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Inside

WORLD 8

PRESIDENT MACRON NAMES
CENTRIST ALLY BAYROU AS
FRANCE'S NEXT PM



Constitution Sparks Volatile Debate



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh speaks during a discussion on the 75th anniversary of the adoption of the Constitution of India in the Lok Sabha during the Winter Session of Parliament

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Initiating a two-day debate on Friday in the Lok Sabha on "Discussion on the Glorious Journey of 75 Years of the Constitution of India", Defence Minister Rajnath Singh accused Congress for always choosing "satta" (power) over the Constitution and never tolerated autonomy of institutions and tried to destroy constitutional principles and spirit. Singh was countered by Priyanka Gandhi, leading the Opposition said that it seems Prime Minister Narendra Modi has not understood that it is 'Bharat ka Samvidhan' not 'Sangh ka Vidhan'. She described the Constitution as a 'suraksha kavach' (protective shield) of justice, unity and freedom of expression and one the BJP-led Government has made every effort to break in the past 10 years. Provoking the Opposition MPs, Rajnath Singh said Congress has sought to project the Constitution as its own contribution, while deliberately ignoring the contribution of several leaders. "The talk of protection of the Constitution does not seem appropriate coming from it (Congress). These days, I see that many Opposition leaders keep the Constitution in their pockets. Actually, this is what they have learnt from childhood, they have seen their families keep the Constitution in their pockets for generations," he said, adding "the BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party), on the other hand, always bows before the Constitution and has never played with the independence and autonomy of institutions." Singh's assertion drew jibes from the members of the Opposition benches during a speech that was largely heard in attention. "Congress, during its decades in power, often amended the Constitution with a malicious spirit to change it gradually, while the Narendra Modi Government has effected amendments to strengthen its fundamental values and for people's empowerment", alleged Singh, inviting objections from Congress MPs. Whenever there was a choice, the Congress chose power

said, adding "the BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party), on the other hand, always bows before the Constitution and has never played with the independence and autonomy of institutions." Singh's assertion drew jibes from the members of the Opposition benches during a speech that was largely heard in attention. "Congress, during its decades in power, often amended the Constitution with a malicious spirit to change it gradually, while the Narendra Modi Government has effected amendments to strengthen its fundamental values and for people's empowerment", alleged Singh, inviting objections from Congress MPs. Whenever there was a choice, the Congress chose power

over the Constitution, he claimed. It always tried to "hijack and appropriate" the framing of the Constitution, Singh said, highlighting the imposition of Emergency, dismissal of many state governments and superseding of Supreme Court judges for "standing up" to the then Indra Gandhi government to charge the party with violating constitutional principles. The BJP leader said he is surprised that those who subverted the Constitution are now speaking for its protection. "Expressions for protecting the Constitution from the Congress do not look good," he said in a jibe at the Opposition party. The two-day debate, which is likely to end with Prime Minister's Modi's speech, is being seen as a highlight of the ongoing parliamentary session amid a running battle between the ruling party and the Opposition since the Lok Sabha poll campaign, which was marked by the INDIA bloc building its campaign on the Constitution being allegedly under threat from the BJP. Singh's mention of the country's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, a persistent target of the BJP's attack over the years, as one of those who contributed to the making of the Constitution drew rare cheers from the Opposition benches. The BJP leader, though, later also charged Nehru with amending the Constitution to override a Supreme Court judgment for "stifling" freedom of expression.



Notice moved in RS for Allahabad High Court Judge's impeachment

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Members of several Opposition parties on Friday moved a notice in the Rajya Sabha for the impeachment of Allahabad High Court Judge Shekhar Kumar Yadav over his alleged controversial remarks at a recent VHP event, sources said. The notice for moving the impeachment motion was signed by 55 opposition MPs, including Kapil Sibal, Vivek Tankha, Digvijaya Singh, John Brittas, Manoj Kumar Jha and Saket Gokhale. These MPs met the Rajya Sabha secretary general and handed over the notice for impeachment a few minutes before the start of the day's proceedings, the sources said. Some of the other prominent MPs who have signed the notice are P Chidambaram, Randeep Surjewala, Pramod Tiwari, Jairam Ramesh, Mukul Wasnik, Naseer Hussain, Raghav Chadha, Fauzia Khan, Sanjay Singh, AA Rahim, V Sivadasan and Renuka Chowdhury.

Three Indian students killed in Canada: MEA

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Three Indian students have been murdered in Canada last week and the Indian High Commission in Ottawa has taken up the matter of safety of Indians with the Canadian authorities, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said on Friday. The safety, security and welfare of Indian nationals in Canada remains of utmost importance to us, MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said. Jaiswal said the Indian missions in that country are in touch with the local authorities for thorough investigation of the incidents. "In the last week or so we have had unfortunate tragedies. Three Indian students have been murdered. We are saddened at these terrible tragedies that have struck our nationals in Canada. We extend our deepest condolences to the grieving families. Our High Commission and Consulates in Toronto and Vancouver are extending all possible help in the matter," he said. "Issues faced by them, especially Indian students, are raised by our high commission and Consulates with the relevant Canadian authorities on a regular basis," he said. "We have also issued an advisory for our nationals and Indian students to exercise extreme caution and remain vigilant in view of the deteriorating security environment in Canada as a result of the growing incidence of hate crimes and criminal violence," Jaiswal added. According to official data, over 400,000 Indian students are studying in Canada. Asked about reports of instances of the Indian high commission not granting visas in Canada, Jaiswal described them as a "disinformation" campaign. "We have seen the said media report. It is yet another example of Canadian media's disinformation to malign India," he said. "Granting of Indian visas is our sovereign function and we have the legitimate right to deny visas to those who undermine our territorial integrity," he said. "The commentary that we see in the Canadian media on this matter is akin to foreign interference in India's sovereign affairs," Jaiswal added.



MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal

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The system has failed us, say RG Kar docs

PNS ■ KOLKATA

The junior doctors, who led the months-long protest over the rape and murder of the resident doctor at the RG Kar Medical College and Hospital, expressed disappointment with the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) investigation into the case on Friday after two key suspects got bail from a court. The Sealdah court granted bail to RG Kar Medical College and Hospital's ex-principal Sandip Ghosh and former officer-in-charge of the Tala police station Abhijit Mondal in the rape and murder case of the on-duty doctor. They were granted bail after the CBI failed to file a charge sheet against them within the mandatory 90-day period. "We are extremely disappointed with the pace with which the CBI is handling this case," said junior doctor Aniket Mahato, a leading face of the protests that rocked the state. "The system has failed us, and the accused have been allowed to go free due to the sluggishness of the investigation. This delay in justice is a slap on the face of all those who have been



fighting for accountability," he added. The junior doctors started their demonstration after the body of their colleague was found at the RG Kar hospital on August 9. Following 50 days of cease work that paralysed the state's healthcare system, they went on hunger strike on October 5 amid the Durga Puja festival, demanding justice. The hunger strike was called off on October 24 after Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee met them. Mahato said they were firm in their resolve for justice. "We are not backing down," he said. "The CBI's inaction has only fueled our frustration. We will decide our next course of action soon and continue our fight for justice," he added. The CBI took over the case on the direction of the high court following allegations of mishandling by the police.

CCPA puts 17 direct selling firms in the dock

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

The Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) has issued notice to 17 direct selling firms including Oriflame India, and Suii Dhaaga Lifestyle, that were found in unfair trade practices, service deficiencies, and violations of the Consumer Protection (Direct Selling) Rules, 2021. According to the CCPA, of these 13 entities are currently under investigation while reply from three of the entities is awaited. Direct selling is a method of marketing, distribution and sale of goods or services directly to consumers, away from fixed retail premises. This method relies on independent representatives of the entity, known as direct sellers, selling products directly to customers, typically through personal contact, online platforms, or home presentations. The list includes multiple firms and the action comes in response to concerns about deceptive practices in the direct selling industry. "However, some fraudulent entities misuse the direct selling model to promote illegal pyramid or money circulation schemes. These firms often make unrealistic promises of high commissions, foreign trips, entrepreneurship, high returns and a wealthy future, contingent on recruiting others, which violates consumer trust and established laws, thereby exposing consumers to fraudulent pyramid and money circulation schemes. Three major signs that a product is being used to disguise pyramid schemes include large joining fee or investment, compensation paid for recruiting and no right of return, buy-back or cooling off period offered," the CCPA said. "The



government remains steadfast in its mission to create a fair, transparent, and consumer-friendly market ecosystem," the statement said. Consumers have been advised to exercise caution by checking disclosures carefully, avoiding recruitment-based earnings, understanding return and refund policies, reading contracts thoroughly and verifying direct sellers' credentials. The Consumer Protection (Direct Selling) Rules, 2021, were introduced to regulate direct selling entities and protect consumer interests and consumers will have to check certificate of Incorporation, PAN, GST Registration, important licenses as per the goods and services offered, Certificate of Registration of Trademark of the direct selling companies. These rules complement other existing regulatory frameworks, including the Consumer Protection (E-Commerce) Rules, 2020, and the Legal Metrology (Packaged Commodities) Rules, 2011. The Department has advised consumers to stay vigilant and report any suspected illegal activities or violations related to direct selling to the appropriate authorities.

IndiGo Airlines apologises 'On-Time, Every Time'



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Days after being tagged as the worst airlines in the world, Indigo on Friday apologised to the passengers stranded in Istanbul airport for hours owing to delays in flights to New Delhi and Mumbai. The airliner apologised for the inconvenience and assured that the issue would be sorted at the earliest. Passengers took to social media to recount their terrible experience. The trouble began when a flight from Istanbul to Delhi, scheduled to depart at 8.10 pm on December 12, was initially delayed to the next day at 1.30 pm. Passengers were left at the airport with little information or support from IndiGo staff. Similarly, the flight from Istanbul to Mumbai, originally set to depart at 8.15 pm on December 12, was first pushed to 11.00 pm, then delayed again to the following morning at 10 am. IndiGo operates one flight each daily from Delhi and Mumbai to Istanbul with Boeing 777 aircraft. Many of them have been stranded since Thursday. While the exact details of the impacted flights could not be immediately ascertained. Frustrated travellers took to social media to express their dissatisfaction, saying they received no communication from IndiGo regarding the ongoing delays. Despite promises of lounge access as compensation, the lounge at Istanbul Airport was overcrowded and unable to accommodate all the stranded travellers, they claimed on social media. "We are aware of the delays on the IndiGo flight connections to Istanbul. We accord the highest priority towards customer convenience and our teams are available at all contact points to assist customers," IndiGo said in a statement on Friday. The airline also apologised for the "inconvenience" caused to the passengers. Some passengers also shared pictures of people stuck at the airport. In a post on X, a passenger said, "first time to India and stranded at the Istanbul Airport for the last 24 hours because the IndiGo flight keeps cancelling. No food. No clarity. No representative. No compensation. Pathetic treatment". "Lot of people stranded at the airport due to pathetic services by @IndiGoE and @TurkishAirlines operators. Never book flights with them as they don't value passengers time. You can never be on time with @IndiGoE," another passenger said in a post on X.



Telugu actor Allu Arjun leaves from Gandhi Hospital after a medical check-up following his arrest, in Hyderabad

Actor Allu Arjun granted interim bail

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana High Court on Friday granted a four-week interim bail to actor Allu Arjun, who was arrested earlier in the day by the city police in connection with the death of a woman during the screening of his latest movie 'Pushpa 2: Here I Come'. The HC order came shortly after the actor was remanded to judicial custody for 14 days by a local court. He was sent to the jail at Chanchalguda here following the remand, amid tight security arrangements. The HC pronounced the order granting bail to Arjun while he was being taken to the jail. The court directed the actor to cooperate with the authorities in the investigation, while granting him interim bail. Earlier in the morning, Allu Arjun was arrested by the city police in connection with the death of a woman during the premiere of his latest movie 'Pushpa 2: The Rule'. The actor was taken into custody, amid tight security, from his residence and taken to Chikkadpally police station in a police vehicle.

SC to hear SPG petition on fate of three specialised vehicles

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Special Protection Group (SPG), which protects the Prime Minister, on Friday, moved the Supreme Court (SC) challenging an order of the National Green Tribunal (NGT) which refused to allow extension of registration period of three specialised armoured vehicles by five years. The matter came before a bench of Justices Abhay S Oka and Augustine George Masih, which took objection that the elite force approached the NGT for registration of its vehicle instead of moving the top court in the MC Mehta matter. The SC has been monitoring the air pollution crisis in Delhi in an ongoing Public Interest Litigation in the MC Mehta case. Appearing for the SPG, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, urged the Bench to consider the matter on an urgent basis and sought extension of registration period citing

importance of the vehicles. Tushar Mehta said these vehicles are an essential and integral part of Special Protection Group technical logistics. The Bench converted the matter in an interlocutory application and posted the matter for hearing on December 16. The NGT on March 22 had refused to grant the relief, saying such vehicles being diesel vehicles cannot be permitted to ply in the National Capital Region (NCR) on completion of 10 years. "We are conscious of the fact that these three vehicles are special purpose vehicles which are not normally available and these vehicles have run very less in the last 10 years and are needed for the specific purpose of security of the prime minister but in view of the order of the Supreme Court dated October 29, 2018, the prayer made in the M.A. Cannot be granted," the NGT had said.



Measles cases reported in K'mal, Ganjam, Puri

Vaccination drives underway

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Odisha is experiencing a resurgence of measles, a viral infection characterised by symptoms such as high fever and dermatological rashes, attributed to waning immunity among people. The concern was voiced on Friday by Director of Public Health Dr Nilakantha Mishra. Significant outbreaks have been witnessed in Raikia block of Kandhamal district and Sorada in Ganjam district, prompting a thorough investigation led by the Director of Public Health. Dr Mishra reported that approximately 30 individuals were initially affected in Raikia block, with most having recuperated; however, five individuals remain infected as of today. Efforts are underway to stem the spread through containment strategies within impacted areas. Dr Mishra said initial findings suggest that reduced immunity levels, potentially a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, may have facilitated the re-emergence of measles. However, the vaccination drives are being sustained across the State in response. Furthermore, some cases have surfaced in Puri district, with health authorities persistently conducting studies to enhance understanding of the outbreak. "Recently, I visited Padiguda village under the Raikia block of Kandhamal district and another village under the Sorada block of Ganjam. Around 30 persons were affected and most of them have been cured, except five active cases," director Dr Mishra stated. "We had previously sent the samples for testing, which were found to be positive. I visited to take stock of the situation. So that, appropriate steps can be taken to keep the viral infection at bay and prevent further spread," the Public Health Director added.

Mercury plummets in State

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The State is witnessing a sharp decline in temperature, signalling the arrival of winter across the State, albeit a bit late than in previous years. Mercury has begun to plummet with minimum night temperature falling below the normal in several regions. Despite the late onset, the chilling cold is gradually intensifying. In the coming days, temperatures in interior districts could reach as low as 9 degree Celsius. Moreover, urban areas are also expected to see the mercury dip below 15 degrees Celsius. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has predicted that temperatures will remain relatively stable over the next week with predominantly dry conditions likely. The Regional Office of the IMD here has also forecast an increase in fog across various parts of the State over the next two days. The twin cities of Bhubaneswar and Cuttack also woke up to chilling cold on Friday morning.

Pregnant woman murder: Husband is killer

Accused killed wife for opposing his extramarital affairs

NALINI SAHU ■ BHUBANESWAR
In a shocking turn of events, police on Friday arrested Deben Behera, husband of Simamayee Behera alias Soumya, in connection with her murder. Simamayee, who was seven months pregnant, was killed at Jhirdapali in Sundargarh district. Deben was taken into custody following intense interrogation that unraveled his

role in the murder.

Initially, Deben alleged that unidentified robbers shot Simamayee when she opened the door after hearing the doorbell ring around midnight.

"At around 12:50 am, my wife opened the door after hearing the doorbell. Two bike-borne assailants shot her when she resisted their attempt to snatch her necklace and other ornaments," Deben claimed.

However, police found multiple discrepancies in his statement, particularly questioning why a heavily pregnant



woman would answer the door late at night while other male family members were present.

Investigations revealed that Deben, a Panchayat Extension

Officer (PEO), conspired with his brother-in-law to kill Simamayee, who opposed his extramarital affairs.

"Deben Behera and his associates orchestrated the murder, trying to pass it off as a botched robbery. During questioning, he confessed to the crime," said Rourkela Superintendent of Police Nitesh Wadhvani.

Further investigation exposed inconsistencies in Deben's timeline. While he claimed the crime occurred at 12.50 am, neighbours reported hearing a gunshot around 12.20 am. Addition-

ally, Simamayee was taken to the local Bonai Hospital at 1.40 am though the hospital is only a 20-minute drive from their residence.

Suspicion deepened when police discovered that Deben waited for a driver to take Simamayee to the hospital despite knowing how to drive himself. Conflicting statements from family members present during the incident further unraveled the conspiracy.

Authorities assured of a comprehensive investigation and promised that all involved would face legal action.

DSBM student clinches golds at C'wealth Games



PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Suromita Sinha, 2nd year BBA student of DAV School of Business Management (DSBM), Bhubaneswar, has won two Gold Medals at the prestigious 11th Commonwealth Games Karate Championships.

Sinha's victory and accomplishment reflect her dedication, discipline and unparalleled skill.

She won two Gold Medals for India in Senior Team Kata and U-21 Individual Kata categories giving a tough fight to the athletes from various countries in Commonwealth Games Karate Championships held in Durban, South Africa from November 28 to December 1.

Dr KC Satapathy, Regional Director, DAV Institutions and Dr DN Mishra, Principal, DSBM, expressed immense

pride in Sinha's achievement, and stated that her unique achievements reflect the true spirit of hard work and perseverance that has resulted in her magnificent performance.

The management, faculty, staff, and fellow students of DSBM congratulated Sinha for her remarkable success and for bringing glory and pride to the DAV fraternity in Odisha and India.

In Cuttack dist Woman's blood-stained body found

Suspected murder; weapon recovered from spot

PNS ■ CUTTACK

A blood-soaked body of a woman was found on the bank of a river near Paramahansa under the Kandarpur police station in Cuttack district on Friday.

The body had deep injury in the face and the neck. It was suspected that the woman was murdered with a sharp weapon.

Being informed, the Cuttack police reached the spot and started an investigation into the incident. A sharp-edged weapon was seized from the spot.

"Om Baba Balia' has been written in Odia in a tattoo on the left hand of the deceased.

Moreover, 'pita kpsm' has been written in the left hand. I request people to intimate the police if they have any information in this connection. Then we can identify the body," said Cuttack DCP Jagmohan Meena.

"The body has deep injury marks inflicted by a sharp-edged weapon. Prima facie, it is suspected that the woman has been murdered. Nobody has lodged any complaint about the incident so far. The deceased is still unidentified. We will register a case if any local residents report about the incident," he said.

"We will verify all the 'missing' reports filed in all the police stations in Cuttack district. We will also request people to give us some clues based on the tattoos on the body as part of our investigation," he added.

In Mayurbhanj Student dies after administered wrong injection

Student dies after administered wrong injection

PNS ■ BARIPADA

A Class-X student died after allegedly being administered a wrong injection in Karanjia of Mayurbhanj district. The deceased was identified as Sukhdev Munda of Dharapada village under the Pandapoda police station in Keonjhar district.

According to sources, Sukhdev was suffering from a skin infection. His father had taken him to a local pharmacy 'Sarbeswar Medicines' at Saharapada Market. However, the pharmacist assured them that the injection would lead to a swift recovery.

Within a minute of being

given the injection, Sukhdev's condition deteriorated, resulting in his death. Family members attempted to save him by rushing him to the Karanjia hospital, but doctors pronounced him dead upon arrival.

Sukhdev was a student of Saharapada Sishu Vidya Mandir. The incident sparked outrage in the hospital premises as Sukhdev's family demanded action against the pharmacist who administered the injection.

However, the pharmacist absconded following the incident and a police investigation was currently underway to find his whereabouts.

85 homoeo docs, 239 radiographers recruited

52 Lecturers also appointed

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The State Government appointed 376 persons including 85 homoeopathic doctors, 239 radiographers in the Health Department and 52 Lecturers in the Higher Education Department at a Nijukti Mela here on Friday.

Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi congratulated the newly-appointed doctors, Lecturers and Radiographers and advised them to work with professional and service motive. He advised them to remain committed to their duties and not give vent to cor-



ruption.

He said Odisha has not achieved the expertise it should have in the health and education sectors. "Odisha is third from the bottom among 28 States in the recently-published health ranking by the NITI Aayog. Odisha has got only 40.19 out of 100. But earlier, it was widely advertised in the name of world-class

healthcare. Now, this situation has to be changed," he said.

Majhi said there is a need for infrastructure and trained human resources for good health services. The State Government is working systematically to solve both these problems. Medical colleges would be established in all the districts in the next five years.

In Bhubaneswar

Kriyanustan Committee holds dharna for S Odisha dev

Demand immediate attention from govt

RAJEEV RATHAN ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Milita Kriyanustan Committee, a coalition advocating for the development of south Odisha, organised a massive Gana Dharana on Tuesday at Lower PMG in Bhubaneswar to highlight the region's longstanding developmental and infrastructural needs. The gathering of citizens demanded immediate attention from the State Government to address the socio-economic challenges in the area.

The committee submitted a detailed memorandum to Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi emphasising a compre-



hensive set of sectoral demands. Despite assurances during the Chief Minister's earlier visit to Brahmapur, the committee noted, no substantial progress has been made on the promised projects.

Among the key demands presented was restoration of the historical identity of the region with the committee calling for renaming of the Bay of Bengal as "Kalinga Sagar" to honour Odisha's rich maritime history and combat colonial erasure of its prominence.

The committee also advocated for significant administrative reforms, including establishment of a South Odisha Development Council headquartered in Brahmapur, creation of new districts by dividing Ganjam and merger of 18 suburban panchayats with the Berhampur Municipal Corporation to form a "Greater Brahmapur". Additionally, the committee called for creation of new municipalities and NACs for better governance and public services.

On the connectivity front, the committee called for development of a greenfield domestic and cargo airport near the IISER in Brahmapur, expansion of several railway lines and upgradation of the Brahmapur railway station under the ABSS Scheme. They also demanded completion of the Brahmapur ring road and express highways connecting key regions in south Odisha.

The committee pushed for industrial and economic development by demanding estab-

lishment of industries such as a shipbuilding factory, aluminum plant and pharmaceutical manufacturing units as well as promoting IT, textile and food processing clusters to generate employment.

In the area of healthcare and education, the committee called for establishment of an AIIMS in Brahmapur, new medical colleges in south Odisha districts and sanctioning of an Indian Institute of Information Technology (IIIT) and a fishery university in Brahmapur. They also urged opening of Sainik Schools, Kendriya Vidyalayas and a tribal university in the region.

Additionally, the memorandum included demands for formation of a permanent High Court Circuit Bench in Brahmapur, recognition of Jaugada and Marada as Bud-

dhist and tourist circuits and installation of statues honouring notable figures such as Sir Anepi Parsuram Patra, Kabi Surjya Baladev Ratha and Kabi Samrat Upendra Bhanja.

The memorandum concluded with a stern ultimatum. If the demands are not fulfilled, the committee would intensify its call for a separate "Kalinga State" comprising south Odisha districts, including Boudh and Nuapada. Speaking at the event, committee Convener Saroj Ranjan Patnaik said the implementation of these demands would unlock the socio-economic potential of south Odisha and align the region with the nation's broader development objectives. The ball is now in the government's court to act decisively on these demands.

Dutee Chand's car hit by truck driver in Cuttack



Olympian has a narrow escape

PNS ■ CUTTACK

Dutee Chand, Odisha's Olympian sprinter, narrowly escaped a car accident near OMP Square in Cuttack on her journey back to Bhubaneswar from Jajpur. The incident occurred when a truck collided with her vehicle, causing considerable damage to her car.

Remarkably, Dutee, who was accompanied by a friend, was able to pursue the truck, eventually bringing it to a halt near the Kathajori Bridge after the driver attempted to flee the scene. Being informed, the Madhupatna police promptly responded by seizing the truck and taking the driver into custody for questioning.

