



the pioneer

Established 1865

INSIDE

MONEY 10
FPIS RETURN TO INDIAN EQUITIES
WITH ₹24,454 CRORE INFLOW IN
DECEMBER FIRST WEEK

CHANDIGARH, MONDAY DECEMBER 9, 2024; PAGES 12 ₹2

www.dailypioneer.com

PUBLISHED FROM: DELHI | LUCKNOW | BHOPAL | BHUBANESWAR | RANCHI | RAIPUR | CHANDIGARH | DEHRADUN | HYDERABAD | VIJAYWADA

ASSAD FLEES, SYRIA JUBILATES

AP ■ DAMASCUS

Syrians poured into streets Sunday after a stunning rebel advance reached the capital, putting an end to the Assad family's 50 years of iron rule but raising questions about the future of the country and the wider region. Joyful crowds gathered in central squares in Damascus, waving the Syrian revolutionary flag in scenes that recalled the early days of the Arab Spring uprising, before a brutal crackdown and the rise of an insurgency plunged the country into a nearly 14-year civil war. Others gleefully ransacked the presidential palace and the Assad family residence after President Bashar Assad and other top officials vanished, their whereabouts unknown. Russia, a close ally, said



Syrians celebrate the fall of Bashar Assad's government in the town of Bar Elias, Lebanon, near the border with Syria. AP/PTI

Assad left the country after negotiations with rebel groups and had given instructions to transfer power peacefully. Abu Mohammed al-Golani, a former al-Qaida commander who cut ties with the group years ago and says he embraces pluralism and religious tolerance, leads the biggest rebel faction and is poised to chart the country's future direction. The end of Assad's rule deals a major blow to Iran and its allies, already weakened by over a year of conflict with Israel. The rebels now face the daunting task of healing bitter divides in a country ravaged by war and still split among different armed factions. Turkey-backed opposition fighters are battling US-allied Kurdish forces in the north, and the Islamic State group is still active in some remote areas.

Police shower protesting farmers with petals before lobbing teargas

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI/CHANDIGARH

Agitating farmers on Sunday afternoon suspended their "Dilli Chalo" foot march for the day after some of them suffered injuries in tear gas shelling by Haryana police, the protesting farmers will decide on the next course of action on Monday. After the farmers started the foot march on Sunday, they were halted by the multilayered barricading erected by the Haryana Police at the entry point to Haryana from Punjab. A heated argument took place between protesting farmer 'jatha' and security personnel. Haryana Police asked the farmers to show them the requisite



Police personnel shower flowers on farmers agitating at Shambhu border, in Patiala district. PTI

permission to take out the foot march. The police claimed they had a list with names of 101 farmers, provided by farm unions, but the names of the protesting farmers were not as per the list. As the confrontation escalated, tear gas shells were lobbed and water cannons were aimed towards the farmers to disperse them, injuring several protestors.

Delhi gets colder, its air turns 'very poor'



Photo: Ranjan Dimri/Pioneer

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The national Capital recorded its second-lowest daytime temperature of the winter season so far on Sunday at 23.7 degrees Celsius, with some parts of the city receiving thundershowers in the evening. The minimum temperature was recorded at 8 degrees Celsius on Sunday morning, two degrees below the season's average. While the air quality took a downturn again into the 'very poor' category with an AQI reading of 302 after having improved to the 'moderate' level at the start of December. The maximum temperature was recorded at 23.7 degrees Celsius, a notch below normal, compared to 25.4 degrees Celsius on Saturday, according to the weather department. The lowest maximum temperature of the season so far was recorded on November 18, when it dropped to 23.5 degrees Celsius. IGI Airport, Vasant Kunj, Hauz Khas, Malviya Nagar, Kalkaji, Mehrauli, Tughlaqabad, Chhattarpur, IGNOU, Aya Nagar and Deramandi, as well as NCR areas (Noida, Gurugram and Manesar) and Farukhnagar (Haryana) received light rainfall in the evening. According to the India Meteorological Department

