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NIFTY 50	BSE SENSEX	Bitcoin INR	NIFTY FINANCIAL SERVICES	NIFTY BANK
23,559.95 ▼	77,860.19 ▼	8,610,619.38 ▲	23,539.75 ▲	50,158.85 ▲
-43.40 (-0.18%)	-197.97 (-0.25%)	+150,876.65 (+0.00%)	-120.65 (-0.51%)	-223.25 (-0.44%)

\$1 (USD)	€1 (EURO)	Gold (24k) 10gm	Silver (1 Kg)	Petrol/L	Diesel/L	LPG/14.2Kg
₹87.77 ▼	₹90.95 ▼	₹84,767.00 ▲	₹95,758.00 ▲	₹101.39	₹92.96	₹829.00
+0.21 (+0.25%)	+0.57 (+0.64%)	+1181.00 (+1.41%)	+49.00 (+0.05%)			

Odisha to implement Unified Pension Scheme

Bhubaneswar, Feb 8 (Representative)

Unified Pension Scheme (UPS)



The Odisha government has decided to implement the Unified Pension Scheme (UPS) for state government employees. The state cabinet, chaired by Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, has approved this scheme for employees who are eligible for a pension under the existing National Pension System (NPS). Addressing the media on Saturday, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi said as you may know, the Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved the Unified Pension Scheme on August 24, 2024. Taking into account requests from various service organizations to establish an appropriate pension system—considering factors such as compulsory pension, family pension, and inflation—the Union Government has further improved the existing NPS and introduced the Unified Pension Scheme, which is set to be implemented from April 1, 2025. Majhi said the state cabinet also decided to implement the unified pension scheme for the state government employees. The key features of the Unified Pension Scheme (UPS) are: For a minimum qualifying period of 25 years, employees will receive an assured pension of 50 percent of the average basic pay earned in the 12 months preceding retirement. Pension will be provided on a pro-rata basis for service periods ranging from a minimum of 10 years to 25 years. A family pension amounting to 60 percent of the pension drawn by the employee before death will be provided. ▶ **Cont. to Page-2**

BJP roars back to power in Delhi after 27 years with two-thirds majority

New Delhi, Feb 8 (Bureau)

Ending a 27-year wait, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Saturday returned to power in Delhi with a massive two-thirds majority, bringing the curtain down on the Aam Aadmi Party's 10-year rule. With one result yet to come in the 70-member Assembly, which had gone to the hustings on February 5, the BJP has already picked up 47 seats - touching a two-thirds majority. The AAP, on a dismal day when many of its stalwarts including party National

Convener Arvind Kejriwal lost out to less fancied BJP rivals, has won 22 seats. The BJP is ahead in the remaining seat. The Congress was completely routed yet again, failing to open their account for the third time in a row in the Delhi Assembly. Most of its candidates lost their security deposit. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who had led the BJP's campaign, hailed the party's landslide victory saying "Development wins and good governance triumphs". He emphasised, "We will leave no stone unturned for the all-round development of Delhi".

On the other hand, Kejriwal in a video message conceded defeat and vowed to play the role of a



constructive opposition. The former Chief Minister said, "I humbly accept the mandate of the people and also congratulate the BJP for their victory. I hope the BJP will fulfill all the promises they have

made for which the people of Delhi have voted them". The BJP previously won the Delhi Assembly polls in 1993 but lost power to the Congress in 1998, and since then has been in the opposition in the prestigious Union Territory, which comprises the National Capital Region. In today's vote count, BJP's Parvesh Verma turned out to be the giant slayer by defeating former Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal by a margin of over 4,000 votes from the New Delhi Assembly constituency. A mong other AAP bigshots, former Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia lost to Tarvinder Singh

Marwah of the BJP by a margin of over 600 votes, while incumbent Minister Saurabh Bharadwaj was humbled by BJP's Shikha Roy with a 3188-vote margin. The silver lining for AAP was the victories of Delhi Chief Minister Atishi and Minister Gopal Rai. After a snake and ladder game In Kalkaji, Atishi defeated her nearest rival BJP's Ramesh Bidhuri with a margin of 3521 and Gopal Rai won the Babarpur seat by over 18994 votes. Prominent BJP candidates who won their seats included Kapil Mishra from Karawal Nagar, Manjinder ▶ **Cont. to Page-2**

Good coordination between RBI, Govt on issues like growth, inflation: Sitharaman

New Delhi, Feb 8 (Mayank Nigam)

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Saturday said there is good coordination between the Government and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and no one encroaches on the other's territory and that is always good for the economy. "There has been good coordination between RBI and the Government. Whether it is growth or inflation, monetary and fiscal policies going in tandem would benefit the economy,"

Sitharaman said while addressing the media along with RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra post Union Budget and also RBI's policy



decision yesterday wherein the key policy (repo) rate was cut for the first time in five years by 25 bps to 6.25 per cent.

The Minister said that industry is seeing signs of possible recovery of consumption, and many of them maybe looking at reviving capacity utilisation. On the new Income Tax Bill, as announced during the Budget, Sitharaman said the Bill has been cleared by the Cabinet and will be introduced in the Lok Sabha next week, post that it will be sent to the Parliament committee and after the government again looks at the recommendations and if required makes necessary amendments. "There are at least three critical stages before it ▶ **Cont. to Page-2**

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Odisha Cabinet approves three projects for Hirakud Dam at a cost of Rs.1,066.38 Cr

Bhubaneswar, Feb 8 (FN Agency)



The Odisha Cabinet on Friday approved a proposal to undertake three projects for Hirakud Dam under the Dam Rehabilitation & Improvement Project (DRIP-III) at an estimated cost of Rs 1,066.38 crore over a period of six years, starting from the financial year 2025-26. The projects will be executed with financial assistance from the World Bank and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) under the Externally Aided Project (EAP).

Briefing the media, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi stated that the projects include the construction of an additional spillway on the left dyke of Hirakud Dam, underwater, ground, and aerial surveys to assess the dam's distressed conditions and implement necessary rehabilitation measures, and the automation of the existing gates and the proposed additional spillway gates using the SCADA (Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition) system. The construction of the additional spillway will ensure the safe passage of excess floodwater. Additionally, advanced surveys, structural analysis, and the selection of modern materials for rehabilitation—utilising state-of-the-art machinery and ▶ **Cont. to Page-2**

Parvesh Verma emerges giant killer by defeating Kejriwal

New Delhi, Feb 8 (Agency)



As the BJP revelled in winning the Delhi Assembly elections after 27 long years, its victory was made sweeter with second-generation politician Parvesh Verma proving to be a 'giant killer' as he defeated Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) National Convener and former Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal. For the 47-year-old son of former Delhi Chief Minister Sahib Singh Verma, it was perhaps the biggest electoral victory in his over-a-decade-old political career when he was declared winner of the prestigious New Delhi Assembly constituency, after a keen see-saw battle that saw him trailing Kejriwal in the initial rounds of counting. The victory of Parvesh Verma, though

with a small margin of 4,089 votes, has immense significance as he was locked in a three-cornered electoral fight involving heavy-weights like Kejriwal and Congress' Sandeep Dikshit, son of three-time popular former Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit. Kejriwal, who was known as a 'giant killer' in the December 2013 Assembly elections when he defeated the sitting CM Sheila Dikshit in the New Delhi Assembly constituency, retained the seat ever since by winning it twice again, in 2015 and 2020. Kejriwal, a former bureaucrat, marked his entry into politics in 2013, on the back of an massive 'anti-corruption' agitation led by activist Anna Hazare and his promise to present the people "different" and "clean" politics. Interestingly, Parvesh Verma also entered active politics in the same year and got his electoral victory from Delhi's Mehrauli Assembly constituency. A year later, the BJP fielded Verma from the West Delhi Lok Sabha seat, which he won, and got re-elected in 2019 with the highest-ever margin of victory - 578,486 votes - in Delhi's history. During his Lok Sabha tenure, Parvesh ▶ **Cont. to Page-2**

'Anarchy' and 'arrogance' of AAPda have been defeated: PM Modi

Delhi New Delhi, Feb 8 (FN Agency)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday termed the victory of BJP in Delhi Assembly election as "historic" and said today's mandate made it clear that there is no place for "shortcuts, lies and deceit in politics". Addressing the party workers at BJP headquarters here, the Prime Minister said the people of Delhi have thrown out AAP-Da. "The mandate of Delhi is quite clear! Today, in Delhi, development, vision and trust have won. Today, anarchy and arrogance and AAPda have been defeated", he said. In a stern message, Modi said the BJP government will table the CAG report in the first assembly session. "I assure you



Attacking Kejriwal, he said, "Today the people of National Capital have made it clear that the real owners of Delhi are themselves only. Those who were proud of being the owners of Delhi have faced the truth".

Bharatiya Janata Party defeated the Aam Aadmi Party in the assembly election after 27 years. According to the Election Commission of India, BJP won 47 seats and leading in one seat while AAP was restricted to 22. The Congress has not won a single seat in the election. The PM noted that Delhiites has removed a major obstacle in the way of Delhi's development. "The politics of protests, confrontation and administrative uncertainty in Delhi has caused a lot of harm to the people," he added. Speaking about the development undertaken by the NDA, the Prime Minister said, "Every NDA candidate and every public representative works in the interest of the people. Wherever NDA has received the mandate in the

country, we have taken that state to new heights of development". Modi also assured that in the coming time, a lot of work will be done on mobility and infrastructure in this entire region. The youth of this region will also get new opportunities for progress. "I believe that urbanisation is an opportunity. It's a medium to empower the poor and marginalized. Delhi is a gateway of the country, and therefore it should have the best urban infrastructure". On cleaning the Yamuna river, he said, I have pledged during the election campaign that we will make Yamuna the identity of Delhi city. "I know that this work is difficult and will take a long time. No matter how much time it takes, no matter how much energy it takes. We will make ▶ **Cont. to Page-2**

■ Subhadra Yojana will transform lives of mothers and sisters in Odisha: CM

Bhubaneswar, Feb 8 (FN Representative) Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi stated that the Subhadra Yojana will bring significant changes to the lives of mothers and sisters in Odisha. Distributing financial assistance of Rs.5,000 each to 18 lakh new beneficiaries in Jajpur on Saturday, Majhi emphasized that women are key partners in Odisha's development. He further explained that the objective of the Subhadra Yojana is to accelerate social progress by harnessing the power, potential, and talent of women and asserted that their social and economic progress will help realize the dream of a prosperous state.. While 80 lakh women received the ▶ **Cont. to Page-2**

■ Indian duo Indians Ramanathan, Myneni finish runner-up in Chennai Open ATP Challenger

Chennai, Feb 8 (FN Agency) The Indian duo of defending champions Ramanukam Ramanathan and Saketh Myneni finished as runners-up in the doubles event of the Chennai Open ATP Challenger Tennis championship here on Saturday evening. In the final, the third seeded Indian pair went down to Japan's Shintaro Mochizuki and Kaito Uesugi 6-4, 6-4 in straight sets. The unseeded Japanese duo broke the serve of the Indians once in each set to win in an hour and seven minutes. This was the second ATP Challenger doubles title for Uesugi and for Mochizuki, who won the Wimbledon Boys singles title in 2019. In the singles semifinals, unseeded Swede Elias Ymer stunned top seed Billy Harris, of Great ▶ **Cont. to Page-2**

■ Kerala ranks second in Travel Review Awards by global travel booking firm

Thiruvananthapuram, Feb 8 (Representative) Kerala has been ranked second on the list of India's '10 Most Welcoming Regions' in the 13th annual Traveller Review Awards, instituted by the world's leading digital travel company Booking.com. The travel booking company's awards honour travel partners across the globe, who consistently deliver outstanding hospitality and service and make travel experiences memorable for travellers, based on over 360 million verified customer reviews. Kerala, which has consistently been featured on the list of India's '10 Most Welcoming Regions' category, has bettered its position this year from last year's third place. Besides, Mararikulam, Thekkady, and Alappuzha ▶ **Cont. to Page-2**

■ Wim Wenders film fest in Kerala Capital on Feb 10, 11

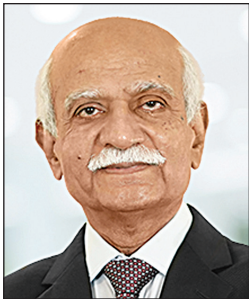
Thiruvananthapuram, Feb 8 (Agency) German film legend Wim Wenders will be in the city on February 10 and 11, as part of his five-city India Tour and screening of his films. The tour is organised by Film Heritage Foundation, in association with the Wim Wenders Stiftung (Wim Wenders Foundation) and Goethe-Institut, with the latter partnering with Kerala State Film Development Corporation (KSDFC) and Kerala Chalachitra Academy for the screening of the films. Wenders will interact with film fraternity, scholars, students and media during his visit to the city. Goethe-Zentrum, the German cultural centre here, has started issuing passes for viewing the films to be screened as ▶ **Cont. to Page-2**

■ Delhi election: Fight against corruption, inflation, pollution will continue: Rahul

New Delhi, Feb 8 (Agency) Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Saturday said that he humbly accept the mandate of Delhi and the fight against pollution, inflation and corruption will continue. Taking to his social media handle X, Gandhi said, "We humbly accept the mandate of Delhi. Heartfelt thanks to all the Congress workers of the state for their dedication and all the voters for their support". He added, "This fight for the progress of Delhi and the rights of Delhiites - against pollution, inflation and corruption - will continue". Meanwhile, Delhi Congress Chief Devender Yadav said that the mandate was a clear indication that the people of Delhi have rejected Arvind Kejriwal's politics ▶ **Cont. to Page-2**

AI will generate huge employment opportunities from 2026-27: Cyient Founder Chairman

Hyderabad, Feb 8 (FN Agency)



Cyient Founder Chairman and Board Member Dr. BVR Mohan Reddy said that though AI will impact repetitive jobs in the short term, it will generate huge employment opportunities from 2026-27. Speaking at the Hyderabad Management Association (HMA) Leadership Conclave 2025, here on Saturday, Dr Reddy emphasized the need for individuals and organizations to adapt to technological advancements to stay competitive. The conclave was held to mark the HMA's golden jubilee celebration. During a fireside chat with PwC Partner Rajesh Duddu, the Cyient Founder Chairman traced AI's evolution, noting that the first PhD in AI was awarded to an Indian, Raj Reddy, at Stanford University in 1961. "He reflected on how AI has progressed from the early days of computing to today's advanced applications, where it can

process vast amounts of data and enhance decision-making." Dr Reddy identified four major steps that India has to urgently initiate like Create a Competitive, knowledgeable skill force; Greater focus on R& D and Fuel for AI is data. We need to build databases; Privacy aspects of data. It can be disastrous if this is not protected. Highlighting AI's capabilities, he said "Computers now have 130 percent more processing power than humans in specific areas. Indian School of Business Dean Madan Pillutla spoke about the importance of diversity in leadership and workforce hiring. "Organizations must embrace diversity by recruiting individuals from varied backgrounds, including women and underrepresented communities. Learning ability and adaptability are more important than institutional pedigree," he stated, in his Keynote address. Earlier in his opening remarks, HMA President Chandrasekhar highlighted the event's significance,

stating, "HMA has been a pillar of leadership and management excellence for 50 years. This conclave brought together some of the most influential thought leaders to share their insights and guide the next generation of leaders," he added. The Conclave 2025 featured distinguished industry leaders, including Dr. Sangita Reddy, Director, Apollo Hospitals; S Sivakumar, Head, ITC Group; Dr. Ganesh Natarajan, Chairman, Honeywell Automation India; Swami Bodhamayananda, President, Ramakrishna Math, Hyderabad; Manisha Saboo, Head, Infosys Foundation; Dr. Raj P. Narayanam, Founder, Zaggle Prepaid Ocean Services Limited; Prem Kumar Vislawath, Founder & CEO, Marut Drones and Rajesh Duddu, Partner, PwC Emerging Tech. These thought leaders shared their perspectives on how AI, digital transformation, and leadership are shaping the future of business. The Conclave 2025 successfully provided a platform for knowledge exchange and strategic discussions on AI's role in shaping the future of leadership and business.