Dutee claimed that the truck

driver not only hit her vehicle but also engaged in shouting verbal abuses and exhibiting inappropriate behaviour.

"We were on our way to Bhubaneswar from Jajpur. A truck driver was honking at us near OMP Square just before reaching Cuttack Link Road. We looked out of the window and saw him abusing us. We gave him way, but he intentionally hit our vehicle and tried to speed away. Later, I chased him and stopped him near Kathajori Bridge. I then called PCR who swiftly reached the spot and protected us," Dutee stated.

"The driver has been detained and his vehicle has also been seized. The way he intentionally hit our vehicle, I'm safe only because we were on a BMW. The situation would have been worse if it was some other vehicle," Dutee added.

New brain drain trend in India quite concerning

In recent decades, India has witnessed an exodus of its brightest minds—a trend widely referred to as the "brain drain." But now, a new and more complex dimension is unfolding in this age-old phenomenon. It's no longer just about skilled professionals leaving India for greener pastures abroad; it's about a growing disillusionment among the youth, a sense of lost opportunities, and a shift in the way they view their future in the country.

The signs of this new brain drain are clear. Highly educated young Indians are not only leaving for traditional hotspots like the United States, the UK, and Canada but are also venturing into new territories like Australia, Germany, and even Singapore. These young minds are often seen in top universities, multinational corporations, or research institutions abroad—highly educated, ambitious, and armed with cutting-edge skills. While this may be seen as a natural flow of talent, the rising numbers indicate a serious gap in the opportunities



RAJESH KUMAR TRIPATHY

available for them at home.

What makes this new form of brain drain particularly concerning is that it is no longer just the result of better wages or career prospects abroad. Many of these young professionals are driven by frustrations that are closer to home. In an era of rapid technological change, India's economic and policy infrastructure has struggled to keep pace with the demands of an educated, ambitious

workforce. India has long been celebrated for its booming tech industry and startup culture, but for many young people, the reality is that these industries are still mired in bureaucratic delays, outdated policies, and systemic inefficiencies.

India has produced some of the world's most talented engineers, scientists, and entrepreneurs, but many of them are opting to build their careers abroad, where access to cutting-edge research, better work-life balance, and innovation-friendly ecosystems are seen as more abundant. Worse, the education system, while producing an ever-growing pool of graduates, often fails to meet the rapidly changing demands of the global job market.

There is also a palpable sense of disappointment regarding the political climate. Many young Indians are increasingly skeptical of the country's ability to deliver the reforms needed to make India a truly competitive global power.

However, what is perhaps most

telling is the growing trend of Indian students seeking opportunities for a permanent migration, not just education or temporary employment. This shift reflects an underlying shift in mindset: young Indians are no longer just seeking to gain experience abroad and return home; they are looking for full time settlement, fulfillment of modern aspirations, and personal satisfaction—elements they feel are in short supply in India.

So, what is the solution? The first step is acknowledging that the problem exists and addressing it head-on. Government can not do everything, the rest of the stakeholders must join hands and help in implementing policies that not only attract global talent but also retain homegrown talent. This involves serious investments in the education system, reforming outdated industries, fostering an innovation ecosystem, and streamlining bureaucratic hurdles that often discourage entrepreneurial ventures. At the same time, there must be a broader cultural shift that rec-

ognizes the value of innovation and creativity over traditional job security.

The rise of this new brain drain should be a wake-up call for Indian thought leaders. The country has long prided itself on its intellectual capital, but unless it creates a fertile ground for that capital to thrive, it risks becoming a net exporter of talent, rather than a global hub of innovation.

India stands at a crossroads. It can either build a future where its young talent is nurtured and empowered to thrive within its borders or see them continue their exodus to more welcoming shores. The choice is clear, and it lies in the hands of policymakers, educational leaders, and the business community. Only with concerted, long-term efforts to revamp the country's infrastructure, education system, and overall governance can India hope to reverse the tide of its new brain drain and secure its future as a global leader. (Email: rajeshkumartripathy@gmail.com; Mob- 9692333031)

Rs 61L Mosquito Larvicidal Oil scam 3 Jharsuguda Municipality officials, supplier held

PNS ■ CUTTACK
The Vigilance police on Friday arrested four persons, including three municipality officials, for misappropriating government funds of Rs 61 lakh for the purchase of public health sanitation materials, specifically Mosquito Larvicidal Oil, during 2022-23 and 2023-24 in the Jharsuguda Municipality.

The arrested were identified as Manoj Kumar Tandhi, former Executive Officer of Jharsuguda Municipality;

Bikash Pasayat, Sanitary Inspector; Biswa Ranjan Sahoo, Sanitation Expert; and Ashutosh Sharma, supplier and proprietor of Fusion Group of Jharsuguda.

A Vigilance probe revealed that in 2023, Manoj Kumar Tandhi placed a supply order for 10,200 litres of Mosquito Larvicidal Oil to Fusion Group at an exorbitant rate. The supplier delivered 9,500 litres of oil and submitted seven invoices totalling Rs 70.30 lakh.

In the 2022-23 financial year, the same oil was purchased at

Rs 77 per litre from Orissa Rubber Udyog Limited. However, in 2023-24, the accused individuals conspired with the supplier to purchase 9,500 litres of oil at Rs 740 per litre, nearly 10 times the previous year's rate, resulting in an excess payment of Rs 660 per litre.

The government deducted 2% GST/TDS from the bill amount, totalling Rs 1.25 lakh. The actual misappropriation amount was Rs 61.44, 600.

All the arrested were forwarded to a Special Vigilance Court in Sambalpur.

Cousins sell tea to meet study expenses in K'pada

As their families not financial sound

RAJESH BEHERA ■ KENDRAPADA

If there is a will, there is a way. Two impoverished college goers in Kendrapada district have proved this. They have opened a tea stall for some income to bear the expenses of their studies.

Arpita Priyadarshini Das alias Lony and her cousin brother Rajaram Sahu alias Sonu, both students at Kendrapada Autonomous



College, faced immense financial hardship for their studies. While Arpita, daughter of

Aruna Kumar Das of Badajaria village under Pattamundai block, is pursuing

her Post Graduation in Political Science, her uncle's son Sonu of Daruora village under Pattamundai block is a B Com 1st year student. Both are staying in a private mess at Udayanagar.

Their families struggle hard to make both ends meet. While Arpita's father is working in a hotel in Hyderabad, Rajaram belongs to a farmer's family.

As both the families are not financially sound, they often failed to provide them money. As a result, the duo launched a tea stall, called "Sonu-Lony tea stall" at Tinimuhani. They

open the tea stall from 5 am to 8 am and later they go to attend classes at the college. After completing their routine works, they again open the shop in the evening, from 6 pm to 8 pm. They study during night hours, after closing their tea stall, said Rajaram.

"By selling tea we both manage to earn around Rs 600 to Rs 700 per day as we are giving special tea at Rs 5 per cup. With modest earnings, we are able to meet all our expenses. We want to continue our study while not becoming a burden on our families," asserted Arpita.

In Dhenkanal Traffic jams on DHH road hit emergency services

PNS ■ DHENKANAL
Frequent traffic jams and blocking of the road is making it difficult for essential services like ambulances on a major road in Dhenkanal town.

The main road connecting Mahavir Bazaar to the District Headquarters Hospital is always witnessing traffic jams. The problem turns critical when ambulances and fire tenders get stuck for hours due to the congestion.

Locals alleged that lack of proper planning and indifferent attitude of the district administration have led to the current situation.

"People from across Dhenkanal district visit the hospital and several settlements have also come up along the stretch making it very congested. The administration knows this issue but it is not taking any steps to solve it," claimed a resident, Sishir Sathpathy.

Notably, efforts to widen the road began six years ago, but there has been little progress. A decision for road expansion was taken in 2018, with 2022 being fixed as the target year of completion, but issues with land acquisition have allegedly, almost, stalled the project.

Dhenkanal MLA and Food Supplies & Consumer Welfare Minister Krushna Chandra Patra assured that the problem would be resolved soon. "A proposal for road widening was accepted recently and discussions are on to carry out the project with minimum hindrance to medical services," said Patra.

Paddy Mandis opened across N'rangpur dist

Target to procure 13L qntrs in first phase

MOHAR MOHANTY ■ NABARANGPUR

The district administration of Nabarangpur has started paddy procurement process and inaugurated Mandis for the ongoing kharif season 2024-2025 on December 10.

In view of the hiccups in paddy procurement process in the previous years, the district administration has chalked out plans to prevent distress sale of paddy by farmers this time. With 42,411 farmers registering for the process this year, a target has been set to

procure 13 lakhs quintal of paddy in first phase, said District Civil Supply Officer Ajay Mallick.

Sources said the minimum support price (MSP) for grade A paddy has been fixed at Rs 2,320 per quintal while it is Rs 2,300 for common variety along with an input assistance of Rs 800 per quintal. This year, a decision was taken to buy paddy in 60 Mandis and for this 60 nodal officers and 19 supervisors have been appointed. It was discussed in the meeting that cameras will be installed at six places along the border area of Chhattisgarh to prevent the entry of paddy from outside the State.

It is worth noting that paddy

is cultivated in 1.6 lakh hectares of land in Nabarangpur district and around 40 lakh quintals of paddy is harvested from it. The government has decided to purchase 19 quintal per acre from irrigated land and 13 quintal from non-irrigated land. Due to good rains this year it is expected that non-irrigated land will yield 24 quintal of paddy per acre and irrigated land will yield 30 quintal of paddy per acre.

As per report in the year 2022-2023, 25 lakh quintal of paddy was purchased while 13 lakh quintal of paddy was purchased in the year 2023-2024 due to insufficient rain. But given the likely good harvest this year, farmer leader Khemraj

Bagh has demanded the government to purchase 30 lakh quintal of paddy this year to save the farmers from distress sale of paddy.

However, the ongoing paddy procurement process has not been hassle-free in the district. Even though all the mandis in the district were officially inaugurated, not a single grain of paddy was purchased. The Millers and Farmers' Association expressed displeasure over not being invited to Dabugaon Mandi. Contacted regarding non-purchase of paddy on the first day, CSO Mallick said, "Tokens have been generated and the information is available to the farmers."

Boudh farmers worried over late opening of Mandis

PNS ■ BOUDH

Boudh's farmers are worried over late opening of the Mandis, which is impacting timely disposal of paddy.

To address the issue, the administration must prioritise timely Mandi opening and ensure that markets are functional to support farmer's timely sales. Boudh's farmers have established a reputation for producing exceptional rice quality. The district is primarily a non-industrial area. The agricultural community in Harbhanga, Kantamal, and Boudh boasts impressive rice production standards, with farmers successfully differentiating themselves through high-quality rice exports.



However, despite their resilience in overcoming natural disasters, farmers are struggling with delayed market entry and unseasonal rain is further complicating the situation.

To resolve the issue, the administration and MLAs must work together to prioritise the opening of Mandis to facilitate smooth procurement and sales, demanded the farmers here.

Farm Mechanisation Mela held in JSpur



PNS ■ JAGATSINGHPUR

The District Level Farm Mechanisation Mela -2024, formerly known as Agriculture Exhibition, was inaugurated at the Collectorate ground on Sunday.

The mela aims to create awareness among the farmers and agriculture dependents on all ongoing schemes in the agriculture sector and to educate farmers on the use of modern agricultural technology in farming.

The event also facilitates a common platform for the

purchase of agricultural machines, tools and equipment at subsidy prices. According to the district Agriculture Department, as many as 60 stalls have been set up showcasing several agricultural equipment, machinery and agricultural produce. The inaugural event was attended by MP Bibhu Prasad Tarai, MLA Amarendra Das, Collector J Sonal, Zilla Parishad President Manoj Bhoi, Municipality Chairperson Archana Singh and Chief District Agriculture Officer Biswajit Panda. The Mela will continue till December 12.

Hackathon Grand Finale ends at IIT-BBS



180 students in 26 teams join

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Grand Finale of the 7th Edition of Smart India Hackathon has come to an end. The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT)

Bhubaneswar was the nodal agency for the event and IIT Bhubaneswar Research and Entrepreneurship Park (IITBBS REP) hosted the 2-day Hackathon (Software Edition), which was aimed at nurturing creative mindset and problem-solving ability among students.

During the valedictory ceremony held on December 12, the top performing teams from different problem areas were provided with a cash prize on Rs 1 lakh each.

Joint Secretary, CAO Startup Odisha, Kamaljit Das handed over the awards to the winners, in the presence of

Assistant Innovation Director, MoE's Innovation Cell & AICTE Dipan Sahu; Regional Coordinator MoE Innovation Cell Shivendra Mani Tripathi and CEO, IITBBS REP Dr Soobhankar Pati.

A total of 180 students in 26 teams participated in the hackathon.

K'pada beggar felicitated for noble gesture

RAJESH BEHERA ■ KENDRAPADA

The members of Sri Jagannath Charitable Trust on Sunday felicitated a sexagenarian visually impaired beggar, Manguli Basantia. Basantia, though begs at temples, he donates his day's earnings to the same temples.

The members of Sri Jagannath Charitable Trust led by its president Daman Mohanty felicitated Basantia, with shawl and an image of



Baladev, Subhadra and Jagannath, by visiting to his house at Badiha village under Mahakalapada block.

The trust members also donated winter clothes to the visually impaired beggar and his wife. Basantia shows this ges-

ture with a prayer to Almighty to end the sufferings of poverty-stricken people.

"When we asked why he donates all his money, Basantia said being a beggar he prays before the Almighty for the betterment of the donors from

whom he collects money," said Engineer Prasant Kumar Das.

The local priest of HaraGauri temple informed that Basantia donated Rs 30,000 that he collected from begging to the temple construction of Hara Parvati. He too donated a sum of Rs 10,000 for the developmental work of Jagulai temple. There are many such cases where Basantia has already donated lakh of rupees that he collected from begging to several temples of the district.

Blood crunch at K'pada DHH hits thalassemia, anaemia patients

Poor people forced to visit SCB

RAJESH BEHERA ■ KENDRAPADA

The fate of about eight children, suffering from thalassemia and anaemia, hangs in balance due to shortage of blood at the District Headquarters Hospital, Kendrapada.

These children need regular packed red blood cell transfusion, but to their irony, the required blood for the thalassemia and anaemia patients remain unavailable most of the time at the DHH blood bank, alleged the parents of the children, who added that they have had to go to Cuttack-based SCB Medical College and Hospital for the required

blood transfusion. Brahmanand Sethy of Purusottampur village, a poor dailywager, is a worried man as his 9-year-old son and 7-year-old daughter have been reeling under thalassemia and anaemia. Both need blood transfusion every month to survive. As most of the time, there is shortage of blood at the DHH, he is forced to spend not less than Rs 2,000 every month to take the children to SCB for blood transfusion. "I don't know how long I can afford it," stated Sethy.

Similarly, the 12-year-old girl of Baidhar Sethi, and nearly 6 other children of Dalit villagers of Purusottampur village have also been suffering from thalassemia disease and they need blood transfusion every

month. Due to non-availability of blood for their wards' blood group, these poor families are forced to take them to Cuttack. As these parents are daily wagers, it is becoming difficult for them to afford to visit Cuttack for blood transfusion.

The blood shortage, coupled with inconsistent quality, led many families from Kendrapada to seek care at Cuttack's central blood bank.

As their children grow, the blood requirement increases from an initial 50-100 millilitres to nearly 700 millilitres per month. However, these families are often able to secure 100 millilitres from Cuttack's facilities only, leaving them desperate to cover the deficit, alleged the family members.

Every missed transfusion brings new symptoms to their wards as their sick children develop swell, whereas their limbs become pale, and their strength ebbs away.

When contacted, in-charge CDMO of Kendrapada Dr Pramod Kumar Praharaj stated that each month, between 130-160 thalassemia patients require blood from the district blood bank adding that genetic factors contribute to the high incidence of the disease.

While the blood bank needs 10,000 units of blood to change it to PRBC, Kendrapada's collection rate remains low, with just 300-400 units per month, totaling only 3,600-4,800 units annually. Even, the blood bank lacks machines required for the purpose along staff shortage, sources informed.

Petition seeks relief against BU's arbitrary rules

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

NGO, Stayee Bikasha Lakshya (SBL), alleging that the Berhampur University has some arbitrary and monopolistic provisions in contravention of the UGC norms, has submitted petitions to the Department of Higher Education, Odisha, besides the President and Prime Minister of India and the Governor of Odisha.

While according to Clause 5 of the UGC Regulations, 2022, higher education institutions (HEIs) may admit students to PhD programmes either through qualifying national-level tests such as UGC-NET, CSIR-NET, GATE, or CEED based on an interview, and/or an entrance test conducted at the level of the individual HEI, the prospectus for pre-PhD course work 2024-25 issued by

Berhampur University lacks any provision for conducting an institution-level entrance test (URET), effectively violating the mandated admission procedure.

Similarly, Clause 6(1) of the UGC Regulations, 2022, specifies that permanent faculty members with a PhD and requisite peer-reviewed publications may act as research supervisors during their probationary period. However, Berhampur University has imposed an additional and arbitrary condition in that a faculty member is eligible to guide research scholars only after completing two years from the date of the award of their PhD. This restriction contravenes the UGC guidelines.

Another critical issue is getting the answer scripts through RTI Act. But the imposition of Rs 500 per script is exorbitant,

arbitrary, and unjustifiable. Besides, the 45 days time period violates the objectives and principles of the Act, 2005, the SBL said.

Yet another serious grievance put forth by the SBL regarding the discriminatory and negligent attitude of BU in verification of educational certificates of Law Graduates for the issuance of LLB practice licence by the Odisha State Bar Council (OSBC). It also raised serious dissatisfaction over BU's illegal debarring of meritorious students from taking admission into the Post Graduate (PG) Degree on the grounds that they have already completed a Post Graduate Degree from the university and violation of environmental rules by burning fossil fuels within campus.

The NGO complained that the Vice-Chancellor, as an ad-

ministrative head, does not possess the authority to introduce regulations contravening existing laws. Imposing such arbitrary rules erodes public trust.

It sought a direction from the authorities to Berhampur University to immediately align its PhD admission and supervision policies with the UGC Regulations, 2022, initiate a review of the prospectus for pre-PhD course work 2024-25 and all related notifications for compliance with UGC norms, ensure that all HEIs, including Berhampur University, adhere to standardized admission processes, conduct an immediate high level inquiry to determine whether Berhampur University's fees and time period taken to share information under the RTI Act, 2005 do not violate the provisions of the very Act.

Indian forces going to all patrolling points in Depsang: Jaishankar

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Friday that security forces would be going to all patrolling points in Depsang in Ladakh and also to the eastward limit which are historically been India's patrolling limit. He said in Lok Sabha that the last of the disengagement agreement with China was related to Depsang and Demchok. "I want to convey that it was mentioned in my (previous) statement (in Parliament) that the understanding envisaged that Indian security forces would be going to all patrolling points in Depsang, and would be going to the eastward limit which are historically been our patrolling limit in that part," he said during Question Hour. The minister said in the same statement, he has made it clear that India had disengagement agreements with China in the past too. "Those disengagement agreements also had certain provisions where both sides on a temporary basis had agreed to put certain restraint on themselves. So I think the position is very clear in that statement. I would urge the honourable member to read that statement again," he said replying to a supplementary question on India-China boundary agreement. Replying to a question on a picture of Nepal currency that allegedly showed a part of Indian territory as its own, Jaishankar said India's position regarding the border is very clear. He said if any of India's neighbours thinks that by doing something they want to change India's position, they should be very clear that it is not going to happen. "I think the entire House is clear on that with me," he said.

On Myanmar, the minister said because of the very disturbed conditions in Myanmar, India had to review the Free Movement Regime (FMR), which allows people residing close to the India-Myanmar border to venture 16 km into each other's territory without any documents. He, however, said the government is sensitive to the requirements of the border communities and is working something on that. Jaishankar said part of the challenge along Myanmar border is that there is very little government authority on the other side of the border and whatever is required to do, India itself has to do on its own. "But today definitely there is much greater presence there to secure our border, to monitor people across the border," he said. On a question on India's neighbourhood first policy,



Jaishankar said before Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Nepal, there was no visit by any Prime Minister to Nepal for 17 years but that did not mean that nobody in India cared for Nepal. Similarly in case of Sri Lanka, before Modi visited the country, for 30 years, there was no bilateral visit, he said. The minister said with regards to Maldives under the current government, the Addu Link Road and Reclamation Project, which was funded by India, was inaugurated and he himself was present. "By the way, the President of Maldives was present at the oath taking ceremony of this new government," he said. Jaishankar said if an opposition member desires to somehow show the foreign policy of this government in bad light for political purposes, that is the member's privilege. "That is not my nature to make foreign policy partisan.

But I would like to remind the member through you that the very Maldives which he was talking about was, Indian companies were driven out from there from an important project in 2012. "In same Sri Lanka, Hambanethota was built by China in 2008. The same Bangladesh was giving support to terrorists till 2014. The same Myanmar was hosting Indian insurgent groups," he said. The minister said for carrying out development projects, both India and the country concerned need to cooperate. "If we look today at the number of projects, the volumes of trade, the exchanges which are taking place, I think the answer is very clear. Now, our neighbours also have their politics. They have ups and downs in their countries. There are some implications on us. Relations are important. We are mature. We don't get into point score," he said.

UP court summons Rahul Gandhi over remarks against Savarkar



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

A local court here on Friday summoned Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on January 10, 2025, to face trial for allegedly promoting enmity and disturbing harmony among people by making mischievous statements about freedom fighter Vinayak Damodar Savarkar. Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate (ACJM) Alok Verma passed the order on a criminal complaint filed by local lawyer Nripendra Pandey. The court found that prima facie offences under sections 153(a) (promoting enmity between different groups) and 505 (statements conducing to public mischief) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) were made out against Gandhi, also the leader of opposition in the Lok Sabha. The ACJM rejected the complaint on June 14, 2023, but the revisional court set aside the rejection order on October 3, 2024, and remanded the matter to the ACJM for passing a fresh order based on the material that

had come on record in the complaint and statements of witnesses. In the inquiry, police confirmed that Gandhi made the "objectionable" statement against Savarkar in Maharashtra and it was broadcast on television and other communication mediums. The complaint in the case states that at a press conference during his Bharat Jodo Yatra in Akola, Maharashtra on November 17, 2022, Gandhi made serious remarks against Savarkar that spread communal disharmony, according to the order. The complainant alleged that Gandhi called Savarkar "a servant of the British who received a pension from them" and distributed pamphlets to media-persons to tarnish his image. Passing the summoning order, the court observed, "The material presented demonstrates that Gandhi's remarks, broadcast nationwide via TV and social media, were intended to spread hatred and enmity, undermining the nation's unity".

All Indian nationals who wished to return home from Syria evacuated: MEA

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

India has evacuated from Syria all its nationals who wished to return home after rebel forces overthrew President Bashar Assad's authoritarian government in the Arab nation. The Syrian government collapsed on Sunday as the rebels seized control of capital Damascus after capturing several other prominent cities and towns. India evacuated its nationals from Syria on Tuesday. "We have evacuated all Indian nationals in Syria who wished to return home following recent developments in that country. So far, 77 Indian nationals from Syria have been evacuated," Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said on Friday. Our embassy personnel in Damascus accompanied them to a pilgrimage to Syria have also left Beirut yesterday to visit other religious sites in the region," Jaiswal added. The Indian Embassy in Syria con-



immigration, he said. He was replying to a question at his weekly media briefing. Jaiswal said the embassy made arrangements for their boarding and lodging in Beirut and for their travel back home. "Most of our nationals have already returned to India and the remaining will be arriving later today or tomorrow," he said. "The 44 Zaireen who were on a pilgrimage to Syria have also left Beirut yesterday to visit other religious sites in the region," Jaiswal added. The Indian Embassy in Syria con-

tinues to function, he added. India on Monday called for a peaceful and inclusive Syrian-led political process to bring stability in that country. "We are monitoring the situation in Syria in the light of on-going developments. We underline the need for all parties to work towards preserving the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Syria," the MEA had said. "We advocate a peaceful and inclusive Syrian-led political process respecting the interests and aspirations of all sections of Syrian society," it said.

