a dozen magazines and the latest crop of books he had acquired for his large library. Occasionally, I would wake up early and wander into his library, only to find a cup of tea has been promptly sent there.

We spoke late into the night: I talking about my diplomatic mishaps and travel joys, he sharing his early Kolkata experiences and his consulting adventures. Our conversations never ended. When he visited me in Washington, he categorically ruled out all tourist trips, even visits to restaurants, and preferred that we should just sit at home or walk in the woods nearby, talking and sharing

and doing little else. I wonder why I remember those vibrant moments above all as I mourn that they will not recur. Then I remember that Aeschylus, who knew about pain and wrote great Greek tragedies, remarked that there was no pain so great as the memory of joy in current grief.

As the years go by, there will be rain and snow, hurricanes and tornados, and my life will alternate between sad and glad days, chaotic activity and



Illustration by: Debabrata Chakrabarty

listless quiet. Most of it will seem normal and much of it will remain prosaic. But not all. There will still be an unrevoked void. I will miss the ones who are gone, my brother and my friend.

Perhaps they are not quite gone. Irreligious as I am, I love that Norwegian religious song, made unforgettable by my beloved soprano, Sissel Kyrkjebø: mitt hjerte alltid vanker (my heart always wanders). Yes, my heart

wanders all the time and the world changes every day every way, but, as Sissel sings,

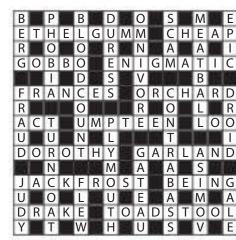
"You will stay with me faithfully swathed in my soul...

You took life here in the depth of my heart."

(The writer is a US-based international development advisor and had worked with the World Bank. He can be reached at mnandy@gmail.com)

CROSSWORD

**SATURDAY'S SOLUTION** 



**ACROSS** 1 Love tucking into awfully tall beer, ok?

6 Wee guy's indignant reply to charge of greed in hearing? (5) Member a Green brought into party is a beast (9)

10 I harshly criticise one of the big religions (5) 11 You must follow Scottish girl in slow part of dance (5) Superhero spotted a dude in need of

picking up (6-3)

covered in cream (7) 15 Give up a prohibition mafia boss (7)

13 Tart will have sex

18 Promise to keep a hold of extremely tense jumper (7) 20 Bootlicker? Bend over

with hands around heel of shoe! 21 Flexible secretary

lawyer`s taken over desk (9) 23 I love to chase old man 2 close to nudist courtyard (5) 25 Popular to tuck into

tea here? (5)

needing to be done up 27 I butt flipping soprano to get foreign capital

26 Plain green ties

28 One nursing tot got a drunk to be an animal (5,4)

**DOWN** 

He lost cat to tumble dryers (3,6)

Maiden cut into pork pies and fruit (5) 3 Soviet film about Scottish island swimmer (3,6)

4 Dance and drink? That could be a mistake! (5-2)

I raced about with half-cut cads to see stimulating art (7) Hoskins must be hugged by model? Cool! (5)

7 New model glad to get top award (4.5) truly in a really hot

8 Desire to grab yours place (5) 14 Work with Eurocentric leader helping

campaign (9) 16 Any bedpan having

been upset is an

objectionable thing (1,3,5)

NO-293044

17 Junkie knight painter possibly keeps company (9)

19 Old US singer wearing graduation clothes? (7) 20 Revolutionary against Republican performing

V-sign? (7) 21 Some grandpas cottaging in a racy English town? (5)

22 Lacerations and things they can create? (5) 24 Those heading to army encampment: brigade on exercise?

(3,2)

NOTE: Figures in parentheses denote the number of letters in the words required. (By arrangement with The Independent, London)

# Telangana CM urges southern states to unite to safeguard their rights

The Congress government aims to increase Telangana's GDP from \$200 billion to \$1 trillion by 2035

**AGENCIES** 

HYDERABAD, 9 FEBRUARY

▼elangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on Sunday called on all southern states to unite to protect their rights.

Terming termed delimitation of assembly and Lok Sabha Constituencies a contentious issue, he said the southern states were being punished for successfully implementing family planning and developing fast when compared to northern states.

Addressing the "Mathrubhumi International Festival of Letters" organised by the Malayalam daily 'Mathrub*humi*' in Thiruvananthapuram, the Chief Minister hoped that the southern states would

join hands to safeguard the guarantees provided by the Indian Constitution and also protect the rights.

Mentioning that Telangana's GDP is about \$200 billion, he said the Congress government has set the goal of taking it to \$1 trillion by 2035.

Revanth Reddy alleged that the Centre is not supporting all the states, especially the southern states and those ruled by non-BJP parties.

Citing the latest Economic Survey report released by the Central government, he said Telangana recorded the lowest inflation in the country. The Global Artificial Intelligence (AI) usage report says that Telangana is on top in the use of Artificial Intelligence.



Modi.

The state is already ranked number one in per capita income in the country. "Should the Centre not support Telangana for achieving many milestones," he asked.

On 'one country, one election', he said that it is an idea of one person, one party. He termed 'one country, one election' a secret agenda of Prime Minister Narendra

affection towards then-party chief Sonia Gandhi as she fulfilled their 60-year dream.

He alleged that the previous BRS government did nothing during the 10-year rule. The BRS leaders made tall promises but did not fulfil them, he said.

The Chief Minister stated that Telangana has been divided into three zones: Hyderabad Core Urban, Semi-Urban, and Rural Telangana. The core urban area located within the 160-km-long Outer Ring Road (ORR) is home to 1.2 crore people. The core area is a hub for software and pharma sectors.

Revanth Reddy said the government envisaged plans to transform the core urban area within the ORR into 100 per cent net zero with service sectors.

He claimed that the government is undertaking several programmes to make Hyderabad the best city in the world. He reiterated that Hyderabad would compete with major cities of the world like New York, London, Singapore, Tokyo, and Seoul.

The government is also planning to build the Future City on 30,000 acres. This will be the greenest, cleanest, and best city in India with proper planning and zoning. It will also be the first net zero city, he said.

The Chief Minister stated that Young India Skill University and Young India Sports University are being developed for the youth.

# Low draft & high winds major challenges before Asia's first vertical lift sea bridge



**NISHAT NIZAMI** 

RAMESWARAM, 9 FEBRUARY

The Indian Railways' engineering feat of the New Pamban Bridge in Tamil Nadu, counting days for the green signal anytime soon, overcame several challenges before becoming Asia's first vertical lift sea bridge.

The new Pamban Bridge, on the azure waters of Palk Strait at Rameswaram in Tamil Nadu, is around 2.08km connecting long, Rameswaram to Mandapam. The journey of the new bridge was full of challenges yet

interesting, according to the engineers. The construction of the metric tonne crane was erectbridge started in 2019, but the work had to be stalled due to the outbreak of Covid-19. As the piling work progressed, according to Mr R Srinivasan, the senior deputy general manager of Rail Vikas Nigam Limited, the project faced hurdles of low drafts or high winds at times, making it the most challenging phase. Considering the situation, the Railways decided to carry out the piling work of the bridge in three separate methods for different phases, which was one of the most challenging yet interesting parts of the bridge construction. "There are 100 piers in the bridge, while the average depth of piles below the seabed is around 38 meters. From piers one to nine, the waters were so low that barges could not be floated to bring in materials. We had to wait for higher tides to move the

challenge, the gantry method was used as rocks obstructed the floating of barges that could shift and hit the barges, leading to its puncture or even sinking it. For this, a special kind of gantry was built to do the piling. This phase, according to the engineers, was faster and work was done comparatively quicker than the earlier phase. In the third phase, from pier 77 to 100, the piling was done using barges," he explained.

As learnt, as part of the process, the 72-meter long lift-span segments called traverse that are in parts were brought part by part, for which a special kind of 110 ed. As per the guidelines of the RDSO that underlined the fabrication being done away from the seashore, the segments weighing around 640 MT were fabricated at a special workshop at Sathrapadi railway station, 60km from the sea. According to Mr R Srinivasan, the senior deputy general manager of Rail Vikas Nigam Limited, the steel used in the bridge was fabricated at the Sathra-

padi workshop. Apart from a few parts like the gearbox and bearings, all the components have been procured from within the country. The two towers, each 34m in height, include mission rooms on top of the towers with gearboxes and hydraulic brakes, which are specialised ones that have been procured from Germany. Interestingly, the sleepers on the railway tracks of the bridge were procured from

a workshop in Howrah. After a gap of around two years during the Covid pandemic, the works were resumed, and the bridge was completed in about three years. With the opening of the new bridge, the Railways plans to dismantle the old redundant cantilever bridge. The piles of the supercentenarian would remain, but the girders would be removed.

## CSR fund scam: Retired Justice CN Ramachandran Nair booked for swindling ₹34 lakh

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE THIRUVANANTHAPURAM.9 FEB-

The Kerala police on Sunday registered a cheating case against retired Kerala High Court Judge, Justice CN Ramachandran Nair, for allegedly swindling Rs 34 lakh in the notorious Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) fund scam. Justice (retired) Ramachandran Nair, who was a trustee of the National NGO Confederation, has been named as the third accused in the case. Sai Gramam Global Trust chairman KN Anand Kumar and Anandhu Krishnan have been listed as the first and second accused, respectively, in the case registered at Perinthalmanna police station based on a complaint from the president of Angadippuram Kisan Service Society (KSS), the implementing agency of the scheme. According to the complaint, the trio collected Rs 34 lakh from KSS as instal-

ments. The police have filed charges under Section 318(4) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) against the accused. Reacting to the development, Justice CN Ramachandran Nair said that the police registered the case against him without even conducting a preliminary investigation. He alleged that the police action was based

on false accusations. The CSR scam, also known as a half-price scam, pertains to the alleged extortion of money from multiple individuals through promises of scooters, laptops, and other household appliances at half price, falsely claiming to utilise Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funds. The police said Anandhu Krishnan, the prime accused in the case, used more than 200 NGOs to execute fraudulent half-price schemes for various products such as scooters, laptops, home appliances, etc. Anandhu Krishnan, 26, a resident of Idukki, allegedly cheated people and charitable societies across the state by promising to deliver twowheelers, laptops and household appliances such as water purifiers and sewing machines at half the price, claiming that hewas procuring them through corporate social responsibility (CSR) funds of big private firms, an officer privy to the investigation said.