Kerala announces plan to build State-owned AI Engine for Schools this year

Thiruvananthapuram, Feb 8 (Agency)

Kerala Minister for General Education Department V. Sivankutty announced that an AI engine will be developed this year, under the leadership of Kerala Infrastructure and Technology for Education (KITE), within the academic frameworks. Inaugurating the State Camp of Little KITES at the ICFOSS campus here on Saturday, the Minister also announced the completion of distribution of 29,000 Robotic Kits in schools, undertaken by KITE. The Minister highlighted that instead of isolated success stories, more companies should adopt the example of Indian Oil Corporation Ltd (IOCL), Cochin Shipyard Ltd (CSL), Qburst Technologies and Canara Bank, who have contributed from their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funds to make robotic education accessible to all school children in Kerala, a release said. The Minister stated that critical facts such as issues arising from excessive use of digital devices by children

and combating of fake news have been included in the ICT textbooks in school syllabus, continuous vigilance is essential beyond this to address these concerns effectively. Kadakampally Surendran MLA, Anvar Sadath, CEO, KITE and Sunil.T.T, Director, ICFOSS also spoke during the inaugural session. The 2-day event features interactive sessions by Dr. Prahlad Vadakkepat from the University of Singapore, Dr. Achuthsankar S Nair from Department of Computational Biology & Bioinformatics, University of Kerala, Sunil Prabhakar, Media Consultant, Madhu.K.S, Managing Director, Hibiscus Digital Media, Sudheer.P.Y & Felix Devasya (2D & 3D Animator) and AI / ICT experts of KITE. As part of the camp, an industry visit was arranged for the students, in which they observed and understood products related to areas such as Drone technology,



Assistive Technology, 3D printing, Weather monitoring systems, Media production and Animation houses. The Little Kites State Camp will conclude tomorrow. The Open Hardware based Robotic Kits which are deployed in schools by KITE comprises of Arduino Uno Rev3, LEDs, SG90 Mini Servo Motor, LDR Light Sensor Module, IR Sensor Module, Active Buzzer Module, Push Button, Bread Board, Jumper wires and Resistors. Each kit costs less than Rs.1000 a piece and comes with warranty, beyond which schools could procure these items, if they become faulty. Students could create different prototypes of several electronic items which could be used in daily life such as Traffic signal, Automatic Streetlights, EVM, Walking stick for visually challenged . Moreover it also helps in nurturing their Logical thinking, Problem solving, and Analytical skills.

Govt serious about empowerment of universities in Maha: minister

Kolhapur, Feb 8 (Agency) Maharashtra Higher Education Minister Chandrakant Patil said on Saturday that the government was committed to empower universities in the state by providing necessary infrastructure and educational facilities. While addressing a function after inauguration of a subway at Shivaji University campus here, he emphasised that it is necessary to empower universities by providing infrastructure facilities and efforts must be made to empower them academically. Patil said that in this regard, the universities should invite expert professors from the country and abroad for imparting knowledge to the students. He lauded the agreements of universities in the state with various foreign universities.

MoD signs Rs 642.17 crore contract with BEL

New Delhi, Feb 8 (FN Agency) The Ministry of Defence on Saturday signed a contract with Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) for the procurement of 28 EON-51 systems for 11 New Generation Offshore Patrol Vessels and three Cadet Training Ships of the Indian Navy. The contract, valued at Rs 642.17 crore including taxes, falls under the 'Buy (Indian-IDDM)' category, the Ministry said in a statement. The EON-51 is an advanced Electro Optical Fire Control System designed to enhance search, detection, and classification of targets using Electro Optical and Thermal Imagers. The system is expected to bolster the operational capabilities of the Indian Navy. The scheme is projected to generate employment opportunities over the next three years while fostering the participation of Indian industries, including Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). It aligns with the government's vision of 'Aatmanirbharta' (self-reliance) in the defence sector, the statement added.

GITAM hosts thrilling auto expo at Pramana-2025

Hyderabad, Feb 8 (Agency) GITAM Deemed to be University, Hyderabad, energised the second day of Pramana-2025 with an exciting Auto Expo – Automania, drawing automobile enthusiasts and students eager to explore the latest automotive innovations. The highlight of the expo was the TATA Kestrel, a 25-ton armored vehicle showcased by the CRPF, featuring anti-blast seats, landmine protection, and a 100 km/h speed capacity. The CRPF also performed a mock drill with the Vajra and Mini Vajra vehicles, demonstrating tactical precision. Alongside the Auto Expo, Pramana-2025 hosted Hackathons, AR/VR Workshops, Project Expos, Short Film Contests, Science Fairs, Freestyle Rap Battles, and DJ Contests. Performances by 9teen and Varnam Bands, along with a ramp walk event, added to the excitement. The festival is set to conclude with a spectacular EDM/DJ Night, featuring Julia Bliss and PRO Bros, ensuring a memorable finale. GITAM Hyderabad continues to inspire innovation and creativity, making Pramana-2025 a resounding success.

Odisha Governor appoints Prof. Dipak Sahoo as VSSUT Vice Chancellor

Bhubaneswar, Feb 8 (FN Representative) Prof. Dipak Kumar Sahoo, currently serving as a Professor at the School of Engineering, Cochin University of Science and Technology (CUSAT), has been appointed as the Vice Chancellor of Veer Surendra Sai University of Technology (VSSUT), in Burla. Odisha Governor Hari Babu Kambhampati appointed Prof. Sahoo to the post on Saturday. Prof. Sahoo completed his B.Sc. in Engineering from OUTR, M.Tech. from CUSAT, and Ph.D. from IIT Roorkee. He also holds an LLB degree and has 14 years of teaching experience. Bringing a total of 24 years of academic experience, Prof. Sahoo has served as a Professor for 14 years.

BIACH&RI organises cancer awareness walkathon on World Cancer Day

Hyderabad, Feb 8 (Agency) As part of its month-long awareness programs for World Cancer Day (February 4), Basavatarakam Indo American Cancer Hospital & Research Institute (BIACH&RI) organised a Cancer Awareness Walkathon on Saturday. The event, which commenced at 0600 hours, was flagged off by Hyderabad Commissioner of Police, CV Anand. Addressing the gathering, Anand recalled the hospital's inauguration during his tenure as DCP of Hyderabad and lauded its remarkable growth over the past 25 years in both size and service quality. Despite ongoing awareness efforts by various stakeholders, he expressed concern over the rising prevalence of cancer, attributing it mainly to widespread pollution. He urged people to remain vigilant and adopt preventive measures. Dr K. Krishnaiah, CEO of BIACH&RI, elaborated on the hospital's ongoing awareness programs throughout February. Marking the hospital's 25th anniversary, he announced new initiatives, including the provision of HPV vaccines for young girls and women at a highly subsidized rate of Rs.1,500 to help prevent cervical cancer.

IOB signs MoU with B.S.Abdur Rahman Crescent Institute to launch Cybersecurity Hackathon

Chennai, Feb 8 (FN Agency)

Indian Overseas Bank (IOB) on Saturday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with B.S. Abdur Rahman Crescent Institute of Science and Technology (Deemed University) to conduct a Cybersecurity Hackathon, aimed at

fostering innovation in the banking and financial sectors. This initiative aligns with the broader vision of the Union Ministry of Finance, Department of Financial Services (DFS), to promote technological advancements and entrepreneurship in banking. The bank has also partnered with M/s. Ernst and Young (E&Y) as the knowledge partner, ensuring that the

hackathon provides participants with expert guidance and industry insights. The Cybersecurity Hackathon will focus on addressing critical problem statements in Digital Authentication, encouraging students to develop AI and ML-driven prototype solutions to tackle real-world challenges. The competition will span several months, providing teams with the

opportunity to refine their ideas under the mentorship of academic experts and industry leaders, a release from IOB said. IOB MD and CEO Ajay Kumar Srivastava said “at IOB, we recognize the growing importance of cybersecurity in the digital era. This hackathon is a step towards nurturing young talent and leveraging technology to create secure banking solutions for the future.”

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Odisha to implement Unified...

A minimum monthly pension of Rs. 10,000 will be available after retirement, provided the employee has completed at least 10 years of service.In addition to the guaranteed pension, guaranteed family pension, and minimum pension, dearness relief will be provided for industrial workers based on the Consumer Price Index for service employees.One-tenth of the monthly salary drawn at the time of retirement will be provided as a lump sum for every completed six months of service. The guaranteed pension amount will not be reduced due to this benefit.Employees under the NPS will have the option to switch to UPS or continue with NPS.Under the UPS, a guaranteed family pension benefit will be available in case of the death of a government employee after retirement, a feature not provided under the NPS.

BJP roars back to power...

Singh Sirsa from Rajouri Garden, Mohan Singh Bisht from Mustafabad. Kailash Gahlot, who joined BJP from AAP ahead of the election, won the Bijwasan seat, while Satish Upadhyay won from Malviya Nagar by upsetting another prominent AAP leader and former Delhi Minister Somnath Bharti. Other notable BJP victors were Raj Kumar Chauhan from Mangol Puri, Vijender Gupta from Rohini, Karnail Singh from Shakur Basti, Ravinder Singh Negi from Patparganj and former Congressman Arvinder Singh Lovely from Gandhi Nagar. The AAP had created a sensation by coming to power in Delhi for 49 days with outside support of the Congress in 2013 only a year after the party was founded. It had been ruling the Union Territory at a stretch since 2015. With regards to vote share, BJP has so far got 45.56 percent votes while AAP has secured 43.57 vote share. The Congress has garnered 6.34 percent votes. In the 2020 elections, the AAP had retained power by winning 62 seats, while the BJP got the remaining eight.

Good coordination between...

is implemented," he said. On the recent fall in Indian currency vis-à-vis US Dollar, RBI Governor said there is no change in “our approach on rupee. We don’t target a price level or band for rupee. We only intervene when there is excessive volatility. We trust our market’s efficiency and depend on them to decide on the specific level.” On whether the income tax relief in the Budget and RBI’s decision to cut repo rate would help boost consumption, Malhotra said the cut in repo rate should help and support it. Asked about financial sector reforms as was indicated in the Budget by the Finance Minister, Malhotra said there are lot of issues common to various financial regulators. “We may look into issues like payments, cyber security etc to better the systems."

Odisha Cabinet approves three...

videography—will enhance the dam’s longevity. Majhi further stated that replacing the manual gate operation with a remote-controlled system using SCADA technology, under DRIP-III, and under the supervision of national and international experts, will improve monitoring and control efficiency.

Parvesh Verma emerges giant...

Verma served as a member of the Joint Committee on Salaries and Allowances and in the parliamentary Standing Committee on Urban Development. In January this year, the BJP picked Parvesh Verma to take on Kejriwal in the high-stakes New Delhi constituency that had another heavyweight candidate in Congressman Sandeep Dikshit. Parvesh Verma, a Jat, canvassed hard on the plank of the AAP government's alleged corruption and non-performance. Matching Kejriwal's aggressiveness, he initiated a campaign christened "Remove Kejriwal, Save the Nation", lambasting the AAP government for not fulfilling its primary commitments. And at the end of a month-long no-holds-barred campaign has come the sweet taste of victory, making the 1977-born Verma the most sought-after politician for the media, and raising his stature both in the party and among the masses. Married, and a father of two,

Verma is an alumnus of Delhi Public School, R.K. Puram. He holds a Bachelor of Commerce degree from Kirori Mal College under University of Delhi and is an MBA in International Business from Fore School of Management. On his big day, Parvesh Verma's supporters are hoping for a bigger role for him in the new government to be formed in Delhi. The coming days can only decide whether their dreams will come true.

Subhadra Yojana will transform...

first installment in three earlier phases, 18 lakh new beneficiaries have now received the first installment under the fourth phase of Subhadra Yojana—the largest women’s empowerment scheme in Odisha. During the distribution of assistance, the Chief Minister highlighted that under the Subhadra Yojana, a provision has been made to provide Rs. 50,000 to mothers in two installments of Rs.10,000 per year for five years. He advised recipients to invest the funds in businesses rather than using them for household expenses. Additionally, he encouraged women to develop skills in various trades. Majhi stated that the state government has partnered with the World Skill Centre and IIM Sambalpur through the recently organized Odisha Utkarsha program to enhance the skill development of women. The Chief Minister reiterated that the vision of a developed Odisha depends on the social and economic empowerment of women. He noted that women are gaining a distinct identity in society and becoming increasingly aware of their rights. Deputy Chief Minister and Women and Child Development Minister Parvati Parida stated that the Subhadra scheme will serve as a source of livelihood for women in the coming years.