TB continues to impose heavy economic burden on patients in India: ICMR study

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Tuberculosis (TB) continues to impose a heavy economic burden on patients in India, with nearly 45 per cent incurring catastrophic costs due to lost productivity and hospitalization despite free diagnosis and care under the Government's National TB Elimination Programme (NTEP), a recent study by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has revealed. Many patients, particularly those from lower-income groups and without health insurance, face significant out-of-pocket expenses, it said, noting that notably, hospitalised patients with TB (PwTB) and those notified from the private sector were more likely to incur catastrophic costs.



The study led by researchers from the ICMR-National Institute of Epidemiology (ICMR-NIE), in Chennai and published in the Global Health Research and Policy journal, estimated the costs incurred by 1,407 persons with TB during their care and also identified the factors associated with the costs. The team led by Kathiresan Jayashree, a scientist at ICMR-NIE measured total patient costs through direct medical,

non-medical, and indirect costs. Catastrophic costs were defined as expenditures on TB care cost more than 20 per cent of the annual household income. The mean age of the 1407 PwTB interviewed was 40.8 (16.8) years. Among them, 865 (61.5 per cent) were male, and 786 (55.9 per cent) were economically active. Thirty-four (2.4 per cent) had Drug Resistant TB (DRTB), and 258 (18.3 per cent) had been hospitalized for TB. Direct costs accounted for 34 per cent of the total costs. TB patients less than 60 years of age, without health insurance, and those hospitalised for the condition experienced higher median costs. About 45 per cent of TB patients experienced catastrophic costs. The study called for enabling early notification of TB, and

"expanding the coverage of health insurance schemes to include persons with TB. "Implementing TB-sensitive strategies to address social determinants of TB may significantly reduce catastrophic costs incurred by persons with TB," Jayashree said. Expanding the net of coverage of health insurance schemes, both public and private, to cover TB diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation will encourage better health seeking and also reduce financial catastrophe in households of PwTB. "Future costing exercises may also calculate the costs incurred by patients after declaration of their treatment outcome, at least for a period of two years to capture costs due to physical, social and economic sequelae of TB," suggested the researchers including those from the WHO besides ICMR.

Parliamentary Panel seeks higher aid under rural housing scheme as costs soar

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

A Parliamentary standing committee has recommended the assistance provided under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana - Gramin (PMAY-G) to be raised from current Rs 1.2 lakhs in keeping with the rising inflation and input costs. The scheme has been extended till March 2029 with an aim to construct two crore additional homes across the country for the landless people. "With rising inflation having a detrimental effect on the cost factor associated with the raw material, transportation cost, labour cost etc, constructing a new house of the requisite area under PMAY-G for poor and needy beneficiaries with such assistance amount seems to be an arduous task," said the Parliamentary Standing



Committee on Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, headed by Congress MP Saptagiri Sankar Ulaka. It pointed out that the assistance under the scheme had remained stagnant at Rs 1.2 lakh for a considerable period of time, often leading to cases in which the houses remained incomplete. "Housing for All" vision might not achieve its target until the beneficiaries were provided "proper hand-holding" in terms of financial assistance of right value and at the

right juncture, said the panel in their report tabled in the Lok Sabha on Thursday. The report also highlighted that more than two lakh landless beneficiaries were still waiting to get land or assistance from state governments to construct homes, which might also cause delay in hitting the target. The committee also noted that against an initial target of 2.95 crore houses to be constructed by March next year, 2.66 crore were constructed as on October

22 and 29 lakh were yet to be completed. A target of constructing an additional two crore houses in the next five financial years -- 2024 to 2029 -- has been approved by the government, the report said. "The committee finds it utmost necessary that a review of per-unit assistance be done on priority basis, particularly when the scheme has been extended to March 2029," the panel said and recommended revision of the per-unit assistance through a suitable hike. The panel expressed concern over landless beneficiaries getting assistance for land to build their house and, citing Union rural development ministry data, said that of 5,73,311 (5.73 lakh) landless beneficiaries identified under PMAY-G, 59 per cent or 3,60,837 (3.60 lakh) had been provided land for the construction of houses.

President Murmu, PM Modi pay tribute to martyrs of 2001 Parliament attack

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

President Droupadi Murmu, Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar and, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday paid tributes to the brave hearts who sacrificed their lives defending Parliament during the 2001 terror attack. In her tributes, President Murmu said the nation remained deeply grateful to the brave hearts. Reiterating India's unwavering resolve to combat terrorism, she said the nation stood united against the forces of terror. Terrorists of Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed attacked the Parliament complex on this day in 2001, killing nine people. All five terrorists were gunned down by the security forces. "I pay my humble tribute to the brave hearts who sacrificed their lives defending

our Parliament on this day in 2001. Their courage and selfless service continue to inspire us. The nation remains deeply grateful to them and their families," the president said in a social media post. "On this day, I reiterate India's unwavering resolve to combat terrorism. Our nation stands united against the forces of terror," she added. Vice President Dhankhar, Prime Minister Modi and Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, several Union ministers and MPs on Friday paid floral tributes to those who laid down their lives in the 2001 terror attack on Parliament 23 years ago. Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, Home Minister Amit Shah, Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju also paid tributes at an event organised outside the old Parliament building -- Samvidhan Sadan. Several



leaders were seen interacting with kin of those who were killed in the attack. Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) personnel offered salute or 'salami' at the venue after a moment of silence was observed to mark the anniversary. Till last year, the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) used to offer 'salami shashtra' (present arms). The attack was carried out by five armed terrorists but personnel from Parliament Security Service, CRPF and Delhi Police foiled the attack as no terrorist was able to enter the building. Six Delhi Police personnel, two Parliament Security Service personnel, a gardener and a TV video journalist were killed in the attack. All five terrorists were gunned down in the forecourt of the then Parliament building. The Lok Sabha paid rich tributes to the security personnel who laid down their lives in

foiling a terror attack on Parliament on December 13, 2001. Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla solemnly reiterated the commitment of the Lower House to fight terrorism and pledged to protect the unity, integrity and sovereignty of the nation. "This House and the entire nation solemnly remembers unfortunate incident of December 13, 2001, when some terrorists attacked India's Parliament, the greatest symbol of our democracy," Birla said as soon as the House convened at 11:00 am. "Our alert security personnel deployed to ensure security of the Parliament premises displayed extraordinary courage and foiled this attack," he said. The Lok Sabha speaker said eight personnel from the Parliament Security Service, Delhi Police and the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) laid down their lives while

courageously repulsing the terror attack. One worker of the Central Public Works Department also laid down his life in the incident, he said. "This House offers humble tributes to all those who made the supreme sacrifice in protecting Parliament on December 13, 2001," Birla said. "This House reiterates our commitment to fight terrorism and the pledge to protect the unity, integrity and sovereignty of our mother land," he added. The Lok Sabha members stood in silence for a brief while as a mark of respect to the martyrs. Rajya Sabha also paid tributes to the bravehearts. Prime Minister Modi said in a social media post "Paid homage to those martyred in the 2001 Parliament attack. Their sacrifice will forever inspire our nation. We remain eternally grateful for their courage and dedication."

Punjab Govt should procure all crops of farmers at MSP: CM Saini

PTI ■ CHANDIGARH

Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini on Friday said that all crops of farmers in Haryana are being procured at Minimum Support Price and the Punjab government should also come forward and announce that the produce of farmers in the AAP-ruled state will be purchased at MSP.

Interacting with reporters here on the sidelines of a handicraft exhibition, Saini said the works done by Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the past ten years for farmers benefit are "historic". He was asked a question about Punjab farmer leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal, who is sitting on fast-unto-death, and has also written an open letter to Prime Minister Modi in which he said that MSP to every farmer is like the fundamental right to live. Saini said the AAP dispensa-

tion in Punjab and the states where Congress is in power should also take a decision to empower the farmers.

"Punjab government should also take a decision to procure crops of farmers at MSP. They should not have a problem in this. When farmers of Punjab are facing problem, Punjab government should come forward and announce that they will procure all crops of farmers at MSP," Saini said. "In Haryana, we are procuring all crops of farmers at MSP and the state government is taking every such step which empowers farmers," he said.

The Congress and other outfits which are part of the opposition's INDIA bloc do politics on everything, he charged.

Dallewal has been on a fast-unto-death at the Khanauri border between Punjab and Haryana since November 26 to press the Centre to accept



the agitating farmers' demands, including a legal guarantee of MSP on crops. Farmers under the banner of Samyukta Kisan Morcha (Non-Political) and Kisan Mazdoor Morcha have been camping at Shambhu and Khanauri border points

between Punjab and Haryana since February 13 after their march to Delhi was stopped by security forces. A group of farmers made two attempts to enter Delhi on foot on December 6 and December 8. They were not allowed to proceed by security

personnel in Haryana. The protesting farmers would make another attempt to march on December 14. Saini also trained his guns at the Congress, saying it has been rejected by people of the country. The Congress "speaks lies"

and people have realised this and they have been rejected in Maharashtra also, he said, referring to results of the assembly polls held recently. "People have put their stamp of approval. In 2029 too under Narendra Modi's leadership the BJP will form government for the fourth time," the Haryana CM asserted. The country is progressing fast and the government is working towards welfare of all sections, including farmers, and various steps have been taken for the empowerment of farmers, women, youth and poor, he further said. To another question, Saini welcomed the Centre's move to implement its key plank of "one nation, one election", as the Union Cabinet headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday approved the constitutional amendment bill to roll out the concept of simultaneous Lok Sabha and state assembly

polls. "We used to be stuck in one election after the other. Sometimes, it is panchayat polls, sometimes municipal polls, Vidhan Sabha or the Lok Sabha polls. It not only involves a lot of expenditure in holding elections, but there is involvement of time too. We were not able to undertake development at the pace at which we want as the Model Code of Conduct comes into effect and development works get impacted," he said. "I congratulate the prime minister and his entire team for the approval they have given to the One Nation One Election (initiative). The common people will get the benefit of this," he said. Saini said the prime minister's vision is to make the country a developed nation by 2047 and the move will help the nation realise that goal even faster.

To another question, Saini hit out at AAP national convenor and former Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal. "In Punjab, they showed greener pastures to people at the time of polls, but they have not been able to fulfil," he charged. Further slamming Kejriwal, Saini said, "he went to jail for corruption. The AAP had come to power (in Delhi) saying they will give a transparent administration and claimed they were honest. But Kejriwal turned out to be more corrupt than even the Congress." "Again, he has started showing greener pastures to the people of Delhi. He talked about giving clean drinking water, he had talked about making Yamuna river clean. People have understood his tall claims. Now, people of Delhi are waiting for the election to oust the AAP from power," he said.

Govt working hard to ensure rights, respect of indigenous people: Manipur CM

PTI ■ IMPHAL

Manipur Chief Minister Biren Singh on Friday said his government is working hard to ensure rights, respect and ownership of land for the indigenous people in the state.

Speaking at the inaugural function of the Manipur Indigenous People Cultural Exchange Festival in Chadong village in Kamjong district, Singh called for "constitutional protection" for the indigenous people.

"Now it is a critical period for indigenous people who have been living since time immemorial. Our land was safeguarded by spear and swords in the history of more than 2000 years and guns arrived only after the British came," he said. Singh said he initiated the "Go to Hills" campaign to strengthen shared cultural and historical legacy. "Understanding the indigenous communities is the need



of the hour...Many people do not want to acknowledge the demographic changes caused by events happening outside the state. We have been struggling to save the indigenous communities which are under threat," Singh claimed. He also said, "The government is working hard to ensure the rights, respect, ownership of land and authority of the indigenous people. We will succeed in our endeavour." An indigenous ethnic cul-

tural centre was developed at Rs 6 crore in Makhel village which is considered as the origin of indigenous people, he said. "Ever since I became a chief minister, I initiated the 'Go to Hills' campaign as part of understanding our shared cultural and historical legacy. Several historical sites have been developed," Singh said. The festival organised by the Indigenous Peoples' Forum was supported by the government as part of its effort to

foster unity, the CM said. Singh also urged those who consistently criticise the government to first "study the changes in population and electoral rolls". He appealed to them to "look at satellite images of the number of villages that have grown in the state and the size of forests that have disappeared due to deforestation". "Please also study why there is a massive rise in population among one community and not in other communities. If there was anything wrong with what I had said and done, you could punish me. Mere gossip cannot save land and indigenous people" Singh said. Singh also asked the residents of the state to "support the steps taken up by the government to protect the indigenous people". "The government will continue its struggle to protect the indigenous population until and unless constitutional protection for these people is achieved," Singh said.

The chief minister said his government is committed to "ensure constitutional protection of indigenous communities" in the state. He asserted that the war on drugs to protect the youths of the state would continue. Singh appreciated the efforts of the Assam Rifles and Ukhrul district SP for destroying more than 100 acres of illegal poppy cultivation in Ukhrul and Kangpokpi areas. The government will definitely extend assistance to any reasonable demand, and all recognised tribes in the state should unite to save land, he said. Singh also highlighted how the people of Chadong village were shifted due to the construction of a dam and said the project has ushered in new means of livelihood for the villagers through fisheries and tourism. Singh also extended his wishes for Christmas and called for peace in the state.

Personal banker held for selling bank account to cyber fraudsters

PARVESH SHARMA ■ GURUGRAM

A personal banker of DBS bank was arrested for allegedly changing the bank details of the victim and selling to the cyber fraudsters for Rs 5 lakh, police said. Priyanshu Diwan, Assistant Commissioner of Police (cyber-crime), said that the arrested accused had been identified as Tipu Sultan, a native of Muzaffarnagar, Uttar Pradesh. According to the police, a man filed a complaint at the Cyber Crime Police Station East on Wednesday that an employee of DBS Bank located on DLF Phase-2. The complainant told the police that he had opened an account in DBS Bank DLF Phase-2, Gurugram, and he asked the bank employee to close the account. The employee told him that the bank account would have to be closed by coming to the branch.

After that, on December 6, he received a message on his mobile number that Rs 15,000 had been credited to the bank account. When he told the bank employee, he said that this money had come from the bank and his account would be closed. After this, on December 9, Rs 1.96 crore had been credited to the complainant's account. After this, the complainant got suspicious; he went to the bank and enquired, and then he came to know that the bank employee had changed his mobile number and email ID from the bank account without his knowledge and registered another mobile number and email ID. Based on his complaint, a case was registered under the relevant sections in Police Station Cyber East, Gurugram. During the probe, a police team of the said police station arrested the suspect from Gurugram's Indra Colony on Thursday. The accused was later taken on

police remand. During interrogation, the accused disclosed that he was working as a Personal Banker at DBS Bank located in the DLF Phase-2 area in Gurugram. He has been working in the bank since June 2023. The accused disclosed before the police that he met a person to open a current account but he refused. After this, the person said that he has an online betting business for which he needs a current bank account. That person asked the accused to provide a current bank account. In return, he lured the accused with Rs 5 lakh. "The accused then fraudulently changed the mobile number and email ID of the complainant's bank account in the matter and the accused gave the same bank account to his companions. The police have recovered 1 mobile phone and 2 SIM cards used in the crime from the possession of the accused," Priyanshu Diwan, ACP (cybercrime), said.

Tripura Govt planning to bring 7,000 hectares of wasteland under palm oil cultivation by FY '27

PTI ■ AGARTALA

The Tripura government has planned to bring around 7,000 hectares of wasteland under oil palm cultivation by the 2026-27 financial year (FY'27), an official said on Friday.

Initially, the Centre had identified 7,000 hectares for oil palm cultivation in the state but the ICAR-Indian Institute of Oil Palm Research reassessment committee classified 1.46 lakh hectares as a potential area for such farming in 2020 through digital mapping. "Under the National Mission on Edible Oil-Oil Palm (NMEO-OP), the state planned to bring at least 7,000 hectares of wasteland under oil palm cultivation by the 2026-27 financial year. The state has a favourable agro-climate for palm cultivation. Accordingly, we are working rigorously to achieve the target," Horticulture and Soil Conservation Department's Director P B Jamatia told PTI. He said the department has



selected two processors as technical associated partners-Godrej Agrovet Pvt Ltd and Patanjali Foods Pvt Ltd -for implementation of the national mission and allotted areas to these companies. Jamatia said Godrej Agrovet has already set up an oil palm nursery at Nalkata in Dhalai district where 1.55 lakh of both exotic and indigenous type seedlings will be produced. Patanjali Foods has also established another oil palm nursery at Jumerdepa in Sepahijala district for producing seedlings, he

said. Claiming that oil palm cultivation will be beneficial for the rural people in future, Jamatia said beneficiaries could grow intercrops like vegetables, papaya, turmeric, cocoa, ginger, bush pepper, banana and pineapples. Intercropping is a sustainable agricultural practice that involves growing multiple crops simultaneously in the same field. Jamatia said the Centre has released Rs 5.14 crore as its share while the state has released Rs 51.41 lakh for oil palm cultivation during the 2022-23 financial year.

Marine Pilots on work-to-rule agitation in Kerala

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Maritime Pilots in Cochin Port Trust, disappointed by the union ministry of shipping's indifferent attitude to their demand for pay parity with other officers are on a work to rule agitation mode. This has affected the operations in Cochin Port at a critical time when India aspires to become a five trillion dollar economy within the next couple of years. Shipping operations have come to a standstill following the "work to rule" policy being followed by the maritime pilots under the auspices of Master Mariners Association. Cochin Port accounts for 4.44 per cent of India's total import and export of 818 million tons which makes it crucial for business operations. Good manufactured in Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka and meant for US, Europe and Africa are routed through this port. The Pilots are agitated because the Union



Government has not responded to their woes. "Though we have been highlighting the disparities faced by us with the ministry since 2010 the latter has been coldshouldering our demands for pay parity with officers who were much junior to us. Moreover, marine pilots have to be more qualified and experienced than the other categories of officers," said a representative of MMA. Maritime pilots are former

mariners with experience in Foreign Going Vessels and have passed advanced examinations held by the union shipping ministry. All mariners will not be able to graduate to the level of maritime pilots. Only the creme Dela creme among them are graduated as pilots. Their main responsibility is to navigate the ships from outer seas through the narrow channels to the berth and back to the outer seas. Once the ships

reach the outer seas, the pilots take command. "One has to know the shipping channels like the back of one's hands to ensure the safety of the ships. This is an operation that has to be performed with care, concentration and calm," a senior pilot told The Pioneer. He said the agitation is to protect the dignity of the profession. "As masters of the ships we used to draw salaries running into lakhs of rupees per month. The high salaries itself is in recognition of our professional qualification and competence," he said. "Though the Cochin Port Trust needs 14 pilots for round-the-clock operations, there are only seven pilots as on date working in the port. Any disruption in shipping operations in Cochin Port Trust is sure to dampen the State's economy," said Rajmohan Pillai, chairman, Beta Group, a Malta based company which is a major client of Cochin Port. A senior bureaucrat in Kerala Government said that recent

events like the closure of the much talked about Smart City in Kochi and entrepreneurs leaving the State en masse to neighboring States has already tarnished the image of Kerala. "Cochin Port is infamous for "work to rule" and labor agitations. The pilots' agitation is like adding fuel to fire," said the bureaucrat. He said the maritime pilots are getting a raw deal from the union government. "The babus in the ministry should learn the significance of the work being done by the pilots. Then only they will understand the seriousness of the issue," he said. An office bearer of the Cochin Steamer Agents Association said that the work-to-rule agitation is a setback for the port as shipping operations are a continuous process. "We cannot ask the vessel managers to wait because the pilots are on strike. They will set sail to the nearest available port because for them time is more precious than money," said the CSAA office bearer.

Swarna Andhra 2047: CM unveils vision for 'wealthy, healthy and happy' State

PTI ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Friday launched "Swarna Andhra-2047" (golden Andhra) vision document, aimed at achieving a 'wealthy, healthy and happy' Andhra Pradesh. The chief minister announced it during a public meeting at the Indira Gandhi Municipal Stadium here, which encompasses 10 principles (padi satralu) and one vision to accomplish a golden future for the southern state. "We have assembled here to herald a new history. We are unveiling Swarna Andhra-2047 vision, which will change the course of the state. The foundation has been laid to transform the Telugu community as the world's top community today and I am telling you all that it is possible," said Naidu, addressing the public meeting.

Exhorting that India should emerge as a developed country by 2047, he said the vision will change the fate and future of the southern state's younger generations. Zero poverty, employment, skilling and human resources development, water security, farmer-agri tech and best global logistics were some of the 10 principles. Others include cost optimisation of energy and fuel, product perfection, swachh (clean) Andhra and incorporating deep tech in all walks of life. During the recent second district collectors conference at the Secretariat in Amaravati, Naidu stressed that the TDP-led NDA government's governance will be based on the Swarna Andhra-2047 vision at state, district, mandal and panchayat levels. Naidu introduced the SwarnaAndhra@2047 vision document during the

Assembly session in November to achieve its objectives in the next 23 years. He noted that 2047 is a significant milestone as it will mark the centenary of Indian independence from colonial rule, and everyone will need to proudly say what we have achieved in 100 years. Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched Viksit (developed) Bharat 2047 and we are launching 'SwarnaAndhra@2047', said Naidu, adding that he wants the state to achieve a per capita income over USD 47,000 from the current level of USD 3,000. According to the CM, the vision document was drafted following widespread consultations and grassroots-level engagement such as conducting workshops at mandal and municipality level and covering over 1.18 crore households, among others. Along with feedback from



school and college students, he said the Niti Aayog had also contributed to its creation, reviewing several programmes being implemented in foreign countries. If all the resources such as rivers, coastline, talent pool and others available in Andhra Pradesh could be properly utilised, Naidu said the goals of the vision could be achieved.

Further, the CM briefly explained each of the 10 principles, which also included his plans to eliminate poverty by involving high net worth individuals to uplift the poorest people and turn the state into a green energy hub. The CM also spoke of his vision to interlink rivers to make sufficient water available all over the state and highlighted that south India is

facing a water crisis. Similarly, he reiterated his call to have more children as the state could face the prospect of having more older people in the next 15 to 20 years. "By 2047, Andhra Pradesh envisions a state of happy, thriving, and responsible Telugus, fostering a progressive and inclusive community, a valley of innovation, a knowledge hub for global speed of doing business," Naidu had said, reading the vision statement earlier in the Assembly. Other goals of the vision include top per capita income for the state in the country with family as a unit and raising global thinkers. Likewise, incorporating deep tech in all walks of life and making the southern state a global hub for skills, among others. Naidu had asserted that an irreversible foundation was

being laid with this vision document, irrespective of who comes to power in the state in the future. "If we can correctly lay the foundation for this, then it (the state) will irreversibly go ahead," he had said, noting that he was laying a foundation whose progression cannot be reversed. Further, he called upon MLAs to carry out a similar exercise at their constituency level, and prepare constituency-specific vision documents. Naidu in September solicited suggestions from the people of the state to catapult it into Swarna Andhra Pradesh (golden state) with a GSDP of USD 2.4 trillion by 2047. The chief minister had called for suggestions for the future vision of the southern state for achieving a per capita income of over USD 43,000 by 2047. "Our target is to lead India with a GSDP of USD 2.4 tril-

lion and a per capita income of over USD 43,000 by 2047. As we embark on this journey towards Swarna Andhra Pradesh @ 2047, we're inviting suggestions from our fellow citizens on shaping a brighter AP (Andhra Pradesh)," Naidu said earlier in a post on 'X'. After launching the vision, Naidu highlighted that achieving a per capita income of USD 43,000 is viable if a GSDP of USD 2.4 trillion could be accomplished in the next 23 years. Further, he called on the people of the state to read the vision and formulate their own household visions, along with emerging as partners in this growth story. He ended by leading a collective pledge to achieve the vision document, calling on the people of the state to dedicate themselves for the development of the state and building a Swarna Andhra.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

One Nation One Election

India's democratic system is on the verge of a transformative change with the 'One Nation, One Election' initiative

The concept of 'One Nation, One Election' has been a subject of significant debate in India's political discourse. On December 12, 2024, the Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved draft legislation to implement simultaneous elections for the Lok Sabha, state assemblies, and local bodies within 100 days. This proposal seeks to streamline India's electoral process, reduce the economic and administrative burden of frequent elections and enhance governance. The 'One Nation, One Election' initiative aims to align the election schedules of the Lok Sabha, state assemblies, municipal corporations and panchayats. The proposed legislation is likely to be introduced in Parliament during the ongoing Winter Session, reflecting the government's intention to initiate nationwide consultations on this transformative reform. The draft legislation incorporates 11 recommendations made by a high-level committee led by former President Ram Nath Kovind. These recommendations aim to address the frequent



disruptions caused by the current staggered election schedule, which is a drain on economic, social, and political resources. One of the primary suggestions involves synchronising the election dates for the Lok Sabha and state assemblies in the first phase, followed by municipal and panchayat elections within 100 days. To ensure smooth execution, a dedicated implementation group will oversee the reforms. Constitutional amendments, such as the introduction of Articles 324A and 325, are proposed to facilitate simultaneous elections, create unified voter rolls. Elections demand significant financial resources and conducting them simultaneously could reduce costs

related to security, logistics and administrative expenses. Frequent elections also result in prolonged enforcement of the Model Code of Conduct, halting developmental activities, which a unified schedule could minimise. However, implementing this ambitious reform involves substantial logistical and constitutional challenges. Synchronising elections requires amendments to several constitutional articles, including Articles 83, 85, 172, 174, and 356, which must be ratified by a majority of state legislatures. Building political consensus among parties with diverse regional interests is another critical requirement. Furthermore, the Election Commission will need to mobilise resources, including additional EVMs and VVPATs and ensure readiness of polling staff and infrastructure nationwide. Besides, simultaneous elections might overshadow local issues due to the dominance of national narratives, potentially affecting regional representation. Coordinating nationwide elections within a short timeframe also poses logistical challenges. Moreover, synchronising subsequent elections in cases of mid-term dissolutions could create governance gaps, leading to policy paralysis. While the proposal promises efficiency and cost-effectiveness, its implementation demands careful consideration of constitutional, logistical, and political complexities.