## Tamil Nadu CM announces financial aid for woman pushed off moving train

**AGENCIES** 

CHENNAL 9 FEBRUARY

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin on Sunday announced Rs 3 lakh financial aid for a pregnant woman who was pushed off a moving train near Katpadi by a 27year-old man after she resisted his sexual assault bid.

He also said that the state government would bear her medical expenses.

The 36-year-old woman, a resident of Tirupur, had boarded the ladies compartment of the Tirupati-bound Intercity Express train from Tirupur station. After most passengers in her coach alighted at Jolarpettai, she was left alone when the accused, reportedly a history-sheeter, entered the compartment.

When the man made advances toward her, she attempted to escape by running towards the restroom. Enraged by her resistance, he pushed her out of the moving train. She sustained multiple fractures in her hand and leg and was rescued by passersby, who took her to the Government Medical

College Hospital in Vellore.

Stating that Telangana

Rising is not just a slogan but

a dream of four crore people

of Telangana, he said that he

aspires to make Telangana

the best state not only in

the Congress formed a separate

Telangana state and the people

of Telangana showed their

Revanth Reddy said that

India but in the world.

Tragically, on Saturday, she suffered a miscarriage due to the injuries. Senior officials from the Chennai Division of Southern Railway visited the hospital and provided the woman with an ex gratia of Rs 50,000. Within 12 hours of the crime, the accused, Hemaraj of Pooncholai village near KV Kuppam, was arrested with the help

of CCTV footage. Police investigations revealed that he was already wanted by the Katpadi railway police for a robbery case, and a separate murder and rape case was pending against him at the Gudiyatham city police station.

The incident has intensified criticism against the state government, with the opposition targeting Chief Minister M.K. Stalin, who also oversees the home department.

The outrage comes amid a series of sexual assault cases in Tamil Nadu. In a separate case, Salem Police arrested a government school teacher in Yercaud on Friday night for sexually abusing 10 girl students.

### Ed Sheeran offers clarification in Bengaluru police intervention case



**AGENCIES** 

MUMBAI, 9 FEBRUARY

Global pop sensation Ed Sheeran recently ran into trouble with the Bengaluru police after they stopped his impromptu street performance midway. The police claimed they had to intervene as they had not received prior permission for the performance.

Now, Ed Sheeran has shared his reaction to the incident, stating that the necessary permissions for the performance were in place. Taking to the Stories section of his Instagram, he wrote: "We had permission to busk, btw, hence us playing in that exact spotit was planned out before. It wasn't just us randomly turning up. All good though. See ya at the show tonight

Ed Sheeran arrived opposite the MG Road Metro station on Church Street, where two microphones and a guitar had been set up for the performance. According to a video circulating on social media, as

Both active and

social media can

passive use of

**NEW DELHI. 9 FEBRUARY** 

**AGENCIES** 

social media.

the singer started performing an unplugged version of his popular track "Shape of You", a police officer arrived and disconnected the speakers, stopping his performance.

If reports are to be believed, the police had also received a complaint of public nuisance against the singer. The video gained significant traction online. One Reddit user commented, "Hahaha. One of those 'Only in India' moments.' Another shared, "It's just very embarrassing."

While some criticised the police for stopping the singer, others argued that they were simply doing their job. Ed Sheeran will be per-

forming a concert today, 9 February, 2025, at Bengaluru's NICE Grounds. This marks the first time the singer has performed in Bengaluru. After completing the Bengaluru leg of his tour, Sheeran will perform at Shillong's JN Stadium on 12 February. His final stop will be on February 15 at Leisure Valley Grounds, Gurugram.

# **AGENCIES**

trigger loneliness: Study

Both passive and active social media use have been linked with increased feelings of loneliness over time,

report researchers. The team investigated how social media use impacts loneliness over time and examined the hidden emotional costs of

The eye-opening research by Baylor University, published in the journal Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, suggests that the very platforms designed to bring us together contribute to an "epidemic of loneliness."

While passive social media use—like browsing without interaction—predictable lead to heightened loneliness, active use, involving posting and engaging with others, was also linked to increased feelings of loneliness.

These results suggest that the quality of digital interactions may not fulfill the social needs that are met in face-to-face communication. "This research under-

scores the complexity of social media's impact on mental health," said primary investigator James A. Roberts.

### TVK names superstar Vijay as its CM candidate, says alliance only with parties recognising his leadership

materials. Similarly, barges

could not be floated during

high winds. The barges would

drift away during high winds,"

pointed out Mr Srinivasan.

"The piling had to be done

manually and conventionally.

So we dumped boulders,

moved materials, and carried

out the piling works. From

pier 9 to 76, water would

always be around two meters,

also preventing the floating

of barges. To overcome the

CHENNAI, 9 FEBRUARY

The Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) has announced that it will enter into a political

alliance only with parties that recognise the leadership of its founder and Tamil superstar, In a statement issued on

Sunday, the TVK confirmed that Vijay is the party's Chief Ministerial candidate. This announcement comes

amid speculation that TVK was in talks with the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) regarding a potential alliance.

Reports suggested that discussions included securing the Deputy Chief Minister's post and 60 Assembly seats for the 2026 elections.

However, TVK's statement has put all such rumours to

Vijay, one of Tamil Nadu's most beloved actors, announced the launch of his political party in February 2024.

His fan group, Vijay Makkal Iyakkam, had contested the 2021 local body elections, winning 115 seats.

During the party's launch, Vijay declared that TVK would not contest the 2024 Lok Sabha elections but would instead focus on the 2026 Tamil Nadu Assembly elections.

He emphasised that the party aims to bring about fundamental political change in the state.

"Our goal is to contest the 2026 Assembly elections and



lead the fundamental political change that people need," Vijay said.

He also addressed key issues affecting Tamil Nadu's political landscape: "On one hand, corruption is deeply rooted in society and administration, and on the other, politics of hate and divisiveness is taking over."

At TVK's inaugural rally on October 27, 2024, in Villupuram, Vijay introduced the party's ideological framework, which blends Dravidian principles with Tamil national-

The rally, held in Vikkaravandi, drew a massive crowd of more than 300,000 people, marking a significant moment in the state's political histo-

During his speech, Vijay criticised the ruling Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), accusing it of being a familycentric party that exploits the Dravidian identity for personal

He also condemned the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) for promoting divisive poli-

Vijay urged TVK members to remain honest and engage with political rivals respectfully, particularly addressing criticisms from Naam Tamilar Katchi (NTK) leader Seeman with facts and decorum.

Vijay also advised TVK members to respond constructively and respectfully to criticism, including on social media platforms.

With its firm stance on leadership and ideology, TVK is positioning itself as a formidable force in Tamil Nadu's 2026 Assembly elections.

### Telangana temple's head priest attacked over 'religious issue'

**AGENCIES** 

HYDERABAD, 9 FEBRUARY

Unidentified persons attacked Chilkur Balaji Temple's head priest C. S. Rangarajan two days ago at his house near Hyderabad over "a religious issue", according to a complaint filed with the police on Sunday.

Moinabad police on Sunday arrested a person in connection with the attack. He was identified as Veera Raghava Reddy. Police said efforts were on to apprehend other accused.

According to the complaint filed by Rangarajan with Moinabad police, 20 persons barged into his house at Chilkur, adjacent to Chilkur Balaji Temple and manhandled him on 7 February. Temples Protection Move-

ment convenor Soundararajan, who is the father of Rangarajan, said that a few individuals, who proclaimed themselves as the descendants of the Ikshwaku clan, wanted to form the Ram Rajya and alleged that they created private armies to punish people who did not accept their mission or agenda and did not understand the concept of constitutional Rama Rajya. The head priest of Chilukur Balaji Temple declined to get associated with them.

They seriously manhandled my son Shri Rangarajan who is also Archaka of Shri Chilkur Balaji Deity. They landed blows on him in our house at Chilkur which is adjacent to Shri Chilkur Balaji temple premises on Feb 7th Friday," Soundararajan said in a statement.

## Aero India 2025 to showcase India's

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

The 15th edition of Aero India,

With the theme 'The Run-

2047. and a scientific temperament," he stated.



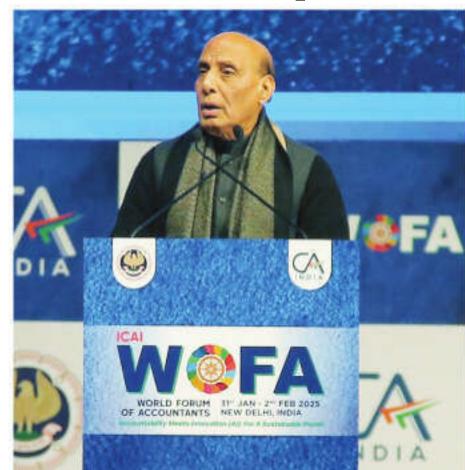
**NEW DELHI. 9 FEBRUARY** 

Asia's largest aerospace and defence exhibition, will be inaugurated by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh at the Yelahanka Air Force Station in Bengaluru, Karnataka, on Monday.

way to a Billion Opportunities,' this five-day event will not only highlight India's aerial and technological capabilities but will also bring together global aerospace companies, fostering partnerships and accelerating innovation. In line with the 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' and 'Make in India, Make for the World' initiatives, this year's exhibition underscores India's aspirations to become a global leader in aerospace and defence by

In a press conference held ahead of the event, Rajnath Singh described Aero India as a vital platform for showcasing India's growing defence and aerospace prowess. He emphasized its role in strengthening India's defence preparedness, while fostering international collaborations. "Aero India serves as a platform to demonstrate New India's strength, resilience, and selfreliance. It plays a pivotal role in not only enhancing India's security but also in shaping the future of our nation. The event will inspire our youth, fostering innovation

Set up across more than 42,000 square metres with over 900 exhibitors—including 150 foreign companies—Aero India 2025 is set to be the largest edition of the exhibition



THE INSTITUTE OF

to date. With over 90 countries confirmed to participate, the event has garnered the attention of defence ministers, air chiefs, and military officials from around the globe. Singh expressed pride in this vast international participation, highlighting that over 30 Defence Ministers and representatives from 43 countries will attend the event, signifying global confidence in India's capabilities.

India's growing role in aerospace and defence manufacturing was also discussed. The country's indigenous platforms such as the Light Combat Aircraft Tejas, Light Combat Helicopter Prachand, and the C-295 Transport Aircraft are now being produced domestically. Additionally, India is on track to manufacture fifth-generation fighter aircraft, underscoring the rapid transformation of its

defence sector.

The Defence Minister further emphasised that India's private sector has made significant contributions to defence production. Following the corporatisation of the Ordnance Factory Board, the newly formed companies are excelling in defence manufacturing.