Indian duo Indians Ramanathan...

Britain, in two hard-fought tiebreaks in their first clash on the pro circuit to enter the summit clash. In a match that featured no breaks of serve and lasted over two-and-a-half hours, 28-year-old Ymer fired 10 aces and saved seven break points to win 7-6, 7-6 and advance to Sunday’s final. His opponent will be Frenchman Kyrian Jacquet, who ousted Czech Dalibor Svrčina 6-4, 6-1 in the first semi-final of the day. This was also the first meeting on the pro tour between the two players. Ymer will be gunning for his seventh ATP Challenger singles title, his first since winning in Pune in November 2018, while 23-year-old Jacquet will be hoping to win his second title on the ATP Challenger Results : Singles : Semifinals : Elias Ymer (SWE) bt Billy Harris (GBR) 7-6, 7-6, Kyrian Jacquet (FRA) bt Dalibor Svrčina (CZE) 6-4, 6-1. Final : Doubles : Shintaro Mochizuki (JPN) / Kaito Uesugi (JPN) bt Saketh Myneni (IND) / Ramkumar Ramanathan (IND) 6-4, 6-4.

Kerala ranks second in Travel...

have been featured among the top 10 ‘Most Welcoming Cities in India’ category with Mararikulam achieving the second position. Within the state, Munnar and Varkala have also been named the ‘Most Welcoming Cities’, showcasing the diverse experiences Kerala offers. Tourism Minister P A Mohamed Riyas said the recognition is a significant testament to the unique experience Kerala offers to its visitors. “This shows, apart from our professional hospitality, the state’s serene backwaters, picturesque landscapes, and rich cultural heritage continue to captivate travellers from across the globe. It will provide adequate momentum to the efforts of Kerala Tourism to make a vital mark on the global tourism map,” Riyas noted. Kerala Tourism Secretary K Biju said these awards manifest the popularity of Kerala as a preferred tourism destination among tourists from all over the world as it turns out to be a perfect choice for those seeking tranquility or excitement with a blend of relaxation and adventure. Kerala Tourism Director Sikha Surendran said the honour is for the innovative initiatives and projects being implemented by Kerala Tourism. She added that the state envisages tourism projects realizing the latest trends in the sector as well as the tastes of tourists. In India, 15,674 partners were awarded, including 7,919 in Homes (up from 13,348 properties in 2024). Hotels remain a popular accommodation choice with 5,709 recipients in India, followed by homestays (2,438), apartments (1,651), resorts (1,172), and guest houses (1,160), reflecting a growing preference for unique and personalized travel experiences beyond traditional hotel stays. Santosh Kumar, Country Manager for India,

Sri Lanka, Maldives and Indonesia at Booking.com, said: “Kerala exemplifies exceptional hospitality across India, offering a captivating blend of serene backwaters, lush hills and captivating culture. This year’s awards truly showcase the incredible diversity of experiences India has to offer travellers.”

Delhi election: Fight against...

of lies and deceit. Taking to X, Yadav said, "All the soldiers of the Congress party fought the battle for justice very strongly but the results were not in our favour". Yadav said that the shortcomings and mistakes would be reviewed. The party will continue to work for the people of Delhi and will be with them every time. The grand old party could not open its account in the Delhi assembly election despite putting up candidates like Sandeep Dikshit, Alka Lamba and Ragini Naik.

Wim Wenders film fest in...

part of “Wim Wenders – King of the Road – The India Tour.” Passes can be downloaded from the weblink: <https://trivandrum.german.in/events> A package of 18 films comprising Wenders’ classics including short films and documentaries, will be screened at KSFDC-owned Kairali, Sree and Nila Complex in the city. The films have been meticulously curated by Wim Wenders in association with Film Heritage Foundation. The 18 films, short films and docu-fictions to be screened are The Goalie’s Anxiety at the Penalty Kick (1971), Alice in the Cities (1973), Kings of the Road (1975), The American Friend (1977), Lightning Over Water (1980), Reverse Angle (1982), Room 666 (1982), The State of Things (1982), Paris, Texas (1984), Tokyo-Ga (1985), Wings of Desire (1987), Until the End of the World – Director’s Cut (1994), The End of Violence (1997), Buena Vista Social Club (1999), The Million Dollar Hotel (2000), Don’t Come Knocking (2005), Pina (3D) (2011) and Anselm (3D) (2023). The unique 25-day retrospective tour, that began from Mumbai on February 5, also has on its itinerary Kolkata, New Delhi and Pune. Dr Syed Ibrahim, Director, Goethe-Zentrum, Trivandrum, said that film enthusiasts of Kerala, especially of the state capital, are sure to be excited to view Wenders’ films and hear his perspectives on a range of live issues. Goethe Zentrum is honoured to be a partner to this event, he added. Known as a pioneer of the New German Cinema of the 1970s, Wim Wenders is one of the leading figures of contemporary world cinema. The work of the screenwriter, director, producer, photographer and author includes multiple award-winning feature-length and documentary films, photo exhibitions presented worldwide, as well as numerous photo books, film books and text collections. His films PARIS, TEXAS (1984) and WINGS OF DESIRE (1987) are part of the international canon of film heritage, as are his innovative documentaries PINA, BUENA VISTA SOCIAL CLUB and THE SALT OF THE EARTH. His two most recent films had their world premiere at the Festival de Cannes in 2023: ANSELM, his documentary film in 3D about the artist Anselm Kiefer, and his Japanese feature film PERFECT DAYS, for which lead actor Kōji Yakusho received the award for Best Actor in Cannes. PERFECT DAYS became Wenders’ internationally most successful film and was nominated for an Oscar in the “International Feature Film” category in 2024. Goethe-Institut is Germany’s cultural institute that promotes language and cultural exchange worldwide.

'Anarchy' and 'arrogance' of...

every effort to serve mother Yamuna, we will work with full devotion" the PM said. Attacking the Arvind Kejriwal-led party which ruled Delhi for over 10 years, Modi said AAP stopped the expansion of Delhi Metro and stalled the central government's Ayushman Bharat scheme. "What kind of politics must it have been, what kind of mentality must it have been that these people of 'AAPda' stopped the expansion of metros, didn't let those staying in shanties get permanent homes, didn't allow the people of Delhi to be eligible for medical insurance under the Ayushman Bharat scheme. That is why voters have chosen our double-engine government," he said. The Prime Minister assured that the BJP government will provide good governance to Delhi. "I thank the people of Delhi. Delhi has given us love wholeheartedly, and I once again assure the people that we will return you double the love in the form of development," Modi said.

DTDC enters rapid commerce space; starts 2-4 hour rapid delivery

New Delhi, Feb 8 (FN Agency)

An integrated express logistics firm with domestic and international operations DTDC is making an entry into the rapid commerce space by launching 2-4 hour rapid delivery and same-day delivery services. This expansion is a testament to DTDC’s ability to leverage its robust logistics network, cutting-edge technology, and its success in the domestic e-commerce sector to enhance last-mile delivery solutions for businesses and consumers alike, the company said in a release. With

its expertise in next-day delivery, DTDC is now taking the next step by offering rapid 2-4 hour



deliveries that promise unmatched speed and reliability, ensuring customers get their orders rapidly and efficiently. As part of this strategic move, DTDC has established its first Dark Store in Bengaluru, signaling the beginning of a hyperlocal fulfillment ecosystem that will significantly improve the speed and efficiency of last-mile

deliveries. This initiative will empower D2C brands and social commerce sellers, enabling them to provide rapid and efficient delivery services across India. DTDC plans to expand this service making rapid delivery options available to businesses and customers nationwide. This expansion will further solidify DTDC’s role in transforming the logistics and e-commerce landscape by meeting the growing demand for rapid delivery in today’s fast-paced digital world. Mr. Subhashish Chakraborty, Founder and Chairman & Managing Director, DTDC Express Ltd., said, "This announcement marks

a significant milestone in DTDC’s journey and strengthens our commitment to driving growth in the rapidly evolving logistics and commerce sectors. Our goal is to meet the increasing demand in rapid commerce, positioning us as a key player in shaping the future of delivery services in India." Mr. Abhishek Chakraborty, CEO, DTDC Express Ltd., added, "We are excited to launch our first dark store in Bengaluru, a pivotal e-commerce hub, where we will serve the growing needs of emerging brands and businesses. With this initiative, DTDC is poised to redefine logistics solutions and cater to the evolving demands of the digital marketplace."

New Delhi, Feb 8 (Agency)

Gokaldas Exports on Saturday reported 65 percent jump in Profit After Tax (PAT) year-on-year at Rs 50 crore during the third quarter (October-December) of 2024-25, versus Rs 30 crore in the same quarter of last financial year. Gokaldas Exports has evolved into a one-stop solution for some of the world’s most recognized apparel brands. Gokaldas Exports is one of India’s largest manufacturers and exporters of apparel, exporting to more than 50 countries. Total income from operations grew 79 percent during the reporting quarter at Rs 1,001 crore as against Rs 560 crore in the corresponding quarter of previous



financial year, the company said in a regulatory filing with the stock exchanges. Commenting on the company’s third quarter, Mr. Sivaramakrishnan Ganapathi, Vice Chairman and Managing Director of Gokaldas Exports said, “In 3QFY25 Gokaldas Exports has reported significant jumps in our reported total income, PAT and EBITDA. We have crossed the Rs 1000 crore total income milestone for the first time in the quarter. EBITDA margins improved sequentially, indicating a healthy performance.” We expect business volume to pick up in both the acquired entities in upcoming quarters with sustained stable performance of the company going forward, he added.

15th edition of Biennial Aero-India International seminar begins

Bengaluru, Feb 8 (Agency)



The 15th edition of the Biennial Aero-India International Seminar commenced here on Saturday, bringing together aerospace experts, industry leaders, and defence officials from across the globe. The two-day seminar, organised by the Centre for Military Airworthiness & Certification (CEMILAC) under the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) in association with the Aeronautical Society of India (AeSI), serves as a prelude to Aero India 2025, scheduled to be held in Bengaluru from February 10 to 14. Themed 'Futuristic Aerospace Technologies: Challenges in Design Validation', the seminar provides a platform for deliberations on emerging trends in aerospace technology, military airworthiness, and challenges in design validation. Discussions will focus on areas such as cutting-edge system design, innovative airworthiness and certification methodologies, artificial intelligence in aviation, advancements in electronics and sensing technology, next-generation propulsion systems, and emerging trends in military aviation. International participation includes representatives from Airbus Defence and Space (Spain), Collins Aerospace, GE Aerospace, Martin-Baker, MBDA and Rolls-Royce (UK), Rafael Advanced Defense Systems (Israel), and SAFRAN (France). Several Indian industry players such as Abeyaantrix Solutions, Ansys Inc., Globals Inc., JSR Dynamics Pvt. Ltd, RAPHE mPhibr, and TAQBit Labs Private Limited are also taking part. The seminar will feature 12 technical sessions covering various aspects of design validation and futuristic aerospace technologies. A total of 33 speakers from India and abroad will present their insights on key topics.

Dr V Narayanan, Secretary, Department of Space and Chairman, ISRO, was the Chief Guest at the inaugural session, while Dr Samir V Kamat, Secretary, Department of Defence R&D and Chairman, DRDO, was the Guest of Honour. Dr G Satheesh Reddy, President, AeSI, was also present at the event. Approximately 1,100 delegates from DRDO, Defence PSUs, the Armed Forces, and private industries, including MSMEs, are participating, with the event serving as a significant avenue for fostering collaborations and advancing aerospace and defence technology in India and beyond.

Railways Spends more than 80% of Budgetary Allocation for 2024-25, Registers Record Progress in Odisha

Bhubaneswar, Feb 8 (FN Representative)

The total Budgetary Allocation for Railway Projects in Odisha is Rs. 10,586 crore for the fiscal year 2024-25. Till date, remarkable expenditure of 81.78% of this allocation has already been incurred towards key railway projects aimed at improving connectivity, safety and infrastructure across the region. Up to January 2025 of the current Financial Year, i.e., 2024-25; Rupees 8657.23 Crores have been spent. This is the testament of Ministry of Railways commitment towards infrastructure development in Odisha. New Projects Sanctioned: In line with the vision to strengthen Odisha's railway infrastructure, 8 new railway projects have been sanctioned in the fiscal year 2024-25, amounting to Rs. 18,118 crore. These projects include: Gunupur-Theruvani New Line (73.62 km): Costing Rs. 1,326 crore, this new line will benefit Rayagada District.. Junagarh Road-Nabrangpur New Line (116.21 km): At a cost of Rs. 3,274 crore, this line will connect Kalahandi and Nabarangpur Districts. Malkangiri-Pandurangapuram New Line (173.61 km): Costing Rs. 4,109 crore, this project will connect Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, and Telangana. Badampahar-Kendujhargarh New Line (82.06 km): A Rs. 2,107 crore project benefiting Keonjhar and Mayurbhanj Districts. Bangriposi-Gorumahisani New Line (85.60 km): A Rs. 2,549 crore investment

in Mayurbhanj District. Buramara-Chakulia New Line (59.96 km): At Rs. 1,639 crore, this project connects Mayurbhanj, Jharkhand, and West Bengal. Bargarh Road to Nawapara Road (138.32 km): A Rs. 2,621.92 crore project aimed at improving connectivity in Western Odisha. Puri-Konark Railway Line (32 km): Rs. 492 crore sanctioned for the new rail line connecting these iconic tourist destinations. Major Railway Flyovers to Improve Connectivity: As part of the effort to modernize and improve train services, 5 major rail flyovers have been sanctioned costing Rupees 1173.12 Crore along with sanction for FLS for one Double Line Fly Over: Sambalpur Station to Sambalpur City Station (8.10 km): Rs. 288.61 crore for this important flyover project connecting Sambalpur City and Sarla Station to ease traffic from Sambalpur Main Station. Khurda Road Station Railway Flyover: Rs. 191.87 crore allocated to alleviate train traffic congestion at Khurda Road Station for Trains from Puri towards Bhubaneswar direction. Rail Flyover in Cuttack connecting Rajathagarh-Radhakishorepur-Machhapur (10.89 km): Rs 268.92 Crore project to alleviate train traffic congestion connecting Rajathgarh, Radhakishorepur, and Machhapur Railway Stations in Cuttack. This infrastructure will improve operations by allowing simultaneous train movements, reducing delays

from cross-traffic. Titilagarh Rail Flyover (8.11 km): Rs. 183.89 crore to ease train operations in the region. Singapur Road Station in Rayagada (5.50 km): Rs. 239.83 crore to ease congestion on the Raipur-Vizianagaram Rail Line. Apart from this, Final Location Surveys (FLS) for Double Line Fly Over at Lajkura in Sundargarh District has also been sanctioned to improve rail infrastructure and boosting the efficiency of rail transportation.