PICTALK



A vendor displays miniatures of Santa Claus ahead of Christmas celebrations, in Nadia

Unraveling the delicate threads of human interaction



VINAYSHIL GAUTAM

Communication is the lifeblood of human connection, yet it remains one of the most intricate and fragile aspects of our existence

Conversation is a delicate business. It is made even more fragile by being central to all human interaction. The more knowledgeable individuals feel that communication is only partially through words. It can also be through eyes, through touch, through gestures, and even through silence. The list can go on. This makes communication not only complicated but also a sensitive matter. Communication can be with oneself. It can be between two persons, or in groups. It can be a short distance or a long distance. The possibilities are immense.



The pitch of the voice could be an intervening variable, and sometimes the more well-versed practice cross-communication. It means giving one message through one medium and another through another. In other words, it can be one message through words and another message through the eyes.

If technology intervenes, it becomes even more complex. The technological interventions can be through a medium such as a handset, a telephone, or, in some parts, a piece of paper. In the past, pigeons have been known to serve a useful purpose. The permutations and combinations are immense, and each has a value, just as each medium has a context. Like in the case of many essentials in life, there is no primer available and there is no one author who has covered comprehensively all aspects of communication. Hence, much of this is on learning by practice. Much of this is also learning by grief because in the absence of a proper 'Guru' one can only learn by trial and error. Many relationships get under strain or break because one meaning is intended, but another meaning gets conveyed. This can sometimes be incomplete or even distorted. Put simply, coding and decoding a message is a complex process and has to

do with many variables, most of which may not be under the control of the parties involved. Hence, it could become like fiddling with wires in the dark. The solutions are not difficult if they are systematically put into operation. In early childhood, when a person is being taught words, it would be helpful if the person is also helped to choose the better word to communicate his ideas. Proper pronunciation should also be taught. If the circumstances permit by linguistic or multi-linguistic can be practiced. This would help adjustment to different levels of people; people of different ages and from different contexts. The solutions are known just as much as the problems are known. But there is little systematic attempt to put it in a frame and help better communication. It is obvious that communication can be between two people of equal age, between somebody who is older and somebody younger, people of the same gender, people of the opposite gender, people with prior antecedents of relationships, and people with no prior antecedents of relationships.



THE USUAL RESPONSE WHEN THERE IS A LACK OF CLARITY ON WHERE TO BEGIN, ONE SHOULD BEGIN JUST SOMEWHERE AND HOPE THAT IT RUNS ON SATISFACTORILY. IF IT IS NOT ENTIRELY SATISFACTORY, IT CAN BE CORRECTED AS ONE GOES ALONG

The contexts are huge and almost impossible to exhaustively list. This is not to say that the problem is not solvable or cannot be handled. The usual response when there is a lack of clarity on where to begin, one should begin just somewhere and hope that it runs on satisfactorily. If it is not entirely satisfactory, it can be corrected as one goes along. Being inundated by problems and not beginning at all cannot be the answer. Sometimes a simple problem can be so elusive that it becomes difficult to structure it for a solution. Effective communication is one such problem. Any discussion touching on communication will be incomplete without the realisation, as already noted, that communication is not always with words. There is an oft-repeated quote to the effect of 'if you cannot understand my silence, you will not understand my words'. Interestingly, silence also communicates, and there are different types of silence. Often, body language takes over, but that is another matter. Unfortunately, communication through silence also needs deep insights and research. Communication

can be between people where one of the limbs that is centrally used in communication, loses its function or becomes unusable. For example, if someone has a problem with listening through one ear, the best course of action would be to help the person concerned restore their hearing through the other ear. However, this may not always work. So options and support systems have to be generated. Like in many things, psychological factors become very heavily involved, and unfortunately, those who are not capable of deep thought fumble more. There is a case for serious research on all aspects of the communication enumerated above and more research on communication per se, in a scholastic mode, would help. Till then, one can only hope that the general conversation on communication will alleviate the confusion that sometimes arises on communication points. One also hopes that research will help good communication all around. (The writer is a well-known management consultant of international repute. The views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

FAMILY FIRST POLITICS

Madam — Family first is not only for Biden. It is rather a human tendency to attend to the needs and aspirations of the family first before thinking and acting for the cause of the society. Biden's act of granting a pardon to his son is seen as a great sin because the US is projecting itself as the promoter and protector of democracy and democratic values all over. Though it is expected of any leader to rise above all petty thinking and prioritise the benefit of the general mass and the country, many a time we do observe some people at the helm of affairs succumbing to simple human instincts, keeping the disciplines and decorum related to the position held at bay. No doubt, such acts not only demolish the image of the person that has been built for decades but also bring shame to the nation and the society he is attached to. We have seen the way the entire country of Sri Lanka was brought under the grip of one family that led to unprecedented levels of corruption, amassing wealth by the family, unleashing some sort of dictatorship, and plunging the common people into sufferings of all sorts.

But people are watching, which all the leaders should keep in mind. Biden lost in the US, and the family is out in Sri Lanka. India is not an exception. The leaders of the ruling dispensation, pointing at the Opposition for promoting the culture of family, assuming the leadership of the party, are simultaneously focusing on bringing their siblings to the limelight of political careers. In most of the states, the regional parties are almost converted into family organs, and they firmly believe in the dictum of 'the king and his family can do no wrong,' meaning that their family is above all the laws of the land and none of them can be questioned or punished. In India it is almost an accepted norm to bear with all the mistakes or misdeeds of the members of the family in power. A G Rajmohan | Anantapur

Gukesh youngest world chess champion



India's young Grandmaster D Gukesh defeated China's World Champion Ding Liren in the 14th and final round, claiming the title of the youngest world chess champion. At just 18 years old, Dommaraju Gukesh has demonstrated that conquering the world is possible at a young age. Thursday was a historic day for Indian chess, thanks to Gukesh's remarkable achievement. Gukesh broke the 14-year-old

record held by Russia's Garry Kasparov, who became the youngest world champion at the age of 22 years, 6 months, and 27 days. Gukesh's victory marks a new chapter in the history of chess. After Viswanathan Anand, Gukesh is the second Indian chess player to earn the title of world champion. In a 14th-round match that lasted nearly four hours, Gukesh defeated Ding Liren in 58 moves, becoming the 18th world champion in chess history. In October 2022, Gukesh had already captured everyone's attention by defeating then-world champion Magnus Carlsen in a rapid chess tournament. In 2024, Gukesh first triumphed in the Candidates Tournament. Later, he played a pivotal role in helping the Indian men's team win the gold medal in the Chess Olympiad. Now, by claiming the world championship title, he has added another feather to India's cap. Dattaprasad Shirodkar | Mumbai

HC JUDGE FACES FLAK

Madam — The Allahabad High Court judge made insensitive comments about the Muslim community and its practices and used offensive language against them, which was not warranted from someone who is looked up to by thousands of common men seeking justice at the high court. It cannot be construed as a slip of the tongue, as he spoke for more than 30 minutes, and it is not the first time he has garnered attention for his controversial words; earlier too, his oral remarks in the court made headlines, and he has also said that cows exhale oxygen. Such poor statements have the potential to undermine public trust in the judiciary and raise a question mark over judicial integrity.

It is welcome that the apex court of the country has taken note of this and sought details of the speech. Some may argue about freedom of speech, but the fact that a judge's impartial conduct in office and public events should be above reproach. The Supreme Court's action in this matter should set the house in order for other

judges in district and high courts. Bal Govind | Noida

RS CHAIRMAN FACES NO CONFIDENCE

Madam — It is unfortunate that the ruling BJP and the opposition parties in our country do not look at each other as ideological opponents but as real-time enemies. The present move by sixty members of the opposition expressing 'no confidence against the RS chairman may not reach the extent of voting, and even if it does, it will get defeated as the opposition does not have the sufficient strength for the motion's success. However, such a move by the opposition expressing lack of confidence in the chair is a black mark in the world's largest democracy. This has led to the situation that they do not engage themselves with each other and ensure a fair and useful debate in both the Houses of Parliament, trying to score one over the other. Gopalaswamy J | Chennai

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Why simplicity and equality must redefine weddings

There is a pressing need to rethink our approach to weddings; advocating for a shift towards simplicity, equality and genuine joy rather than crass display of wealth



RACHNA LAKHPATRI

Weddings have long been a grand celebration where two people unite, signifying not just the union of two souls, but also the joining of two families. These joyous occasions are infused with rituals, traditions, and celebrations designed to enhance the richness and pride of cultural heritage.

Within the shimmering lights, the grand feast, and the spirited festivities, there exists a frequently ignored reality: the rising expenses these celebrations impose on families, especially those in the middle and lower-middle classes. Dowry, once regarded as a remnant of outdated and oppressive traditions, has taken on a contemporary guise. The concept of 'dowry' may no longer be prevalent in everyday language, yet its core remains hidden beneath the polished surface of what we now refer to as 'gifts.' What was once viewed with disdain has now been embraced, illuminated by a fresh perspective that aligns with contemporary feelings. What's the final takeaway? Families, particularly the bride's, face immense



financial strain due to these 'gift' expectations, which frequently manifest as expensive items, vehicles, and cash contributions. In many cases, what are presented as gifts are actually disguised demands. Middle-class families, determined to avoid the label of being stingy, frequently push themselves to the limit to maintain their standing. The expectation to host lavish weddings adds an extra weight, as in many cultures, these ceremonies are seen as a reflection of the family's standing in the community. In severe situations, for struggling families, this can be devastating; for individuals find themselves compelled to deplete their life savings or other assets, while others are

drawn into loan schemes. This debt, incurred at the expense of societal expectations, is repaid over years—and even decades—creating a relentless cycle of instability. The most concerning aspect of this situation is its ongoing nature and the way it sustains economic and gender disparities. When a groom traditionally requests gifts for the bride, it often creates an unfair financial burden on the bride's family, even if the demand is subtle. It merely reinforces the outdated notion that a family must 'pay' to marry off their daughter. This approach truly detracts from the principle of equality in relationships and adds unnecessary stress to what should be a welcoming event.

Now is the moment for society to reevaluate its values and confront these detrimental customs. Marriage ought to be a celebration of love and togetherness, rather than a cause for financial distress or societal expectations. A shift away from materialism is essential, emphasising the importance of mutual respect, understanding, and equality. Families and communities should collaborate to foster an atmosphere that values simplicity and authenticity over extravagance and false displays of wealth. Both governments and social organisations can play a vital role in addressing this issue by implementing laws against all forms of dowry and raising awareness about its psychological and financial consequences. A debt-free, joyful beginning to married life is the greatest blessing any couple could hope for. The true essence of celebration is not found in the extravagance of the occasion, but rather in the commitment to a shared future rooted in love and respect. (The author is a freelance writer and a motivator; views are personal)



FIRST COLUMN

HARMONISING WITH CHANGE

While change is often seen as a source of progress, its relentless pace can leave many mentally drained



RRAJYOGI BRAHMA KUMAR NIKUNJ JI

Whether we like it or not, we have to constantly adapt to the changing time, changing thoughts, and changing future. Today, change has become so rapid that some people, especially professionals, have to keep a constant watch on the emerging trends and must be perpetually prepared to gear up in order to keep pace with change. As a consequence of keeping themselves in high gear constantly over a long period of time, many feel that rapid changes shake up their nerves and are physically and mentally so exhausting and taxing that life has become more of a problem than a pleasure. However, we must not have the impression that every change is an anathema.

No! On the contrary to common belief, change is generally a welcome feature of life, and stagnancy is always considered boring. It is the rapidity and high frequency of change, or the enormity of change, that forces responsible people to miss the necessary physical and mental rest, keeping them always on the move and causing them worry. But the question that arises is, what has led to this condition of rapid and ever-growing change? Observation and analysis tell us that it is science and technology that are responsible for this predicament, as they compel individuals to lead an increasingly faster life in a highly competitive world. They force people to move like machines, which, too, are moving faster day by day and are changing enormously in design and functions. But if we go deeper into the problem, then we would find that science and technology are, in fact, at the service of mankind; therefore, it is man



who decides what kind of gadgets and goods he requires and at what pace—not vice versa. The evolution of science is based on man's needs, desires, mindset, motives, emotions, set of values, conscience, and external influences, including exposure to media and to society's approval, appreciation, or criticism of his acts. Hence, these factors are the major driving forces that lead to new inventions or new forms and designs. It is these factors that determine the purpose and use to which science and technology should be put. It is these which set new trends. It is these that lead to the rejection of the old and the change to the new.

Therefore, the rapidity of change depends, to a great degree, on the rapidity of rejection of the old system, old set of values, prevalent fashions and customs, and existing norms and beliefs. This, in turn, depends on how rapidly a person is dissatisfied or discontented with the present goods, facilities, services, practices, norms, status-symbols, and security needs. This dissatisfaction or discontentment may, in some cases, be justified and may, in most cases, be due to a lack of man's inner stability and inner happiness stemming from a wrong set of values and wrong attitudes. A thorough analysis of the present situation would lead us to the conclusion that the current situation, which is leading us either to tension or depression or short-lived pleasure, is due to our own consumerist attitude, which is geared mainly to cater to man's indulgence in sensual pleasure or comforts.

In order to bring a change to this callous attitude and wrong lifestyle, we need to reform our mind by adopting a spiritual attitude through a spiritual set of values, or what is called 'Spiritualism,' which is a turnaround of thoughts and a way of living. Today, those people who are trying to cope with change without bringing change to their mindset, value system, and lifestyle through spirituality have really missed the message of the wise. Therefore, it's high time that we as a society realised that simplicity of lifestyle, by embracing spiritual values, alone would be the remedy to the present precarious situation that would empower us to manage rapid change with vigor and enthusiasm.

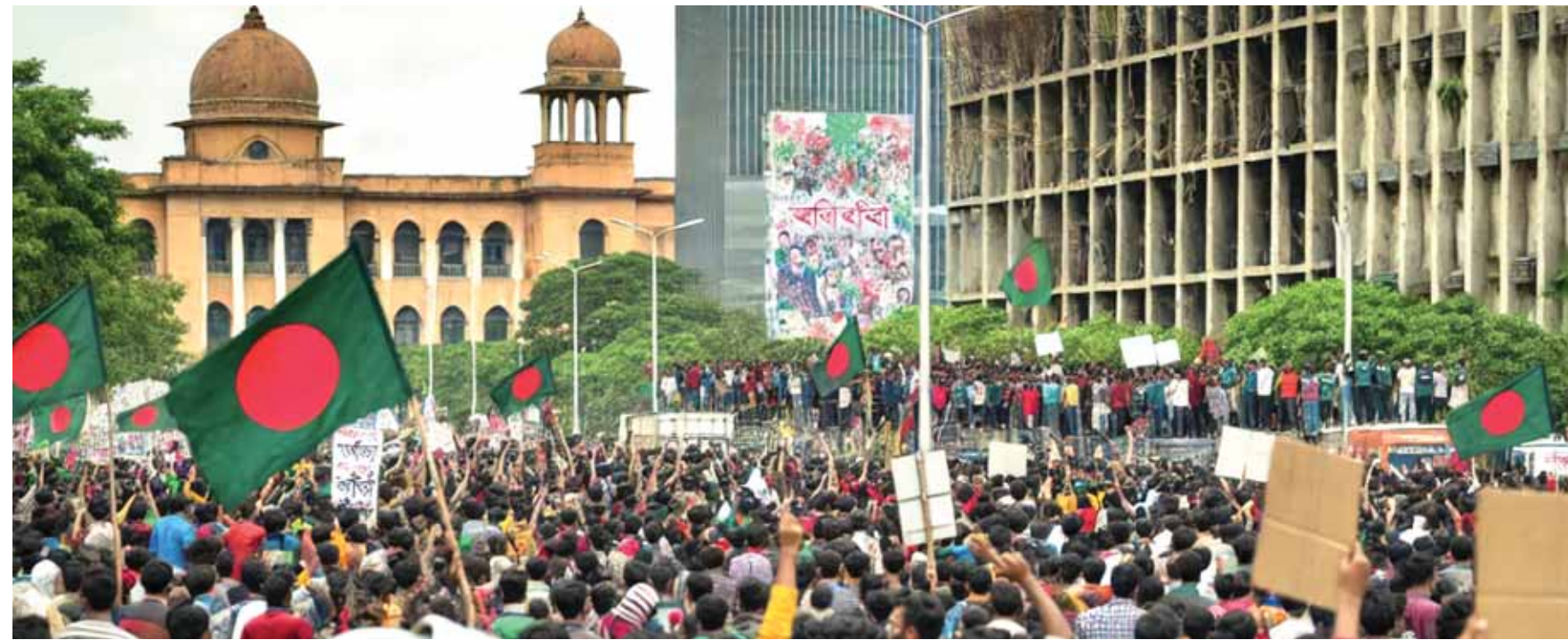
(The writer is a spiritual educator & popular columnist; views are personal)

Bangladesh's secular fabric under siege



HIRANMAY KARLEKAR

The suppression of dissent, coupled with the growing boldness of extremist ideologies, risks steering the nation towards a fundamentalist Islamist state



It is increasingly clear that fundamentalist Islamist organisations, which are pathologically hostile to India as well as to all secular and democratic persons and organisations in Bangladesh, are increasingly calling the shots in that country under the rule of its interim government. An indication of this is the relentless persecution of Shahriar Kabir, an internationally acclaimed author, journalist, champion of human rights, democracy and secularism, and a tireless campaigner to bring to justice the perpetrators of war crimes during Bangladesh's liberation war in 1971. He continues to languish in Kashimpur jail under terrible conditions. Despite being designated as a prisoner of conscience by Amnesty International, a magistrate's order giving him Division One status, which would give him a separate room and other facilities remains to be carried out. This is because the deputy commissioner of Ghazipur district, where Kashimpur prison, where he is lodged, is located, has not signed the order, which will be effective only after his signature is affixed to it. Nor, according to reports, does he seem inclined to sign it soon.

As a result, Kabir, who is 74-years-old has to live among common prisoners and sleep on the floor during a cold winter as his health continues to deteriorate. Earlier, during a remand hearing at Dhaka's Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court on 20 October, Kabir had complained that he was not receiving adequate medical treatment in jail. On November 2, he was taken to Shaheed Tajuddin Ahmed Medical College Hospital for a check-up. According to its deputy-director, he suffered from various old age-related ailments but these were not critical. Kabir has high blood pressure and diabetes and a large accumulation of stones in his kidney. Blood is coming out with his stool. Given the role of the deputy commissioner, who presumably has nothing personal against him, it is difficult not to feel that it is the interim government, led by Nobel laureate Chief Advisor Muhammad Yunus, that wants to deny him Division One status. That it continues to do so despite considerable international demand for his release is clearly the result of pressure from



A SPIRITUAL LEADER, PHILOSOPHER, MYSTIC POET AND SOCIAL REFORMER, LALON ARTICULATED A WELTANSCHAUUNG WHICH ENCOMPASSED THE ESSENCE OF THE BHAKTI CULT AND SUFISM, REJECTED ALL DISTINCTIONS OF CASTE, CLASS AND CREED, OPPOSED THEOLOGICAL CONFLICTS AND RACISM

organisations like the Hefazat-e-Islam (Hefazat) and Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami (Jamaat). Hefazat's hand in Kabir's persecution is clear from the fact that one of the several charges on which he has been jailed was filed with Bangladesh's International Crimes Tribunal on August 20, 2024, by Mufti Harun Izhaz Chowdhury, Hefazat's joint secretary. It showed him, along with Sheikh Hasina, as one of the 23 accused, charged with crimes against humanity and mass killing in connection with the violent clashes between Hefazat's supporters and members of security forces and Awami League activists during it rally in Dhaka, on May 5, 2013, to press its 13-point charter of demands. The latter included demand for a stricter dress code as ordained by Islam, a ban on statues, candlelight vigils and public mixing of men and women, besides the scrapping of the Awami League government's women's development policy promising women equal rights to property. Comprising mainly of Sunni clerics heading a network of 19,199 Quami madrasahs and its students in Bangladesh, it has considerable power to mobilise in the streets. Its intensely anti-India orientation was reflected in its violent protests against Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Dhaka on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of Bangladesh's independence on March 26, 2021. Thirteen 13 persons were killed and scores injured in clashes between its supporters and members of the security forces and Awami League's supporters. While the Hefazat is not calling all the shots in the interim government,

it certainly has a wide measure of influence and has its way wherever it wants, however small or big the event or the demand is. The "Mahati Sadhusanga and Lalon Mela" (great gathering of sadhus and Lalon fair) hosted by Muktidham Ashram and Lalon Academy in Madya Narsingpur, Kashipur Union Parishad in Narayanganj, was scheduled to begin on November 22, 2024. There was to be singing, dancing, festivities and food. Baul singers and devotee from all over Bangladesh were coming over for the occasion. The district administration, however, ordered its cancellation. A report in The Daily Star (November 23, 2024) quoted Fakir Shah Jalal, founder of the ashram and academy, said, "All arrangements had been made, but the administration did not permit the event, citing warning from some members of the "Muslim" community. Even when we requested to hold the event indoors, without loudspeakers, it was denied."

A spiritual leader, philosopher, mystic poet and social reformer, Lalon articulated a weltanschauung, which encompassed the essence of the Bhakti cult and Sufism, rejected all distinctions of caste, class and creed, opposed theological conflicts and racism. It is not surprising that such a person would be anathema to fundamentalist Islamists. The report in The Daily Star, cited above, had stated that Hefazat-e-Islam leader Maulana Abdul Auwal had warned the administration in a speech to stop the event or face intervention by protesters. Other Islamist organisations are also flexing their muscles. Speaking at a grand convention of the District Qaumi Madrasa Council in Dhaka on November 25, Mamunul Haque, the secretary general of Bangladesh Khelafat Majlis, described the August 5 revolution as a significant step toward an Islamic revolution in

Bangladesh, adding that the country was destined to undergo an Islamist transformation.