Major highlights will include the Defence Ministers' Conclave, a CEOs Roundtable, and events showcasing indigenous products such as the India Pavilion and iDEX Pavilion, which will display cutting-edge technologies developed by Indian innovators.

Additionally, Aero India 2025 will witness the historic participation of two fifthgeneration fighter aircraft ~ the Russian Su-57 and the American F-35 Lightning II ~ which will showcase the latest advancements in air superiority and stealth technology.

# Israeli forces begin to withdraw from a key Gaza corridor

Israel agreed as part of the truce to remove its forces from the 6-kilometre Netzarim corridor

**ASSOCIATED PRESS** 

MUGHRAQA. 9 FEBRUARY

sraeli forces began withdrawing from a key Gaza corridor on Sunday, Israeli \_\_\_officials said, part of Israel's commitments under a tenuous ceasefire deal with Hamas that is moving ahead but faces a major test over whether the sides can negotiate its planned extension.

Israel agreed as part of the truce to remove its forces from the 4-mile (6-kilometre) Netthe zarim corridor, a strip of land that bisects northern Gaza from the south that Israel used as a military zone during

At the start of the ceasefire last month, Israel began allowing Palestinians to cross Netzarim to head to their homes in the war-battered north, sending hundreds of thousands streaming across Gaza on foot

and by car. The withdrawal of forces from the area will fulfill another commitment to the deal, which paused the 15-month war.

However, the sides appear to have made little progress on negotiating the deal's second phase, which is meant to extend the truce and lead to the release of more Israeli hostages held by Hamas.

Israeli Prime Minister Ben-

iamin Netanyahu was sending a delegation to Qatar, a key mediator in talks between the sides, but the mission included low-level officials, sparking speculation that it won't lead to a breakthrough in extending the truce. Netanyahu is also expected to convene a meeting of key Cabinet ministers this week on the second phase of the deal.

Separately on Sunday, the Palestinian Health Ministry said that a 23-year-old Pales-



tinian woman who was eight months pregnant was fatally shot by Israeli gunfire in the northern occupied West Bank, where Israeli troops have been carrying out a broad opera-

Since it began on 19 Jan, the ceasefire deal has faced repeated obstacles and disagreements between the sides, underscoring its fragility. But it has held, raising hopes that the devastating war that led to seismic shifts in the Middle East may be headed toward an end.

On Sunday, cars heaped with belongings, including water tanks and suitcases, were seen heading north through a road that crosses Netzarim. Under the deal, Israel is supposed to allow the cars to cross through uninspected and there did not

appear to be troops in the vicinity of the road.

The Israeli officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity because they weren't authorized to discuss troop movement with the media, did not disclose how many soldiers were withdrawing. Troops currently remain along Gaza's borders with Israel and Egypt and a full withdrawal is expected to be negotiated in a later stage of the truce.

During the first 42-day phase of the ceasefire, Hamas is gradually releasing 33 Israeli hostages captured during its 7 Oct, 2023, attack in exchange for a pause in fighting, freedom for hundreds of Palestinian prisoners and a flood of humanitarian aid to war-battered Gaza. The deal also stipulates that Israeli troops will pull backfrom populated areas of Gaza as well as the Netzarim corridor.

## Released Thai hostages return to Bangkok after being held for over a year in Gaza

**AGENCIES** 

BANGKOK, 9 FEBRUARY

Five Thai workers released after being held hostage for over a year in Gaza arrived in Bangkok on Sunday.

Sarusak Rumnao, 32, Watchara Sriaoun, 33, Sathian Suwannakham, 35, Pongsak Thaenna, 36, and Bannawat Saethao, 27, were freed on 30 January as part of an exchange arrangement.

They were embraced by family members, some of whom cried, in the arrivals hall at Suvarnabhumi airport. Thai Foreign Minister Maris Sagniampongsa and the Israeli Ambassador to Thailand Orna Sagiv were both at the airport to welcome home the freed hostages.

"We are all very grateful and very happy that we get to return to our homeland. We all would really like to thank vou. I don't know what else to say," Pongsak told a news conference at the airport.

Maris said the Thai government "never gave up hope



and here is the result today. The tears of joy are our encouragement." He added that Bangkokwould continueworking to secure the release of the remaining Thai hostage.

The group quickly left the news conference to return to theirhometowns in Thailand's northern and northeastern regions.

They were the second batch of Thai hostages released since the war broke out. During an earlier ceasefire in November 2023, 23 Thai nationals were released in a deal negotiated between Thailand and Hamas, with assistance from Qatar and Iran.

All five men were assessed at a hospital outside Tel Aviv prior to their return. Four of them were joined by one relative each earlier this week. The trip was sponsored by the Israeli government, according to the Thai Embassy in Tel Aviv.

Hamas militants kidnapped 31 Thai nationals during the Oct. 7, 2023, assault on southern Israel, making them the largest group of foreigners held captive. Many of the Thai agricultural workers lived in compounds on the outskirts of southern Israeli kibbutzim and towns, and Hamas militants overran those places first.

## Kurds in new Syria want to preserve the cultural rights they gained in years of war

**AGENCIES** 

Kurds in Syria were marginalized during five decades of Assad family rule, with many denied citizenship and wrongly described as Arabs. Now they are seizing the chance during the post-Assad transition to keep the cultural gains they made in the northeast enclave they carved out

during the country's civil war. Mothers can now give children Kurdish names. The Kurdish language is taught in schools. The new year, Nowruz, can be celebrated openly. The Kurds, one of the world's largest populations without a state of their own,

have been feeling some control "Asayish," the Kurdish term over their lives and want to make that permanent with a

new government in power. But that depends on Syria's new leaders, and the outcome of an ongoing conflict between the Kurds and Turkish-backed rebels that's been overshadowed by the dramatic shift from Assad rule. Two months of fighting have left scores dead on both sides. "We have made all these gains. There is no way we will abandon them, even over our bodies and the bodies of our children," said Amira Ali, a Kurdish woman from the northeastern city of Hassakeh whose husband is a member of the local police force known as,

for security.

Shortly after the uprising against the Assad government began in 2011, the Kurds filled the vacuum created by the withdrawal of government forces from wide areas of Syria's northeast. The main Kurdish-led force now controls about 25 per cent of Syria. An autonomous authority runs day-to-day affairs of the region that many Kurds call "Rojava Kurdistan," or "western Kurdistan."

Now Kurdish leaders are negotiating with the new authorities in Damascus on the future of their people, who made up 10 per cent of the country's prewar population.

# $North Korea's Kim slams US-South Korea-Japan \\partnership \&vows to boost his nuclear programme$

**AGENCIES** 

SEOUL, 9 FEBRUARY

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un said an elevated U.S. security partnership with South Korea and Japan poses a grave threat to his country and vowed to further bolster his nuclear weapons program, state media reported Sunday.

Kim has previously made similar warnings, but his latest statement implies again that the North Korean leader won't likelyembrace President Donald Trump's overture to meet him and revive diplomacy anytime soon.

In a speech marking the 77th founding anniversary of

the Korean People's Army on Saturday, Kim said the U.S.-Japan-South Korea trilateral security partnership established under a U.S. plot to form a NATO-like regional military bloc is inviting military imbalance on the Korean Peninsula and "raising a grave challenge to the security environment of our state," according to the official Korean Central News

"Referring to a series of new plans for rapidly bolstering all deterrence including nuclear forces, he clarified once again the unshakable policy of more highly developing the nuclear forces," KCNA said.

Agency.

Amid stalled diplomacy



with the U.S. and South Korea in recent years, Kim has focused on enlarging and modernising his arsenal of nuclear weapons. In response, the United States and South Korea have expanded their

bilateral military exercises and trilateral training involving Japan. North Korea has lashed out at those drills, calling them rehearsals to invade the country.

Since his 20 Jan inaugu-

ration, Trump has said he would reach out to Kim again as he boasted of his highstakes summit with him during

his first term. During a joint news conference with Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba on Friday, Trump said that "We will have relations with North Korea, with Kim Jong Un. I got along with him very well,  $as you\,know.\,I\,think\,I\,stopped$ the war."

During a Fox News interview broadcast on 23 Jan, Trump called Kim "a smart guy" and "not a religious zealot." Asked whether he will reach out to Kim again, Trump replied, "I will, yeah."

## Trump says some white South Africans are oppressed and could be resettled in the USA; they say no thanks

**AGENCIES** 

CAPE TOWN, 9 FEBRUARY

Groups representing some of South Africa's white minority responded Saturday to a plan by President Donald Trump to offer them refugee status and resettlement in the United States by saying: thanks, but no thanks.

The plan was detailed in an executive order Trump signed Friday that stopped all aid and financial assistance to South Africa as punishment for what the Trump administration said were "rights violations" by the government against some of its white citi-

The Trump administration accused the South African government of allowing violent attacks on white Afrikaner farmers and introducing a land expropriation law that enables it to "seize ethnic minority Afrikaners' agricultural property without compensation."

The South African government has denied there are any concerted attacks on white farmers and has said that Trump's description of the new land law is full of misinformation and distortions.

Afrikaners are descended from mainly Dutch, but also French and German colonial



settlers who first arrived in South Africa more than 300 years ago. They speak Afrikaans, a language derived from Dutch that developed in South Africa, and are distinct from other white South Africans who come

from British or other backgrounds.

Together, whites make up around 7 per cent of South Africa's population of 62 mil-

On Saturday, two of the

most prominent groups representing Afrikaners said they would not be taking up Trump's offer of resettlement in the U.S.

"Our members work here, and want to stay here, and they are going to stay here," said Dirk Hermann, chief executive of the Afrikaner trade union Solidarity, which says it represents around 2 million people. "We are committed to build a future here. We are not going anywhere.'

At the same press conference, Kallie Kriel, the CEO of the Afrikanerlobbygroup AfriForum, said: "We have to state categorically: We don't want to move elsewhere."

## Trump's AI ambition and China's DeepSeek overshadow an AI summit in Paris

**AGENCIES** 

PARIS, 9 FEBRUARY

The geopolitics of artificial intelligence will be in focus at a major summit in France where world leaders, executives and experts will hammer out pledges on guiding the development of the rapidly advancing technology.

It's the latest in a series of global dialogues around AI governance, but one that comes at a fresh inflection point as China's buzzy and budget-friendly DeepSeek chatbot shakes up the indus-

U.S. Vice President JD Vance — making his first



trip abroad since taking office — will attend the Paris AI Action Summit starting 10 Feb, while China's President Xi Jinping will be sending his special envoy, signaling high stakes for the meeting.