Khurda Road-Balangir Rail Line Project: This important rail project, sanctioned in 1994-95, had faced delays due to land acquisition challenges. However, with Rs. 1160 crore allocated for the project in this fiscal, the expenditure as of January 2025 stands at approximately Rs. 913 crore. It is expected that expenditure will reach more than Rs. 1,100 crore by the end of this financial year. The Odisha Government has actively facilitated the land acquisition process, and work is progressing steadily, with major approvals and permits now in place. In the current financial year, Rail Line construction work

target for the 74 Kms in Khurda Road-Balangir Rail Line project between Sonepur and Purunakatak has already been completed creating a history for this public centric Rail Line project. Redevelopment of Key Railway Stations: The redevelopment of Bhubaneswar, Puri, and Cuttack Railway Stations continues to make significant strides: Bhubaneswar Railway Station: Over Rs. 269 crore has been spent, and the project is 60% complete. The work of re-development of Bhubaneswar Station was sanctioned by Railway Board in June'22. The work is in advanced stage with the buildings on both sides of the station completed and finishing work are in progress. The work of elevated road has commenced on the Main entry (West) side. Apart from this, Rs 50 crores have been spent at Puri Railway Station and Rs 168.39 cr has been spent at Cuttack Rail Station. Track Renewal: For the fiscal year 2024-25, Rs. 1,134 crore was allocated for track renewal in ECoR with Rs. 935.77 crore (around 80% of the budget) already expended. Out of 365 Kms target, 341 Kms of Track renewal has already been completed. Safety Initiatives: In ECoR, Rs. 1,290.36 crore has been spent towards safety initiatives, which comprises approximately 78% of the allocated budget for safety projects. This includes, Level Crossing, ROB/ RUB, Track Renewal, Bridge Works

and Signaling & Telecom works. Apart from this, Ministry of Railways has also Recently Sanctioned Rs. 275.01 Crore for provision of Safety Fencing along Railway Tracks. Bhubaneswar and Palasa Railway Stations over Khurda Road Division along with Brahmapur-Golanthara Rail Section. Signal & Telecom: The Automatic Block Signaling (ABS) system is being deployed across key Railway Sections, including the Jakhapura-Nergundi and Khurda Road-Golanthara Rail Sections. This advanced system will enhance the train operational capacity and safety of trains. East Coast Railway (ECoR) has initiated a major safety enhancement project by planning the installation of the advanced Kavach system between Ranital (Bhadrak) in Odisha and Duvvada (Visakhapatnam) in Andhra Pradesh, a vital section of the Howrah-Chennai Main Line covering a distance of 595 KMs. Tender has been notified for the survey, design, supply, installation, testing, and commissioning of Kavach equipment, as well as other associated works, with an estimated value of Rs. 280 crore, approx. The Ministry of Railways remains fully dedicated to enhancing connectivity, promoting economic growth, and ensuring safety in Rail Transport in Odisha. With robust investments, active collaboration with state authorities, and tireless work, we are confident that the railway network in Odisha will see remarkable progress in the coming years, benefiting millions of citizens and boosting regional development.

CSIR-NIIST develops technology for converting biomedical waste into soil additives

Thiruvananthapuram, Feb 8 (Representative)

Union Minister for Science and Technology Dr. Jitendra Singh will formally launch an automated biomedical waste conversion rig that can disinfect pathogenic biomedical waste such as blood, urine, sputum, and laboratory disposables, without the use of costly and energy-intensive incinerators, besides imparting a pleasant fragrance to these foul-smelling toxic waste. The rig, christened as “S’rjanam” and developed by National Institute for Interdisciplinary Science and Technology(CSIR-NIIST) based at Thiruvananthapuram, will be installed and commissioned at a function at

AIIMS, New Delhi on February 10. The prototype equipment, with a daily capacity of 400 kg, can handle 10 kg



degradable medical waste per day in the initial phase. The technology, once validated, will be ready for full-scale implementation after securing approval from competent authorities. Through this technology, CSIR-NIIST aims at an innovative and alternative solution for the

safe, inexpensive and environment-friendly disposal of pathogenic biomedical waste. The event will be attended by Dr. M Srinivas, Director, AIIMS New Delhi; Dr. (Mrs.) N Kalaiselvi, Secretary, DSIR & DG, CSIR; Tanmay Kumar, Secretary, MoEFCC; Dr Rajiv Bahl, Secretary, DHR & DG, ICMR; and Dr. V K Paul, Member, NITI Aayog. Dr C Anandharamakrishnan, Director, CSIR-NIIST, will propose the vote of thanks. The technology, developed by CSIR-NIIST, has been confirmed by expert third parties for its antimicrobial action and the non-toxic nature of the treated material. It can also disinfect laboratory disposables for direct recycling. Soil studies have

confirmed that the treated biomedical waste is superior to organic fertilizers like vermicompost. “With its potential to transform treated waste into value-added soil additives with minimal human intervention, our technology provides a safer solution for healthcare facilities, avoids the risk of spills and occupational exposure, and assists in preventing uncontrolled spread of infectious microbes,” said Dr. C Anandharamakrishnan. India produces 743 tonnes of biomedical waste daily, according to the 2023 annual report of the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB). It presents a significant challenge for proper management and disposal. Improper segregation, open dumping, open burning, and inadequate incineration lead to severe health hazards, such

as the release of harmful human carcinogens, particulate matter, and ash residues. Increased biomedical waste generation demands more transportation facilities, increasing the risk of accidents and spills. The WHO has also emphasized the importance of innovative and alternative protocols for pathogenic biomedical waste disposal. Dr. C Anandharamakrishnan said the dumping of biomedical waste at any premise is prohibited by law. However, there have been several incidents of dumping the biomedical waste generated in one state across the borders of the neighbouring states. Incineration is a costly energy-intensive strategy that forces the stakeholders to adopt simpler and cheaper, but sometimes illegal means, to dispose biomedical waste.

Priya Living launches in Hyderabad, redefining senior living with connection and purpose

Hyderabad, Feb 8 (FN Agency)

Priya Living, founded by Silicon Valley entrepreneur Arun Paul, has made its debut in India, introducing a transformative vision of aging—one that embraces connection, growth, and joy instead of retreat. Unveiled in Hyderabad on Friday, Priya Living’s dynamic communities reimagine elderhood as a time of opportunity, fostering deep

social connections, lifelong learning, and active lifestyles. “Priya Living is deeply personal to me,” said Arun Paul, Founder of Priya Living. “It’s not just about my parents, but about the millions of ‘aunties and uncles’ who left India decades ago yet hold it close to their hearts. Their sacrifices and resilience inspired me to create a space where they can return not just physically, but emotionally—to a home that welcomes them with open arms and a lifestyle designed for the way they want to live.”

More than just a residence, Priya Living is a movement to redefine aging. Its vibrant, intergenerational



communities encourage residents to rekindle old passions, explore new interests, and live with purpose. With boutique-inspired spaces, world-class services, and curated experiences, Priya

Living seamlessly blends tradition with modern living, ensuring elders continue to thrive. Unlike conventional senior living models that demand hefty upfront payments, Priya Living offers a flexible, pay-as-you-go structure, making high-quality living more accessible and financially viable for seniors. The company has committed over USD 100 million to developing world-class senior living communities across India. Following the successful launch of its inaugural project, Priya Living Flower

Valley in Delhi NCR in 2023, the brand is now expanding with new communities in Hyderabad and Ahmedabad this year. By the end of 2026, Priya Living aims to establish a presence in seven major Indian cities, creating vibrant, engaging environments where seniors can enjoy active and fulfilling lives. With its bold approach, Priya Living challenges outdated notions of aging, proving that the later years can be filled with adventure, connection, and purpose, a company statement said.

EAST COAST RAILWAY

e-Tender Notice No.: CAOCRSPBB-02-2025, Dated : 31.01.2025


NAME OF WORK: CONSTRUCTION OF ROAD OVER BRIDGE SPAN (1X36 M COMPOSITE GIRDER + 1X18M COMPOSITE GIRDER) AT RAILWAY KM.580/23-25 IN LIEU OF LEVEL CROSSING NO. 260 BETWEEN BALUGAON-CHILIKA STATIONS ON KHURDA ROAD-PALASA MAIN LINE OF KHURDA ROAD DIVISION (ONLY RAILWAY PORTION).

Approx. Cost of the Work : ₹2243.75 Lakhs, EMD : ₹12,71,900/-, Completion Period of the Work: 18 (Eighteen) Months.

Tender Closing Date & Time : At 1500 hrs. of 04.03.2025.

Complete information including e-tender documents of the above e-tender is available in website : www.irops.gov.in

Chief Administrative Officer (Con)/PR-149/CH/24-25 RSP/Bhubaneswar



If you don't value your time, neither will others.
Stop giving away your time and talents. Value
what you know & start charging for it.

– Kim Garst

Founder Of Abyom Spacetech And Defence: Jainul Abedin Receive Karmaveer Chakra In The Field Of Rocketry

Indigenous Reusable Rockets starting from propulsion systems to control systems and navigation. His thirst does not stop there, he wants to give access to the youth to develop, and test their rocket engine and related components. Both, resulting in his series of rockets called RSR, SRLV and MRLV and the program CIEST. Jainul started his journey back in 2016 when he was a 16-year-old child who looked up into the night sky and wondered why can't we reach there and why rocket science is a big deal. That was the moment he decided to jump into the field of rocketry. With over four years of experience in the space sector, Jainul Abedin is one of the youngest SpaceTech entrepreneurs, leading groundbreaking innovations in reusable rocket technology.

At just 16, he conceived the idea of developing India's first reusable rocket, and by 19, founded Abyom SpaceTech and Defence Pvt. Ltd. in 2020 while pursuing his Bachelor's in Pure Sciences from Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Gorakhpur Uni-



versity. Jainul's scientific contributions and his Team include over 25 published research papers and a patent on space innovation, focusing on RLV landing mechanisms, propellant advancements, and nozzle flow separation. Jainul has authored over 5+ research papers, and holds 3 patents. His achievements have earned him numerous accolades, including the Chief Minister's Award of Uttar Pradesh, Youngest Innovator of the Year, and Youngest Entrepreneur of the Year. Under Jainul's leadership, Abyom has grown into a pioneering space organization, establishing India's first commercial rocket engine testing facility in Hyderabad and successfully conducting over 150 engine tests. The company has gained global recognition, being featured among the Top 20 Global SpaceTech Startups to Watch by Startus Insights and the Top 30 Startups to Watch by INC42. He has actively collaborated with global scientists, through over 45 national and international webinars and conferences.

His commitment to advancing space technology has been recognized by institutions like DST, Boeing, IIT Delhi, and IISc Bangalore. Recently, under Jainul's leadership Abyom was selected for the prestigious 2024 CDL Cohort as one of the Top 40 startups globally and was named among the Forbes Select 200 Companies with Global Business Potential-2024. Driven by a vision to position India as a global leader in space technology, Jainul continues to inspire innovation and sustainability in the space sector, setting a benchmark for the future of space exploration. Recognized for his collaborations with global scientists and institutions, Jainul continues to inspire innovation and sustainability, driving India's prominence in the space sector.

The Ant And The Dove

On a hot day of summer, an ant was searching for some water. After walking around for some time, she came near the river. To drink the water, she climbed up on a small rock. While trying to drink a water, she slipped and fell into the river. There was a dove sitting on a branch of a tree who saw an ant falling into the river. The dove quickly plucked a leaf and dropped it into the river near the struggling ant. The ant moved towards the leaf and climbed up onto it. Soon, the leaf drifted to dry ground, and the ant jumped out. She looked up to the tree and thanked the dove.



Later, the same day, a bird catcher nearby was about to throw his net over the dove hoping to trap it. An ant saw him and guessed what he was about to do. The dove was resting and he had no idea about the bird catcher. An ant quickly bit him on the foot. Feeling the pain, the bird catcher dropped his net and let out a light scream. The dove noticed it and quickly flew away.

Moral of the Story:
If you do good, good will come to you. One good turn deserves another.

Blenders Pride Fashion Tour Gurugram brings the Greatest Celebration of Fashion Icon Rohit Bal

An unparalleled universe of fashion, glamour, glitz and revelry came to life at Blenders Pride Fashion Tour 2025's inaugural edition in Gurugram, with a magnificent celebration of the extraordinary life of Rohit Bal – India's one true fashion icon. A remarkable partnership with Rohit Bal, that saw the Fashion Tour create several stunning showcases, saw an incredible culmination, as it honoured the artistic genius, craftsmanship, and vision, that transformed the very essence of Indian couture. Fashion icon Sonam Kapoor also celebrated the life of Rohit Bal by becoming the showstopper for the special show. In collaboration with Fashion Design Council of India (FDCI), the tour spotlighted Bal's impeccable sense of fashion, his passion for art, his Kashmiri roots, and his epic persona that knew no bounds. From tastefully decorated spaces inspired by Bal's signatory motifs, celebrated Chef Suvir Saran's curation of Kashmiri traditions, to soulful designed by Vibha Saraf and Sahgal, the evening was just as Bal would have. The ramp were over 100 of Bal's closest tribe in Fashion, Bollywood, and Media with illustrious names like Kalyani Chawla, Varun Bahl, Rajiv Makh-Madhur Bhandarkar, JJ Valaya, Rahul Dev, Mugdha Godse, Esha Gupta, Malini Ramani, Vijender Singh, Sonam Kapoor and many more, as their diverse stories filled up the room with larger-than-life projections of Bal's pictures & videos, bringing raw emotions on one iconic runway. Kartik Mohindra, CMO Pernod Ricard India, said, "This celebration of Rohit Bal's legacy, was one for the ages. It reflected our long-standing commitment to shining the spotlight on the iconic voices shaping Indian fashion. We've had an incredible partnership with Bal over the years, and it was only befitting for the Fashion Tour to celebrate him in a way that truly reflected his impact on the world of fashion. As the tour moves ahead, the upcoming experiences will continue to showcase the evolving face of fashion, as 'The One and Only' platform converging innovation and iconicity like never before."