Not surprisingly, Ahmadiyas and Sufis have come under attack. Several of the former's mosques were attacked on August 6. A violent mob destroyed Baba Pagla Ali's Sufi shrine at Sherpur district on August 29; another such mob vandalised and looted Ismail Pagla's shrine in Sirajganj district on September 3. Meanwhile two Islamist terrorist outfits—Ansar al-Islam (erstwhile Ansarullah Bangla Team) and Hijbut Tahrir (Tahrir) are increasingly active. Despite the ban on Tahrir, its supporters organised, on August 9, a rally in Dhaka city and demanded the establishment of an Islamic Caliphate in Bangladesh. Also, the statues of two police officers who died fighting the terrorists at the Holey Artisan Bakery in July 2016, have been destroyed and a Hijbut Tahrir poster has been found at the site. Despite the arrest of its media coordinator in Dhaka in early October, its activities continue, albeit clandestinely, in many parts of Bangladesh.

This is because the interim government is pursuing a much softer line against both Ansar al-Islam and Tahrir than Sheikh Hasina's government. An example is the release of the 'chief' of Ansar al-Islam on bail on August 26. As a consequence, while the Hefazat and Jamaat are riding high and terrorist bodies are quietly active, champions of secularism like Shahriar Kabir are imprisoned and organisations opposing communalism are apprehensive and defensive. In a situation like this, one can hardly rule out Bangladesh slowly sliding towards becoming a fundamentalist Islamist country and even an exporter of terrorism.

(The author is Consulting Editor, The Pioneer. The views expressed are personal)

The rise of preventative fillers: A new era in beauty standards

India's Millennials and Gen Z are embracing early cosmetic treatments like fillers as part of their self-care routines

In recent years, a noticeable trend has emerged among India's Millennials and Gen Z, the increasing popularity of early cosmetic treatments like fillers. This shift highlights evolving beauty standards influenced heavily by social media platforms such as Instagram and TikTok, where idealised images of flawless skin abound.

These platforms perpetuate an image-driven culture, encouraging young people to consider cosmetic enhancements as a means to maintain a youthful appearance and meet contemporary beauty ideals. Recent data from Deloitte underscores this trend, revealing that 65 per cent of Millennials and 58 per cent of Gen Z in India



HEMA PANT

have a positive outlook on using technology and aesthetic treatments to improve their lives. This optimism is coupled with a heightened focus on self-care and personal enhancement, which has led to the rising popularity of preventative fillers. Often referred to as "Baby Botox," these treatments involve minimal amounts of Botox or dermal fillers used before

the onset of wrinkles, appealing to those who wish to stave off the visible signs of ageing before they even begin. A significant demographic shift is evident in data from NASSCOM, which indicates that Millennials and Gen Z comprise 52 per cent of India's population. This figure highlights the growing influence of these younger generations who are increasingly well-versed in cosmetic procedures and less stigmatised by them. The normalisation of such treatments owes much to open discussions on social media, where people share their experiences and results, contributing to a growing acceptance. The American Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery

reports that 64 per cent of practitioners have noted a rise in patients under 30 seeking cosmetic procedures, reflecting this broader cultural acceptance. The allure of preventative fillers lies not only in the desire to maintain a youthful appearance but also in the empowerment that comes from taking control of one's aesthetic journey. Young individuals today are more informed and proactive about their beauty routines, often seeking expert advice to make informed decisions. This proactive approach to beauty and self-care represents a significant cultural shift toward embracing enhancements as a normal part of life in a digital era. However, while the

appeal of preventative fillers is undeniable, young people must approach these treatments with caution. Overuse can result in "filler fatigue," a condition where excessive treatments lead to skin stretching and the need for more frequent interventions. A balanced approach that integrates overall skin health with aesthetic goals is essential to ensure that beauty enhancements do not compromise one's natural appearance. Education plays a vital role in this process. Young individ-



uals are encouraged to seek guidance from reputable professionals who prioritise safety and use high-quality products. By doing so, they can make informed choices that align with their personal beauty goals without succumbing to the pressures of fleeting trends. This emphasis on education and safety empowers them to navigate their beauty journeys with confidence, fostering a sense of self-assuredness in their natural selves.

The rise of early cosmetic treatments among India's youth illustrates a significant cultural shift towards embracing self-care and beauty enhancements in a digital era. As these generations navigate their identities in a visually oriented world,

they increasingly turn to options like fillers to maintain their youthful allure. By prioritising education and safety, young individuals are empowered to make informed decisions about their beauty routines, fostering confidence in their natural selves.

As this trend continues to evolve, it will be intriguing to observe how it shapes the ongoing conversation around beauty in modern society. The future of beauty is likely to be shaped by these young, informed consumers who value both innovation and authenticity, setting new standards for generations to come.

(The writer is Medical Director, Sculpt Clinics; views are personal)

President Macron names centrist ally Bayrou as France's next PM

AP ■ PARIS



French President Emmanuel Macron on Friday named centrist ally Francois Bayrou as prime minister in an effort to address the country's deep political crisis, after a historic parliamentary vote ousted the previous government last week. Bayrou, 73, a crucial partner in Macron's centrist alliance, has been a well-known figure in French politics for decades. His political experience is seen as key in efforts to restore stability to no single party holds a majority at the National Assembly.

days in order to choose new ministers. The task appears challenging because Macron's centrist alliance does not have a majority in parliament and Bayrou's Cabinet will need to rely on moderate lawmakers from both the left and right to be able to stay in power. Some conservatives are expected to be part of the new government. Macron's strategy aims at preventing far-right leader Marine Le Pen from holding "make or break" power over the government. Le Pen helped oust Barnier by joining her National Rally party's forces to the left to pass the no-confidence motion last week.

The president of the National Rally, Jordan Bardella, said Friday his party will take a wait-and-see approach for now. "Our red lines are still there, they're not going to change," he warned. National Rally officials, including Le Pen, have said they want any new budget law to preserve the purchasing power of the French people. Bayrou's appointment comes also in line with Macron's efforts to build a non-aggression pact with the Socialists so that they commit not to vote against the government in any future confidence motion. Mathilde Panot, head of the hard-left France Unbowed

group at the National Assembly, criticised Bayrou's appointment in a message on X as "the continuity of (Macron's) bad policies." She said her party is ready to vote for a no-confidence motion again against the new government. Bayrou leads the centrist Democratic Movement, known as MoDem, which he founded in 2007. In 2017, he supported Macron's first presidential bid and became a weighty partner in the French president's centrist alliance. At the time, he was appointed justice minister, but he quickly resigned from the government amid an investigation into the MoDem's alleged embezzlement of European Parliament funds. Bayrou this year was cleared in the case by a Paris court, which found eight other party officials guilty and sentenced the party to pay a fine. Bayrou became well known to the French public when he was education minister from 1993 to 1997 in a conservative government. He was three times a candidate for president, in 2002, 2007 and 2012.

Israeli strike in Gaza kills 25 people as US makes new push for a ceasefire

AP ■ DEIR AL-BALAH (GAZA)

An Israeli airstrike has hit the central Gaza Strip, killing at least 25 Palestinians and wounding dozens more, Palestinian medics said, just hours after President Joe Biden's national security adviser raised hopes about a ceasefire deal to end the war in Gaza. Officials at two hospitals in the Gaza Strip, al-Aqsa Hospital in the north and al-Aqsa Hospital in central Gaza, reported they received a combined total of 25 bodies from an Israeli strike on a multi-storey residential building in the urban Nuseirat refugee camp on Thursday. Palestinian medics also reported that over 40 people, most of them children, were receiving

treatment at the two hospitals. The al-Aqsa Hospital said that the Israeli attack also damaged several nearby houses in Nuseirat. There was no immediate comment from the Israeli military on the deadly strike. Israel is trying to eliminate Hamas, which led the attack on southern Israel in October 2023 that sparked the war in Gaza. The Israeli military says Hamas militants hide among Gaza's civilian population. Photos from the site showed a completely collapsed building with people walking through its mangled and charred remains, smoke rising from piles of belongings strewn over the rubble. The bombardment came just

hours after Jake Sullivan, President Biden's national security adviser, told reporters in Jerusalem that Israel's ceasefire in Lebanon has helped clear the way for another deal to end the war in Gaza. He plans to travel next to Qatar and Egypt, key mediators in the ceasefire talks, as the Biden administration makes a final push on negotiations before Donald Trump is inaugurated. Sullivan said "Hamas' posture at the negotiating table did adapt" after Israel decimated the leadership of its ally Hezbollah in Lebanon and reached a ceasefire there. "We believe it puts us in a position to close this negotiation," he said. Israel's offensive has killed over

44,800 Palestinians in Gaza, more than half of them women and children, according to the Gaza Health Ministry, which does not say how many were combatants. The Israeli military says it has killed over 17,000 militants, without providing evidence. The fighting has plunged Gaza into a severe humanitarian crisis, with experts warning of famine. Israel says it allows enough aid to enter and blames UN agencies for not distributing it. The UN says Israeli restrictions, and the breakdown of law and order after Israel repeatedly targeted the Hamas-run police force, make it extremely difficult to operate in the territory.

Biden watching situation in Bangladesh very closely: White House

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

President Joe Biden is closely monitoring the situation in Bangladesh and the US will hold the country's interim government accountable for ensuring the protection of religious and ethnic minorities, the White House has said. The security situation in Bangladesh has been difficult following the ouster of the former prime minister Sheikh Hasina, White House National Security Communications Advisor John Kirby said. "We have been working closely with the interim government to enhance the capability of their law enforcement and security services to deal with the challenge," Kirby said at a news conference on Thursday.

Hasina was ousted as prime minister in the face of a massive anti-government protest in August. There have been a spate of incidents of violence against Hindus and other minorities, as well as attacks on temples in the last few weeks in Bangladesh. "We've been very clear in our engagement with all Bangladeshi leaders that protection of religious and ethnic minorities is absolutely critical, and the leaders of the interim government have repeatedly committed to providing security to all Bangladeshis, regardless of religion or ethnicity," he said. "We want to hold them to that," Kirby said in response to a question. Over the past few weeks, Indian Americans have held

peaceful protests and marches in several cities, including in front of the White House, in Chicago, New York, SFO, Detroit, Houston and Atlanta, urging Biden to help stop alleged brutalities against the minority Hindu community in Bangladesh. Earlier in the day, Indian-American Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi urged members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to address the issue of violence against minorities, primarily Hindus, in Bangladesh during the confirmation hearing of Senator Marco Rubio for the position of secretary of state. President-elect Donald Trump has nominated Senator Rubio for the top diplomatic position. The date of his confirmation hearing has not been announced yet.

Speaker resigns in Sri Lanka

Colombo (PTI): Sri Lanka's Parliament Speaker Asoka Ranwala announced his resignation on Friday following days of speculation about him falsifying his educational qualifications.

"In recent days, a problem with my educational qualifications has been raised in society. I have not made any false statements about my educational qualifications," Ranwala said in a statement. Asserting that he currently does not possess any documents to prove his qualifications, Ranwala said that it would also not be possible for him to obtain these from the relevant institutions. "However, in order to stop the inconvenience caused to the government and the people who had placed trust in the government, I have decided to resign from the post of Speaker," he said.

Blinken urges nations to support peaceful Syrian political transition

AP ■ JERUSALEM

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken is pressing ahead with efforts to unify Middle East nations in support of a peaceful political transition in Syria. He is meeting on Friday with Turkey's foreign minister after talks with President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to try to bring Turkey into a consensus to prevent Syria from collapsing into wider turmoil. It's Blinken's 12th trip to the Mideast since the Israel-Hamas war erupted in Gaza last year but first since the ouster of Syrian President Bashar Assad. The outgoing Biden administration is particularly concerned that a power vacuum in Syria could exacerbate already heightened tensions in the region and create conditions for the Islamic State group to regain territory and influence. The fighting between Israel and Hamas has plunged Gaza into a severe humanitarian cri-

sis. Israel's offensive has killed over 44,800 Palestinians in Gaza, more than half of them women and children, according to the Gaza Health Ministry, which does not say how many were combatants. The Israeli military says it has killed over 17,000 militants, without providing evidence. The war in Gaza was sparked by an October 7, 2023, attack by Hamas in southern Israel in which some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, were killed and around 250 others were taken hostage. Some 100 hostages are still inside Gaza, at least a third of whom are believed to be dead. Blinken says there's broad agreement between US and Turkey on Syria's future: US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Friday there was "broad agreement" between Turkey and the United States on what they would like to see in Syria following the ouster of President Bashar Assad. "There's broad agreement on

what we would like to see going forward, starting with the interim government in Syria, one that is inclusive and non-sectarian and one that protects the rights of minorities and women" and does not "pose any kind of threat to any of Syria's neighbours," Blinken said in joint statements with Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan. The insurgent groups that toppled Assad in Syria have not made clear their policy or stance on Israel, whose military in recent days has bombed sites all over the country, saying it is trying to prevent weapons from falling into extremist hands. Blinken also said it was crucial to keep the Islamic State group under control. "We also discussed the imperative of continuing the efforts to keep ISIS down. Our countries worked very hard and gave a lot over many years to ensure the elimination of the territorial caliphate of ISIS to ensure that that threat doesn't

rear its head again," Blinken said. The Turkish foreign minister said the two discussed ways of establishing prosperity in Syria and ending terrorism in the country. "Our priority is establishing stability in Syria as soon as possible, preventing terrorism from gaining ground, and ensuring that IS and the PKK aren't dominant," Fidan said, in a reference to the banned Kurdistan Workers Party. Blinken said: "We're very focused on Syria, very focused on the opportunity that now is before us and before the Syrian people to move from out from under the shackles of Bashar al-Assad to a different and better future for the Syrian people, one that the Syrian people decide for themselves." Blinken and Fidan said they had also discussed a ceasefire for Gaza. "We've seen in the last couple of weeks more encouraging signs that (a ceasefire) is possible," Blinken said.



US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, left, meets with Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, middle, and Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan, at Ankara Esenboga Airport. AP/PTI

British Indian hedge fund trader jailed in Denmark

PTI ■ LONDON

A British hedge fund trader of Indian heritage has been sentenced to 12 years in prison by authorities in Denmark after being found guilty of a tax fraud amounting to over GBP 1 billion. Sanjay Shah, 54, was handed the maximum prison sentence for an economic crime by a district court in Glostrup this week. The Danish prosecution said in a statement that the court found it proven that Shah was the mastermind behind a complex setup in which 190 American pension companies and 24 Malaysian companies entered into agreements to purchase Danish list-

ed shares at times when the shares were traded with the right to dividends. "The verdict is a milestone in the criminal justice settlement following the dividend tax cases, as the convicted person was the main instigator of a fraud against the Danish state of historic proportions," said Marie Tullin, special prosecutor at the State Attorney for Serious Crime (SSK). "It is therefore with satisfaction that I can now state that the court has imposed a sentence that reflects the extremely serious and extensive nature of the case," she said. In addition to the prison sentence, the court confiscated a total of approximately 7.2 bil-

lion kroner (USD 1bn), corresponding to the economic gain of the convicted person. Among other things, deposits in accounts in foreign banks, shares and bonds, as well as a number of properties or shares thereof belonging to the convicted person, his companies or his wife were confiscated. "The fraud has caused a major loss for the Danish state, and it is therefore of crucial importance that the court today has confiscated an amount that corresponds to the convicted person's profits from the fraud," says Dennis Bæckmann, special prosecutor, National Unit for Serious Crime (NSK). Shah, who has denied wrong-

doing, was also expelled from Denmark permanently, and he was denied the right to participate in the management of a business in Denmark or abroad without being personally and unlimitedly liable for the company's obligations. He has lodged an appeal against the Glostrup district court's verdict in the High Court. According to the Danish Prosecution Service (AnklageMyndigheden), the British national was convicted of committing fraud of a "particularly serious nature for 9,025,205,871 kroner (GBP 1bn) and attempted fraud for an additional 553,346,302 kroner during a period from 2012 to 2015".

Suspected spy with business ties to Prince Andrew barred from UK

AP ■ LONDON

A suspected Chinese spy with business ties to Prince Andrew has been barred from the UK because of concerns he poses a threat to national security. A British immigration tribunal upheld the decision on Thursday in a ruling that revealed the Chinese national had developed such a close relationship with Andrew that he was invited to the prince's birthday party. Government officials were concerned the man could have misused his influence because the prince was under "considerable pressure" at the time, according to the ruling. British authorities believe the Chinese national, whose name wasn't released, was working on behalf of the United Front Work Department, an arm of the Chinese Communist Party that is used to influence foreign entities. The government determined that the businessman "was in a position to generate relationships between senior Chinese officials and prominent UK fig-

ures which could be leveraged for political interference purposes by the Chinese State," according to the tribunal's decision. Prince Andrew, the younger brother of King Charles III, has been repeatedly criticised for his links to wealthy foreigners, raising concerns that those individuals are trying to buy access to the royal family. Andrew's finances have been squeezed in recent years after he was forced to step away from royal duties and give up public funding amid concerns about his relationship with Jeffrey Epstein, the American financier and convicted pedophile who committed suicide in prison in 2019. British intelligence chiefs have become increasingly concerned about China's efforts to influence UK government policy. In 2022, Britain's domestic intelligence service, known as MI5, warned politicians that a British-Chinese lawyer had been seeking to improperly influence members of Parliament for years. A parliamentary researcher was arrested in 2023 on suspi-

cion of providing sensitive information to China. The 50-year-old Chinese national covered by this week's ruling was described as a man who worked as a junior civil servant in China before he came to the UK as a student in 2002. He earned a master's degree in public administration and public policy at the University of York before starting a business that advises UK-based companies on their operations in China. He was granted the right to live and work in the UK for an indefinite period in 2013. Although he didn't make Britain his permanent home, the man told authorities that he spent one to two weeks a month in the country and considered it his "second home." He was stopped while entering the UK on November 6, 2021, and ordered to surrender his mobile phone and other digital devices on which authorities found a letter from a senior adviser to Andrew confirming that he was authorised to act on behalf of the prince in relation to potential partners and investors in China.

Biden grants clemency to four Indian-Americans

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Four Indian-Americans facing sentences ranging from 17 years to life imprisonment are among nearly 1,500 people granted clemency by President Joe Biden. These four Indian-Americans are Meera Sachdeva, Babubhai Patel, Krishna Mote and Vikram Dutta. "America was built on the promise of possibility and second chances. As President, I have the great privilege of extending mercy to people who have demonstrated remorse and rehabilitation, restoring opportunity for Americans to participate in daily life and contribute to their communities, and taking steps to remove sentencing disparities for non-violent offenders, especially those convicted of drug offences," Biden said in a statement on Thursday. "That is why, today, I am pardoning 39 people who have shown successful rehabilitation and have shown commitment to making their communities stronger and safer. I am also commuting the sentences of nearly 1,500 people who are serving long prison sentences - many

of whom would receive lower sentences if charged under today's laws, policies, and practices," he said. This was the largest single-day act of clemency in recent times. In December 2012, Dr Meera Sachdeva was sentenced to 20 years in prison and ordered to repay nearly USD 8.2 million for fraud at a former Mississippi cancer centre she ran. She is now 63. Babubhai Patel was sentenced to 17 years on 26 convictions for a healthcare fraud conspiracy, a drug conspiracy, and related fraud and drug violations in 2013. Also in 2013, Krishna Mote, 54, was sentenced to serve life in prison after he was convicted of conspiracy to distribute more than 280 grams of crack cocaine and more than 500 grams of cocaine, and distribution of crack cocaine as an aider and abettor. Vikram Dutta, 63, was in January 2012 sentenced in a Manhattan federal court to 235 months in prison after he was found guilty of conspiracy charges stemming from his use of his perfume distribution business to launder millions of dollars for a Mexican narcotics organisation.

Russia targets Ukrainian power infrastructure

AP ■ KYIV

Russia on Friday launched a massive aerial attack against Ukraine, involving dozens of cruise missiles and drones, the latest such strike aimed at crippling the country's electricity system. The Russian military targeted the Ukrainian power grid, energy minister Herman Halushchenko wrote on his Facebook page. "The enemy continues its terror," he said. Halushchenko said energy workers do everything necessary to "minimize negative consequences for the energy system," promising to release more details on damages once the security situation allows it. Ukraine's air force reported multiple strike drones launched at Ukraine overnight followed by swarms of cruise missiles in the country's air space. It said Russia also used air-launched ballistic Kinzhal missiles against Ukraine's western regions. Friday's attack is the latest in a series of such raids that has heightened fears that the

Kremlin aims to destroy the country's power generation capacity as the winter sets in. Since launching its invasion in February 2022, Russia has relentlessly pummelled Ukraine's electricity system, resulting in repeated shutdowns of critical heating and drinking water supplies during the bitter winter months in an apparent attempt to break Ukrainian spirits and resolve. Moscow has declared that the attacks are aimed at hobbling Ukraine's defence industry, thwarting the production of missiles, drones, armoured vehicles and artillery, among other weapons. A similar massive attack on November 28 involved about 200 missiles and drones and left more than a million households without power until emergency teams restored supplies. Ukrainian officials have warned that Russia is stockpiling cruise and ballistic missiles for more attacks. On November 21, Russia for the first time used an intermediate range hypersonic ballistic missile to strike an industrial

plant in the city of Dnipro, in eastern Ukraine. Russian President Vladimir Putin described the attack with the Oreshnik missile as retaliation for Ukrainian strikes on Russian territory with longer-range Western weapons. He declared that more attacks with the new weapon could follow. The Pentagon warned Wednesday that Russia could use its new missile against Ukraine again soon. Around half of Ukraine's energy infrastructure has been destroyed during the almost three years of war with Russia, and rolling electricity blackouts are widespread. Kyiv's Western allies have provided Ukraine with air defence systems to help it protect critical infrastructure, but Russia has sought to overwhelm the air defences with combined strikes involving big numbers of missiles and drones. Russia has held the initiative this year as its military has steadily rammed through Ukrainian defences in the east in a series of slow but steady offensives.

Trump invites Xi Jinping to his Jan 20 inauguration

PTI ■ WASHINGTON
 US President-elect Donald Trump has invited Chinese President Xi Jinping to attend his inauguration on January 20, according to his spokesperson. "This is an example of President Trump creating an open dialogue with leaders of countries that are not just our allies but our adversaries and our competitors too," the incoming White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt told Fox News in an interview on Thursday. "We saw this in the first term. He got a lot of criticism for it, but it led to peace around the world. He is willing to talk to anyone. He will always put America's interest first," she said. Leavitt, however, did not say if the invitation had been accepted by the Chinese president. The White House preferred not to comment on the merit of the invitation.

"It is going to be up to President-elect Trump to decide who's going to sit with him there at that inauguration, who's going to be there," John Kirby from the White House told reporters. "We have worked really hard on this most consequential of bilateral relationships. The president met with Xi Jinping a number of times, including recently. And as you get ready to turn over things to the Trump team, we're turning over a US-China relationship that is in better shape than the one we found it in. That doesn't mean that we don't have disagreements," Kirby said. "We do and we will and I'm sure they will too, but we're working hard on this relationship and we'll do that right to the end," he said. Responding to a question, Kirby said it was not his place to pass judgment on the invitations to the inauguration.