Heads of state and top government officials, tech bosses and researchers are gathering in Paris for the

two-day summit cohosted by French President Emmanuel Macron and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The event aims to address how to harness artificial intelligence's potential so that it benefits everyone, while containing the tech-

nology's myriad risks. **European Commission** President Ursula von der Leyen is attending, along with officials and CEOs from 80 countries, including German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, OpenAI CEO Sam Altman, Microsoft President Brad Smith and Google CEO Sundar Pichai.

## LEISURE

## 10 MINUTE CROSSWORD



1 Is aware of (5) 4 Forbidden (6) Items left behind (4,8) 8 Cheerful (5) 9 Compel compliance with (7) 11 Deep ditch (6) 13 Attractiveness (6)

Unit of distance (9) 2 Watch (7) 3 Sentimental (Informal) Pub (Slang) (6) 5 Necessary (7) 6 Go into (5) 10 Mid-morning snack (9) 12 Whim (7) 16 Instance (7) 14 Very many (Informal) 18 Fruit (5) 19 Seasonal weather (5,7) 15 Channel Island (6) 20 Cure (6) 17 More than enough (5) 21 Female relatives (5)

## 18 Hawaiian greeting (5)

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD 12 Grave, **ACROSS** DOWN book. 13 Stash, 2 Grab, 7 Essayist, 1 Eggs, 16 Carpaccio, 3 Self-govern-11 Brackets 4 Calibre 18 Behind, 14 Dawdle, (Excalibur), 19 Utopia, 4 Crafty, 15 Occult, 8 Paella, 20 Suggest, 17 Wife. 5 Loggia, 9 Grouse, 10 Getting by, By arrangement with The Independent Figures in parentheses denote

the number of letters in the words required

### **BEETLE BAILEY/Mort Walker**





## RED EYE/Bill Yates & Mel Casson











### **NEED TO KNOW**

\*AIIMS 26588500, 26588900 Moolchand Medcity (formerly) Hospital) 42000000 & 24-hour General Inquiry 139 Chemist Shop 42000447 «Vidyasagar Institute for Mental Health and Neuro-Sciences 26924300, 26924304 Batra Hospital & Medical Research Centre 29051280, 29958747

Deen Dayal Upadhyay

25496320, 25494403

Guru Tegh Bahadur

L. A. A. M. S. H. R.

### 22586262, 22585007

\*5MS Inquiry Nos. 57886, 54959, 5676747

ROADWAYS INQUIRY \*ISBT (General Inquiry): 23868836, 23865181 Haryana Roadways 23861262 Himachal Roadways 23717473, 23325320

 Punjab Roadways 23867842, port 011-25671580; Terminal I \*Rajasthan Roadways 23864470 U.P. Roadways 23868709

### FLIGHT INQUIRY AIR INDIA Flight Inquiry and Reservation 18001801407

\*INDIGO AIRLINES New Delhi City Office 43513185, Call Centre 09910383838, 18001803838, Reservation 43513186; Indigo Airlines Air-

 Air Canada Flight Inquiry 25656421/25656431 Reservation 41528181 Air France Flight Inquiry and Reservation 23466262 (City) 25652294 (Airport) . Kuwait Airways Flight Inquiry and Reservation 23354373

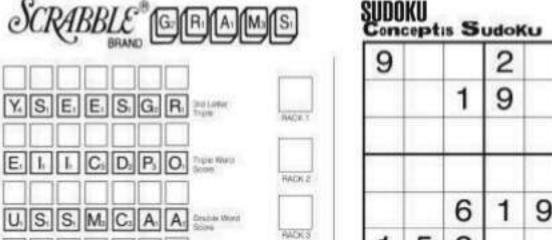
B 25671576, Palam Road

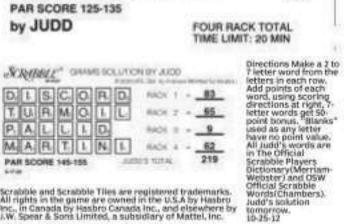
JET AIRWAYS Flight Inquiry

EMIRATES Flight Inquiry and

and Reservation 39841111

Reservation 33773377







Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that no row, no column and no answer to 6 3 5 1 4 2 8 3x3 box contains the same number. The difficulty level previous 9 8 8 2 1 7 4 3 5 puzzle 7 2 1 3 5 4 9 8 8 increases through the week.

### **THUMBNAILS**

India's semiconductor consumption market to grow at a 13 pc CAGR through 2030: Driven by the government's production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme, India's semiconductor consumption market which is valued at \$52 billion in 2024-25 is expected to grow at a robust CAGR of 13 per cent through 2030. Sectors like automotive and industrial electronics present significant value-addition opportunities. Mobile handsets, IT, and industrial applications. which together contribute nearly 70 per cent of the revenue, remain the primary growth drivers, according to Dr V Veerappan, Chairman of the Indian **Electronics and Semiconduc**tor Association (IESA).

## Market outlook: Delhi polls' outcome, Q3 earnings and inflation data set to drive D-Street action

January inflation is projected to drop to 4.69 per cent from 5.22 per cent in the previous month, which could influence RBI's next policy decision



**AGENCIES** 

MUMBAI, 9 FEBRUARY

he market outlook for the next week of February will be guided by key factors like Delhi polls outcome, inflation data and Q3 earnings.

The announcement of the Delhi Assembly election results was another significant event as the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) secured a strong victory in the Assembly elections, winning 48 out of 70 seats.

Analysts believe this win could contribute to positive investor sentiment.

Macroeconomic data will

be another major focus for investors. Inflation and industrial output data will be released on 12 February.

January inflation is projected to drop to 4.69 per cent from 5.22 per cent in the previous month, which could influence RBI's next policy decision.

Meanwhile, industrial production growth is expected to slow to 4.1 per cent from 5.2 per cent. Corporate earnings will

also impact stock market movement this week.

Major companies such as Eicher Motors, Apollo Hospitals, Vodafone Idea, Hindustan Aeronautics, and Muthoot Finance will report their quarterly results.

The financial performance of these companies will shape investor confidence.

Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) continued their selling spree last week, pulling out Rs 8,852 crore from the market.

However, domestic institutional investors (DIIs) provided some stability by investing Rs 6,449 crore.

"Nifty remained volatile throughout the week but managed to close positive for the second consecutive week, sustaining above the 23,450– 23,500 zone, signalling a potential bottom reversal," Puneet Singhania, Director Master Trust Group said.

He added that the index continues to trade decisively above the critical 21-day EMA, reinforcing positive sentiment and indicating further upside momentum.

"Despite short-term volatility, the trend remains positive, supporting a 'Buy on Dips' strategy," Singhania mentioned. On the global front, several macroeconomic indicators will play a crucial role

in influencing market trends. US inflation data for January, which will be released on 12 February, is expected to show core inflation at 3.2 per cent and headline inflation at 2.9 per cent year-on-year

Any deviation from these estimates could impact the US Federal Reserve's future

interest rate decisions. Additionally, UKGDP data and China's inflation numbers

will also be watched closely.

In the last week, the domestic equity benchmarks continued their upward momentum as the Nifty advanced by 0.33 per cent to close at 23,559.95, while the BSE Sensex rose 0.46 per cent to settle at 77,860.

## Foreign investors continue exodus, pull out nearly ₹7,300 crore in February

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

**NEW DELHI, 9 FEBRUARY** 

The Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) continue the exodus from the Indian Stock Market as in the first week of February, they pulled out over Rs 7,300 crore (about 840 million).

According to the data, Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) offloaded shares worth Rs 7,342 crore from Indian equities so far this month (till 7 Feb-

The development comes amid global trade tensions, with the US imposing tariffs on countries such as Canada, Mexico, and China. In the month of January, the FPIs recorded outflow of Rs 78,027 crore. However, in December, they invested Rs 15,446 crore, data with the depositories showed. FPIs were buyers in the debt market as they put

in Rs 1,215 crore into debt general limit and Rs 277 crore in debt voluntary retention route. The overall trend indicates a cautious approach by foreign investors, who scaled back investments in Indian equities significantly in 2024, with net inflows of just Rs 427 crore. In 2023, there was a net inflow of Rs 1.71 trillion, driven by optimism over India's

strongeconomic fundamentals. However in 2022, there was a net outflow of Rs 1.21 lakh crore amid aggressive rate hikes by global central banks. The depreciating Indian Rupee has also been a factor in the FPIs offload as Indian rupee depreciated sharply, breaching Rs 87 per US dollar mark for the first time. A weaker rupee erodes returns for foreign investors, making Indian assets relatively less attractive.

## **STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, 9FEBRUARY:**

A recent report by the Bain & Company in collaboration with Indian pharmaceutical bodies said exports of India's pharmaceutical industry are projected to reach \$350 billion by 2047.

This is an estimated 10-15 times increase from the current levels.

India, which currently ranks 11th in pharmaceutical export value, can secure a position among the top five nations by 2047, the report said.

The country's pharma exports are expected to grow from approximately \$27 billion in 2023 to \$65 billion by 2030, before reaching the ambitious \$350 billion target by India's 100th year of independence, it added.

India, being already a global leader in generic drug



supply, is expected to move up the value chain by focusing on specialty generics, biosimilars, and innovative pharmaceutical products.

The report said the key to this growth would be India's transition from a volume-based approach to a value-driven strategy.

It further identifies three major areas that will drive this shift which are strengthening domestic Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (APIs) production, investing in bulk drug parks, and ensuring self-sufficiency in critical raw materials will be criti-

APIs exports, currently

valued at \$5 billion, are projected to reach \$80-90 billion by 2047.

With China dominating 35 per cent of the outsourced API market, global supply chain diversification efforts — such as the U.S. Biosecure Act—present a major opportunity for India, it said.

Indian biosimilar exports, presently valued at \$0.8 billion, are expected to grow fivefold to \$4.2 billion by 2030 and reach \$30-35 billion

by 2047. Increased research and development investments, regulatory simplifications in key markets like the US, and capacity expansion are expected to boost India's global standing in biosimilars. Currently, the largest component of India's pharma exports at \$19 billion (70 per cent of total exports), generic formulations are projected to grow to \$180-

190 billion by 2047. Moving beyond commodity gener-

India must enhance its capabilities in specialty generics, which offer higher margins and greater global market potential.

It highlighted that India supplies 55-60 per cent of UNICEF's vaccines but must shift focus towards highvalue markets through clinical trials and manufacturing investments.