Actor Sonam Kapoor shared, "It has always been an honour to be Rohit's muse, donning his extraordinary creations for many years. Being a part of this unique celebration of his legacy at Blenders Pride Fashion Tour has been a true honour and one that will be etched in my memory forever." The Gurugram edition was a perfect example of the iconic world of Blenders Pride Fashion Tour, and the impact it creates with bringing the most remarkable names in fashion & style. As curator of the tour, it's exciting to see how it continues to take shape as 'The One and Only' platform of en vogue experiences", says curator Ashish Soni. Sunil Sethi, Chairman, FDCI expressed, "FDCI couldn't have been prouder to partner with Blenders Pride Fashion Tour, in creating the most awe-inspiring celebration of Rohit Bal, that beautifully captured his legacy. As two powerhouses in fashion, we're committed to shaping the future of fashion experiences." The Fashion Tour is now headed to Chandigarh on February 8th, 2025, where designer Kanika Goyal's Street luxe fashion will collide with glamorous edge of Jacqueline Fernandez and thumping beats by Harry Sandhu and Hari-Sukhmani.

Kevin Pietersen Unveils the exquisite blended scotch whisky, Dram Bell, by Ardent Alcobev

Ardent Alcobev, an emerging player in India's premium whisky market, has unveiled Dram Bell, a luxury Blended Scotch Whisky, at an exclusive launch event held at Imara – Turf Club in Mumbai. The event was hosted by Kevin Pietersen, former England cricket captain and marquee investor in Ardent Alcobev, along with the co-founders. Bottled in Scotland, Dram Bell is available in two variants: the Premium variant, priced at Rs. 1,750, and the Reserve variant, priced at Rs. 2,450. Each bottle represents the perfect blend of heritage and modern sophistication, offering a luxurious experience for whisky connoisseurs. Expressing his enthusiasm for the launch, Kevin Pietersen shared his personal connection to the brand and the philosophy behind Dram Bell. "My investment in Ardent Alcobev is more than just a business decision; it's a reflection of my personal values. Throughout my career, whether on the cricket field or with any other ventures, I've always prioritized dedication, quality, and the pursuit of excellence. Ardent has these same principles in their unwavering commitment to making process, and evident in every aspect of Dram Bell. While the aim is always to savour the experience, to appreciate the unique blend of international standards of excellence with evolving palates of Indian consumers while exploring the consumer base of Indian-Made Foreign Liquor (IMFL) drinkers."

Commenting on the launch, Debashish Shyam, Co-Founder of Ardent Alcobev, shared, "With the launch of Dram Bell we're not just entering India's premium whisky market; we're setting a new standard. Partnering with Kevin Pietersen, as both an investor and brand ambassador, adds a unique dimension to the brand but also brings his discerning eye and global appeal. While our objective is to transform the whisky landscape by offering a blend that seamlessly combines international standards of excellence with the evolving palates of Indian consumers while exploring the consumer base of Indian-Made Foreign Liquor (IMFL) drinkers."

Dram Bell has been made available in Maharashtra in Nov 2024 and will be available at select retail and on-trade stores. The company will progressively expand distribution into other key markets in the North and South India. **About Ardent Alcobev Pvt. Ltd:** Ardent Alcobev Pvt. Ltd. is an emerging player in India's premium holic beverage market, founded as a joint venture between Rajasthan Liquor Ltd. (RLL) and industry veterans Debashish Shyam and Jatin Fredericks along with former English cricket captain Kevin Pietersen as a marquee investor. Ardent Alcobev is dedicated to building a portfolio of "bottled-in-origin" spirits that cater to the evolving tastes of the Indian consumer, offering global-quality products at affordable prices. The company aims to redefine the premium drinking experience in India as the market moves toward a more discerning consumer base. Ardent Alcobev debuted with Dram Bell Blended Scotch Whisky in Maharashtra in November 2024, with plans to expand its portfolio to other premium beverage categories.



Union
Budget 2025: Tax Reforms and Financial Relief Needed Amid Economic Uncertainty

As we all await the upcoming union budget, the huge uncertainty throughout the world economy, the break in China's growth, Rising debt in the US, Social and Economic unrest throughout the world, and political instability in major countries resulting in the disruption of government has been unprecedented. Various data coming in last few months are not very positive. if we look upon the major Recessions in last hundred years, the current situation can be compared to these. At our domestic front too, the attitude of the our Central Government to tax maximum, looting its common citizens, Small and medium businessmen, Corporate is not welcome. A very high rate of GST and income tax has created a wide divide between the rich and poor. We are at the tip of a volcanic eruption. small disruption can create collapse and long-term recession.

The finance ministry is hereby urged to be more reasonable, particularly in the context of finance and share market. This sector cannot be seen as a tool to earn maximum money without giving any relaxation. Various decision taken up recently are not in good taste.

Reduction in GST, increase in income tax slabs, reduction in short-term capital gain tax, Abolition of STT, incentives to increase Savings are necessary. We hope finance ministry would take a positive attitude towards this. Rajesh Surendrakumar Agarwal, Business Associate of Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd.



has in moderation, ensuring that it's

DMK MP writes to Union Min Ashwini Vaishnaw to revoke Censor Board certificate for Sanatani-Karma hi Dharma film

Chennai, Feb 8 (Representative)

DMK Rajya Sabha MP P Wilson on Friday wrote to Union Minister for Information and Broadcasting Ashwini Vaishnaw seeking to stay/revoke the censor board film certificate granted to screen the film Sanatani-Karma hi Dharma premiered in Odisha on Friday to protect the rights of minorities as it allegedly portrays Jesus Christ in a derogatory manner. In a letter, copies of which were released to the media here, he said "I write this letter under the direction of the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin to protect the rights of minorities and to bring to your attention a matter of serious concern regarding the release of the film Sanatani - Karma hi Dharma, which was premiered today in Odisha." "This film, as reported, derogatorily portrays Jesus Christ, Christians, and Christian services, distorting the image of Jesus and mis-

representing key aspects of Christian doctrine, including the sacrament of Baptism. Furthermore, it depicts conversion as a criminal activity, which is a blatant affront to the right to



freedom of religion enshrined in the Constitution of India", he said. "The Constitution safeguards every citizen's right to choose and practice their faith freely. Any attempt to undermine this fundamental right is unconstitutional and poses a threat to the social fabric of our diverse nation", he said. Mr Wilson contended that additionally, the film appears to target tribal

communities, who are integral to India's pluralistic heritage, by perpetuating divisive narratives. Such efforts threaten their fundamental rights to land, water, and forest, while fostering communal disharmony. Allowing this film to screen could further incite hatred and violence against peaceful communities. "It is deeply concerning that the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) initially denied certification for the film in Cuttack. However, the filmmakers obtained a UA certificate from CBFC's Mumbai office after making minor modifications, including a change in the film's title", he said, in the letter. This raises serious questions about regulatory oversight and the adequacy of safeguards to prevent films from becoming tools for communal polarization. "While freedom of expression is a fundamental right, it must not come at the expense of targeting communities or inciting violence.

Considering the serious concern, I urge you to take immediate action by issuing a directive to stay the censor board certificate granted for screening of the film Sanatani -Karma hi Dharma across the country until its content and certification process are thoroughly reviewed; Direct the CBFC to revoke the film's certification, given the concerns regarding its misleading, offensive, and socially divisive content and review the film ensuring compliance with the guidelines designed to safeguard public order and communal harmony", the DMK MP said. "India's true strength lies in its unity amidst diversity. In a period where maintaining communal harmony is critically important, permitting the screening of such a film risk creating division and deeply offending the sentiments of millions of Christians across the nation", he said, adding "I hope for your prompt intervention to address this pressing issue".

J&K Congress denounces US action against Indians in Jammu

Jammu, Feb 8 (FN Agency) Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress on Friday staged a protest demonstration and organised a march against the inhumane treatment meted out to over 100 Indians deported by the US government. The protestors raised strong slogans against Washington's Donald Trump government and the Narendra Modi regime in New Delhi. A large number of Congress leaders and workers led by Ravinder Sharma, Chief Spokesperson of JKPC, Ved Mahajan Ex MLC Incharge Headquarters, Hari Singh Chib, Senior PCC leader and others held a demonstration at High Court Chowk Janipur and raised strong slogans against the US government. Carrying banners of Trump and Modi, they expressed resentment over the silence and inaction over the inhumane treatment of countrymen by the US. Condemning the insult, torture and inhumane treatment meted out by the Donald Trump government, JKPC

Chief Spokesperson Ravinder Sharma said that entire nation is shocked by the incident. "The entire country feels insulted and hurt by the treatment like terrorists with our fellow citizens, who had gone US for Jobs but the so called friend of Prime Minister Modi Donald Trump has done worst ever human



rights violations with the peaceful and innocent Indians, he said. A small country like Columbia brought back their citizens in her own plane. Then why PM Modi has remained a mute spectator and silent on this serious issue, he asked. "These innocent people went to the US in search of jobs as the Modi government failed to fulfil the promise to give two crore jobs annually to our youth," said the Congress leaders.

Vaccum Ignition trial of indigenous Cryo engine success : ISRO

Chennai, Feb 8 (Agency)



As part of preparations for inflight re-ignition, the Vacuum-ignition trial of Cryogenic engine with Multi-element Igniter was conducted successfully in LVM-3 launch vehicle, which would be used for the maiden human-flight mission Gaganyaan. ISRO said on Saturday that it successfully carried out the ignition trial of the indigenous CE20 cryogenic engine powering the upper stage of LVM3, with a Multi-element igniter under vacuum conditions, which simulates the engine ignition in the vacuum condition of space. This test was carried out in the High Altitude Test Facility at ISRO Propulsion Complex at Mahendragiri in Tamil Nadu on Friday. During this test, the ignition of the engine Thrust Chamber was carried out with a multi-element igniter in vacuum, under the tank pressure conditions that are expected to prevail at the time of re-starting the cryogenic engine in flight. The performance of the engine and the facility during the test was normal and as expected. Restarting a cryogenic engine is inherently complex and as part of the studies related to the restart operation, ISRO is exploring the initiation of turbopumps in bootstrap mode rather than the stored gas system. In this approach, both the thrust chamber and gas generator are expected to re-ignite under tank head conditions. ISRO has outlined a series of tests aimed at engine starts in bootstrap mode towards enhancing the capability for multiple cryogenic engine restarts during flight. Previously, the engine ignition trial using multi-element igniter was carried out under ground conditions outside the vacuum chamber. The engine is already qualified to operate for thrust levels ranging from 19t to 22t in flight with single start and is qualified for Gaganyaan mission. The engine was developed by Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre of ISRO.

KTR's satirical tweet on Delhi election results goes viral

Hyderabad, Feb 8 (FN Agency)

As the results of the Delhi Assembly elections unfold, creating nationwide excitement, a satirical tweet by Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) Working President and former minister KT Rama Rao (KTR) has gone viral on social media. With counting underway since 0800 hours, the election trends have fluctuated throughout the day. As per the latest updates, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is leading in 43 seats, while the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) is ahead in 27 seats. Reports suggest that AAP candidates are leading in only a handful of constituencies out of the 10



they contested. If the current trend continues, it appears certain that the BJP will form the government in Delhi. Against this backdrop, KTR took to the social media platform 'X' (formerly Twitter) to make a sarcastic remark on the election outcome. In his tweet, he quipped, "Congratulations to Rahul Gandhi for making BJP win. "His comment, seemingly aimed at the Congress party's failure to counter the BJP, has sparked widespread reactions and is rapidly gaining traction online. As political circles and social media users react to KTR's jibe, his tweet has added another layer of discussion to the post-election political landscape.



Rituals being performed during 'Shiveli' festival celebrations at the Ernakulam Shiva Temple, in Kochi, Kerala.

Odisha Cabinet approves Rs 4,124cr for stadium construction in 314 blocks

Bhubaneswar, Feb 8 (FN Bureau)

The Odisha Cabinet has approved an outlay of Rs.4,124 crore over a period of five years for the construction of block-level stadiums across the state in a phased manner. The initiative aims to strengthen grassroots sports infrastructure and foster a robust sports ecosystem. Chaired by Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, the Cabinet approved the project, underscoring the government's commitment to promoting health, wellness, and athletic excellence

across Odisha. Briefing the media on Saturday, the Chief Minister stated that the initiative would address critical gaps in rural sports infrastructure, particularly at the block level, where facilities remain underdeveloped. These disparities have long hindered the state's vision for rapid sports growth, he added. Majhi emphasised the government's commitment to bridging this gap by outlining key objectives, including providing enhanced opportu-



nities for athletes, nurturing local talent, and organising more grassroots sports com-

significant potential. Beyond fostering competitive sports, these facilities will encourage rural youth to participate in physical activities, contributing to their overall development and long-term mental and physical well-being. The Chief Minister highlighted Odisha's emergence as a rising sports hub in India, reaffirming the state's dedication to cultivating a vibrant sports culture. "The construction of block-level stadiums marks a significant step to-

ward achieving this vision," he stated. By establishing state-of-the-art facilities at the grassroots level, the project will serve as a pipeline for nurturing high-performance athletes while inspiring citizens to integrate sports into their daily lives. Each block-level stadium will be developed on 8-10 acres of land and will include key components such as a football/cricket field, a clay athletic track with throw and jump areas, courts for volleyball, kho kho, and kabaddi, an indoor hall for badminton and table tennis, and a common facility centre, Majhi said.