PUBLIC NOTICE
 It is to inform to the public at large that the entire first floor without roof rights, with one common car parking at ground floor, built-on property bearing No. C-32, Having Area Measuring 100 Sq. Yds., Out Of Khassa No. 25, Rect. No. 10, Situated in The Area Of Village Asalatpur Khandar, Delhi State Delhi, Colony Known As Jeevan Park, Uttam Nagar, New Delhi of 1. Sh. Ravi Kumar (90% Share) & 2. Sh. Vinay (10% Share) who are co-owners of the said property. On 04.09.2024 a Notarized Agreement to Sell dated 04.09.2024 executed by Sh. Naveen Kumar Goyal and same to be financed & mortgaged by Aditya Birha Housing Finance Ltd. If any person having any type of claim/right/interest over the said property, may inform in writing, at the address mentioned below, about his objections within 7 days from today, failing which it shall be presumed that the said property is free from all type of Encumbrances, lien etc. **Lucem Legal LLP** B-49B, Second Floor, Opp. SBI Bank Sector 2 Noida UP-201301 Contact: 9129-4269379

PROVISION OF SERVER BASED IP EPABX SYSTEM
 E-Tender Notice No. N. 4_HO-2024-25-RT Dated: 11-12-2024, E-Tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following works: **Tender No. N. 4_HO-2024-25-RT. Name of work:** Provision of Server Based IP EPABX system over N.F. Railway. **Tender Value:** ₹9,52,18,937.58/-. **Earnest Money:** ₹6,26,100/-. **Date & Time closing of Tender:** 12.00 hrs. of 03-01-2025. The complete information with tender documents of above e-tender will be available in website www.ireps.gov.in

ENGINEERING WORKS UNDER ALIPURDUAR DIVISION
 E-Tender Notice No. 111/W-21/APDJ: Dated: 11-12-2024. E-tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following work: **Tender No.: 27-AP-III-2024. Name of Work:** New Mal Jn. (SL)-Alipurduar Jn. (SL)-TSR(P)-22.00 Tkm & Siliguri Jn.-New Mal Jn. (SL)-TSR(P)-17.00 Tkm. **Tender Value:** ₹18,11,79,388.85; **Earnest Money:** ₹10,55,900.00. E-tender will be closed at 13.00 hrs. on 02-01-2025 and opened at 15.00 hrs. on 02-01-2025. The complete information with the tender documents of above e-tender will be available in the website <http://www.ireps.gov.in>

Baba Farid University of Health Sciences
 Sadiq Road, Faridkot -151203 Ph. 01639-256232, 256236

VACANCIES
 Advt. No.BFU-24/27
 Online applications are invited w.e.f 17/12/2024 to 06/01/2025 from eligible candidates through University website i.e. www.bfuh.ac.in to the recruitment of 01- Director, 02-Law Officer, 02-Medical Record Keeper, 02-Driver, 01-Accountant, 04-Radiography Technician, 04-Radiographer (Radio-diagnosis), 01-Gas Manifold Operator and 01-Sanitation Supervisor on regular basis at Tertiary Cancer Care Centre, Fazilka constituent institute of Baba Farid University of Health Sciences, Faridkot. For details/updates/eligibility/no. of Posts/terms & conditions visit website www.bfuh.ac.in **Sd/-** ni/12/253/2023/39997 Dated CHD - 12/13/2024

छत्तीसगढ़ पर्यावरण संरक्षण मंडल
 पर्यावास भवन, सेक्टर-19, नवा रायपुर अटल नगर, जिला- रायपुर (छ.ग.)

सर्व संबंधित को सूचना
 भारत सरकार, पर्यावरण, वन एवं जलवायु परिवर्तन मंत्रालय द्वारा जारी ई.आई.ए. नोटिफिकेशन, 2006 (यथा-संशोधित) के तहत सर्व संबंधित को सूचित किया जाता है कि ग्राम- बासीन, तहसील- राजिम, जिला- गरियाबंद (छ.ग.) में स्थित निम्नलिखित 02 फर्शी पत्थर (गौण खनिज) (1) मेसर्स श्री प्रमोद टोपडरे, ग्राम- बासीन, तहसील- राजिम, जिला- गरियाबंद (छ.ग.) स्थित खसरा नं. - 1503/1 (पाट), कुल रकबा- 0.63 हेक्टेयर, फर्शी पत्थर (गौण खनिज) उत्खनन क्षमता- 4856 टन प्रतिवर्ष एवं (2) मेसर्स श्री तुलाश राते, ग्राम- बासीन, तहसील- राजिम, जिला- गरियाबंद (छ.ग.) में स्थित खसरा नंबर- 1436 एवं 1440 (पाट), कुल रकबा- 0.62 हेक्टेयर, फर्शी पत्थर (गौण खनिज) उत्खनन क्षमता- 4110 टन प्रतिवर्ष के पर्यावरणीय स्वीकृत बाबत संयुक्त लोक सुनवाई दिनांक 17/01/2025 को समय दोपहर 12:00 बजे से ग्राम पंचायत भवन बरभोंडा, तहसील- राजिम, जिला- गरियाबंद में नियत की गई है। यह भी सूचित हो कि लोक सुनवाई के दौरान भारत सरकार, पर्यावरण वन एवं जलवायु परिवर्तन मंत्रालय, नई दिल्ली के ऑफिस मेमोरेण्डम F.No.22-25/2020-IA. III दिनांक 14.09.2020 तथा कोरोना वाईरस के नियंत्रण एवं रोकथाम हेतु शासन द्वारा जारी समस्त दिशा-निर्देशों का अक्षरशः पालन करया जाना अनिवार्य होगा। ई.आई.ए. नोटिफिकेशन, 14 सितम्बर, 2006 (यथा- संशोधित) के अनुसार संबंधित व्यक्तियों के अवलोकन / पठन हेतु द्वापरे ई.आई.ए. रिपोर्ट, कार्यवाहक सार हिन्दी एवं अंग्रेजी भाषा तथा सी.डी. (साफ्ट कॉपी) डायरेक्टर, भारत सरकार, पर्यावरण, वन एवं जलवायु परिवर्तन मंत्रालय, जोर बाग रोड, नई दिल्ली, एकीकृत क्षेत्रीय कार्यालय, भारत सरकार, पर्यावरण, वन एवं जलवायु परिवर्तन मंत्रालय, अण्डा भवन, नार्थ ब्लॉक, सेक्टर-19, नवा रायपुर अटल नगर, जिला- रायपुर (छ.ग.), कार्यालय कलेक्टर, जिला- गरियाबंद (छ.ग.), मुख्य कार्यपालक अधिकारी, जिला पंचायत गरियाबंद, जिला- गरियाबंद (छ.ग.), मुख्य महाप्रबंधक, जिला व्यापार एवं उद्योग केन्द्र, जिला- गरियाबंद (छ.ग.), मुख्य कार्यपालक अधिकारी, जनपद पंचायत - फिंगोहर, जिला- गरियाबंद (छ.ग.), कार्यालय सपरब / सचिव, ग्राम पंचायत बासीन, तहसील- राजिम, जिला- गरियाबंद (छ.ग.), कार्यालय सपरब / सचिव, ग्राम पंचायत बरभोंडा, तहसील- राजिम, जिला- गरियाबंद (छ.ग.), क्षेत्रीय कार्यालय, छत्तीसगढ़ पर्यावरण संरक्षण मंडल, न्यू ऑफिस बिल्डिंग, रिंग रोड नं.- 2, टाटीबंद, रायपुर, जिला- रायपुर (छ.ग.) एवं मुख्यालय, छत्तीसगढ़ पर्यावरण संरक्षण मंडल, पर्यावास भवन, सेक्टर-19, नवा रायपुर अटल नगर, रायपुर, जिला- रायपुर (छ.ग.) में रखी गई है।

सदय सचिव
छत्तीसगढ़ पर्यावरण संरक्षण मंडल,
 नवा रायपुर अटल नगर, रायपुर (छ.ग.)

PUBLIC NOTICE
 I, Atul Bhatia S/o Shri Arjan Kumar Bhatia R/o 40, Gagan Vihar, Delhi - 110051 do hereby solemnly affirm and inform that I am the owner of property No. 40, situated at Gagan Vihar, Delhi - 110051. I have lost /misplaced my original Conveyance Deed dated 10 - 01 - 2007 vide regd. as Document No. 541, Book No. 1, Volume No. 2364, on pages 25 to 27 dated 10 - 01 - 2007 in the office of SR - VII, Delhi alongwith other previous documents of property No. 40, Gagan Vihar, Delhi - 110051. I have also filed a complaint in respect of lost / misplaced of above said documents vide M.O. 430/2014 and LR No. 231845/2024 dated 19-11 - 2024. **Atul Bhatia**

THE PIONEER CLASSIFIEDS
 CHANGE OF NAME

I, Joyamala Paul, Mother of- JC-773325H Sub Shyam Paul, R/o- Daharthuba (West), PS+PO- Habra, Teh- Barasat, Dist- North 24 Parganas, W.B.- 743263, have changed my name from Joyamala Paul to Joymla Paul, vide affidavit No. IN-DL01684330495543W, dated 13/12/2024 before Notary Public Delhi.

PD(107)C
I, Joymla Paul, Mother of- JC-773325H Sub Shyam Paul, R/o- Daharthuba (West), PS+PO- Habra, Teh- Barasat, Dist- North 24 Parganas, W.B.- 743263, declare that in my son's service records, my DOB is wrongly written as 01/07/1956 whereas my correct DOB is - 01/01/1961, vide affidavit No. IN-DL01682496780251W, dated 13/12/2024 before Notary Public Delhi.

PD(107)C
I, Bhollu Dass, Father of- No.15794455L Hav Amrit Pal Singh, R/o- Maharaja Ranjit Singh Nagar, Badrukhan, Sangrur, Punjab- 148001, have changed my name from Bhollu Dass to Bhollu Dass, vide affidavit dated 13/12/2024 before Notary Public Delhi.

PD(107)C
I, Hafiza Bibi, Mother of No.14929812H Hav Safikul Mallick, R/o- Vill-Khardattapara, PO- Hapania, Dist- Purba Bardhaman, W.B.- 713512, have changed my name from Hafiza Bibi Mallick to Hafija Bibi Mallick, & my correct DO.B. is 02/12/1952, vide affidavit dated 13/12/2024 before Notary Public Delhi.

PD(107)C
I, Artee, W/o- No.16022559A L/NK Shailendra Singh, R/o-Vill/PO- Kanera, Teh- Ater, Dist- Bhind, M.P.- 477111, have changed my name from Artee to Arti, vide affidavit dated 13/12/2024 before Notary Public Delhi.

PD(107)C
I, Uma Bai, Mother of- No.16022559A L/NK Shailendra Singh, R/o-Vill+PO- Kanera, Teh- Ater, Dist- Bhind, M.P.- 477111, have changed my name from Uma Bai to Uma Devi, vide affidavit dated 13/12/2024 before Notary Public Delhi.

PD(107)C
I, Ambri Khatun, Mother of- JC-471939N Sub Firoz Ahmad Khan, R/o- Ghosia Kalan, Ghusia, Rohtas, Bihar-802212, have changed my name from Ambri Khatun to Ambari Khatun, vide affidavit dated 13/12/2024 before Notary Public Delhi.

PD(107)C
I, Nar Singh, Father of- No. 16022559A L/NK Shailendra Singh, R/o- Vill/PO- Kanera, Teh- Ater, Dist- Bhind, M.P.- 477111, have changed my name from Nar Singh to Narasingh, vide affidavit dated 13/12/2024 before Notary Public Delhi.

PD(107)C
I, Rajiya, D/o, Mohammad Jaharodin, R/o, B-798 Fakirgipuri, Delhi-33, That I have Changed My name from Rajiya Tak To Rajiya for all Purposes.

PD(106)C
I, Ruchika Madaan, W/o Shri Manoj Kumar Madaan, R/o B-2/179 Block B-2, sec-6, Rohini Delhi 110085 declare that my name before marriage was Ruchika Rani and after marriage Ruchika Madaan and have changed my name Ruchika Rani to Ruchika Madaan for all purposes **PD(107)C**

PUBLIC NOTICE
 Notice is hereby given on behalf of MRS. USHA who is owner of Residential Property area measuring 1334.63 Sq.Yds., out of Khata No.000555, Kharsa No.43, Situated in the area of Village Jagannur Afjalpur, Pargana Dankaur, Tehsil and District-Gaumi Budh Nagar U.P. vide Gift Deed bearing Document No. 38833, Book No. 1, Volume No. 46008, on Pages 235 to 248, on dated 27.11.2024, SRO-Greater Noida, and intend to mortgage against the financial assistance from Fedbak Financial Services Limited. To comply the requirements of BANK/NBFC, we give this public notice that if any person having any type of claim/right/title interest/creating mortgage over the said property, may inform in writing, at the address mentioned below, about his objections from today, failing which it shall be presumed that the said property is free from all type of Encumbrances, lien etc. **Lucem Legal LLP** Plot No.136, (Basement) Uday Park, New Delhi-110049, Contact: 911-40046316

PUBLIC NOTICE
MR. ANIL KUMAR SETHI S/O MR. DALIP CHAND SETHI R/O 255, BHERA ENCLAVE, PASCHIM VIHAR, DELHI . have purchase Unit No. 433 in NE CENTRAL Tower/Block project NORTH EYE, situated at PLOT NO: GH-0A, SECTOR-74, NOIDA., I have lost the original Allotment Letter dated 19.08.2020, all Receipts, of the above said property, I have requested M/s SUPERTECH LIMITED, to issue the duplicate Allotment letter, Receipts, of the said property, if anybody or Financial Institutions have objection, he/she may contact to M/S Supertech limited, office - Plot No. C-2, Sector 96, Noida 201303 (U.P.), Within 15 days. **DIWAKAR JHA (ADVOCATE)Ch. No. 45, Sub-Registar Compund, Sector-33, Noida-201301 (U.P.), Mob. 9711299949**

PUBLIC NOTICE
 My Wife late RANJANA SAHRAWAT booked a Flat 1702, Tower A - 2 , in project called Supertech One Village , Plot No. GH-01, SECTOR-16B, GREATER NOIDA, now after her Demise I have requested to M/S Supertech Limited to Remove her name the said Flat. If anybody has an objection, in this regard he/she may contact to M/S Supertech Limited office at Plot No C-2, Sector 96, Noida, Uttar Pradesh 201303 within 15 days of the Published notice, SACHIT KUMAR SAHRAWAT (co-Applcant) S/o SH. MAHENDRA SINGH R/O Z884, TIMAR PUR, NEDELHI-110054. **DIWAKAR JHA (ADVOCATE)Ch. No. 45, Sub-Registar Compund, Sector-33, Noida-201301 (U.P.), Mob. 9711299949**

Indian Overseas Bank
 PALWAL Branch
 (Address: Railway Road, Shri Colony, PALWAL, HARYANA - 121 102)
 Phone No. & Email id: 101667@ioib.in

Demand notice to Borrowers/Mortgagors/Guarantors Under Sub-section (2) of section 13 of the SARFAESI Act, 2002 Place: Pawal Date: 19.11.2024

Sl.No	Borrower
1	Premeet S/O Rajbir & Rajbir S/O Dharambir, Vill Kamrawali, P.O Badoli, The & Dist Palwal (Haryana).
2	Mrs. Kela Devi, (Guarantor I mortgagor) Vill Kamrawali, P.O Badoli, The & Dist Palwal (Haryana).
3	Mr.Rajender SAD Dhargambi, Near Shiv Mandir, VIII, Kamrawali, Barauli, Palwal, Haryana.
4	Mr. Ravinder S/O Dharambir, Near Sarkari School, VIII Kamrawali, Barauli, Palwal, Haryana.
5	Ms.Sushila W/o Biendra Singh, 115, Khani Mohalia, Blothi, Bharatpur, Rajasthan.
6	Ms. Mukesh W/o Brigal, 115, Ratni Mohalia, Bithi, Bharatpur, Rajasthan

Dear Sirs/
Re.: Your Credit facilities with Indian Overseas Bank, PALWAL Branch
 1. You, the above named borrowers of our bank have availed the following credit facilities from our Palwal Branch:
 The details of credit facilities with outstanding dues are as under:

Sl.No	Nature of Facility	Limit	Rates of interest (including overdue interest) & rests	Last Debit Date (Mandatory)	Total dues* as on 19/11/2024 (In Rs.)
1	Term Loan	9,90,000.00	14.55% p.a compounded monthly	19.11.2024	22,15,257.81
		16670395.1400001			
	Total				

* With further interest from last interest debit date at contractual rates/rests will become payable from the date mentioned above till date of payment.
 The Above named guarantors referred under Sl. Nos 2,3,4,5 & 6 have executed guarantee and thereby guaranteed payment on demand of all moneys and discharge all obligations and liabilities then or at any time thereafter owing or incurred to Indian Overseas Bank by the borrowers for the credits limits of Rs 9,90,000.00 together with agreed interest, charges etc. overseas
 The credit facilities were secured by the assets mentioned below by way of mortgage/ hypothecation/ hire purchase/ lease (as applicable) standing in the name of the borrower Nos 1. They were also secured by mortgage of properties in the name of borrower / mortgagor mentioned in Sl.No 2,3,4,5 & 6. They were also secured by mortgage of properties in the name of mortgagor / guarantor Nos herein above.
 The guarantors mentioned under Sl. Nos 2,3,4,5 & 6 of you have given personal guarantee for the credit facilities as given above.
 You have acknowledged from time to time the liabilities mentioned herein above through various documents executed by you.
 2. The details of securities in favour of the Bank for the aforesaid credit facilities are:

Nature of security	Particulars of securities
1. Mortgage	Equitable mortgage of residential property vacant plot measuring 149 sq yards having its Kharsa No: 325/14(35-12) to the extent of 5/112th share, situate at Palwal within the limits of MC Palwal In the name of Smt Kela Devi, W/o Dharmbir S/o) Sh Gula. Boundaries: E- Rasta, W- Property of Jaat (Mitrol), N- Other Property S- Rasta.

** The Bank reserves its right to proceed against the agricultural land security Nos. 6 above through other available legal course of action.
 3. Consequent upon defaults committed by the above named borrowers in payment of the principal debt I interest as per agreed terms, loan account mentioned above have been classified as Non-Performing Asset on 18.07.2022 (date of classification as NPA) as per Reserve Bank of India guidelines and directives. Despite our regularizations for regularization of your account, you have not repaid the overdue loans including interest thereon.
 4. Since you the above named borrowers referred under Sl. Nos 1, have failed to meet the liabilities in respect of the credit facilities duly secured by various securities mentioned above and upon classification of your account as a Non-Performing Asset, we hereby recall our advances to Sl.Nos 1, 2,3,4,5 & 6 of you and give you notice under sub-section (2) of section 13 of the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002, and call upon you to pay in full and discharge your liabilities to the bank aggregating to Rs 22,15,257.81 (Rupees twenty two lakhs fifteen thousand two hundred fifty seven and paise eighty only), as detailed in para 1 above, with further interest @ 14.55 % compounded with monthly/ half yearly as agreed, from the date mentioned above within 60 days from the date of receipt of this notice 5. The above named mortgagor / I guarantor Nos have given undertaking for repayment 1 guarantee for the credit facilities taken by the borrowers and have also mortgaged the properties herein mentioned to secure the above said credit facilities. Since the borrowers have committed defaults in repayment, the mortgagors/guarantors have become liable to pay to us in terms of the guarantee, the amounts due to the Bank as per the loan / credit facilities aggregating to Rs 22,15,257.81 (Rupees twenty two lakhs fifteen thousand two hundred fifty seven and paise eighty only), together with further interest @ 14.55 % compounded with monthly/ half yearly as agreed and we hereby invoke the guarantee against the mortgagors / guarantors who have given non-agi securities enforceable under the SARFAESI Act namely of you and call upon you to pay the said amount within sixty days from the date of receipt of this notice. Please be advised that the Guarantors liability is co-extensive with the liability of the borrowers.
 6. We further give notice to the borrowers namely 1, 2,3,4,5 & 6 and mortgagors/guarantors who have given non-agi securities enforceable under the SARFAESI Act namely that failing payment of the above amount in full with interest and charges etc till the date of payment, we shall be exercising all or any of the rights vested on us, under sub-section (4) of section 13 of the said Act.
 7. Please note that in law the borrowers and guarantors are jointly and severally liable to repay the dues with further interest and charges etc.
 8. Please note that interest will continue to accrue at the rates and rests as agreed for each credit facility until full repayment.
 9. Your attention is also invited to sub-section (13) of section 13 of the said Act in terms of which you are restrained from transferring/alienating/selling any of the secured assets referred to above by way of sale, lease or otherwise, without obtaining our prior written consent. Please also note that non-compliance / contravention of the provisions contained in the said Act or Rules made thereunder, is an offence which is punishable with imprisonment and/or fine as provided under section 29 of the Act. 10. The guarantors referred under Sl.No 2,3,4,5 & 6 have given personal guarantee to secure the loans of the said borrowers and as such we advise you to prevail upon the borrowers to repay the dues as per our demand since we have the right to initiate action against you simultaneously in accordance with law, for recovery of our dues based on your personal guarantee.
 11. We also put you on notice that if the account is not regularized/ repaid within the stipulated time and in case of the Bank classifying you as a willful defaulter as per RBI Guidelines, the Bank reserves its rights to publish your photograph in newspaper(s) with your name, address, details of default, dues etc., in accordance with RBI Guidelines besides initiating all recourse available to the Bank for recovery. 12. We also advise you that this demand notice is without prejudice to and shall not be construed as waiver of any other rights or remedies which we have for recovery of the above said dues as well as our right to make further demands in respect of sums due and payable of you.
 13. Further, your attention is invited to provisions of Sub-section (8) of the Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available to you, to redeem the secured assets.
Yours Faithfully
Authorized Officer
Indian Overseas Bank

PUBLIC NOTICE
 The Public at large is hereby notified that I, Sudhir Kumar S/o Shri Arvind Kumar intend to purchase a Property No.D-95, First Floor, Gali No.5, Shakarpur, Delhi-110092 from Shri Parvesh Kumar Jindal S/o Shri Ashok Kumar Jindal, who represent himself as owner of the property on the basis of WILL dated 10.12.2002, vide regd. as Document No. 11344 in Book No.3, Volume No. 324, on Pages 166 to 167 Dated 10/12/02 in the office of Sub Registrar VIII Delhi executed by Late Smt. SHANTA RANI in her lifetime. It is therefore, Notified that anybody claiming any right, title, interest, share or lien over the aforesaid property may file such claim or objection to the undersigned within a period of 7 days from the date of Publication of this notice. Otherwise, it will be presumed that the said property is free from all encumbrances, charges and/or lien, etc. and I am free to purchase the said property from the above named seller, Sd/SUDHIR KUMAR # 160, Street No.8, Block E, Karawal Nagar Road, Khajoori Khas Colony, Dayalpur, Delhi-110094, Contact No. 9899282023 **Sudhir Kumar**

PUBLIC NOTICE

For kind attention of allottees of the real estate project, "70 Grandwalk" developed by M/s Shine Buildcon Pvt. Ltd.
 1. The above-mentioned project was registered with the Interim RERA Panchkula vide registration No. 28 of 2017 dated 28.07.2017, and the registration was valid up to 30.12.2022.
 2. The promoter has made an application with the request to the authority that instead of revoking the registration on its expiry, the authority may permit it to remain in force subject to such further terms and conditions as it thinks fit to impose in the interest of the allottees, and any such terms and conditions so imposed shall be binding upon the promoter.
 3. The Authority is considering an application of the promoter to permit the continuation of the registration certificate under section 7(3) of the Act for this project to remain in force and hereby invite objections from the allottees in particular and any other concerned persons in general in this regard.
 4. Those objections shall be filed in the registry of the Authority before 28.12.2024 and appear in the Authority on 06.01.2025 at 11.00 AM for considering the objections received, failing which the Authority will consider the present application for continuation of the registration under section 7(3) of the Act. **Secretary**
 For Haryana Real Estate Regulatory Authority, Gurugram
 Dated: 14.12.2024

PUBLIC NOTICE
 It is publicly notified that Flat No. 055D, Block-U-3, Sector-11, Noida has been allotted in the name of Vinod Jain S/o S.L. Jain R/o 1793/28, Faridabad Haryana, and the GPA executed at Noida Vide Book No IV Volume No 1650 on pages 212 at Document No. 1446 and Add Book No. IV Volume No. 1684 on pages 331 to 336 dated 22.07.1995 in favour of Parveen Phul W/o Tribhuvan Kumar Phull R/o 156, First Floor, Ashoka Enclave Part-III, Sector-35, Amar Nagar Faridabad Haryana So with the help of the notice it is informed the transfer of the above flat in favour of Ashok Kumar S/o Shri Yogendra Prasad Singh R/o 117-C, 2nd Floor, Block-U-3, Sector-11, Noida and the Agreement to Sell was not registered. If any one has any objection he/she may submit his/her objection in the Housing Department of Noida Authority alongwith sufficient proofs within 15 days of the publication this notice. **Parveen Phull**