With over 40 new chemical and biological entities in development, India's pharmaceutical exports in innovation could reach \$13-15 billion by 2047. India's contract development and manufacturing organisations (CDMOs) and contract research organizations (CROs) are poised for growth, driven by supply chain diversification efforts from developed economies.

## Valuation of 6 of top Exports of India's pharma industry to reach \$350 billion by 2047: Report 10 companies surges over ₹1.18 lakh crore



**NEW DELHI, 9 FEBRUARY** 

Last week, the combined market valuation of six of the top 10 most valued firms surged Rs 1,18,151.75 crore. HDFC Bank and Bharti Airtel emerged as the biggest gainers, in line with firm

trend in equities. The top gainers from the packwere Reliance Industries, HDFC Bank, Bharti Airtel, ICICI Bank, Infosys and Bajaj

Finance. Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), State Bank of India, Hindustan Unilever, and ITC faced erosion from their valuation together losing Rs 1.15

lakh crore from their valuation. The market valuation of HDFC Bank jumped Rs 32,639.98 crore to Rs 13,25,090.58 crore while the ICICI Bankwent up Rs 1,384.81 crore to Rs 8,87,632.56 crore.

However, the market valuation of the largest public sector lender, State Bank of India, declined Rs 25,926.02

Bharti Airtel added Rs 31,003.44 crore taking its valuation to Rs 9,56,205.34 crore.

crore to Rs 6,57,789.12 crore.

Infosys rallied Rs 21,114.32 crore to Rs 7,90,074.08 crore and that of TCS dipped Rs 16,064.31 crore to Rs 14,57,854.09 crore. The valuation of ITC tanked

Rs 39,474.45 crore to Rs 5,39,129.60 crore and the mcap of Hindustan Unilever tumbled Rs 33,704.89 crore to Rs 5,55,361.14 crore.

The mcap of Bajaj Finance

surged Rs 29,032.08 crore to Rs 5,24,312.82 crore while the mcap of Reliance Industries climbed Rs 2,977.12 crore to Rs 17,14,348.66 crore.

On Friday, the stock market remained indifferent to the RBI's rate cut as the Sensex and Nifty closed lower for the third consecutive session.

At close, the Sensex declined by 0.25 per cent, shedding 197.97 points to settle at 77,860, while the Nifty slipped 0.18 per cent, down 43.4 points to 23,559.95.

### Piyush Goyal slams states seeking Central funds on basis of tax contribution to prosper, the eight states North constituency was speakyears, used to calculate the in the total net proceeds of "income distance" which

MUMBAI, 9 FEBRUARY

Union Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal has come out strongly against the demand of some states seeking allocation of central funds in proportion to the taxes that they contribute to the Central

Criticising this approach as "petty thinking and unfortunate," the minister highlighted the Prime Minister's view that if the country has

**RITWIK MUKHERJEE** 

KOLKATA, 9 FEBRUARY

The Ayurvedic products market in India, which was valued

at Rs 748.5 billion in 2023, is

growing fast, driven by

increasing health conscious-

ness and demand for natural

remedies. The market is

expected to reach \$16.27 bil-

lion by 2028. By 2032, the

market is projected to reach

Rs 3,207.6 billion, exhibiting

a growth rate (CAGR) of 17.55

per cent during 2023-2032.

However, these figures are

not something that is driving

Kolkata's home-grown

ayurvedic brand, and more

importantly, the only tradi-

tional ayurvedic family in

eastern India. Parampara

may be one of the strongest

ayurvedic brands, but the

founder is driven more by

the urge and challenge to

take Ayurveda, the oldest

medical science derived from

of the Northeast and eastern Indian states of Bihar, West Bengal, Odisha and Jharkhand must develop as well.

"There are some states like Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Telangana which say they should get back the amount of taxes they have paid. There can't be more petty thinking than this. There cannot also be anything more unfortunate than this," Goyal lamented.

The MP from Mumbai

the Veda (more particularly

Atharva Veda), out of the

hands of some uneducated,

fake practitioners and self-

styled beauticians. His mis-

sion is to uphold the rich

legacy of his forefathers while

embracing the advancements

of modern medicine and

establishing Ayurveda as an

authentic branch of medical

science with a holistic, curative

current generation scion of

one of the oldest surviving

traditional Ayurveda families,

whose legacy spans over five

centuries, rooted in a royal

lineage of Ayurvedic practi-

tioners dedicated to the art

of natural healing, minces

no words in saying, "We are

not bothered so much about

the market size, the brand

positioning, or for that matter,

the bottom line. We are striv-

ing relentlessly to establish

Ayurveda as an authentic

Dr Debabrata Sen, the

method of treatment.

ing at the 'Rashtriya Ekatmata Yatra 2025', an event here organised by the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad and the Students Experience in Inter-State Living initiative

> on Saturday. In an oblique reference to the previous Uddhav Thackeray-led Maha Vikas Aghadi government, the minister also said, "It is unfortunate that some leaders of the earlier government which was there for two-and-a-half

Parampara seems well set to turn Purulia village into a model ayurvedic village

Swadeshi treatment method

too, where any disease can

be cured except where emer-

gency surgical or intravenous

interventions are required."

Parampara Ayurved, there-

fore, Dr Sen claims, is where

tradition meets modernity

in a harmonious blend of

timeless wisdom and con-

temporary practices. Sen's

ancestors treated the likes

of the Tagore family, the

family of Acharya Prafulla

tax paid by Mumbai and Maharashtra and demand that they should get back this amount in Central funds."

However, there is no need to worry now as the present BJP-led government in Maharashtra is very sensitive towards Northeast India, Goval said.

The Centre distributes funds to the states in accordance with the recommendations of the Finance Commission on the share of states

Chandra Roy, and many

other famous families of Ben-

felicitated by several national

and international organisa-

tions including Jadavpur

University (for his work on

"Ayurvedic Drug Develop-

ment Research"), by Rajib

Gandhi Memorial Ayurvedic

Medical College & Hospital

"APARAJITO DEBABRATA"),

by Ayurvedic Doctors Forum,

W.B. ("DHANWANTARI

AWARD"), and by Professor

P.K. Prajapati, Vice-Chan-

cellor, Dr Sarvapalli Rad-

hakrishnan AyurCHARAKA

SAMMANA AWARD"), is now

burning the midnight oil to

turn and upgrade a far-flung

village near Maan Bazar in

Purulia into a model ayurvedic

village. Purulia is a natural

habitat of flora and fauna

with wild genes. "I am also

conducting various training

programmes across the length

Dr Sen, who has been

gal over the years.

all taxes, including corporation tax, personal income tax, and central GST.

The 15th Finance Commission (FC) recommended that 41 per cent of the central government's divisible tax pool be allocated to states for the period 2021-26. This is

known as vertical devolution. The 15th FC also recommended criteria for distributing the funds among states, known as horizontal devolution. These criteria included

and breadth of the state.

There is a huge lack of aware-

ness. Even today, very few

would know that ayurvedic

treatments cover eight

branches/disciplines and it

offers eight types of treatments

(Astango). One cannot just

source some plants and make

ayurvedic products or med-

icines. The plant will have

to have wild genes, or one

needs to do genetic engi-

neering for the highest level

of efficacy. We currently have

over 200 products, which

are sold through 12 compa-

ny-owned outlets and e-

commerce platforms, and

all have such wild genes or

are genetically engineered.

We also have a state-of-the-

art laboratory," said Dr Sen.

top herbal products exported

from India include: Ashwa-

gandha, Turmeric, Ginger,

Neem, Triphala, Tulsi (Holy

Basil), Brahmi, and Shatavari.

Interestingly, some of the

reflects the difference of a state's income from the state with the highest per capita income, the size of the population of the state as per the 2011 Census and the share of dense forest in each

The Union Government released tax devolution of Rs 1,73,030 crore to State Governments on January 10 this year, up from the devolution of Rs 89,086 crore in December 2024.

# RBI opens NDS-OM platform to boost retail participation in G-Sec market

**STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE** MUMBAI, 8 FEBRUARY

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has issued a release announcing that it will allow non-bank brokers registered with the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) to access the negotiated dealing system-order matching (NDS-OM) platform, which is an anonymous system for trading government securities (G-Secs) in the secondary market.

"The RBI will expand access to the NDS-OM platform, the electronic trading platform for secondary market transactions in government securities, to non-bank brokers registered with the SEBI in order to enhance access for retail investors," RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra said, according to the

The RBI move is intended to expand retail participation



in the government bond market.

Earlier in October 2024, the SEBI had proposed a consultation paper outlining a framework where stock brokers could engage in trading of G-Secs through a separate business unit.

Access to the NDS-OM system is expected to boost retail participation since stock brokers serve a large number of retail clients.

## Institute of Internal Auditors engaging with SEBI for larger role, wider acceptance

**STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE** KOLKATA. 9 FEBRUARY

The Institute of International Auditors, India, Calcutta Chapter (IIA), is engaging with the SEBI to explore various ways of how the capital market regulator and the institute work together to ensure corporate governance and bring in more effective ways of meeting compliances, said Kallol Mitra, President,

IIA, India, Calcutta Chapter. "This is a very early stage. And let's see how it goes. But since SEBI is the market regulator, certified internal auditors may have an important role to play in the whole scheme of things," said Mitra, on the sidelines of the 32nd Annual Conference of IIA, India, Calcutta Chapter.

The Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) has already recognised the profession of internal auditors. Recognitions have also come from a number of state-run organisations. All these assume significance in the wake of the fact that corporate governance and compliance are two of the most critical components in today's context, he said.

The 32nd Annual Conference delved at length on the topical issue of 'AI and Internal Audit (IA): Boon or Bane'.



"Artificial Intelligence is nothing new, not even in the context of internal audit, Adoption

of AI in internal audit has more advantages than one. It has certain challenges and risks as well, with regard to data privacy, cyber security and so on. However there is no alternative to adopting and using AI," said Burzin Dubash.

Dubash said that the institute had recently come out with a guideline or roadmap for AI adoption, after taking the views of all stakeholders. It is still evolving and will continue to evolve. The guidelines cover a wide ranging where one needs to be extra cautious and so on. The institute has also been conducting various training programmes - physically and through webinars across the length and breadth of the country. More than 120 webinars have been conducted already.

issues - the process, method-

ology, advantages, challenges,

At present, the institute, through its six chapters, has as many as 7,000 internal

auditors. IIA is burning midnight oil to take this number of 10,000 by 2030. "But even then, there will be a demandsupply gap in the profession of internal auditors in the country. The apprehension over AI taking away jobs and replacing internal auditors can be ruled out altogether. AI will have to be backed sufficiently by human interventions and human intelligence," said Dubash.