Ruling DMK set to win Erode East Assembly bypoll by record margin

Chennai, Feb 8 (Representative)

In a one-horse race, the ruling DMK candidate V C Chandrakumar is all set to win the Erode East Assembly constituency seat by a record margin, as the counting of votes polled in the February 5 by-elections, continued on Saturday. As per the latest reports, Mr Chandrakumar has secured more than 50 percent of the votes polled and was leading by more than 70,000 votes over his only rival Ms M K Seethalakshmi of Naam Tamilar Katchi (NTK). After 13th round of counting, which began at 0800 hrs amid tight security, Chandrakumar polled 89,931 votes as against 19,078 by Ms Seethalakshmi. With four more rounds of counting remaining, the NTK candidate needed a further

6,700 votes to retain her deposit, reports received here said. With the major political parties, including the main Opposition AIADMK, its ally, the DMDK, the BJP-Led NDA and its allies, including the PMK and the nascent Tamilar Vettri Kazhagam of Kollywood actor Vijay, boycotting the polls, the outcome of the bypoll was a foregone conclusion. Having established a big lead, which kept swelling with every round of counting, Chandrakumar, who was the clear favourite to win the bypoll, was leading right from the first round and is all set to win by a record margin. With Mr Chandrakumar assured of a landslide victory, DMK cadres, carrying party flags, in the constituency celebrated it by bursting crackers, distributing sweets and dancing to the beating of drums. It

was celebration time at the DMK headquarters 'Anna Arivalayam' in Chennai, also where enthusiastic party cadres burst crackers and distributed sweets to celebrate the by-



poll success. About 70 per cent of the total 2.27 lakh voters have exercised their democratic right during polling in 237 booths in the constituency, which

passed off peacefully on Wednesday. The counting began at 0800 hrs at Sithode Government Engineering College. Counting of postal ballots was taken up first followed by the votes polled in EVMs. The fate of 46 candidates were already sealed in the EVMs in the bypoll, the second in this constituency in two years. Though there are 46 candidates in the fray despite major political parties staying away from the contest, the main fight was between ruling DMK's V C Chandrakumar and M K Seethalakshmi of the Naam Tamilar Katchi (NTK) of actor-director Seeman. The bypoll, the second in two years, was necessitated following the death of Senior Congress Leader and sitting MLA EVKS Elangovan in December last year. This is the third election to this

seat since 2021 in which Mr Elangovan's son Thiru Mahan E. Ve. Ra was elected to the Assembly for the first time. However, his untimely death resulted in bypoll held on February 28, 2023 and it was won by Mr Elangovan, who is also a former Union Minister and former TNCC President, by highest ever margin of over 66,000 votes and entered the State Assembly after a gap of 39 years. However, Mr Elangovan's unfortunate death in December 2024, resulted in yet another bypoll to the seat. DMK Assistant Propaganda Secretary V C Chandrakumar, who had joined the party in 2016 after quitting the actor-politician Vijayakanth-led DMDK, and NTK candidate, Ms Seethalakshmi, also the party's Women's Wing Coordinator, were the main candidates, while the rest were Independents.

MP Anurag Thakur and wife take holy dip in Sangam

Prayagraj, Feb 8 (Agency)



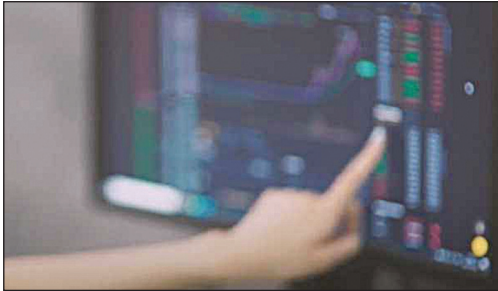
Former Union Minister and MP from in Himachal Pradesh Anurag Thakur, along with his wife, took a holy dip in Sangam calling it the 'Maha Kumbh of unity', he praised its divine and grand spirit. Sharing pictures of his holy dip on his official X handle, MP Anurag Thakur quoted the sacred verse, "Gange cha Yamune chaiva Godavari Saraswati, Narmade Sindhu Kaveri Jalesmin Sannidhim Kuru. "He worshipped at the confluence of the divine rivers Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati, praying for the welfare of all. Wishing happiness, prosperity, and good fortune for everyone, he described Maha Kumbh as the 'Maha Kumbh of Unity' and a symbol of Indian culture and faith. It may be noted that over 40 crore devotees have taken a holy dip in Mahakumbh 2025 so far. Sadhus, saints, politicians, social workers and devotees from across the country are participating with deep faith in this historic event. This grand Maha Kumbh in Prayagraj is showcasing the eternal essence of Sanatan culture on the world stage. Several prominent leaders, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, have taken a holy dip in the Sangam. Other notable figures who participated include Governor Anandiben Patel, Rajasthan CM Bhajan Lal, Haryana CM Nayab Singh Saini, Manipur CM N. Biren Singh, Gujarat CM Bhupendra Patel, and Union Ministers Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Arjun Ram Meghwal and Shripad Naik. BJP MP Sudhanshu Trivedi, Rajya Sabha MP Sudha Murthy, Assam Assembly Speaker Biswajit Daimary, SP National President Akhilesh Yadav, Leader of Opposition M. K. Prasad Pandey, and MPs Ravi Kishan, Hema Malini, and Dinesh Lal Yadav 'Nirahua' have also taken part. Besides, senior BJP leader Ravi Shankar Prasad has also taken the holy dip. On February 10, President Droupadi Murmu is also scheduled to take a holy dip in Sangam.

U.S. stocks slump amid Trump's reciprocal tariff plans

New York, Feb 8 (Representative)

U.S. stocks tanked on Friday, as traders were unsettled by a mix of tariff and inflation news that added to the week's volatility. U.S. stocks broadly declined, with the Dow Jones Industrial Average falling by 444.23 points, which is equivalent to a drop of 0.99 percent. The S&P 500 traded down by roughly 0.95 percent, and the Nasdaq Composite slid by 1.36 percent. Declines were observed across all sectors of the S&P 500 as investors reacted to prevailing economic uncertainty. The market took a hit after U.S. President Donald Trump announced his plans for reciprocal tariffs on trading partners, a move that could lead to an across-the-board increase in tariff rates to match those charged by the United States. "I'll be announcing that next week reciprocal trade, so that we're treated evenly with other countries," said

Trump during a meeting with visiting Japanese prime minister. "We'll have a news conference, and we'll lay it out pretty simple. "The preliminary reading of the University of Michigan's consumer sentiment index indicated that consumer confidence in February



fell to 67.8, notably below 71.3 anticipated by economists polled by Dow Jones. "Year-ahead inflation expectations jumped up from 3.3 percent last month to 4.3 percent this month, the highest reading since November 2023 and marking two consecutive months of unusually large increases," said the

survey. On the jobs front, the United States added 143,000 positions in January - a figure that fell short of December's revised total of 307,000 and the 169,000 forecast by economists - while the unemployment rate eased to 4 percent, below the expected 4.1 percent, according to the data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics released Friday. Chicago Federal Reserve President Austan Goolsbee called the jobs report "solid" and said it showed "we're settling into something like full employment." He added that the central bank "may be on hold" for now, but he still sees interest rates moving lower over the "next 12-18 months." In corporate news, Uber shares jumped more than 8 percent to a session high after billionaire hedge fund manager Bill Ackman, CEO of Pershing Square Capital Management, revealed that his firm holds over 30 million shares in the ride-share company, a stake valued at more than 2 billion U.S. dollars.

Israeli PM thanks Trump for sanctions against ICC

Jerusalem, Feb 8 (FN Agency)

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Friday thanked US President Donald Trump for imposing sanctions against the International Criminal Court (ICC). The US president signed an executive order on Thursday imposing sanctions on the ICC over its persecution of the US and its allies, including Israel. Under the order, the US will impose "tangible and significant consequences on those responsible for the ICC's transgressions." The consequences include the blocking of property and assets, as well as the suspension of entry into the US of ICC officials, employees, and agents, as well as their immediate family members. "Thank you, President Trump, for your bold ICC Execu-

tive Order. It will defend America and Israel from the anti-American and antisemitic corrupt court that has no jurisdiction or basis to engage in lawfare against us," the Israeli prime minister said on X. The ICC has waged a "ruthless campaign against Israel as a trial run for action against America," and thus Trump's order protects the sovereignty of both countries, Netanyahu added. On November 21, 2024, the ICC issued arrest warrants for Netanyahu and former Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, citing allegations of war crimes and crimes against humanity. Netanyahu's office lashed back at the court, accusing it of trying to isolate Israel and supporting terrorism against the Jewish state.



U.S. House Democrats call for security probe into Musk's DOGE team

Washington, Feb. 8 (Agency)



Over 20 U.S. House Democrats on Thursday urged government watchdogs to investigate potential national security threats posed by Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) team. "We are writing to express urgent concerns regarding recent reports that unauthorized individuals have gained access to protected government networks and sensitive, potentially classified data," Representative Gerald E. Connolly, ranking member of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, leading a group of Democratic lawmakers, wrote in a letter. "These reports raise serious questions about the security protocols in place to safeguard sensitive government information and the potential for unauthorized access and misuse by private citizens without requisite clearance or any legitimate reason to access this information," the letter said. Although Musk appears to have been granted the status of "Special Government Employee," there is no evidence that he, or any of his associates working under the "DOGE team" moniker are entitled to access government systems, nor is there any evidence that they have undergone the proper vetting to ensure the security of taxpayer and government data, it argued. The letter was addressed to mostly deputy inspector generals at several federal agencies, including the U.S. Treasury, the Office of Personnel Management, the Department of Education, the U.S. Agency for International Development, the General Services Administration and the Small Business Administration. U.S. President Donald Trump signed an executive order on his first day in office on Jan. 20 to establish DOGE, an advisory committee, led by Tesla CEO Musk. Trump claimed that DOGE aims to significantly reduce federal spending to restore the efficiency of the federal government. This move quickly prompted lawsuits from several government employee unions and oversight agencies, among others. DOGE has recently accessed information from multiple federal agencies, drawing widespread criticism and sparking protests in multiple cities across the country.

South Sudan declares mpox outbreak with 1st case confirmed

Juba, Feb 8 (Agency)



South Sudan on Friday confirmed its first mpox case, with authorities pledging heightened vigilance to prevent further transmission. Acting Minister of Health James Hoth Mai said the National Public Health Laboratory confirmed the case in a Ugandan national who had recently travelled to his home country, where an active outbreak is ongoing. "This outbreak has been declared following confirmation by the National Public Health Laboratory on Thursday using real-time polymerase chain reaction testing of skin lesion samples collected from a 31-year-old male, a Ugandan national," Mai told reporters in Juba, the capital of South Sudan. He said the health ministry has activated the Public Health Emergency Operations Center to coordinate the response, leveraging existing incident management systems currently addressing cholera and other public health emergencies. The minister added that the confirmed case is under isolation at Gudele Hospital, where a team of experts from the government and partner organisations has been mobilised to conduct a detailed field investigation, trace contacts, and ensure close monitoring. Humphrey Karamagi, the World Health Organisation (WHO) country representative in South Sudan, said the early detection of the disease demonstrates the country's preparedness to handle health threats. Karamagi said that the WHO has declared mpox a health emergency of international concern and has been working closely with the South Sudanese government to strengthen health workers' capacity in surveillance and response to the highly infectious viral disease. "I can confirm that the country has been following the necessary protocols. We have tested hundreds of suspected cases, and this is the first positive one. The government has been actively monitoring for this and is well-positioned to respond," Karamagi said. Mpox is a viral zoonotic disease primarily transmitted from animals, such as wild rodents, to humans. Human-to-human transmission occurs through direct contact with skin lesions or infected bodily fluids, as well as indirect contact with contaminated materials such as bedding. Symptoms of the disease include fever, headache, malaise, muscle aches, swollen lymph nodes, and body rashes.

Iraqi president, Jordanian king reaffirm commitment to Palestinian cause

Baghdad, Feb 8 (Agency)

Iraqi President Abdul Latif Rashid and Jordanian King Abdullah II reaffirmed Friday their unwavering commitment to the Palestinian cause. A statement by the Iraqi presidency said that the two leaders held a phone conversation, during which they discussed joint efforts to ease regional tensions and reinforce stability. They underscored the "necessity of establishing an independent Palestinian state in accordance with UN resolutions and international law," emphasizing that this is a fun-



damental pillar for achieving lasting peace in the region, it said. According to Jordan's Royal Hashemite Court, the king, in the call, emphasized the need to intensify Arab efforts in supporting the Palestinian people in securing their full legitimate rights. He reiterated Jordan's firm rejection of any attempts to annex land or forcibly displace Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank. The Iraqi presidency said the two also highlighted the deep-rooted ties between Iraq and Jordan, stressing the importance of continued coordination to advance their shared interests.



Several hundred demonstrators rally against President Donald Trump outside the California State Capitol in Sacramento, California.

Northeast Australian region warned to prepare for more major flooding

Sydney, Feb 8 (FN Agency)

Major flood warnings have again been issued for Australia's northeast as torrential rain returns to the region. The Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) on Saturday issued widespread major and minor flood warnings for towns along a 300-km stretch off coast in the North Tropical Coast region in the state of Queensland. A severe weather warning from the BoM said that heavy rainfall forecast for Saturday and Sunday could lead to "dangerous and life-threatening flash flooding" in the region. The region has been hit by catastrophic flooding since Feb. 1, with two confirmed deaths and significant damage to properties and infrastructure. This system continues to pack a punch, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation quoted Queensland Premier David Crisafulli as saying on Saturday.



"While the risk of that widespread flooding has reduced, there is the prospect of flash flooding because of swollen catchments." According to the BoM, several parts of the region have already broken their all-time rainfall records for the month of February. The bureau's warning said that six-hourly rainfalls of up to 200 millimeters were possible on Saturday. Support and rescue crews from across Australia have been deployed to the area to aid local authorities, Australia's 9News network reported. A bridge on a major highway that collapsed, cutting off several towns, has been temporarily rebuilt, allowing emergency services and supplies to again enter by road. The federal government on Saturday extended the eligibility area for personal hardship payments. Affected families in the area are eligible to receive up to 900 Australian dollars (\$64.4 U.S. dollars) to cover the cost of emergency essentials. The rainfall is expected to ease by Monday.