(IMD), Delhi is set to experience a sharp dip in temperatures, with the mercury expected to plummet to around 3°C from December 10. This significant drop marks the onset of a cold wave that will grip not only the national capital but also the entire northern belt, including Punjab, Haryana, and Western Uttar Pradesh, until December 14. IMD has also warned of dense fog across parts of northern India on December 9 and 10, potentially reducing visibility and impacting transportation. IMD advised that fog may affect some airports, highways and railway routes in the areas of metropolitan division. "Chances of tripping of power lines in the very dense fog routes," it said. However, the chilling conditions are predicted to intensify due to a combination of factors, including snowfall in the northern hills and the influence of a Western Disturbance, which could bring light showers to the plains. These rains, expected on December 8 and 9, may exacerbate the cold spell further. The IMD has forecast very light rain or drizzle for Monday and moderate fog conditions from Monday to Wednesday. The fog intensification will then reduce as shallow fog is forecast for Thursday.




Black Sunday for Indian Cricket

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

It turned out to be a forgettable day on Sunday for Indian cricket as each of the three national teams -- senior men's, women's and Under-19 men's sides -- suffered humiliating defeats in their respective games. While the Rohit Sharma-led side suffered a 10-wicket defeat against Australia in the second Test of the five-match Border-Gavaskar Trophy in Adelaide, the Indian women lost by a huge margin of 122 runs against Australia in the second ODI to hand their rivals a 2-0 lead in the three-game series in Brisbane. The Border-Gavaskar Trophy is now levelled at 1-1 after

India won the series opener in Perth by 295 runs. The third Test will be played in Brisbane from December 14. It was a tale of two shoddy batting efforts with the two senior-most players Rohit and Kohli looking well past their best. Jasprit Bumrah gave it all but lacked a potent bowling partner at the other end. For Rohit Sharma, things are getting increasingly difficult as he now has lost the last four Tests that he has captained. In his last six Test matches, he has batted in 12 innings with just one half-century in Bengaluru. The only other innings where he crossed 20-run mark is the 11-ball-23 cameo in Kanpur against Bangladesh.



भारतीय जीवन बीमा निगम
LIFE INSURANCE CORPORATION OF INDIA

Government of India

Samridhh Narishakti, Viksit Bharat


BIMA SAKHI YOJANA's

— Launch by —

Honourable Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi

9th DECEMBER 2024, 2 PM onwards, Sector 13/17, HSVP Ground, Panipat, Haryana

A target of making 2 lakh women self-reliant in 3 years, through this scheme



✓ Stipendiary scheme for three years

✓ Minimum educational qualification: 10th Pass

✓ Minimum completed age: 18 years at the time of application


✓ Post stipendiary duration, as per the rules, the agency will continue along with commission

✓ LIC also presents its Agents with career opportunities, subject to conditions

✓ Stipendiary scheme based on achievement of specified criteria

To join **BIMA SAKHI YOJANA** and for information, contact nearest **LIC** branch or visit www.licindia.in

Watch the live telecast of the programme On DD News

Follow us :  LIC India Forever | IRDAI Regn No.: 512

Khalistani Shadow Returns: Attack on Sukhbir Evokes Chilling Parallels to Punjab's Dark Past

MONIKA MALIK ■ CHANDIGARH

The recent attack on Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) leader Sukhbir Singh Badal has once again brought the specter of Khalistani extremism into the spotlight, sending shockwaves through Punjab and raising fears of the violence that once gripped the state making a possible resurgence. The chilling details of the attack, carried out by Khalistani terrorist Narain Singh Chaura, evoke haunting parallels to the deadly period of the 1980s and early 1990s, when targeted killings and acts of terrorism were an unfortunate reality in Punjab's socio-political landscape.