The clamour for the ouster of Manipur CM is no longer confined to the ranks of the 10 revolting Kuki MLAs and the Congress. It is now coming out in the open with BJP Legislators including Cabinet Ministers openly voicing their demand for it. It had been a hectic week in February. Firstly, the Union Home Minister summoned the Speaker of the Manipur Legislative Assembly Thokchom

Satyabrata Singh for a one-to-one talk. Normally it is unusual for the Union Home Minister wishing to speak to the speaker as he is in no way concerned with the question of Law and Order, which has been almost totally absent in the State for the past 21 months now. But Manipur is an unusual state where the Constitution has been shelved for nearly two years now and the Chief Minister had openly declared that the question of Law and Order in the hills areas of his State "now lies in the hands of Amit Shah ji

and that he is occupied with that question only in the valley or 10 per cent of the total area of What prompted the Shah-Satyabrata summit

must have been the forthcoming Assembly session of the State scheduled from 10 February. Already sounding the war drums, in the form of a no-confidence motion to be tabled seeking the removal of CM Biren Singh, this was first announced by the Congress which then had only five MLAs, five short of the requisite number to set the motion rolling. Then came the announcement by Meghalaya Chief Minister and President of the National People's Party (NPP) which had six MLAs and was supporting the Biren Singh led BJP Government that they were withdrawing support. Even though the formal split was announced, at least four NPP legislators continued to hobnob with CM Biren attending his conclaves and meetings. Then the Congress petitioned the Speaker to the effect that these four should be booked under the Anti-Defection Law under the 10th Schedule of the Constitution, resulting in the speaker announcing that the six NPP legislators would be seated in the opposition bench. This ensures the requisite number for the no-confidence motion. Prior to the NPP the Kuki Peoples'

seven BJP legislators, including two Cabinet ministers, have fled Imphal since trouble erupted on 3 May 2023 and although Biren Singh has not dropped the two Kuki ministers from his Cabinet and they continue to hold office, enjoying the perks, they have led the chorus for Biren Singh's ouster. They had also failed at attending the last Assembly sessions at Imphal citing personal safety and security concerns. This will mean that they may not be present physically as and when the vote of no confidence comes up on the floor of the House and by that account bypass the whip of the Party if and when issued. Amit Shah's attempt was not to rub the Speaker on the wrong side when the crucial motion set into motion. Satyabrata returned home and hinted at a Ministerial reshuffle in Biren Singh's Cabinet, something which the Chief Minister ought to have said himself.

Earlier in the beginning of the month a delegation of five Congress MLAs led by former Chief Minister Okram Ibobi had called on newly inducted Governor Ajay Bhalla and asked him to rein in CM Biren Singh who had earlier in a statement passed at the BJP HQs in Imphal had warned of dire consequences to anyone supporting the no-confidence motion against him. He had used his usual rhetoric this time to the extent that the legislators who stood against him would not be able to live in the houses as the people/stormtroopers would hound them out. Earlier Lourenbam Rameshwar, a BJP MLA and a known critic of Biren Singh had also issued a statement to the effect that "he too is an elected legislator representing a constituency like him and that mere physical threats will not be able to solve the present political crisis and administer the State".

Biren Singh is known to have utilised the services of non-state actors to intimidate his adversaries and critics. One MLA had her house raked with gunfire to keep her quiet. This writer also had his house fired upon thrice for having first pointed out the role of his mistress being elected with the help of armed Kuki militants during the 2022 elections. The second was for having said that "Biren is not Manipur and Manipur is not Biren" and the choice before the people of the State was to either save Biren or

is under a ceasefire agreement with the Governments of India and Manipur, armed with machine guns stormed into the house and at gunpoint asked me to delete a post on social media in which I had asked as to whether two Meitei boys earlier abducted by the Kukis will be exchanged for 11 Kuki militants then lodged in the Imphal Jail. The exchange did take place two days hence but pointing it out in public was embarrassing for him though.

Also, the Speaker's tribunal has begun hearing on the disqualification notice served on five legislators belonging to the Janata Dal (United) who jumped ship and joined the BJP/Biren bandwagon earlier in 2022. They were six MLAs elected on JD(U) ticket but unfortunately, one was left behind so it could not be deemed as a merger and hence came under the purview of the 10th Schedule of the Constitution. The Speaker is said to have concluded his hearing and is said to have kept the judgement in reserve to be announced on the eve of the Assembly session on 10 February and informed sources have indicated that they have been disqualified. The lone JD(U) MLA left was also seated in the opposition bench but after the JD(U) high command had issued a statement stating that the JD(U) is still a part of the Biren Singh coalition, it is still not known where he will be seated when the House meets on 10 February.

The drama took a high voltage turn when known Biren detractor and Panchayati Raj and Rural Development Minister Yumnam Khemchand was asked to report in Delhi by HM Amit Shah on 4 February. The very next day CM Biren Singh also flew to Delhi in the afternoon. Then at around 7.30 pm, three more ministers and four MLAs followed him in a chartered flight all seeking an audience with Shah. There, in the capital, Amit Shah refused to meet any of them and instead deputed Sambit Patri MP and BJP's Manipur in charge. Patra first met Biren Singh and then Khemchand and MLA Thokchom Radheshyam. Patra had apparently tried to convince the latter two to remain calm until the end of the February session stating that the "Centre has taken a decision to change the leadership after ". Both Khemchand and Radheshyam

however listened and demanded immediate

The aim of the urgent summons was to prevent a collapse of the Government on the floor of the Assembly when the vote of no-confidence gets placed as there are apparently a large number of BJP MLAs apart from the seven Kuki BJP legislators who are hounding Biren's blood. The grapevine has it that out of the total number of 32 BJP MLAs elected in the 2022 elections two-thirds of them are against Biren Singh and they are also ready to place a no-confidence motion against him in which case it would lead to an embarrassment of the BJP

across the country. Biren Singh has been a national embarrassment all through his second tenure as Chief Minister of Manipur. His shifting reasons behind the ongoing turmoil which has left more than 250 people dead, over 60,000 people rendered homeless and thousands of houses burnt to the ground. He had first blamed it on the Manipur High Courts' directive to his government to send the report to the Centre on the question of granting scheduled tribe status to the Meiteis pending for the last 13 years to be the cause behind. Then he said it was the result of his war on drugs in which the poppy growers responded as narco-terrorists. Then he said that they were armed illegal immigrants backed by foreign powers out to protect the 900 illegal and unauthorised villages set up by them in the state. Then he said it was a result of the ethnic conflict between the Kukis and the Meiteis, in sync with the statement passed by HM Amit Shah to that

Stripped of his position as the Chairman of the Unified Command the body, comprising the army, the paramilitary forces, and the state police overseeing the Law and Order situation in the State and replaced by a retired IPS officer, he pleaded his helplessness openly. He had publicly stated that even as the Chief Minister, the State and Central intelligence agencies in the State have not been providing any inputs to him for the last 15 months. He then nudged some of his pet civil society organisations to put pressure on the Governor to have the Chairmanship of the Unified Command restored to him. Then he made a public apology to the public seeking forgiveness for his inability to front, the action has shifted from the foothills of the

Manipur valley to the Indo-Myanmar border front. There in the Kabaw valley of the Sagaing Divi-

sion of Myanmar bordering Kamjong District of Manipur, a six-day-long battle had raged from 25 January last month. Pitted on one side was a combined force of the various Manipuri insurgent groups and against them was the Kuki National Army(Burma) or KNA(B) backed by the People's Defence Force (PDF) fighting against the Myanmarese Military Junta. The Myanmarese government had apparently used air strikes against the PDF-KNA(B) combined force but the ground battle was carried out by the Manipuri forces. Some 30 KN(B) cadres were killed and the Manipuri side lost four cadres. One Captain and a private of the UNLF(Koireng) group, one cadre belonging to the People's Liberation Army(PLA) and one belonging to the Kanglei Yaowol Kanna Lup( KYKL) were killed in action and publicly mourned in the State with proxy funerals using 'Pangon' wood to substitute the body. Many of the slain Kukis were left strewn around and the stench became unbearable in the vicinity; the Manipuri insurgents cremated them in a mass funeral pyre.But what takes the cake is the fact that following their failure to meet HM Amit Shah, CM Biren Singh, accompanied by the rest of the Ministers and MLAs returned to Imphal but not before taking a dip at Prayagraj in the Maha Kumbh Mela there in Allahabad. It is not known whether they took the dip at the Triveni asking for forgiveness from the Gods for atonement of their sins committed or were seeking a divine intervention to save their positions or not. However a dip in the Holy Ganga or not, time is running out fast for CM Biren Singh, the man who will go on record for having administered the Indian State of Manipur under the Constitution of India with the help of Non-State actors. A Banana Republic almost.

The writer is a senior journalist at The Statesman

## Rider through the world

### **NAVA THAKURIA**

he is brave, tough, and energetic—one can describe Meenakshi Das, an Assamese bike rider, like this when one listens to her stories of solo adventurous journey across 64 countries. The 41-year-old mother of a high school-going daughter went with the mission to create a world record, and Meenakshi has done it. She now becomes the first solo two-wheeler rider to travel through all these countries almost within a year. Carrying the national flag and Asomiya Gamocha with her, the fitness trainer by profession roamed around various Asian, Arabian and European localities, canvassing her mission to empower women through adventure sports and tourism.

Addressing a small gathering in Guwahati recently, the passionate biker revealed a number of emotional stories involving unknown individuals who supported her during the expedition, revealing the everlasting humanity. Meenakshi observed that many people on the globe, while chasing their materialistic dreams, were left in loneliness.



She could encounter many personalities and sense a feeling of deep pain among them. Naively, she emerged as somebody's daughter, sister, friend and a ray of hope for the women; aspiring freedom from diktats imposed by the society and authorities. She strongly believes that humanity is still alive.

Meenakshi fondly remembers the support extended by Indian diplomats, non-resident Indians (Assamese), and many foreign nationals irrespective of their nationalities and religious faiths. In reality, she completed her mission with no official sponsorship from the government, but the patronage extended by kindhearted individuals during her 371 days of rigorous venture helped her. Some countries she could not enter due to visa problems and internal conflicts that surfaced there, but Meenakshi wants to make it happen. She even nurtures the dream of riding the entire American continent, adding she wants to travel wherever there is a landmass.