Israel deliberately disturbs aid delivery to Gaza: Hamas

Gaza, Feb 8 (FN Bureau)

Hamas on Friday accused Israel of deliberately delaying the implementation of the Gaza ceasefire agreement by disturbing the delivery of humanitarian aid and relief to the enclave. "Israel has failed to uphold its commitments under the agreement," Salama Marouf, head of the Gaza-based media office, said in a press conference. "The scale of aid allowed into Gaza remains far below what is needed to meet the basic needs of the population," Marouf said, noting that only 8,500 aid trucks have entered Gaza so far, instead of the agreed 12,000. Israel has also restricted the entry of fuel, allowing only 15 trucks per day instead of the agreed 50, Marouf said, adding that it has blocked critical medical sup-



plies, delayed the evacuation of the injured and the sick, and prevented the entry of essential reconstruction materials. He urged global pressure on Israel for fully implementing the agreement, lifting restrictions on aid, and facilitating reconstruction efforts. He also called for an emergency international conference to address the humanitarian crisis in Gaza and support the rebuilding of its infrastructure. Israel and Hamas reached a three-stage ceasefire deal in January, mediated by Egypt, Qatar, and the United States, after more than 15 months of fighting in Gaza. The initial stage effective Jan. 19 lasts for six weeks and includes a limited exchange of Israeli hostages and Palestinian prisoners, increased aid into Gaza, and a partial withdrawal of Israeli troops from the enclave.

Hamas Releases Names Of 3 Israeli Hostages To Be Freed In Next Swap

Gaza City, Feb 8 (Representative)

Hamas is set to release three Israeli hostages on Saturday in exchange for 183 prisoners held by Israel in the fifth exchange of a fragile Gaza ceasefire. The exchange comes despite uproar in the region over a proposal by US President Donald Trump to clear out the Gaza Strip of its inhabitants and for the United States to take over the Palestinian territory. The office of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu confirmed to AFP on Friday it had received a list of hostages for release from Gaza after Hamas published three names of captives to be freed. The three men set to be released on Saturday are Eli Sharabi, Or Levy and Ohad Ben Ami,

according to Hamas. Their names were confirmed by Netanyahu's office. Former hostage Yarden Bibas, who was freed last week by Hamas militants in Gaza, on Friday urged Netanyahu to help bring back his wife and two children from the Palestinian territory. "Prime Minister Netanyahu, I'm now addressing you with my own words... bring my family back, bring my friends back, bring everyone home," Bibas said in his first public message following his release. Hamas previously said his wife Shiri and his two sons Ariel and Kfir -- the youngest hostages -- were dead, but Israel has not con-

firmed their deaths. Netanyahu, who is in Washington, will "monitor this phase of the hostages' release from the control centre of the delegation



in the US", the premier's office said in a separate statement. "Now is the time" -The Hostage and Missing Families Forum urged the gov-

ernment on Friday to stick with the Gaza truce, even as Trump's comments sparked uproar across the Middle East and beyond.

"An entire nation demands to see the hostages return home," the Israeli campaign group said in a statement. "Now is the time to ensure the agreement is completed -- until the very last one," it added. Israel and Hamas have completed four swaps under the first stage of the ceasefire agreement. Palestinian militants, led by Hamas, have so far freed 18 hostages in exchange for around 600 mostly Palestinian prisoners released from Israeli jails. The ceasefire, mediated by Qatar, Egypt

and the United States, aims to secure the release of 33 hostages during the first 42-day phase of the agreement. Negotiations on the second stage of the ceasefire were set to begin on Monday, but there have been no details on the status of the talks. The second stage aims to secure the release of more hostages and pave the way for a permanent end to the war, which began on October 7, 2023 with Hamas's unprecedented attack on Israel. During the attack, militants took 251 hostages to Gaza. Seventy-six remain in captivity, including 34 whom the Israeli military says are dead. Israel's retaliation has killed at least 47,583 people in Gaza, the majority civilians, according to the Hamas-run territory's health ministry. The United Nations considers the figures reliable.

Australia inch closer to 2-0 series victory over SL

Galle, Feb 8 (Agency)



Australia inched closer to a series victory as Sri Lanka faltered late on the third day of the second Test on Saturday, with Beau Webster and Nathan Lyon making crucial contributions to tighten the visitors' grip on the match. Angelo Mathews (76) and Kusal Mendis (48*) offered resistance with a 70-run stand, guiding Sri Lanka to a 41-run lead. However, Mathews fell to a well-judged catch by Webster at fine leg off Lyon's bowling, shifting the momentum in Australia's favour. Stand-in captain Steve Smith's tactical decision to employ Webster's off-spin instead of seam paid dividends as Ramesh Mendis fell for a duck. Matthew Kuhnemann further compounded Sri Lanka's troubles by dismissing Prabath Jayasuriya in the final over of the day. At stumps, Sri Lanka were struggling at 197/8, leading by just 54 runs. Resuming with a 157-run deficit, Sri Lanka were reduced to 39/3 before Mathews and Kamindu Mendis (22) steadied the innings. However, Lyon, who reached his 550th Test wicket, removed Dinesh Chandimal (12) and Kamindu, denting Sri Lanka's chances of a recovery. Captain Dhanan-jaya de Silva (47) showed intent but fell to a stunning one-handed catch by Smith at slip off Kuhnemann's bowling. Mendis attempted to counter-attack, striking Lyon for a six and a four off consecutive deliveries to push Sri Lanka into the lead, but Mathews' late dismissal put the visitors back in control. Australia's strong position was built on a record 259-run partnership between Smith (131) and Alex Carey (156), guiding them to a first-innings total of 414. Carey's innings was the highest score by an Australian wicketkeeper in Asia, surpassing Adam Gilchrist's 144. Sri Lanka's Jayasuriya responded with a five-wicket haul, capitalising on the second new ball to trigger an Australian collapse in the morning session. Smith fell to a sharp-turning delivery, while Carey was bowled attempting an aggressive sweep. Debutant Cooper Connolly showed promise but was dismissed attempting an expansive stroke, while Webster contributed a steady 31 before making an impact in the field and with the ball. With Sri Lanka trailing by just 54 runs and only two wickets remaining, their hopes now rest solely on Mendis. However, with Australia's disciplined attack and a deteriorating Galle pitch, a series victory for the visitors appears imminent.

I am still CDM for J&K contingent, claims JKOA official Wattal

Jammu, Feb 8 (Representative)

Refuting the allegations of his "ouster" from the 38th National Games underway at Uttarakhand, a senior official of Jammu and Kashmir Olympic Association (JKOA), Kiran Wattal has claimed that he is still the "Chef de Mission" (CDM) for Jammu and Kashmir contingent and will soon be returning to the venue. Wattal, the Vice President of Gymnastics Federation of India (GFI) and also the President of Jammu and Kashmir Gymnastics Association (JKGA) setting aside the controversy while speaking to UNI asserted, "allegations about my removal as CDM of J&K contingent are baseless rumours." "I am still the CDM and returning back to Uttarakhand very soon as gymnastics events are also commencing from February 9." "I have been nominated by the president of GFI at the National Games vis-a-vis I am also the representative of the government and the Jammu and Kashmir Olympic

Association (JKOA)," he said, adding, "some elements are intentionally trying to malign my image at the national podium but I want to make it clear that I am still the CDM." "I had prior commitments in Jammu and Kashmir including the conduct of the first ever District Gymnastics Championship at



Shopian because of which I had to rush to Jammu," he said. Claiming of being nominated by the JKOA and the J&K Sports Council, Wattal said, "I had already informed my Deputy CDM (Rajesh Dutta) about my occupancy and also told him to manage all contingent related affairs/arrangements at the National Games." "Moreover, I am in constant touch with the of-

ficials and regularly making all the correspondences with the organisers of the National Games and very soon I will be in Uttarakhand," cleared Wattal, who also holds the post of vice president in the JKOA. However, contrary to this, a letter (accessed by the UNI) dashed to the Jammu and Kashmir Olympic Association by Sunaina Kumari, Chairperson, Games Technical Conduct Committee (GTCC), 38th National Games, under subject, "Relief of Duties for the CDM, J&K Olympic Association," read, "Dear Sir/Madam, this letter serves as formal notice that, due to repeated instances of misbehavior with other agencies and multiple complaints received, the decision has been made to relieve your CDM of his duties for the 38th National Games." "Effective immediately, the Deputy CDM will be appointed as the new CDM for the event and will assume all responsibilities associated with the position," the letter's content further read. It also said, "We believe this decision is necessary to ensure the decorum of the Games."

Chile boss Gareca upbeat about World Cup hopes

Santiago, Feb 8 (FN Agency)

Chile manager Ricardo Gareca has insisted that his team can overcome a lackluster run of results to qualify for the 2026 FIFA World Cup. The Roja is currently ninth in the 10-team South American qualifying group with just two wins from 12 outings. But Gareca, who replaced fellow Argentine Eduardo Berizzo as Chile boss in January 2024, said his team's destiny remained in its own hands with six qualifiers remaining. "We are convinced that we can reverse this situation," the 66-year-old told a news conference ahead of a friendly against Panama at Estadio Nacional in Santiago on Saturday. The top six teams in the South American group



will earn an automatic berth in football's showpiece tournament - to be played in the United States, Mexico and Canada next year - while the seventh-ranked side will advance to an intercontinental playoff. "We know it's going to be an enormous challenge and every game is going to be difficult. But our job is to fight until the end. We have a lot of faith and confidence," the former Boca Juniors and Argentina international forward said. Gareca will use the clash with Panama as a chance to test his squad ahead of World Cup qualifiers against Paraguay and Ecuador next month. "It helps us to expand our universe of players, which is going to be very important," Gareca said. "It's a nice chance to put into practice what we've been working on in training and try to play well in front of our own fans."

Bengaluru FC to face Jamshedpur FC in ISL on Feb 9

Bengaluru, Feb 8 (FN Bureau)

Jamshedpur FC will travel to take on Bengaluru FC at the Sree Kanteerava Stadium in the Indian Super League (ISL) match here on Sunday. The Red Miners broke their six-game winless streak against Bengaluru FC with a 2-1 victory in the reverse fixture and will now aim to complete a league double over the Blues for the second time (previously in 2020-21). However, they have struggled to find their feet at the stadium, being unable to emerge victorious in their previous four clashes there. Bengaluru FC are undergoing a difficult patch of form presently. They have been winless in their last six games, drawing once and losing five times - including three defeats on the bounce entering this game. In the standings, Jamshedpur FC are placed third with 34 points from 18 matches on the back of 11 victories and a solitary draw. They are involved in a close battle with FC Goa for the second place

presently, who beat them to it after the Gaurs triumphed 2-1 over Odisha FC. The Red Miners have a chance to leapfrog FC Goa (34) with a win here and they will aim for nothing less to sustain pressure and keep challenging for the top-two, which qualifies a team directly for the semi-final. Jamshedpur FC have eased into Khalid Jamil's playing philosophy in the current term, boasting of a 57.8% aerial duel success rate, the second-best in the league behind Mohun Bagan Super Giant (59.9%). They are also on track for their best aerial duel success rate in a single ISL campaign (previous best: 53.4% in 2020-21). Bengaluru FC are sixth in the table, having 28 points from 19 encounters due to eight victories and four draws. They have shipped 28 goals, which is the highest amongst teams in the top-six, with only Jamshedpur FC having conceded more (29). The

Blues have failed to win in their last three home games, drawing once and losing twice, matching their worst-ever home form in ISL history (October-December 2023). Bengaluru FC have scored seven goals via headers this season, second only to Mohun Bagan Super Giant (10). The Jamshedpur FC box will have to be cautious



with lateral or long balls coming in from both set pieces and open play. Jamshedpur FC have netted multiple goals in each of their last three away matches, a feat they have only bettered once in ISL history (four consecutive games between January and February

2023). They will look to equal that steak with a similar attacking performance in the coming encounter. The Red Miners have won three away matches this season, with two of those victories coming in their last three away fixtures (L1). Their formidable form on the road could spell trouble for Bengaluru FC, who need a quick course correction to not fall behind in the pecking order for the playoffs. In their 15 matches against each other this season, Bengaluru FC have won six games and Jamshedpur FC have emerged victorious five times. Four encounters have delivered draws. Bengaluru FC head coach Gerard Zaragoza said that his team wants to emerge victorious over crucial junctures. "Our plan is to win over important moments. What's better than playing at home in Kanteerava in front of our own supporters?" he said. Jamshedpur FC head coach Khalid Jamil reit-

erated on the importance of consistently getting positive results. "Everybody is working hard. We are working well. We need to continue the work and get a positive result in this away match," he said. Jamshedpur FC's Javi Hernandez is one assist away from reaching the tally of 20 for the same in the ISL. He could become the ninth player to reach this milestone and a goal contribution in this encounter would also make him the first Jamshedpur FC player to do so in six consecutive games. Javi has scored seven goals and assisted thrice this season. Sunil Chhetri's five goals are the highest by any player in this fixture. Chhetri has scored 11 goals and assisted once in 19 appearances this season, winning 61 duels and making 69 touches inside the opposition's box. Jamshedpur FC's Javi Siverio has scored three winning goals this season, with only Jamie Maclaren (5) and Alaeddine Ajarraie (4) having more. Siverio has netted six goals and produced 18 goal-scoring chances in the current term of the competition.