The attack on Sukhbir Badal occurred on the morning of December 3, 2024, when Chaura, pretending to be a devotee, approached the SAD leader under the guise of offering obeisance at the Golden Temple. Concealed within his jacket, the assailant had a pistol, which he intended to use at point-blank range. The attempt to assassinate Sukhbir was thwarted only because of the swift intervention of Punjab Police cop, who heroically prevented the assailant from firing by pushing the gun upward. The quick action of the police officer prevented a tragedy, saving Sukhbir's life. But the very nature of the attack, executed in a manner so reminiscent of the dark days of the Khalistani movement, has sparked an outcry across the state.

What makes the attack particularly unsettling is that it took place near the same spot where, 41 years ago, Punjab Police DIG, Jalandhar Range, AS Atwal was assassinated in a similar fashion.

On the dreadful day of April 25 in 1983, 40-year-old DIG Atwal was shot dead at point-blank range outside the Golden Temple complex. The assassination was a clear message from Khalistani extremists aimed at undermining the authority of the State. The chilling image of DIG Atwal's body, lying unattended for hours at the temple entrance as

the local shopkeepers dared not approach, continues to haunt the collective memory of the people of Punjab.

Resurfacing Ghosts of Khalistani Violence

The attack on Sukhbir Badal, which employed the same tactics used by Khalistani militants in the past, highlighted a disturbing trend — the return of the terror tactics that once led to the violent insurgency in Punjab. These methods, involving point-blank shootings and attacks under the guise of devotion or anonymity, have resurfaced in multiple high-profile assassinations over the years.

The most notable of these assassinations, a direct result of Khalistani violence, was that of Harchand Singh Longowal — a prominent Akali leader, who was gunned down on August 20, 1985, in a shooting that took place just a month after he had signed the Rajiv-Longowal Accord. The agreement, which was meant to bring an end to the violent insurgency in Punjab, was not welcomed by all. Longowal's assassination was seen as an act of retaliation by hardline Khalistani militants who viewed the accord as a betrayal of their cause. His death marked a turning point in Punjab's history, with the violence continuing to spiral out of control for years to come.

Another high-profile figure targeted by Khalistani extremists was Punjab's then-Chief Minister Beant Singh. On August 31, 1995, Beant Singh, known for his firm stance against terrorism, was killed in a bomb explosion orchestrated by Khalistani militants. A bomb was strapped to the body of a police officer, Dilawar Singh, who detonated it in close proximity to Beant Singh's car at Punjab Civil Secretariat. The explosion killed the Chief Minister and 17 others — marking one of the most horrific acts of terrorism in Punjab's modern history.

While the Khalistani insurgency may have officially ended in the 1990s, the shadows of its violence have never truly dis-

appeared. In more recent years, the State has witnessed a resurgence of such attacks. In 2016, RSS prominent leader in Punjab Jagdish Gagneja was shot dead in Jalandhar by assailants on motorcycles — a chilling echo of the tactics used by militants in the 1980s.

Gagneja's activism in spreading the RSS's ideology in Punjab made him a target of militants, who believed his work threatened their goals.

A Perilous Pattern: Targeted Killings Across Decades

The recent attack on Sukhbir Badal is part of a larger, more sinister pattern of targeted killings that has unfolded over the decades. In 2016, the assassination of 88-year-old Mata Chand Kaur in Ludhiana served as another painful reminder of the ongoing threat. Mata Chand Kaur, a prominent figure in the Namdhari sect, was murdered by gunmen who had positioned themselves on a deserted road. They approached her vehicle under the pretext of seeking blessings, only to open fire at point-blank range. Such attacks, designed to strike in the most unexpected and vulnerable moments, are reminiscent of the Khalistani violence that once plagued the state.

Similarly, in November 2022, Hindu leader Sudhir Suri was assassinated in Amritsar while protesting outside a temple. The assailant, who was influenced by Khalistani sympathizer Amritpal Singh — now a detainee under stringent National Security Act (NSA) and Lok Sabha MP from Khadoor Sahib, executed the killing at point-blank range in front of numerous witnesses. Suri's assassination, which took place in broad daylight, raised serious questions about the continuing presence of Khalistani extremists in the region.