Her landmark journey started from her home city of Guwahati on 17 Decem-

ber 2023. Riding a 400 cc motorcycle with no modification to her bike, she covered Nepal before arriving in Mumbai, from where she flew to Dubai to march forward with the mission. Till her solo return journey culminated on 22 December 2024, Meenakshi covered around 68,000 kilometres. It was a poignant moment when she arrived back to her tiny family with a supportive husband taking care of their 14-year-old daughter

and an ailing mother. As a precaution, I avoided riding in night hours and usually travelled 10 hours a day, covering nearly 500 km. She took a proper diet and started the day with a warm-up in the morning hours to keep her fit. Even faced with physical problems because of her age, Meenakshi did not bow down, and hence she could overcome many other problems like extreme weather (rain, snow, sandstorms), mechanical problems in her bike, and even a road accident in Armenia on the way to Georgia. Her cell phone was not augmented

with any translation app, and sometimes she had to manage body language with admirers (who could not understand English or Hindi/Assamese).

Meenakshi faced visa problems due to political turmoil and restricted guidelines in Ukraine, Belarus, Syria, Lebanon, Oman, Iraq, Tibet and Myanmar. But she managed to enter and explore the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Iran, Turkey, Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia, Croatia, Italy, the Netherlands, France, England, Norway, Portugal, Kazakhstan, Russia, China, Vietnam, Indonesia, Singapore,

Recently Meenakshi was felicitated by Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangha's Kharghuli Shakha of Guwahati Mahanagar at a small function, where she divulged about her meeting with Hindu Swayamsevaks in London, who extended help during her stay in the UK. She was also supported by the RSS volunteers in Maharashtra. Meenakshi visited Nagpur and stayed in a hostel, specially run for the girls of northeast India, where she came to know about various welfare activities of the RSS. Admitting that she had little idea about the socio-cultural organisation promoting Hindu nationalism in India and influencing millions of Indians living inside and outside the country, she now possesses a high

regard for RSS Karyakartas. Meenakshi used to document her adventurous journey through video blogs, which are appreciated by hundreds of thousands of viewers around the world. She opined that a biking culture had grown in India lately, which should be welcomed. But at the same time, she warned that the making of stunts and racing by the youngsters on the busy roads cannot be appreciated, as their actions may distract as well as annoy others. She proposed specially designed tracks for that kind of biking activity. Soon to be included in the Limca Book of Records ~ an annual reference book documenting world records created by the Indians~a rejuvenated Meenakshi also aims to include her name in the Guinness World Records as a solo rider travelling through the largest number of countries in the coming days.

The writer is a Guwahati-based special representative of The Statesman

## Assam Rifles champions millet awareness with exhibition in Shillong

ABHIJIT DEB

n an initiative to promote sustainable agriculture and nutritious food choices, Assam Rifles, under the ministry of home affairs, organised a millets exhibition at its Laitkor base recently.

The event, designed to highlight the immense potential of millets as a staple in contemporary diets, drew enthusiastic participation from Assam Rifles personnel, their families and members of the pub-

The exhibition was inaugurated by Lt Gen Vikas Lakhera, AVSM, SM, director general of Assam Rifles, who emphasised the importance of dietary diversity and the role of millets in ensuring food security.

A key highlight of the event was a lecture by Dr Khadar Valli, Padma Shri awardee and widely known as the "Millets Man of India".

He provided an in-depth perspective on the health benefits of incorporating millets into daily meals, explaining how they help combat lifestyle diseases such as diabetes, obesity, and cardiovascular ailments. His address underscored the need for a shift from heavily processed grains to indigenous, nutrient-rich alternatives like millets.

The exhibition featured an impressive lineup of stalls from government bodies, private enterprises and startups showcasing a wide array of millet-based products. Prominent participants included the National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India (NAFED), National Cooperative Consumers Federation of India Limited (NCCF), Pansari Industries, Marbin Food Processing, Kodo Bazar Federation Farmer Producer Company Ltd, HQ Inspired (a Shillongbased startup) and APRINS (a Guwahati-based startup).

From traditional millet-based dishes to modern, ready-to-eat products, the exhibition highlighted the versatility of these ancient grains. Visitors were treated to samples of innovative millet-based snacks, bakery items, breakfast cereals, and beverages, demonstrating how millets can seamlessly integrate into modern diets without compromising taste.

Experts in nutrition and agriculture held discussions on the critical role of

millets in sustainable farming and their potential to address food security challenges. They highlighted that millets require minimal water, are naturally pest-resistant, and thrive in arid con-

rice and wheat. Nutritionally, millets are a powerhouse of essential vitamins, minerals, fibre, and protein, offering a healthier substitute for highly processed grains. Pearl millet, sorghum, foxtail millet, barnyard millet, and finger millet were among the varieties showcased, with detailed explanations on their distinct nutritional benefits.

ditions, making them an eco-friendly

alternative to water-intensive crops like

The event aligns with the Government of India's broader initiative to promote millets, especially following the United Nations' declaration of 2023 as the International Year of Millets (IYM). This global recognition

tioning India as a key player in the

global millet market. Assam Rifles' involvement in this movement signifies the armed force's commitment to not just national security but also public health and sustainable food systems. By hosting such an exhibition, Assam Rifles has taken an active role in spreading awareness and encouraging millet consumption among the

The Millets Exhibition was a platform for government agencies, entrepreneurs, and farmers to connect and exchange

masses.

Participants left with a renewed appreciation for millets, recognising their potential as a nutritious, climate-

resilient, and economically viable crop.

With growing awareness about millets and their benefits, such initiatives are expected to gain momentum, reinforcing





### 'IT WAS A GREAT FEELING'

Former West Indies opener and T20 World Cup winner Lendl Simmons expressed his excitement about opening the innings alongside Shikhar Dhawan for Delhi Royals in the Legend 90 League. "It was a great feeling opening with Shikhar Dhawan. He's a top-quality player, and we complemented each other well at the crease. This Legend 90 League is a fantastic platform to relive competitive cricket, and it's even better to have secured a win for Delhi Royals," Simmons was quoted in a release from Legend 90 League.

NEW DELHI MONDAY, 10 FEBRUARY 2025 The States man Postal Reg. No. DL (ND)-II/6088/2022/-23-24

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### **THUMBNAILS**

Wolves brush past Blackburn Rovers with 2-0 victory: Wolverhampton Wanderers delivered a commanding performance to progress to the fifth round of the Emirates FA Cup, defeating Blackburn Rovers 2-0 at **Ewood Park on Sunday. Two** quick-fire goals just before halftime sealed the win, with **Joao Gomes and Matheus** Cunha both finding the net in under two minutes. The visitors began the match brightly, with Cunha having the best chances in the opening stages. He forced Blackburn keeper Balazs Toth into two good saves within the first five minutes. However, it was Blackburn who started to assert themselves, with Augustus Kargbo firing just over the bar and Dominic Hyam having a goal ruled out for offside.

Kolkata beat Chennai by 9 wickets in ISPL Season 2: Tilgers of Kolkata dominated with both bat and ball to overpower Chennai Singams by a massive margin of nine wickets in an Indian Street Premier League (ISPL) clash at the Dadoji Kondadev Stadium here on Saturday. Chasing a target of 66 runs, the Tiigers broke little sweat as they recovered from the early dismissal of opener Sarfraz Khan to chase down the required runs with four overs to spare. Opener and skipper Thomas Dias led from the front, by top-scoring with a hurricane innings of 30 runs off 16 balls while Fardeen Kazi scored an undefeated 23 off 15.

## 2nd ODI: Rohit's ton helps India beat England by four wickets

Rohit's 32nd ODI century and Gill's 60 help India chase down 305 with 33 balls remaining and take an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three-match series

**AGENCIES** 

**CUTTACK, 9 FEBRUARY** 

aptain Rohit Sharma broke a long lean run with the bat by hitting a sparkling 119 and guided India to a four-wicket win over England in the second ODI at the Barabati Stadium on Sunday.

Rohit's masterly 32nd ODI century, laced with 12 fours and seven sixes, along with Shubman Gill's 60 and handy knocks from Shreyas Iyer (44) and Axar Patel (41 not out) helped India chase down 305 with 33 balls remaining and take an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three-match series.

But seeing a rampaging Rohit getting back to his best self with the bat must have brought in tons of relief to him and many important personnel in Indian cricket. It was a knock where Rohit was in his usual flow with the bat his wrists for six and carving -the free-flowing shots, good Saqib Mahmood for a maxiuse of wrists and impeccable mum. timing-all combining to give



Chasing 305, Rohit got his trademark short-arm jab

turn – flicking Atkinson off over outside edge for a bound- point for another boundary slow down after reaching his ets

After the power-play ended, Gill slog-swept Rashid for six, before short arm-jabbing and pulling Mark Wood four boundary. After Iyer whipped boundaries. When Rashid was back, Gill kept finding extra cover fence twice for boundaries before getting a splendid 15th ODI fifty. With Rohit dispatching Gus Atkinson for for 119 off 90 balls. four and six respectively, followed by Gill pulling and Iyer and Axar Patel slowed glancing Jamie Overton for boundaries, the chase was hitting the boundaries. But already looking like a oneway traffic for India. But Overton bounced back by getting rid of Gill by executing an off-run-out for 44, which began stump yorker to perfection, a slight wobble for India. thus ending the 136-run opening partnership. Rashid joined trying to pull a short ball from the wicket-taker's party by Overton, but gave a glove getting a ball to turn away at edge behind to Salt. Hardik the last moment and caught Pandya took two fours off the feather edge of Virat Kohli's Atkinson before pulling the bat, which was detected by pacer straight to mid-wicket. UltraEdge on review, leading But Axar and Jadeja ensured to the batter being dismissed India got over the line, as the After a floodlight failure for five. After Shreyas Iyer got latter hit a lovely inside-out over the long-off fence held off the mark against Overton, cover drive for four to get an From the other end, Shub-up play for 35 minutes, Rohit Rohit swept Rashid for four emphatic win for the hosts' the fans' their money's worth. man Gill was pristine – playing re-started in imperious fashion and dispatched Overton for - glancing Mahmood over six, before getting his century in 49.5 overs (Joe Root 69, going by getting a thick edge and flick over the in-field to fine leg for four, and followed by dancing down the pitch to Ben Duckett 65; Ravindra flying over backward point collect two boundaries. Rohit it up by smacking a six over hit the leg-spinner over mid- Jadeja 3-35) lost to India 308/6 for four off Gus Atkinson in used his hands well to hoist long-on. He welcomed Adil off for a six and bring up his in 44.3 overs (Rohit Sharma the second over. From there, Mahmood over long-off for Rashid with a sweep going 32nd ODI century in a non- 119, Shubman Gill 60; Jamie Rohit's innings took a sublime six, before Gill got one to fly for four, before cutting through chalant style. Rohit didn't Overton 2-27) by four wick-

century – reverse-sweeping to get his fifty in just 30 balls. and glancing Rashid for fours, before carving Wood over backward point for another and pulled twice to get two fours and a six off Wood, Rohit toe-ended a slog to short midwicket off a full toss from Liam Livingstone and departed

After Rohit's departure, down a bit, with the latter on the last ball of the 37th over, a mix-up in search for a second run resulted in Iver's

KL Rahul fell for 10 after

**Brief Scores:** England 304

## WPL 2025: Deepti tolead UP Warriorz



**AGENCIES** 

**NEW DELHI, 9 FEBRUARY** 

India's off-spin all-rounder Deepti Sharma has been named as new captain of the UP Warriorz ahead of the 2025 season of the Women's Premier February 14.