PUBLIC NOTICE
 Subject: Transfer of ownership in respect of Flat No. 1802-Tower A, situated at Time Residence, Sector-63, Gurugram, Haryana-122102 consequent upon the intestate death of owner Sh. Sandeep Chatteroo S/o Pyare Lal Chatteroo. Sh.Sandeep Chatteroo who was the owner of the subject cited property as per record has registered or unregistered and has/has not died on 31.12.2023 and has/has not died on 31.12.2023 and has/has not had no registered or unregistered will, leaving behind following legal heirs.
 i) Ms. Nirmala Chatteroo (Mother)
 ii) Sh. Samarth Chatteroo (Son)
 iii) Ms. Prapti Chatteroo (Daughter)
 iv) Poonam Chatteroo (Wife)
 all residence of 1, Chatur Singh Gardens, Govind Pura, Jammu, Jammu and Kashmir-180003 intends/intend to transfer of the above said property in their favour being the legal heirs. If any person is having any objection against the transfer of property, he/she can submit objections in writing along with supporting documents within 30 days from the date of publication of this notice, otherwise the said property shall be transferred in the names of legal heirs and may not entertain subsequent claims, if any. **Praveen Rastogi (Advocate)**
 ENR No. : D-24/06
 Address: RZ-97, Khushi Ram Park, Uttam Nagar, New Delhi-110059 Mob: 9810986643

PUBLIC NOTICE
 Subject: Transfer of ownership in respect of Flat No. 1802-Tower A, situated at Time Residence, Sector-63, Gurugram, Haryana-122102 consequent upon the intestate death of owner Sh. Sandeep Chatteroo S/o Pyare Lal Chatteroo. Sh.Sandeep Chatteroo who was the owner of the subject cited property as per record has registered or unregistered and has/has not died on 31.12.2023 and has/has not died on 31.12.2023 and has/has not had no registered or unregistered will, leaving behind following legal heirs.
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 ENR No. : D-24/06
 Address: RZ-97, Khushi Ram Park, Uttam Nagar, New Delhi-110059 Mob: 9810986643

SHINE BUILDCON PRIVATE LIMITED
 CIN No. U45201DL2004PTC131675
 Registered Office: H-334, Ground Floor, New Rajinder Nagar, New Delhi-110060 India .
 Corporate Office: 281, Udyog Vihar Phase-II, Gurugram, Haryana-122016, India.
 Email: shinebuildcon@rediffmail.com, Phone No. : 011-26744111, 26744112

Public Notice
 Whereas M/s Shine Buildcon Private Limited is in process of developing a Commercial Project namely "70 Grandwalk" situated in Sector-70, Badshahpur, Gurugram - 122 001, Haryana over an area measuring 2.893 Acres under License No.34 of 2012 valid up to 14.04.2025 granted by Director Town and Country Planning, Haryana and having HREERA Registration No. 28 of 2017 dated 28.07.2017.
 And where is M/s Shine Buildcon Private Limited (hereinafter referred "Company") has applied for change in Bank Account from Kotak Mahindra Bank Ltd to HDFC Bank Ltd and accordingly, the Company has obtained in principal approval for Change of bank accounts from Haryana Real Estate Regulatory Authority, Gurugram. Accordingly, vide this public notice, the general public is hereby notified/informed of the following changes in bank accounts:

Particulars	Previous Bank Accounts	New Bank Accounts
Bank Name	Kotak Mahindra Bank Ltd.	HDFC Bank Ltd.
IFSC Code	KKR0000220	HDFC0000127
Master Collection Account No. (100%)	582011033838	50200084302578
REERA Account No.(70%)	2012187222	50200084302513
Promoter/Fresh Cash Flow Account No. (30%)	582011033838	50200084367197

Any person having objections may file its objections before concerned office of Haryana RERA, Gurugram or Company within 15 days of this public notice.
M/s Shine Buildcon Private Limited
 Date: 14.12.2024 Place: Gurugram

OFFICE OF THE NAGAR PALIKA PARISHAD HATTA -DIST DAMOH
 (Third Call)
 Notice Inviting e-Tenders

NIT No. 1027 Dated: 10-12-2024
Online lumpsum bids for the following works under "sbm (u) - 2.0" (estimated on uadd issr (w.e.f - 02.08.2021) are invited from registered contractors and firms of repute fulfilling eligibility criteria

Tender ID	Scope of the work	Probable amount of contract (Rs. In Lacs)	Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) (In Rs)	Cost of Bid Document (In Rs)	Time of Completion including rainy season
1.	Design and build sewage treatment plant of installed capacity 3.60 MLD and all appurtenant structures and allied works; 2 No. of Pumping stations and all appurtenant structures and allied works; and	690.75	345373/-	20000/-	12 months
2.	Survey, review the designs, redesign where necessary, and diversion works of Nallahs with interception sewer of about 1.10 Km length including survey, design, construction of 2 No. of Pumping stations and all appurtenant structures and allied works; and				
3.	Operation & maintenance of the complete works of sewage treatment plant, intercepting sewer and/or interception & diversion works of Nallahs and pumping stations for a period of 05 years after completion of works, including defect liability period (DLP) of 5 year, starting from the date of commission of the project				

1. Interested Bidder can view the NIT on website www.mptenders.gov.in and www.mpurban.gov.in
 2. The Bid Document can be purchased only Online from 10:30 Hrs of 11-12-2024 to 17:30 Hrs. of 28-12-2024
 3. Amendment to

Switzerland suspends India's most favoured nation status

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Swiss government has suspended the most favoured nation status (MFN) clause in the Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA) between India and Switzerland, potentially impacting Swiss investments in India and leading to higher taxes on Indian companies operating in the European nation.



According to a December 11 statement by the Swiss finance department, the move follows the Supreme Court of India last year ruling that the MFN clause doesn't automatically trigger when a country joins the OECD if the Indian government signed a tax treaty with that country before it joined the organization. India signed tax treaties with Colombia and Lithuania that provided tax rates on certain types of income that were lower than the rates it provided to OECD countries. The two countries later joined OECD. Switzerland in 2021 interpreted that Colombia and Lithuania joining the OECD meant a 5 per cent rate for dividends would apply to the India-Switzerland tax treaty under the MFN clause, rather than 10 per cent as outlined in the agreement. But post suspension of the MFN status, Switzerland will from January 1, 2025, levy a 10 per cent tax on dividends due to Indian tax residents who claim refunds for Swiss withholding tax and for Swiss tax residents who claim foreign tax credits. In the statement, the Swiss Finance Department announced suspension of the application of the MFN clause of the protocol to the agreement between the Swiss Confederation and the Republic of India for the avoidance of double taxation with respect to taxes on income. Switzerland cited a 2023 ruling by Indian Supreme Court in a case relating to Vevey-headquartered Nestle for its decision to withdraw the MFN status. This means that Switzerland will tax dividends that Indian entities will earn in that country at 10 per cent from January 1, 2025. According to the statement, in 2021, the Delhi High Court in the Nestle case upheld the applicability of the residual tax rates after taking into account the MFN clause in the double taxation avoidance treaty. However, the Indian Supreme Court, in a decision dated October 19, 2023, reversed the lower court's decision and concluded that, the applicability of MFN clause provided "was not directly applicable in the absence of 'notification' in accordance with Section 90 of the Income Tax Act". Commenting on the decision of Swiss authority decision, Nangia Andersen M&A Tax Partner Sandeep Jhunjhunwala, said the unilateral suspension of application of the MFN clause under its tax treaty with India, marks a significant shift in bilateral treaty dynamics. "This suspension may lead to increased tax liabilities for Indian entities operating in Switzerland, highlighting the complexities of navigating international tax treaties in an evolving global landscape," he said.

It also underscores the necessity of aligning treaty partners on the interpretation and application of tax treaty clauses to ensure predictability, equity, and stability in international tax framework, Jhunjhunwala said. AKM Global, Tax Partner, Amit Maheshwari, said that the main reason behind the decision to withdraw MFN is of reciprocity, which ensures that taxpayers in both countries are treated equally and fairly. "Swiss authorities announced in August 2021 that based on the MFN clause between Switzerland and India, the tax rate on dividends from qualifying shareholdings would be reduced from 10 per cent to 5 per cent, effective retroactively from July 5, 2018. However, the subsequent Supreme Court ruling in 2023 contradicted the same," Maheshwari said. Overall, he added that this could impact Swiss investments in India as dividends would be subject to higher withholding now and income accruing on or after January 1, 2025, may be taxed at the rates provided for in the original double taxation treaty between Switzerland and India, regardless of the MFN clause. JSA Advocates & Solicitors Partner Kumarmanglam Vijay said this would especially impact Indian companies having ODI (overseas direct investment) structures with subsidiaries in Switzerland and will raise the Swiss withholding tax on dividends from 5 per cent to 10 per cent from January 1, 2025.

Delhi-Dehradun expressway to be completed within three months says Union minister Nitin Gadkari

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Union minister Nitin Gadkari on Friday said that the Delhi-Dehradun expressway, which is expected to reduce travel time between the two cities to two hours, will be completed within the next three months. Currently, the travel time between the two cities is five to six hours. Addressing 'Times Network India Economic Conclave 2024', Gadkari further said that construction of the Delhi-Mumbai Expressway is expected to be completed within two months. The travel time between the two metropolitan cities is expected to reduce to 12 hours with the completion of the expressway from the present

24 hours. The road transport and highways minister said Delhi-Dehradun highway project has two packages. "A Rs 10,000 crore project has been approved for Delhi's Kalindi Kunj, extending to Faridabad. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is set to inaugurate the project within the next 15-20 days," Gadkari said. Gadkari also said that the Modi government is working to reduce air pollution, lower the import of fossil fuel and enhance farm income. "The transport ministry is responsible for 40 per cent of the air pollution... While a huge part of pollution is due to stubble burning in neighbouring states of Punjab and Haryana, road construction and fossil fuels also add to the annual problem," he said. The minister also pointed out that the problem of stubble burning will be solved in two years as the government is working on 400 projects that will convert 200 lakh tonnes of rice straw every year to alternate fuels. Gadkari said that his ministry is working on 36 green express highways, which will help reduce the logistics costs in the country. "India's logistics cost is 14-16 per cent compared to 8 per cent in China and 12 per cent in the US and European Union. We aim to bring this down to 9 per cent in two years," he said. According to the minister, this will push India's exports by 1.5 times and help us become more competitive.

Sebi proposes algo trading for retail investors with safeguards

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Capital markets regulator Sebi on Friday proposed facilitating the participation of retail investors in algorithmic trading (algo trading), which provides advantages of faster order execution and improved liquidity. The proposal, if implemented, is expected to fill the void for retail investors who want to trade using algo with adequate safeguards. In an effort to enhance market efficiency and transparency, Sebi introduced algo trading through the Direct Market Access (DMA) facility, which provided significant advantages like faster order execution, reduced transaction costs, greater transparency, better audit

trails and improved liquidity. However, access to these facilities has been limited to institutional investors. In its consultation paper on Friday, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) proposed extending the existing regulatory framework, with additional safeguards, to facilitate the participation of retail investors in algo trading. "The evolving nature of algo trading, particularly with the increasing demand for algo trading by retail investors, has necessitated a further review and refinement of the regulatory framework so that retail investors are also able to participate in algo trading with proper checks and balances," Sebi said. Further, the regulator proposed spelling out the rights and responsibilities of the main stakeholders of the trading ecosystem -- investors, stock brokers, algo providers/ vendors and Market Infrastructure Institutions (MIIs)-- so that the retail investors can avail algo facilities with requisite safeguards. Ajay Garg, Director and CEO, SMC Global Securities, said allowing algorithmic trading for retail investors is indeed the need of the hour. Under the new framework, retail investors will get access to the approved algo only from the registered brokers, which will safeguard the interests of these investors. This presents great opportunities for stockbrokers to expand their customer base in a regulated environment. The past study of Sebi in F&O trading revealed that around 97 per cent of FPI profits and 96 per cent of proprietary trader profits were generated from algo trading in FY24. The proposed refined framework of algo trading will build the trust of retail investors and help them generate higher profits, given that it benefited the FPIs and institutional investors in the past, Garg said. Sebi said the facility of algo trading would be provided by the stock broker only after obtaining requisite permission from the stock exchange for each algo. Further, all algo orders would be tagged with a unique identifier provided by the stock exchange in order to establish an audit trail, and the broker would seek approval from the exchange for any modification or change to the approved algos or systems used for algos. For the purpose of provision of algo trading through Application Programming Interfaces (APIs), brokers should be the principal, while any algo provider or fintech/vendor would act as its agent while using the API provided by the broker. "All orders above the specified order per second threshold, originating/flowing through API extended by brokers to their clients/service providers, shall be treated as algo orders and shall be tagged with a unique identifier provided by the stock exchange.

TVS Motors, Reliance Jio, Tata AIG among winners of 17th BML Munjal awards



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

TVS Motors, Reliance Jio, Tata AIG, OYO, ONGC Videsh and HPCL have been adjudged winners of the 17th BML Munjal Awards for Business Excellence in Learning & Development. TVS Motors won in the Private Sector (manufacturing) category, Reliance Jio Infocomm and Tata AIG General Insurance won in the Private Sector (Services) category, Oravel Stays (OYO) won in the Emerging Stars category, ONGC Videsh won in the Public Sector category and Hindustan Petroleum (HPCL) won in the Sustained Excellence category. Union Minister Piyush Goyal and India's G20 Sherpa Amitabh Kant graced the occasion and gave away the awards. The BML Munjal Awards annually celebrate excellence in Learning and Development (L&D) and are a tribute to the enduring legacy of the late Dr. Brijmohan Lall Munjal, founder of the Hero Group. The six winners were eventually picked by an independent jury comprising of Sanjay Nayar, Founder and Chairman, Sorin Investment Fund, Gopal Srinivasan, Chairman & Managing Director, TVS Capital Funds, Rajat Dhawan, India Managing Partner & Senior Partner, McKinsey & Company, Vishesh Chandniok, CEO, Grant Thornton Bharat, Padmaja Ruparel, Co-Founder, Indian Angel Network, Simrit Kaur, Principal, Shri Ram College of Commerce, Rajeev Dubey, Editor In Chief, Fortune India and Sunil Kant Munjal, Chairman, Hero Enterprise. Announcing this year's awards, Sunil Kant Munjal, Chairman of Hero Enterprise, stated, "People are the only assets that appreciate as time goes on, and they need to be placed at the centre of every model, whether it is for a business enterprise or a social venture."

No staff fired, it was campaign to highlight workplace stress: YesMadam co-founder

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

After beauty services platform YesMadam faced backlash on Monday over a purported internal email leaked on social media suggesting the termination of staff who indicated workplace stress, the company co-founder on Friday clarified that no staff was fired and called it a marketing initiative "to shed light on workplace stress and mental health." YesMadam Co-Founder Mayank Arya in a note said the intent behind the campaign was to highlight an important issue, but it inadvertently triggered negative reactions. "It is important to clarify that



no firing mail was sent to employees, and no one was terminated. The picture shared on LinkedIn was the first step toward introducing the initiative, and the clarification shared the following day was meant to serve as a wake-up call for the industry about the importance of mental health awareness,"

he said. He added that the campaign was conceptualised with the genuine objective of raising awareness about mental health challenges in corporate and startup environments. "Our intentions were rooted in addressing workplace stress and fostering a healthier work culture. However, we understand that the approach taken was inappropriate and led to unfavourable feedback. I deeply regret any confusion or discomfort caused by this initiative," he said. He acknowledged that the "execution fell short and unintentionally triggered unintended emotions". Anushka Dutta, whose LinkedIn profile identifies her as a UX copywriter at the company, on Monday posted on LinkedIn, "What's happening at YesMadam? First you conduct a random survey and then fire us overnight because we're feeling stressed?" She attached a screenshot showing an email from the company's HR official, which suggested that the company was laying off employees who reported workplace stress in an internal survey. Noida-headquartered YesMadam secured investments from Lenskart's Peyush Bansal, Sugar's Vineeta Singh, OYO's Ritesh Aggarwal and boAt's Aman Gupta on Shark Tank India.

Sebi extends timeline to submit comments on proposed appointment process of key officials at MIIs

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Sebi on Friday extended the deadline to December 31 for submitting public comments on a proposal on the process to appoint key officials of stock exchanges and other market infrastructure institutions and a cooling-off period before they can join a competing institution. Earlier, the deadline was December 12 for submitting comments. In a statement on Friday, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) said, "It has been decided to extend the timeline to submit the public comments on the consultation paper till December 31, 2024."

The regulator, in its consultation paper issued in November, proposed a process for the appointment of KMPs (key managerial personnel) - Compliance Officer, Chief Risk Officer, Chief Technology Officer, and Chief Information Security Officer - of an MII and cooling-off period for KMPs, including MDs and directors, including public interest directors of an MII joining a competing MII. On the proposed process for appointment, Sebi stated that market infrastructure institutions (MIIs) comprising stock exchanges, clearing corporations and depositories, should engage an independent external agency to identify suitable candidates for specific KMP roles. The agency should submit recommendations to the Nomination and Remuneration Committee (NRC) for evaluating the recommendations and forwarding them to both the governing board of the MII and Sebi. Thereafter, Sebi should review the NRC's recommendations and provide comments within a specified time frame. If no comments are received, the governing board may assume Sebi has no objections. The governing board should make the final appointment decision, considering NRC's recommendations and Sebi's comments, if any.

TAC Security gets global certification for cyber risk assessment of IoT devices

CHANDIGARH ■ NEW DELHI

Cybersecurity firm TAC Security on Friday said it has received certification from global body IoT to conduct testing and risk assessment of Internet of Thing (IoT) devices for enterprises. TAC Security is now empowered to conduct IoT security assessments under the esteemed IoT certification programme, guaranteeing that connected devices meet the highest global



security, transparency, and upgradability. With this, TAC Security joins an exclusive league of eight companies worldwide, further cementing its leadership in driving advanced evaluations for a safer digital future, it said. TAC Security said it will foray into the IoT security market, offering security assessments through its ESOF vulnerability management platform. The company intends to roll out the services from February 2025. "Being approved as an IoT authorized lab empowers us to ensure manufacturers and enterprises meet global security benchmarks. This milestone is a significant leap in our mission to become the world's largest vulnerability management company," said Saransh Rawat, Chief Technology Officer, TAC Security. TAC Security will incorporate IoT security assessments into its ESOF Vulnerability Management Portfolio, offering organisations a comprehensive platform to manage IT (Information Technology), OT (Operation Technology), and IoT risks seamlessly, he said. Trishneet Arora, Founder and CEO, TAC Security, said, "Becoming an IoT authorized lab is a testament to TAC Security's unmatched expertise, cutting-edge infrastructure, and commitment to global security benchmarks. With an estimated 25.4 billion IoT devices expected by 2030, IoT security is critical for safeguarding smart cities, healthcare systems, industrial automation, and smart homes, the company said, adding that the market is projected to grow to USD 59 billion by 2030. TAC Security aims to achieve 10,000 global customers by March 2026. The company also has other certifications, including ISO 17025, Google CASA Assessor, Google MASA Assessor, AppDecence Alliance Security Assessor, CERT-IN (Government of India), and CREST Certified Penetration Testing Company.

IFSEC India 2024 kicks off, showcasing cutting-edge security solutions

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The three-day security expo and conference IFSEC India 2024, billed as the largest in South Asia, kicked off on Thursday at the Bharat Mandapam. The event brought together over 300 leading security and fire safety brands, featuring more than 5,000 products from cutting-edge CCTV and video surveillance systems to biometrics, RFID and perimeter security technologies. Deputy High Commissioner, UK High Commission in India, Christina Scott said, "India's success in executing the world's largest democratic process with minimal risks highlights the strength of its security infrastructure." DCP, Delhi Traffic Police, HQ & Road Safety, SK Singh said, "With 35 per cent of critical assets still at risk of cyber threats, integrating robust digital defences alongside physical measures has become imperative." IFSEC India 2024 has received strong support from prominent associations, including Asian Professional Security Association (APSA), American Society for Industrial Security (ASIS) Delhi, Ahmedabad, and Mumbai Chapters, Electronic Security Association of India (ESAI), Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC) Delhi and Chennai Chapters, International Institute of Security and Safety Management (IISSM), Central Association for Private Security Industry (CAPSI), Global Association for Corporate Services (GACS), and Mitkat Advisory. India's security landscape is undergoing a remarkable transformation, with cities increasingly adopting advanced solutions such as video analytics, facial recognition, and integrated CCTV systems, driving the shift toward smarter and safer urban environments.

Association of India (ESAI), Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC) Delhi and Chennai Chapters, International Institute of Security and Safety Management (IISSM), Central Association for Private Security Industry (CAPSI), Global Association for Corporate Services (GACS), and Mitkat Advisory. India's security landscape is undergoing a remarkable transformation, with cities increasingly adopting advanced solutions such as video analytics, facial recognition, and integrated CCTV systems, driving the shift toward smarter and safer urban environments.

Dhankhar to inaugurate the Geoscience Museum in Gwalior

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar will inaugurate the GSI Geoscience Museum in Gwalior on Sunday. Madhya Pradesh Governor Mangubhai Patel, Union Minister of Communications and Development of North Eastern Region Jyotiraditya M Scindia, and Minister of State for Coal and Mines Satish Chandra Dubey will participate in the event, the mines ministry said in a statement on Friday. Housed in the Victoria Market Building, the state-of-the-art museum is set to become a hub for geoscience education and public engagement, it said.

The museum represents an initiative by the Geological Survey of India (GSI) to showcase the wonders of earth sciences, while promoting scientific temperament and knowledge-sharing among the public, it said. The museum features two galleries designed to raise awareness about earth, atmospheric, and ocean sciences, as well as the evolution of life, as per the statement. Developed in coordination with the Gwalior Municipal Corporation and the National Council of Science Museums (NCSM), the museum represents GSI's commitment to advancing geoscience literacy.

INBRIEF

54TH GNDU ANNUAL INTER-COLLEGE ATHLETICS MEET FROM DECEMBER 14

AMARAVATI: Guru Nanak Dev University is all set to host the 54th Annual Inter-College Athletics Meet (Men & Women) 2024-25 from 14th to 16th December 2024 at the GNDU campus. This event will bring together top athletic talent from colleges across the region to compete in a variety of track and field events.

BSES HONORED ON THE GLOBAL STAGE: WINS 8 GOLDS AT ICQCC 2024, SRI LANKA

We are delighted to share that BSES Rajdhani Power Limited (BRPL) and BSES Yamuna Power Limited (BYPL) have achieved international acclaim by winning 8 Gold Awards at the prestigious International Convention for Quality Control Circles (ICQCC) 2024, held in Colombo, Sri Lanka from November 11th to 14th, 2024.





GRACE IN EVERY GESTURE

Indian classical dance is a beautiful and spiritual form of expression that connects the artist to the divine. *SAMASRAVA: An Ode to Classical Heritage* was a stunning tribute to this tradition, offering a rich, immersive experience for the audience at Stein Auditorium, India Habitat Centre. The performances were not only visually captivating but emotionally resonant, bringing out the timeless relevance of these art forms in today's world.

The evening opened with Arunima Ghosh's Odissi performance, which immediately captured the audience's attention. Her graceful movements and deep emotional connection to the piece were evident throughout. In Yahi Madhava, she portrayed Radha's inner turmoil and vulnerability with such sensitivity that it left a lasting impact. The subtlety of her facial expressions and the fluidity of her movements beautifully conveyed Radha's frustration and sorrow, giving the audience a glimpse into the emotional complexity of the character.

Vinod Kevin Bachan's performance, *Devi Mahamaya: The Rise of the Divine Shakti*, was a powerful display of strength and grace. Bachan's portrayal of Durga embodied the goddess's divine energy and formidable presence. Each movement exuded confidence, reflecting the unstoppable force of the feminine divine. The intensity of his performance reminded the audience of the spiritual power that classical dance can convey and how it can bring mythological stories to life in a way that resonates deeply.