Sukhbir Badal: A Symbolic Target

The attack on Sukhbir Singh Badal holds significant symbolism. Sukhbir, as the leader of the Akali Dal and the

High-Profile Khalistan-Related Attacks in Punjab	
Apr 25, 1983	Assassination of Punjab Police DIG AS Atwal outside the Golden Temple in Amritsar, a Khalistani extremist attack
Aug 20, 1985	Assassination of Akali leader Harchand Singh Longowal by Khalistani militants, soon after signing the Rajiv-Longowal Accord
Aug 31, 1995	Bomb explosion kills Punjab CM Beant Singh and 17 others in Chandigarh, orchestrated by Khalistani militants
Aug 6, 2016	Murder of RSS leader Jagdish Gagneja in Jalandhar, echoing tactics of 1980s Khalistani attacks
Apr 4, 2016	Assassination of Mata Chand Kaur, Namdhari sect leader, on a deserted road in Bhaini Sahib in Ludhiana
Nov 5, 2022	Killing of Hindu leader Sudhir Suri in Amritsar, influenced by Khalistani sympathizer Amritpal Singh
Dec 3, 2024	Attempted assassination of SAD leader Sukhbir Badal by Khalistani terrorist Narain Singh Chaura, foiled by Punjab Police officer

son of the Akali veteran Parkash Singh Badal, is seen as a key figure in shaping Punjab's post-terrorism landscape. His leadership represented a break from the violence of the past and a commitment to bringing peace and stability to the state. As a result, he has become a prime target for those who seek to destabilize Punjab and revive the separatist movement.

Sukhbir Badal's family has long been associated with the struggle against the forces of extremism. His father, Parkash Singh Badal, served as Chief Minister of Punjab for five terms and played a crucial role in restoring peace to the state following the Khalistani insurgency. The attack on Sukhbir is not just an attack on an individual, but an assault on the legacy of the Badal family and their efforts to bring about reconciliation and progress in Punjab.

A State at Crossroads

The resurgence of Khalistani violence, as seen in the recent attack on Sukhbir Singh Badal, has once again

brought Punjab to a critical juncture. The state, which has long been hailed as a symbol of resilience and recovery, now faces the challenge of dealing with the lingering ghosts of its violent past. The lessons of history must not be forgotten, and the people of Punjab must unite against the forces that seek to divide them.

The response of the State Government, law enforcement, and civil society will be crucial in ensuring that the peace and stability that Punjab has fought so hard to achieve, are not undone by the actions of a few radicalized individuals. The recent attack on Sukhbir, though thwarted, is a grim reminder that the battle against extremism is far from over. However, the people of Punjab, buoyed by their collective resolve, can overcome these challenges and ensure that the state's hard-won peace remains intact.

In these testing times, Punjab must stand united to safeguard its future and uphold the values of peace, harmony, and unity.

Haryana is land of endless possibilities, says VP Dhankhar

SUSHIL KUMAR ■ CHANDIGARH

Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar, who visited Kurukshetra to attend the International Gita Yanti Mahotsav (IGM)-2024 on Sunday, said that Haryana is a land of endless possibilities, a leader of the nation, and its talent is unparalleled in every field. Under the leadership of Nayab Singh Saini, the talent of every Haryanvi will shine even brighter, Dhankhar added.

Addressing the people at the Gita Gyan Sansthanam, Dhankhar showered praises on CM Saini. Lauding the Chief Minister, he said, "CM Saini is a grounded person with impeccable character, hard-working, and a person of high thinking. I am confident that Nayab Singh Saini will undoubtedly do exceptional work."

The Vice President further said that companions or charioteers play a decisive role in life, and Haryana has found its companion and charioteer in CM Saini. Dhankhar emphasized that the message from the birthplace of the Bhagavad Gita, Dharmakshetra-Kurukshetra, is that the nation is supreme. Patriotism should be pure and absolute.