Ola Electric maintains leadership position in EV 2Ws in Q3 FY25 with 25.5 pc market share

Kolkata, Feb 8 (FN Agency)

Ola Electric has maintained leadership position through Q3 FY25 with a 25.5 per cent market share (as per VAHAN data) driven by the company's singular EV focus, strong product portfolio and technology leadership. Ola Electric on Friday announced its quarterly results with the company's revenue standing at 1,069 Cr for the quarter ended 31st December 2024 as against 1,336 Cr for the quarter ended 31st December 2023. Ola Electric maintained leadership position through Q3 FY25 with a 25.5 per cent market share (as per VAHAN data) driven by the company's singular EV focus, strong product portfolio and technology leadership. Further to this, the company retained market share leadership in Jan'25 (As per VAHAN) with an uptick in Gross Margin of approx 26 per cent (provisional and unaudited) up from 20.4 per cent in Q3 FY25. The company posted an Automotive segment Gross Margin of 20.8 per cent in Q3 FY25 which saw an increase of 2.2 pp YoY. The company's Automotive gross margin remained strong, improving by 20 bps QoQ to 20.8 per cent in Q3 FY25, despite a 14 per cent QoQ decline in revenue to 1,075 Cr due to intensified competition and festive discounts. This resilience was driven by around 1pp QoQ reduction in BOM costs and the benefit of PLI accruals across our



product range, contributing a margin uplift. These margin gains have been reinvested in the business, making EVs more affordable and further driving EV penetration. The company expects their path to profitability to be driven by improvements in Gross Margin, Optimization in Operating Costs and Operating Leverage through product portfolio expansion, category expansion (motorcycles, Gig & Z) and technology leadership. In continuation of the strategy to invest in engineering and vertical

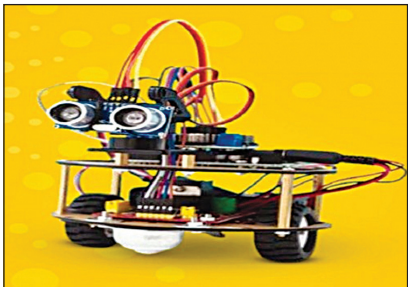
integration, Ola Electric launched the S1 Gen 3 products in January 2025 and the company will begin deliveries of the same during February 2025. Over the Gen 2, Gen 3 offers 20 per cent increase in peak power, 11 per cent reduction in cost, and 20 per cent increase in range. The S1 Portfolio now spans 14 products across Gen 2 and

Gen 3. This broadened portfolio allows the company to cater to customers across performance-focused and value-focused segments. The Gen 2 portfolio allows Ola Electric to penetrate the market with aggressive pricing and Gen 3 helps the company improve its margin profile. The company entered the motorcycle market in Feb'25 with the launch of its mass market EV motorcycle portfolio including Roadster X and Roadster X+. The company launched these motorcycles in five battery pack configurations with deliveries starting mid-March 2025. With the launch of the Gen 3 scooter portfolio and its entry into the motorcycle market, the company now has the widest portfolio of EVs in the country with 14 scooter and 5 motorcycle variants available for purchase. During November 2024, the company also announced its entry level scooter portfolio including Ola Gig, Gig+ and S1 Z. These products will allow Ola Electric to cater to new customer segments across personal and commercial mobility and feature a portable battery powered by the 4680 Bharat Cell. Deliveries of these products will start in Q1 FY26. During the quarter, the number of vehicles delivered by the Company stood at 84,029 units as against 86,775 units delivered in the same period last year. The company has exceeded its Q2 expansion target of 2,000 stores, expanding the distribution network to over 4,000 touchpoints by Dec'24, up from 784 company-owned stores in Sep'24 to cater to the

KITE boosts STEM Education with 29,000 Robotic Kits for Kerala schools

Bhubaneswar, Feb 8 (FN Agency)

Thiruvananthapuram, Feb 8 (FN Agency) Kerala Infrastructure and Technology for Education (KITE), the technology wing of the Kerala General Education Department, has distributed 29,000 robotic kits to high schools across Kerala, introducing students to emerging technologies like Artificial Intelligence, Robotics, and the Internet of Things (IoT). Following the distribution of 9,000 kits in 2022, KITE has added 20,000 more kits this year with CSR support. Indian Oil Corporation Ltd. provided 8,475 kits, Cochin Shipyard Ltd. contributed 4,615, and QBurst Technologies and Canara Bank donated 1,000 each. The open-hardware kits include Arduino Uno R3, LEDs, mini servo motors, LDRs, light and IR sensor modules, breadboards, buzzer modules, push-button switches, and resistors. Costing under Rs 1,000 per kit, they allow schools to easily obtain replacement parts, a release said. Students can build prototypes of devices such as traffic signals, street lights, electronic voting ma-



chines (EVMS), and walking sticks. The programming aspect promotes logical thinking, problem-solving, and analytical skills. Little KITEs, the country's largest student ICT network, engages 1.8 lakh students annually and played a key role in this initiative. Within the program, 66,737

ninth-grade students participated in school-level camps, 15,668 in sub-district camps, and 1,253 in district-level camps. A total of 123 students will attend the state camp on February 8 and 9. The camp will feature sessions with experts such as Prof. Prahlad Vadakkepat, Sunil Prabhakar, and Madhu K.S. Students will visit facilities specializing in drone technology, assistive technology, 3D printing, media production, and animation. Additionally, student-created animations will be previewed. On the second day, Felix Devasya, and Sudheer P.Y, along with Dr. Achuth Shankar S. Nair, will interact with students.

Rahul Gandhi spreading misleading views: Maha CM

New Delhi, Feb 8 (Representative)

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Saturday accused Congress leader and Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, of spreading misleading views, saying they are empowering forces of anarchy in the country. He made these remarks during a meeting with senior journalist and political analyst Bhau Torsekar and Jaipur Dialogue head Sanjay Dixit at the Jaipur Dialogue Deccan Summit event held here. Responding to Rahul Gandhi's recent comment on an increase of four million voters in the Maharashtra Assembly election as "vote engineering" by the ruling BJP, he reminded him of the



significant vote difference between the ruling Mahayuti and opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) in the Assembly elections, which was nearly of one crore votes. "If Rahul Gandhi analyses the reasons for his party's defeat, it could save the Congress, but if he keeps looking for excuses, Congress' position will worsen in the future," he retorted. Fadnavis further said, "Rahul Gandhi has always been a confused leader. He does not realise that public has lost trust in him. His views will remain the same as long as he holds press conferences with leaders like Shiv Sena's Sanjay Raut. These misleading views are giving strength to anarchists. Negative propaganda is being spread about constitutional institutions, which is

leading to an alliance of 180 anarchist groups. "He said that in the Lok Sabha elections, BJP's battle was with anarchist organisations that had spread several "fake narratives". However, during the Assembly elections, measures were taken by the RSS family to counter such propaganda, and they succeeded in achieving good results with the support of various RSS organisations, he added. Fadnavis also criticised the media, stating, "Reports about Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde's alleged displeasure have become a part of entertainment, with no truth in them. Eknath Shinde is a serious leader, and there have been attempts to spread false news about his dissatisfaction."He also condemned the lack of creativity in the media and criticised them for not providing accurate news based on information.

AAP stalwarts bite the dust

New Delhi, Feb 8 (Agency)



Almost all Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) heavy weights including its National Convenor Arvind Kejriwal, former Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia and minister Saurabh Bharadwaj faced crushing defeats in the crucial Delhi assembly elections for which votes were counted on Saturday. BJP's Parvesh Verma turned out to be the giant slayer by defeating former Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal by a margin of over 4,000 votes from the New Delhi assembly constituency. Sisodia lost to Tarvinder Singh Marwah of the BJP by a margin of over 600 votes Bharadwaj was humbled by BJP's Shikha Roy with a 3188-vote margin. The silver lining for AAP was the victories of Delhi Chief Minister Atishi and minister Gopal Rai. After a snake and ladder game In Kalkaji, Atishi defeated her nearest rival BJP's Ramesh Bidhuri with a margin of 3521 and Gopal Rai won the Babarpur seat by over 18994 votes. Prominent BJP candidates who won their seats are Kapil Mishra from Karawal Nagar, Manjinder Singh Sirsa won from Rajouri Garden, Rekha Gupta from Shalimar Bagh and Mohan Singh Bisht from Mustafabad, the constituency which recorded the highest voter share.Kailash Gahlot, who switched party and joined BJP ahead of the election won the Bijwasan seat, while his party colleague Satish Upadhyay won from Malviya Nagar by upsetting another prominent AAP leader and former Delhi minisrwe Somnath Bharti by nearly 2000 votes. Other prominent BJP winners were Raj Kumar Chauhan from Mangol Puri, Vijender Gupta from Rohini, Karnail Singh from Shakur Basti, Ravinder Singh Negi from Patparganj and former Cogngress man Arvinder Singh Lovely from Gandhi Nagar.At per the ECI data, BJP has already won 40 seats while, it was leading in eight seats. The AAP meanwhile has won in 17 seats while leading in five seats. The Congress meanwhile, faced the same fate of zero account in the elections. BJP garnered a vote share of 45.89 percent, AAP obtained 43.55 percent votes and the Congress could get 6.35 percent of the votes.



Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman with Reserve Bank of India Governor Sanjay Malhotra arrives for the 613th Meeting Central Board of Directors (CBD) of the RBI, in New Delhi.

AAP Chief Kejriwal concedes defeat, congratulates BJP

New Delhi, Feb 8 (FN Bureau)

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) National Convenor Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday conceded defeat in the Delhi assembly election and congratulated the BJP for their victory. In a video message, the former Chief Minister said, "I humbly accept the mandate of the people and also congratulate the BJP for their victory. I hope the BJP will fulfill all the promises they have made for which the people of Delhi have voted them". Kejriwal said that in the last 10 years, the AAP government had done a lot of work in the field of education, health, water, electricity and many other areas.



"During our tenure we also tried to build infrastructure. Now that the people of Delhi have given us a mandate we will play the role of a constructive opposition and continue to work for the welfare of people of Delhi," the former Chief Minister said. He said that they "did not come into politics for power" but considered politics a medium, through which they could do social work and address the needs of the people. Moreover, he also thanked all the AAP workers for bravely fighting the election.Meanwhile, the BJP has won the 70-member assembly election with a thumping majority, with the last round counting still underway in some constituencies.

"Development wins, good governance triumphs" PM Modi on BJP win in Delhi

New Delhi, Feb 8 (Representative)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday hailed the landslide victory of BJP in the assembly election in Delhi and said "Development wins and good governance triumphs". He emphasized "We will leave no stone unturned for the all-round development of Delhi".Jana Shakti is paramount! Development wins, good governance triumphs. I bow to my dear sisters and brothers of Delhi for this resounding and historic mandate to @BJP4India. We are humbled and honoured to receive these blessings." Modi wrote on social media handle X."It is our guar-



antee that we will leave no stone unturned in developing Delhi, improving the overall quality of life for the people and ensuring that Delhi has a prime role to play in building a Viksit Bharat" he said.According to the Election Commission, BJP is leading in 48 seats, while AAP in 22 seats. The Congress has failed to open its account for the third consecutive term."My salute

and congratulations to all my brothers and sisters of Delhi for giving a historic victory to BJP. I am very grateful to all of you for the abundant blessings and love you have given,' the Prime Minister wrote on X. "We will leave no stone unturned for the all-round development of Delhi and to make the lives of the people here better, this is our guarantee" Modi assured. Congratulating, party workers, he said , "I am very proud of all my workers of BJP, who worked day and night for this massive mandate. Now we will be even more strongly dedicated to the service of the people of Delhi".According to ECI, BJP have won five seats so far, and the party

First BIMSTEC Youth Summit held in Gandhinagar

New Delhi, Feb 8 (FN Agency)

The First BIMSTEC Youth Summit was held in Gandhinagar that saw young leaders from countries in the Bay of Bengal littoral region discuss challenges and opportunities in several areas including entrepreneurship and digital connectivity. The three-day summit was inaugurated by Union Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports Mansukh Mandviya and Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel and Secretary East Jaideep Mazumder.The MEA spokesperson said in a post on X: "The 1st BIMSTEC Youth Summit themed 'Youth as a bridge for intra-BIMSTEC exchange' was inaugurated by Minister of Youth Affairs & Sports @mansukhmandviya, CM Gujarat @Bhu-

pendrabjp, MoS @khadseraksha & Secretary (East) @JaideepMazumder in Gandhinagar.

"The 3-day congregation of young leaders of BIMSTEC discussed challenges and opportunities for the region in several areas including entrepreneurship, technologies, digital connectivity, sustainable development & most importantly forging ties transcending boundaries. "This initiative reaffirms India's commitment to promoting regional cooperation in line with 'Neighborhood First' policy, 'Act East' policy & SAGAR vision." CM Bhupendra Patel highlighted the role of today's youth in promoting youth leadership. He emphasized by working together, BIMSTEC nations can harness youth potential and drive inclusive growth for a brighter future.



No files to be removed from Secretariat without GAD permission: Delhi Govt

New Delhi, Feb 8 (Agency)

The Delhi Government on Saturday ordered that no file will be removed from the Delhi Secretariat, without appropriate permission, apparently apprehending that classified documents will be taken out in the wake of defeat of Aam Aadmi Party (AAP). According to the order issued by the Joint Director General Administration Department, Government of Delhi, "To address security concerns and the safety of records, it is requested that no files/documents, Computer Hardware etc. may be taken outside Delhi Secretariat complex without permission from GAD". "It is therefore directed that necessary directions may be issued to the concerned Branch In-charges under the Departments/Offices situated in Delhi Secretariat to ensure safety of records, files, documents, electronic files etc. under their section/branches", the order said. The direction comes as counting to the 70-member Delhi assembly is underway and the trends and results declared so far showed that BJP is all set to form the government in the National Capital.



Delhi election result reflects referendum on Kejriwal and AAP: Cong

New Delhi, Feb 8 (Agency)

Congress on Saturday said that the mandate given by the people of Delhi reflects nothing more than a "referendum on Arvind Kejriwal and the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP)". On his social media handle X, party spokesperson Jairam Ramesh said, "After all, at the height of the PM's popularity in 2015 and 2020, AAP had won decisively in Delhi. This shows that, rather than being vindication of the policies of the PM, this vote is a rejection of Arvind Kejriwal's politics of deceit, deception, and vastly exaggerated claims of achievement". He said that the Congress always took the lead in highlighting the



various scams that have occurred under Arvind Kejriwal and voters have pronounced their judgement on his twelve years of misrule. Ramesh said, "The Congress was expecting to do better. It has, however, increased its vote share". Stating that the party campaigned vigorously, Ramesh said, "It may not be in the Assembly but it is definitely a presence in Delhi, a presence that will be expanded electorally with the sustained efforts of lakhs of Congress workers. There will be a Congress Govt once again in Delhi in 2030". The drought for the grand old party continued as it could not open its account in the 2025 Delhi election, despite stalwarts like Sandeep Dikshit, Alka Lamba and Ragini Naik in the fray.

Keen to see Delhi gets a govt which serves its people: Sitharaman

New Delhi, Feb 8 (FN Agency)

As the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is almost sure to win Delhi Assembly election and form the government after nearly a quarter of century, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said the NCR (National Capital Region) should have a government which serves the cause of the people of Delhi. "Under PM Modi's leadership, we are very keen that Delhi gets a government which serves its people and this is something which is the need



of the hour for attaining Viksit Bharat 2047. The National Capital Region should have a government which serves the cause of the people," Sitharaman said while addressing the media, post Budget, along with RBI. "I strongly believe that the roadmap which the PM has set for the country should certainly take Delhi to the top priority and serve its people from every point of view, be it Human Development, Infrastructure development, Social sector growth like schools, hospitals," she added. BJP is leading at 48 seats out of 70, while the incumbent Aam Admi Party (AAP) in 22 seats.