Australia skipper Alyssa Healy, injury. Under Alyssa's captaincy, UP Warriorz finished third in WPL 2023, before vice-captain in the past and making a league stage exit in has taken up the leadership the 2024 edition.

making her the fifth-highest tain.

run-getter in the competition, while taking 10 wickets, including a hat-trick against Delhi Capitals at the Arun Jaitley Stadium.

It also made Deepti the first Indian bowler to take a hat-trick in WPL history. Deepti League (WPL), starting from was recently named in ICC's 2024 Women's T20I Team of Deepti, 27, will be taking the Year, alongside India teamover the captaincy duties from mates Smriti Mandhana and Richa Ghosh, who will be who was ruled out of WPL turning out for defending 2025 due to a recurring foot champions Royal Challengers Bengaluru in WPL 2025.

Deepti has been India's mantle at the domestic level. The Warriorz signed Deepti She also captained Velocity for Rs 2.6 crore during the to a runners-up finish in the inaugural auction. In the 2023 fourth and final season of the season, she went on to take Women's T20 Challenge in nine wickets while scoring 90 2022. But captaining UP Warruns with the bat. In WPL riorzinWPL2025 is unarguably 2024, she amassed 295 runs, her biggest challenge as a cap-

## ICC Chairman Jay Shah congratulates Karunaratne for outstanding career



### **AGENCIES**

DUBAI, 9 FEBRUARY

International Cricket Council (ICC) Chairman Jay Shah congratulated Dimuth Karunaratne for an outstanding international career and wished him all success in the years to come.

The 36-year-old, who came  $to\,be\,known\,as\,a\,Test\,specialist$ in an era of proliferating limited-overs games, retired from international cricket after the second match of their ICC the ICC, I would like to con-100 Test matches for the island nation.

"Dimuth has had a very a statement.

"His commitment has been will miss him. On behalf of Atapattu.

Karunaratne, a solid left-hander, made his international debut against England in an **ODI at Manchester in** 2011. He aggregated 7,222 runs with 16 centuries in Test cricket and 1,316 runs in 50 ODIs with one century.

World Test Championship gratulate him for an outstandseries against Australia in ing career and wish him all Galle, the same ground on the best for the future. I hope which he made his Test debut he continues to contribute to in 2012. He went on to play the game in the years to come, using his experience of playing in different countries. Karunaratne, a solid left-

fine career during which he hander, made his international excelled as a batter in the debut against England in an most traditional format of the ODI at Manchester in 2011. game, becoming only the sev- He aggregated 7,222 runs with enth from his country to feature 16 centuries in Test cricket in 100 Tests," Jay Shah said in and 1,316 runs in 50 ODIs with one century.

All his 16 centuries came second to none and he has as opener, a record for most been a great ambassador of centuries by a Sri Lankan the game. I am sure fans of opener that he holds jointly Test cricket the world over with former captain Marvan

## Sindhu to miss Badminton Asia Mixed Team Championships due to hamstring injury

SUNRISE

### **AGENCIES**

**NEW DELHI, 9 FEBRUARY** 

Two-time Olympic medallist shuttler PV Sindhu will not be part of India's squad for the Badminton Asia Mixed Team Championships (BAMTC) to be played in Qingdao, China, from February 11-16. Sindhu revealed that she sustained a hamstring injury that will take longer to recover than expected.

"It is with a heavy heart that I share I won't be traveling with the team for BAMTC women's singles charge once and Macau. The team will 2025. While training on the 4th in Guwahati, I felt a twinge in my hamstring. Despite my efforts to push through with heavy taping for our country, an MRI has revealed that my recovery will take slightly longer than I initially expected," Sindhu wrote on X.

very best. I will be cheering India's No. 2 in the world MR Arjun, Sathish Kumar K. from the sidelines," she added. medal in the previous edition be named for Sindhu. of the BAMTC, with Sindhu

again this year. Open, Sindhu had emphasised

the year was to remain injury-With Sindhu unavailable,

the responsibility for women's singles is likely to fall on noy, Satwiksairaj Rankireddy, "Wishing the team all the Malvika Bansod, currently rankings. It remains uncertain India secured a bronze whether a replacement will out due to injury), Malvika

playing a key role in the squad. Group D of BAMTC, alongside Tanisha Crasto, Adya Variy-She was expected to lead the 2023 runners-up South Korea ath.

begin their campaign against However, ahead of the India Macau on February 12, followed by a crucial encounter that one of her main goals for against South Korea on February 13 at the Conson Gymnasium in Qingdao, China.

India squad

Men: Lakshya Sen, HS Pran-Chirag Shetty, Dhruv Kapila,

Women: PV Sindhu (ruled Bansod, Gayatri Gopichand, India have been placed in Treesa Jolly, Ashwini Ponnappa,

### Mbappe scores equaliser for **Real Madrid in Atletico draw**

### **AGENCIES**

MADRID, 9 FEBRUARY

Atletico Madrid in the derby in the area by Tchouameni played at the Santiago Bern- on Lino. After seeing it on the abeu and remain top of La monitor, the referee signaled Liga table. The visitors took for a penalty and Julian Alvarez the lead in the first half after made it 0-1 (34'). a penalty reviewed by the VAR

Real started building patient left post for his 23rd goal this passages of play, reaching the season. opponent's area. However, it but his strong left-footed shot copy of the previous move.

did not find the target. After the half-hour mark, De Burgos Bengoetxea alerted Soto Grado Real Madrid drew against viathe VAR to review an action

After the break, Real started and converted by Julian Alvarez, very strongly and in the 50th but Mbappe made it 1-1 at minute made it 1-1. Rodrygo the start of the second half. made a strong run to the Real had numerous chances byline, cutting back for Bellingto win but was thwarted by ham to shoot. Gimenez blocked an inspired Oblak in the Atletico the shot but it dropped to goal and the scoreboard didn't Mbappe, who controlled the ball right-footed inside the

Two minutes later he nearly was Atlético who fired the added a second following a first warning with Lino's 14th- great move by Vini Jr. down minute deflected shot from the left flank. The Brazilian's outside the area. Hosts cross was headed by Bellingresponded immediately with ham, who crashed the ball a long-range shot from Rodrygo against the crossbar. Ancelotti's that went over. In the 18th teamwere enjoying their best minute, it was the turn of Vini spell, again coming close to Jr. from the edge of the area, making it 2-1 with a carbon

## FIH Hockey Pro League: Netherlands come back from 3 goals down to snatch shootout victory



The curtain came down on

the Sydney leg of the FIH Hockey Pro League with two high-quality matches, but there was disappointment for the passionate home fans. In the men's tournament, it was reigning Olympic gold medallists the Netherlands who got the better of current champions Australia, coming from three goals down to draw 4-4 before clinching a bonus point with quarter felt like a full 60 minutes of hockey with high-paced play ranging from end to end. There were a couple of early 1 lead. chances for both sides before

ahead in the 7th minute. much like the first, but things period. Jeremy Hayward with a 27th-minute drag flick, and Benjamin White scored



the final period.

a 3-1 shootout. The opening his first international goal for deep trouble, but they stepped Australia from a recycled up to deliver a thrilling finish. penalty corner to take the Pepijn van der Heijden started final minute to take the match hosts into half time with a 2- the fightback with a 47th- to a shootout, but Australia Both Australian goal scorers then put the Aussie goal under secutive day. The Dutchmen lead in the 17th minute with and they leave Sydney well Derck de Vilder put the Dutch repeated their success in the siege, shaving the post before leave Sydney with a slender third quarter, Hayward adding Miles Bukkens scored from a lead at the top of a congested The second quarter started a 32nd-minute drag and White recycled penalty corner in the men's table. grabbing a field goal in the 50th. A great save from Jed tightened in the middle of the 36th. That saw the Kookaburras Snowden kept the Kookaburras was awarded to Pepijn van corner variation to the second analysis of the game, we precarrying a 4-1 lead and tremen- ahead with just six minutes der Heijden who said, "It was castle, working the ball back pared very well, so in the end equalised for the Kookaburras dous momentum through to remaining, but the Dutch were a tough game. I mean, we across the top of the circle to we stayed calm, so we held at full steam and equalised started good. Then when it the injector for an easy finish. the ball and took care of the

Heijden drag. Snowden made another excellent save in the minute drag flick. The Dutch fell short for the second con-

fourth quarter we played really good."

some really good chances

a penalty corner deflection clear at the top of the log. by Hao Guoting from outside The Netherlands were in with a 57th-minute Van der went a little bit south we didn't Penny Squibb pulled one back ball until the end."

do our own thing, we started for the Hockeyroos with a to doubt a little bit. I think drag flick a minute later and after the third quarter, in the China led 3-1 at the break. The Chinese earned a cou-

ple of penalty corners in a In the final women's match dominant third quarter, but Olympic silver medallists China Aleisha Power did great work got the better of Australia with in the Hockeyroos' goal to a convincing 3-1 win to extend keep her team in contention. their clear lead at the top of Australia threatened more the table. Australia held the towards the end of the quarter, ascendancy throughout the but the famous Chinese defenopening quarter, creating sive structure was rock solid.

There was some possession without success. It was then for the Australians in the early China who snatched the lead stages of the final period, but in the dying seconds as Yu they struggled to create genuine Anhui knocked a floating ball attacking chances against a out of the air on the right tight Chinese unit. China assumed more and more con-The Chinese doubled their trol as the clock ran down,

Liu Chencheng was named the right post. Li Hong added China's player of the match The player of the match a third with a clever penalty and said, "We did thorough

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