Dhankhar said that for more than a decade, India has been making history. After six decades, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has had the privilege of becoming the charioteer of the nation. He said that India has seen unprecedented economic progress and institutional advancement in the last ten years, and now India is on the path to becoming



a developed nation. Dhankhar said that a developed India is no longer a dream but a goal. To achieve this, we must adopt the concentration and determination of Arjuna, as he focused solely on his goal, just as we must focus solely on our target to succeed, he said.

We should be promoting Peace through Teachings of Bhagavad Gita: CM Saini

Welcoming the Vice President Dhankhar on behalf of the people of the state, Saini said that the visit of the Vice President to Dharmakshetra-Kurukshetra for the IGM stands as a testament to his deep interest in spirituality, his unwavering faith in the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita, and his special bond with Haryana.

Saini said that the Vice President's presence in the IGM-2024 has certainly elevated the prestige of the

Mahotsav and boosted the enthusiasm of the participants. Describing the Bhagavad Gita as a cornerstone of Indian philosophy and a guide for all humanity, the Chief Minister said that the Bhagavad Gita is not just a sacred text; it is a way of life and a beacon of hope for humanity. In today's world, fraught with stress and conflict, the teachings of the Gita are essential to sustain humanity and foster global harmony, said Saini.

The Chief Minister emphasized that the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita are vital in addressing the stresses and challenges of modern life. The teachings of Bhagavad Gita offer solutions to humanity's inner conflicts and guide us toward peace and understanding. By following its teachings, we can realize the dream of global harmony and serve the nation's best interests, he said.

On sixth day of penance, Sukhbir Badal performs 'sewa' in Fatehgarh Sahib

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

On the sixth day of his penance for "religious misconduct" on Sunday, Shiromani Akali Dal leader Sukhbir Singh Badal performed the duty of 'sewadar' outside a gurdwara in Fatehgarh Sahib amid tight security. Badal also listened to 'kirtan' and washed dishes in the community kitchen.

The former deputy chief minister, a Z+ protectee, arrived at the gurdwara surrounded by security personnel. Holding a spear and dressed in the blue 'sewadar' uniform, Badal sat at the gurdwara's entrance for an hour from 9 am. The 62-year-old is undergoing a religious pun-

ishment pronounced by the Akal Takht — the highest temporal body of Sikhs — for "mistakes" committed by the Shiromani Akali Dal and its government in Punjab from 2007 to 2017.

Besides the Golden Temple in Amritsar, the Akal Takht on December 2 asked Badal to perform the service of 'sewadar' at the Takht Kesgarh Sahib, the Takht Damdama Sahib, and Darbar Sahib in Muktsar and Fatehgarh Sahib for two days each.

Badal survived an attempt on his life on the second day of his penance at the Golden Temple on December 4 when former Khalistani terrorist Narain Singh Chaura fired at him from close range but missed.

Punjab Badal attacker Chaura sent to another 3-day police remand

A court in Amritsar on Sunday extended by three days the police custody of Narain Singh Chaura who had opened fire at Shiromani Akali Dal leader Sukhbir Singh Badal at the gate of the Golden Temple in Amritsar. Badal had survived the attempt on his life on December 4 as Chaura was overpowered by plainclothes policemen.

Amid tight security, Chaura, 68, was produced before the court in Amritsar as this three-day remand was to expire on Sunday. A police official told reporters in Amritsar that the court has again allowed a three-

day police remand. He will be produced before the court on December 11, said the police official.

Chaura, a former Khalistani terrorist who is facing several cases, was sent to a three-day police remand on December 5. He has been booked under Section 109 (attempt to murder) of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and under sections of the Arms Act. The attack targeting Badal was captured on cameras by media persons who had gathered to cover the second day of the Akali performing the duty of 'sewadar' at the main gate of the Sikh shrine as religious penance for "mistakes" committed by the SAD government in Punjab from 2007 to 2017.