Arohi Munshi's Bharatnatyam pieces also made a strong impression. In *Shringara Lahiri*, she captured the essence of the goddess through fluid movements and expressions that spoke to the beauty and rhythm of the divine. Her portrayal of Yashoda calling out to Krishna in *Krishna ni begane baro* was equally deep. The tenderness in her gestures and expressions beautifully conveyed the maternal love of Yashoda, drawing the audience into the emotional



SAMASRAVA: An Ode to Classical Heritage beautifully celebrated Indian classical dance, showcasing its enduring relevance and emotional depth through dynamic performances, says **SAKSHI PRIYA**



world of the character. Diksha Rawat's Kathak performance concluded the evening, bringing the rhythm and dynamism of the art form to the forefront. Her *Taal Ashtamangal* was a brilliant demonstration of her technical skill, with intricate footwork and rhythmic precision that left the audience in wonder. Her second piece, a traditional *Banaras Gharana thumri*, was emotionally charged as she portrayed Radha's plea to Krishna. The intensity of her abhinaya and the complexity of the rhythm made this performance a fitting finale to the evening.

What made *SAMASRAVA* special was the variety of classical dance forms, each showcasing its unique style, yet all communicating the same emotional and spiritual depth. The dancers not only demonstrated their technical brilliance but also their ability to tell compelling stories through movement, emotion and expression. The evening was a celebration of the enduring relevance of Indian classical dance, a reminder that these ancient art forms continue to evoke deep emotions and speak to the human experience in ways that resonate today.

This event was a powerful reminder of the enduring legacy of classical dance and its ability to connect audiences with the divine, the emotional and the eternal. *SAMASRAVA* reaffirmed the importance of preserving and promoting India's rich cultural heritage while making it accessible to contemporary audiences. The performances were a beautiful reflection of the grace and spiritual power of classical dance, leaving the audience with a sense of wonder and appreciation for these timeless art forms.

PHOTO: PANKAJ KUMAR



"Art reflects a culture's spirit, capturing its traditions, dreams and enduring beauty"

The *Parampara Series 2024* at New Delhi's Kamani Auditorium brought together three evenings of exceptional artistry, celebrating India's classical dance and music heritage. Each performance honoured the depth and diversity of the country's cultural traditions, showcasing the seamless blend of history and creativity that continues to inspire across generations.

The series opened with a riveting Kuchipudi presentation by the renowned Raja Radha Reddy Repertory. Their storytelling and precision enthralled the audience, setting an inspiring tone for the evenings to come. This was followed by the soulful Hindustani vocals of Mahesh Kale, whose emotive artistry left a lasting impression.

The second evening shone a spotlight on the SRJAN Ensemble, who brought the intricate elegance of Odissi to life through their refined movements and expressions. Accompanying this visual splendour was the Hindustani flute recital by maestro Rakesh Chaurasia, whose

TRIBUTE TO CLASSICAL ARTS

The *Parampara Series 2024* in New Delhi celebrated the richness of India's classical dance and music, showcasing its cultural legacy, writes **TEAM VIVA**

melodies resonated deeply with the audience. Audiences not only experienced mesmerising performances but also the stories embedded into each art form, reflecting centuries of cultural evolution. Every gesture, note and rhythm carried forward a legacy passed down through generations, offering a meaningful connection to India's artistic roots.

The final night featured the graceful Mohiniyattam performance by Neema Prasad and her group, followed by an evocative classical music act by Tal Fry, which brought the event to a memorable close. The event witnessed attendance from notable personalities such as Union Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat and Rajiv Pratap Rudy, among others, underlining its cultural significance.

The 28th edition of the *Parampara Series* was a celebration of India's cultural heritage. As the performances concluded they left behind a deep sense of connection to tradition and artistry. Such events keep India's rich legacy alive, inspiring people across generations.



Brushstrokes of Devotion

In the serene surroundings of the Open Palm Court at the India Habitat Centre, Shruti Gupta Kasana's solo exhibition, *Sampurn Vrindavan*, offered a unique and thought-provoking exploration of Lord Krishna's life. The exhibition focused on three key themes: Krishna's childhood in Vrindavan, his life in the kingdom of Dwarka and his deep affection for cows. Kasana's artistic interpretation brought these stories to life in a way that was both captivating and immersive.

The exhibition featured a combination of vibrant acrylic paintings and mixed-media works that reflected the essence of Krishna's life and teachings. The themes of Anterdweep, depicting the underwater city of Dwarka and Krishna's bond with cows were particularly striking, capturing his tenderness and divine connection with all living beings. The works portrayed Krishna not only as a powerful deity but as a compassionate and loving figure whose legacy continues to inspire.

In addition to the paintings, Kasana's artistic vision extended into fashion, with a series of statement knitwear

Sampurn Vrindavan by Shruti Gupta Kasana beautifully captures the essence of Krishna's life through stunning art, fashion, and eco-conscious design, **SAKSHI PRIYA**



pieces incorporated into the exhibition. These garments, made with a mix of hand embroidery, applique patchwork and Bengali Kantha techniques, were designed not just as wearable pieces of art, but as representations of the themes within the exhibition. The blend of traditional craft and modern design created a dynamic interaction

with environmental consciousness. By blending jute with cotton, she has created a unique medium that supports her artistic vision while also promoting sustainability in the art world.

The exhibition offered a deep, meaningful look into the life of Krishna, celebrating not only his mythology but also his love for nature and compassion for all beings. Kasana's work, through its vibrant colours, intricate details and thought-provoking themes, invited visitors to engage with Krishna's story in a modern context, while also highlighting the artist's versatility and innovation.

Sampurn Vrindavan was a powerful artistic journey into the heart of Krishna's life and teachings. It brought together the worlds of mythology, fashion and sustainability in a way that felt both fresh and deeply rooted in tradition. Kasana's unique vision and skill left a lasting impression, offering a new lens through which to appreciate the eternal message of love, compassion and devotion that Krishna embodies.

PHOTO: PANKAJ KUMAR

By **TEAM VIVA**

The India International Centre Annex recently hosted a compelling photo exhibition, *Portraits of Persistence: Enduring Communities of North Bihar*, as part of the Visual Katha series. It was inaugurated by Sunita Narain, Director General of the Centre for Science and Environment, the exhibition offered a powerful portrayal of North Bihar's rural communities and their resilience in the face of relentless annual flooding. Curated by Eklavya Prasad, a social development professional and photographer, the exhibition presented a poignant visual narrative of submerged homes, devastated farmlands, and fractured infrastructure. Prasad's photographs documented not only the immediate impacts of flooding but also the long-

VISUAL ODE TO NORTH BIHAR'S RESILIENCE



term transformations it imposes on livelihoods and societal structures. Amidst these challenges, the exhibition celebrated stories of

adaptation, ingenuity, and survival, showcasing community-driven solutions and innovative coping mechanisms.

Prasad, reflecting on his nearly two decades of grassroots work with Megh Pyne Abhiyan, shared that the exhibition was born from his desire to inspire sustainable interventions for flood-affected regions. His images shed light on the everyday heroism of these communities, demonstrating their strength in adapting to nature's adversities.

Sunita Narain, in her inaugural address, commended the series for its depth and impact. She highlighted how the exhibition went beyond capturing the seasonal aftermath of floods to reveal the year-round struggles of these communities. She also stressed its relevance in the era of climate change, urging the need for focused and sustainable solutions.

The exhibition concluded, leaving visitors with a profound appreciation for the resilience of North Bihar's flood-affected communities.



Bumrah is a combination of legendary pacers, says Chappell

PTI ■ SYDNEY

Jasprit Bumrah embodies the qualities of pace legends such as Dennis Lillee, Andy Roberts and Richard Hadlee but at the same time is forging his own legacy, one that is set to inspire future generations of pacemen, feels former India coach Greg Chappell. He also said that Bumrah is the only player standing between Australia and the Border Gavaskar Trophy. "What sets Bumrah apart is his combination of skills: (Malcolm) Marshall's adaptability, Lillee's aggression, Richard Hadlee's control, Roberts' strategy, Wasim (Akram) and Waqar's (Younis) reverse swing, (Glenn) McGrath's precision, (Dale) Steyn's explosiveness, and (Kagiso) Rabada's modern versatility." "As Nasser Hussain aptly observed, "He's the complete bowler. As he has had back

surgery already, it is not certain he will have a long career, but if he does, his name will be mentioned in the same breath as the champions above," Chappell wrote in the 'Sydney Morning Herald'. An all-format bowler, Bumrah has reinforced his status as the best bowler in the world several times including when he led India to a 295-run win in the Perth Test recently. "While the legends of yesteryear established the foundations, Bumrah is carving his own legacy - one that promises to inspire future generations of pacemen." The former Australia captain said Bumrah's lethal yorkers and unsettling bounce evoked memories of Lillee's raw aggression on the field. "Lillee was a warrior, combining raw aggression with psychological prowess. I opposed him many times in domestic cricket and watched him from close quarters



against the best batsmen of his era. "His ability to make it hard for batsmen to score runs with his probing line and length, allied to his guile and determination, made him the champion that he was. Bumrah, though less overtly

combative, channels Lillee's ability to unsettle batsmen. His deadly yorkers and disconcerting bounce - especially with his unorthodox release point and trajectory - echo Lillee's capacity to dictate terms. "Bumrah's quiet intensity and precision make him a nightmare, much like Lillee's unrelenting aggression." Another great of the game was Roberts, who combined pace with strategic brilliance. Chappell felt Bumrah's 2018 performance at the MCG where he used variations to get the better of the batters was reminiscent of the way Roberts operated. "Bumrah shares Roberts' cerebral approach. Both bowlers use subtle variations to outfox batsmen, relying on strategy rather than brute force. Bumrah's spell in the 2018 Boxing Day Test against Australia - culminating in 6-33 - was a modern echo of Roberts' game-changing

bursts." "Roberts had a loping and relaxed run-up and a very strong shoulder action like Bumrah, and skidded onto you quite quickly, so it was important to be focused on the ball leaving the hand. "The danger of a bowler who zeroes in on the stumps, as Roberts did and Bumrah does, is that if you relax for a moment and try to hit across their deliveries, you become even more vulnerable to LBWs and bowled. I would use the same approach against Bumrah," Chappell added. The 31-year-old has consistently churned out stellar performances and is the go to bowler when the Indian team is in need of wickets. "With 151 wickets at an average of 21.03 in just 30 Tests, his ability to excel in diverse conditions recalls Marshall's dominance. Bumrah's reverse swing on abrasive surfaces and his

ability to seam and swing the ball under cloudy skies have been pivotal, evoking the same uncertainty that batsmen faced against Marshall. "As Ian Botham famously remarked of Marshall, "He gave you no respite." Today, batsmen echo similar sentiments about Bumrah," Chappell wrote. Drawing comparison to Hadlee, Chappell said "Bumrah's meticulousness draws comparisons to Hadlee. His mastery of English conditions, where he averages 22.02, and his ability to exploit even the slightest movement resemble Hadlee's clinical dismantling of batting orders. "Like Hadlee, Bumrah's focus on perfecting every delivery has made him indispensable in critical moments. He is also carrying the Indian pace attack at present as Hadlee did for New Zealand in his era," he added.



Dismissals during first innings did affect his flow, admits Gill

PTI ■ BRISBANE

Shubman Gill admitted that the fall of wickets at the other end affected his game in the Adelaide Test but expressed confidence that the Indian batting group would deliver a stronger first-innings effort in what is now effectively a three-match series. Gill didn't play the first Test due to a finger injury but looked good in his brief innings of 31 and 28 during the pink ball Test at Adelaide which India lost by 10 wickets. "As a batting group, we are looking to post a big total first up. That's been the key discussion and every batter has his own game plan," Gill said in the pre-match press conference after the team scored 150 and 180 in the first innings at Perth and Adelaide respectively. Gill believes that he wouldn't curb his natural game although he did get edgy seeing wickets tumble at the other end. "I still have the freedom as a batter. One of the challenges is whether you can play the game you want to play, irrespective of what's happening at the other end and irrespective of scorecard. "I faltered in the first innings because of what happened at the other end and I take that upon myself." There was a four-over period

in which Gill faced just one ball and that affected his concentration. "And there was a period when I didn't face much - may be one ball in four overs and then when I faced a delivery I missed a completely fuller ball. These are challenges you face. You might not face a ball for four overs or you might end up facing 18 balls on the trot," Gill explained. India have had at least six scores of 150 or less in recent times and Gill admitted that the piece of stat isn't lost upon the batting group. He said it is now a three-match series for his side. "Adelaide Test, we didn't do well but the series is still 1-1. We will treat it as a three-match Test series and if we win this one, we will have advantage going into Melbourne and Sydney." Gill was nostalgic as he walked into the Gabba for the first time since the 2021 Test where he was the top-scorer in the run-chase with a fine 91 that catapulted him into stardom. "Walking into the stadium after 2021 with the team, definitely it felt very nostalgic." Skipper Rohit Sharma didn't attend the optional training session and when asked about his absence, Gill replied: "This was an optional session and he has already practised a lot."

Ignore the criticism, it comes with the territory: Anand to Gukesh

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Legendary chess player Viswanathan Anand on Friday asked D. Gukesh to ignore those questioning the standard of the World Championship title showdown with China's Ding Liren, saying criticism always comes with success. Indian Grandmaster Gukesh made history on Thursday, becoming the youngest-ever to win the world title defeating Liren in the 14th and final game of the championship in Singapore. Former world champion Vladimir Kramnik was not impressed with the quality of chess on display during the match, calling it the "end of chess as we know it." Kramnik expressed his frustration over the game's quality, calling a critical blunder by Ding Liren "childish." In his reaction, Kramnik wrote on 'X': "No comment. Sad. End of chess as we know it." In another tweet, he said,



"Never yet has a WC title been decided by such a childish one-move blunder." Five-time world champion, Norway's Magnus Carlsen too has been critical of the quality on display in earlier rounds, saying, "This does not look like a game between two World Championship contenders. It just looks like maybe the second round or third round of an open tournament." However, Anand, the five-time world champion and Gukesh's mentor, said he saw "history being made by Gukesh". "I feel very happy. I was literally watching history being made yesterday," Anand told PTI Videos. "It (criticism) comes with every match. To be honest, I think it just comes with the territory. You ignore it and that's all. You know Gukesh's achievement, everything and his concomitant rise. I mean if you look at the Olympiad, he showed that he's actually become a much stronger player." "He won the Candidates this

year, so many good results in Toronto and he's here. So this stuff (criticism) just comes with it. You cannot expect to become world champion and not face some random criticism," added Anand. The championship match seemed destined for a draw. However, Liren faltered under pressure and committed a blunder. "Most of us had written the game off (as a draw) by this point. If Ding had brought his bishop back, Gukesh would have had a long task to make any progress. But then, suddenly, the game turned, and he won. It was fantastic," he added. Anand praised the psychological depth of the young champion's approach. "Gukesh was not playing aggressive or anything. He had an extra pawn and was circling around, trying to find a way through," Anand said. The tactic of wearing down the opponent, even when it looked as good as a stalemate, proved crucial.



Hazlewood replaces Boland in Australia XI for third Test against India

PTI ■ BRISBANE

Australian captain Pat Cummins on Friday announced that pacer Josh Hazlewood will replace Scott Boland in his playing XI for the third Test against India after having recovered from a side strain. The injury had forced Hazlewood to sit out of the Pink Ball Test in Adelaide last week. Cummins exuded confidence that Hazlewood would pull through the match without any "hiccups". "He had a really good bowl yesterday, he had another bowl in Adelaide a couple of days previously. Him and the medical team are really confident," he said on the eve of the game at the Gabba. Cummins said he had to take

the ball away from Hazlewood at Perth to prevent his injury getting worse. "We've seen it a few times where Josh has pushed through to get through a Test match and a little bit of soreness turns into a month or two of injury. "So, we made the call then that it probably wasn't worth the risk of keeping him bowling. I think he bowled an extra two overs leading into tea break and he said it felt ok, but I just kind of thought from there, 'that's enough'," said Cummins. The Australian captain was sympathetic for Boland after the veteran pacer made a stirring return to Test cricket at Adelaide after last year's Ashes. Boland had a match-haul of five wickets that included the

Hojlund scores twice for Manchester United to beat Viktoria Plzen 2-1 in Europa League

AP ■ LONDON

Rasmus Hojlund scored twice after coming off the bench and Manchester United rallied to beat Viktoria Plzen 2-1 in the Europa League. The Denmark striker netted in the 88th minute after collecting Bruno Fernandes' pass off a free kick to seal the victory and put United into the top eight of the standings. Hojlund replaced Marcus Rashford in the 56th and scored an equalizer six minutes later after Amad Diallo's shot was deflected by goalkeeper Martin Jedlicka into his path for an easy finish. The 21-year-old Hojlund also scored twice in the previous round, when United beat Norwegian team Bodø/Glimt 3-2, and has five goals in his six appearances in the second-tier competition.

"It feels good to have scored two goals but I am more happy with the win," Hojlund said. "My instructions? Go out there and score two goals! Just to use my qualities, run the channels and be assertive in front of goal." United had come off two straight losses in the English Premier League, 2-0 away to Arsenal, and 3-2 at Old Trafford to Nottingham Forest that left the club 13th and eight points adrift of the top four as progress looked slow under new coach Ruben Amorim. Matej Vydra, who previously played for Burnley and Watford, opened the scoring three minutes into the second half. United has 12 points from six games after three wins and three draws in Europa League play - good enough for seventh place. The top eight qualify directly to the Round of 16. The

teams placed No. 9 to No. 24 go into a two-legged playoff. Tottenham continued to show inconsistent form in a 1-1 draw at Rangers, leaving the north London team in ninth place. The Scottish side is eighth. Substitute Dejan Kulusevski was fed by fellow substitute Dominic Solanke to score 15 minutes before time and salvage a point at Ibrox Stadium. Spurs were held 2-2 at home by Roma in the previous round and lost 3-2 to Galatasaray before. The draw came after losing 4-3 to Chelsea in the Premier League on Sunday. Hamza Igamama netted for Rangers at the start of the second half off a cross from James Tavernier in what was a return to Glasgow for Spurs coach Ange Postecoglou, who led Celtic for two seasons.

Treesa-Gayatri bow out of BWF World Tour Finals

PTI ■ HANGZHOU

Indian women's doubles pair I of Treesa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand missed out on a semifinal spot at the BWF World Tour Finals after losing to Japan's Nami Matsuyama and Chiharu Shida in straight games in their third and final group A match here on Friday. Treesa and Gayatri, who won their maiden BWF Super 300 title at Syed Modi International in Lucknow recently, lost 17-21 13-21 to their world number 4 opponents in 49 minutes. It was the fourth defeat for the Indian pair against the Paris Olympics bronze medallists Japanese rivals in five meetings. World number 13 Treesa and Gayatri, the only Indians to have qualified for the prestigious season-ending



tournament, needed a win to secure a spot in the knockout stage of the tournament. On Wednesday, the Indians had narrowly lost to world No.1 pair Liu Sheng Shu and Tan Ning of China in their opening group match before stunning the Malaysian duo of Pearly Tan and Thinaah Muralitharan in their second match to keep their hopes

AFFIDAVIT

By virtue of an affidavit before Executive Magistrate Balasore, I, Bivakar Panda, S/o- Late Bhubaneswar Panda, resident of Village-Kaumari, PO-Nuagaon, P.S-Baliapal, District-Balaswar, Pin-756024, Odisha declare by this affidavit no-9645 Dated 13/12/2024 that now onwards I shall be known as BIBHAKAR PANDA for all future purposes.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
e-Procurement Notice
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER
MINOR IRRIGATION DIVISION, BOUDH
Bid Identification No. 12/BMID/2024-2025
E-mail ID: bmidbdh@gmail.com
Letter No. 3097 / Date. 12.12.2024

01 Name of work : Construction of New Check Dams under MATY Scheme for 2024-25 in Harabhangha Block of Boudh District
02 Numbers of Work : 02 (Two) Nos
03 Tender Amount : Varies from Rs. 41.76 to 42.75 Lakhs
04 Class of Contractor : "B"
05 Tender paper Cost(Online) : Rs. 6000/-
06 Period of Completion : 06 (Six) Calendar Months
07 Availability of Bid Document : From 16.12.2024 at 10.00 AM to 26.12.2024 at 05.00 PM in website ([www.tendersodisha.gov.in](https://tendersodisha.gov.in))
08 Last date & Time of receipt of Bid : 26.12.2024 at 05.00 PM through online
09 Date of opening of Bid Documents : 27.12.2024 at 11.00 A.M in the office of the SE, M.I. Division, Boudh, 31.12.2024.
10 Date of Lottery : 31.12.2024.
11 Digital Signature Certificate of Bidder : The bidder must process compatible digital signature certificate (DSC)
12 Name and address of the OIT : Superintending Engineer, M.I. Division, Boudh A/P.O.- Malisah, District- Boudh, PIN-762014
Further details can be seen from the Government of Odisha Web-Site: www.tendersodisha.gov.in
Superintending Engineer
M.I.Division, Boudh
OIPR-32279/11/0012/2425

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
e-Procurement Notice
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER
RURAL WORKS DIVISION-II, BHADRAK
N.B. Procurement Notice for Road & Building Works
Bid Identification No. Online Tender 04 of 2024-25

1. Name of the Work :- Road & Building Works
2. Total No of Works :- 5 Nos
3. Estimated Cost :- Rs 0.85 lakh to 40.88 Lakhs
4. Class of Contractor :- "B", "C" & "D" Class
5. Period of Completion :- As per Annexure
6. Type of Tender :- Single Cover
7. Other Details :-

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of Tender On-line for bidding		Date of seeking of Tender	Date & Time of Opening of Tender
		From	To		
Executive Engineer, Rural Works Division-II, Bhadrak	Online-4 of 2024-25	17.12.24 At- 11.00 A.M	24.12.24 At- 4.00 P.M	24.12.24 At-2.00 P.M	26.12.24 At- 11.00 A.M.

Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal "<https://tendersodisha.gov.in>"
N.B. Further Lottery to be Held on Dt.31.12.2024 at 11.30 A.M. (If any changes it will be intimated)
OIPR-25090/11/0004/2425

Sd/-Er.Kanan Pradhan
Superintending Engineer
R.W. Division, Bhadrak

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE BLOCK DEVELOPMENT OFFICER, RANPUR
P.R & D. WDEPARTMENT
Tender call Notice
E-mail-ori-ranpur@nic.in
Tender Call Notice No.online 02/2024-25
Letter No. Dated: 08.12.2024

Bid Identification No. B.D.O., Ranpur-Online 02/2024-25

The Block Development officer, Ranpur on behalf of Governor of Odisha inviting percentage based single coversystem ONLINE MODE for eligible contractors for construction of Building work as detailed in the table below:

1. Nature of Work	: Building Works.
2. No of Work	: 3 Nos
3. Tender Cost/Est. No	: As mentioned in DTCN
4. Class of Contractor	: As mentioned in DTCN
5. Available Bid Document	: From Dt.16.12.2024, 11.00AM Dt.26.12.2024 the Website up to 5.00 P.M
6. Date of opening of Bid :	Dt.27.12.2024 at 11.00AM

The have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the Website: <https://tendersodisha.gov.in>. Any Addendum / Corrigendum / Cancellation of tender can also be seen in this website.

Sd/-
Block Development Officer
Ranpur
OIPR-19124/11/0004/2425

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER
RURAL WORKS DIVISION-II, BHADRAK
E-mail: ee_rwbdk2@yahoo.co.in
"e" Procurement Notice for Road Works
Bid Identification Online Tender 06/RWD/BDK-II/2024-25 Dtd.09.12.2024

1. Name of the Work :- Road Works as per Annexure
2. Total Number of Works :- 2 Nos
3. Approximate Estimated Cost :- Rs 8.01 lakhs & Rs 28.57 lakhs
4. Class of Contractor :- As Per Annexure
5. Period of Completion :- As Per Annexure
6. Other details :- The details are as follows.

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of Tender on-line for bidding	Last Date & Time of seeking tender clarification	Date & Time of opening of Bid
Executive Engineer, R.W. Division-II, Bhadrak	06	17.12.2024 At 4.00 P.M	27.12.2024 up to 4.00 P.M	30.12.2024 at 11.00 AM

7. Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal "<https://www.tendersodisha.gov.in>"
8. Any other changes / Corrigendum may be seen only in website www.tendersodisha.gov.in

9. Date of transparent lottery to be conducted on dt.10.01.25 at 11.30A.M. in the office of the Superintending Engineer, Rural Works Division-II, Bhadrak.

OIPR-25090/11/0008/2425

Executive Engineer
R.W. Division-II, Bhadrak