Elections to 5 MCs and 44 councils of Punjab to be held on Dec 21

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH



Elections to five municipal corporations and 44 municipal councils and nagar panchayats in Punjab will be held on December 21, the State Election Commission said on Sunday. All necessary arrangements have been made for the civic body polls, it said.

Addressing the media here, State Election Commissioner Raj Kamal Chaudhuri said polling for five municipal corporations and 44 municipal councils and nagar panchayats will be held from 7 am to 4 pm. "The model code of conduct will come into force," he said. The five municipal corporations going to polls are Amritsar, Jalandhar, Ludhiana, Patiala and Phagwara.

The process of filing nominations will start from December 9 and the last date will be December 12. The scrutiny of nomination papers will be done on December 13 and the last date for the withdrawal of nominations will be December 14, Chaudhuri said. He said, 37,32 lakh voters, including 17.75 lakh females and 204 others, are eligible to cast their votes in these elections.

The state election commissioner said electronic voting machines (EVMs) would be used for the voting. A sufficient number of EVMs have been arranged for use in the elections, he added. Votes will be counted on the same day at the polling station itself, after the completion of polling of votes, he further said.

Chaudhuri said polling

would be held for 381 wards of the Municipal Corporations and 598 wards of the Municipal Councils/Nagar Panchayats. Adequate security arrangements have been made by police, he said, asserting that a comprehensive security plan has been prepared.

There are a total of 1,609 polling locations having 3,809 polling booths. Of them, 344 polling locations have been identified as hypersensitive, and 665 as sensitive. A total of 21,500 personnel of the police department and Home Guard Jawans would be deployed, he said.

The commissioners of police and senior superintendents of police have been authorised to enhance the security deployment at polling locations. He said instructions regarding the prohibition on carrying arms and ammunition have been issued.

The district magistrates being competent authority under the Arms Act will assess the necessity or requirement of the deposit of arms. The expenditure limits notified for a candidate contesting for the municipal elections are Rs 4 lakh, Rs 3.60 lakh for municipal council class I, Rs 2.30 lakh for municipal council class II and Rs 2 lakh for municipal council class III. The expenditure limit notified for a candidate contesting for the Nagar panchayat is Rs 1.40 lakh.

Around 23,000 election personnel would be deputed on election duty. As many as 25 IAS and PCS officers would be appointed as general observers for the polls, he said.

Farmers suspend 'Dilli Chalo' march for a day after injuries; To decide next course of action today

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

The protesting farmers on Sunday afternoon suspended their foot march to Delhi for the day after some of them suffered injuries in tear gas shelling by Haryana security personnel along the State's border with Punjab. Farmers will decide on the next course of action on Monday.

After a group of 101 farmers from Kisan Mazdoor Morcha and Samyuka Kisan Morcha (SKM) groups started the foot march to press for their demands, including a legal guarantee for Minimum Support Price on Sunday, they were halted by the multilayered barricading erected by the Haryana Police. A heated argument took place between protesting farmer 'jatha' and security personnel. Haryana Police asked the farmers to show them the requisite permission to take out the foot march. Meanwhile, farmers were seen wearing face masks and eyewear to protect themselves if a situation occurs and

teargas shells are lobbed at them.

Following this, tear gas shells were lobbed and water cannons were aimed towards the farmers to disperse them, injuring five protesters. In order to placate the protesting farmers, tea and biscuits were being offered to them at the Shambhu border over Ghaggar river.

Farmer leader Sarwan Singh Pandher alleged that the AAP-led Punjab government is in alliance with the Centre and is working against them. Pandher questioned why the media was being stopped at the protesting site.

Talking to reporters at Shambhu, Pandher said that the foot march to Delhi has been suspended for the day and asked the protesting farmers to return. At least eight farmers were injured and one of them was rushed to the Post-Graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research (PGIMER) in Chandigarh. "We have called back the 'jatha' (group of 101 farmers)," he added.

Pandher said that farmers would decide their next course of action after a meeting of their forums -- the Samyuka Kisan Morcha (Non-Political) and the Kisan Mazdoor Morcha.

He said that police showering flowers and offering biscuits and tea was merely a gimmick. The farmer leader claimed that police used rubber bullets at the protesters. Paramilitary personnel and Haryana Police have intensified action against protesting farmers. Teargas shells have been lobbed at the farmers on four occasions, beside water cannons to disperse them. Five farmers, including Major Singh of Kisan Mazdoor Sangharsha Committee, Dilabag Singh Gill and Karnail Singh, have been injured. Police used pepper spray and tear gas shells after a few farmers attempted to pull out the iron mesh fencing. Due to strong winds, the smoke from the tear gas shells is also causing problems for the security personnel.

Earlier, Haryana security personnel lobbed teargas shells

to disperse protesting farmers as they neared multi-layered barricades at the Shambhu border. The teargas shells forced the farmers, some of whom had covered their faces and were wearing protective eyewear, to get back a few metres.

Talking to reporters, Haryana Police DSP Varinder Kumar said the action was taken after the protesting farmers started pulling the iron mesh which is the last line of defence. He claimed that a list of 101 farmers was shared by the farmer leaders but around 300 farmers reached near the fence. "We have been given a task to maintain law and order and we have just followed the order. The action was taken as some of the farmers took law in their hand," he added.

It should be mentioned here that at Shambhu border, farmers had been camping since their first attempt to march to the capital was foiled in February, to press their various demands, including a legal guarantee for minimum support price.

Sub National Immunization Round of Pulse Polio 2024-25 Begins in Six Districts of Hry

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Chandigarh: The Sub National Immunization (SNID) round of Pulse Polio 2024-25 started on Sunday in 6 districts of the Haryana, identified by Government of India-Faridabad, Gurugram, Jhajjar, Mewat, Sonapat and Kaithal in which booth activity was undertaken on the first day in order to maintain the polio free status of the State. An official spokesperson said that all the district booths have been inaugurated by Public representatives, senior officers of district administration and health department. Approximately 15 lakh children are to be covered during this campaign in the state.

INCLUDE MEDITATION AND YOGA IN DAILY LIFE, SAYS MINISTER GANGWA

Chandigarh: Haryana Public Health Engineering and Public Works Minister Ranbir Gangwa on Sunday emphasised that incorporating meditation and yoga into daily routines can bring positive changes to life. He described meditation and spirituality as key sources of peace, which significantly enhance mental strength. Gangwa was speaking as the Chief Guest at the 23rd anniversary of the Brahma Kumaris' Om Shanti Retreat Center in Bhora Kalan village, Gurugram.

89,706 STUDENTS ATTENDED SECOND PHASE OF BLOCK-LEVEL ROAD SAFETY QUIZ COMPETITION IN HRY

Chandigarh: The second phase of the block-level road safety quiz competition was organised across schools and colleges in the state. A total of 89,706 students participated enthusiastically, spreading the important message of road safety. Senior police officers from various districts visited the competition centers to encourage the participants. Under the guidance of the Director General of Police (DGP) Shatruej Kapur, nodal officers from the police department were assigned duties across districts to ensure proper management of the competition. Students were categorised into different groups based on their academic qualifications and age. The questions posed in the competition aimed at helping students understand the significance of road safety and encourage them to make informed decisions in real-life situations. An official spokesperson said that before the start of the campaign, students were provided with study materials related to road safety rules.

HIMACHAL CM EXTENDS BIRTHDAY WISHES TO VIDYA STOKES

Shimla: Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu on Sunday met former minister and senior congress leader Vidya Stokes on the occasion of her 98th birthday. During the meeting, the Chief Minister extended his heartfelt wishes, praying for her good health and long life. On the occasion, Revenue Minister Jagat Singh Negi, MLA Harish Janartha, Sudarshan Babloo and Vinod Sultanpuri were also present.

According to the statement, the launch at the historic city of Panipat is an initiative of the Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) designed to empower women aged 18-70 years, who have passed Class X. They will receive specialised training and a stipend for the first three years to promote financial literacy and insurance awareness.

After training, these women can serve as LIC agents and the graduate Bima Sakhis would have the opportunity to qualify for being considered for Development Officer roles in LIC. During the programme, the Prime Minister will also lay the foundation stone for the main campus of Maharana Pratap Horticultural University, Karnal. The main campus and



PM Modi to launch Bima Sakhi scheme to empower women in Panipat today

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

To empower women, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will launch a new 'Bima Sakhi Yojana' at Panipat in Haryana on Monday and will also distribute appointment Certificates to prospective Bima Sakhis.

eight regional research stations, spread over 495 acres, will be established at a cost of over Rs 700 crore.

The University will have one College of Horticulture for Graduate and Post-Graduate studies and five schools covering 10 horticulture disciplines. It will work towards crop diversification and world-class research for the development of horticulture technologies.

VOICE WITHIN / VIJAY SINGAL
The Concept of Moha in Bhagavad Gita



VIJAY SINGAL

Moha is stated to be the veil that hides one's true nature. There is no exact English equivalent for the Sanskrit word moha (also spelled as moh or mohah). It is generally translated as delusion (a belief which is not based on facts) or illusion (wrong perception of true sensory experiences).

Ignorance here does not refer to the lack of worldly knowledge such as knowledge of science and history, but to the miscomprehension of one's true nature and also of misunderstanding of the truth of the ultimate reality.

Sri Krishna has stated in shloka 7.13 that deluded (mohitam) by the three modes of material nature, people of the world are unable to know the imperishable Supreme. In other words, bewildered by myriad forms of material nature, the beings are unable to see the underlying truth which lies behind these forms.

Moha arises from the tamasic guna, the mode of ignorance (shloka 14.17). Being of the tamasic nature, delusion gives rise to confusion of the mind. It obscures one's ability to discriminate between right and wrong.

Moha is stated to be the root cause of all human suffering.

Chapter sixteen has described the impact of delusion on human behaviour. Under the influence of delusion, one forgets the truth about his higher nature and identifies himself with the various facets of the ever-changing material world.

How can moha, one of the biggest obstacles on the path of self-realisation, be dispelled? Krishna revealed in shloka 11.1 that delusion can be overcome through spiritual knowledge. It has further been declared in shloka 2.52 that when one's intellect crosses the muddy waters of delusion, then he becomes indifferent to what has been heard and what is yet to be heard.

The text of Bhagavad Gita begins with the dilemma of Arjuna. Afflicted with delusion, he was confused about his

duty in the battlefield. He beseeched Krishna to guide him in that hour of crisis. To remove his delusion (and through him the delusion of all mankind), Krishna explained to him all the aspects of the material nature as well as of the spiritual truth.

'Have you listened to my teachings with undivided attention? Has your delusion born of ignorance been dispelled?' (Shloka 18.72).

'My delusion is destroyed by your grace and I have gained memory (wisdom). I am now free from doubts, and I shall act according to your instructions' (shloka 18.73).

A combined reading of these two verses suggests that when one assimilates the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita, he gains spiritual wisdom. As a result, he is freed from the entanglement of moha and maya.

Governor-XI wins Sadbhavana Cricket Cup, CM give away prizes

The Governor-XI team clinched the Sadbhavana Cricket Cup organized by the Him Sports and Cultural Association to raise awareness against drug abuse held in BCS Shimla. Vivek Bhatia and Abid Hussain Sadiq were jointly declared Man of the Series. In the final match, Governor-XI

defeated Chief Justice-XI by 32 runs. Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu appreciated the efforts of the organizers for creating awareness against the use of drugs through this sports event, Sadbhavana Cricket Cup. He said that the state government was committed to fight against drug menace and in this direction working with dedica-

tion to promote sports and improve opportunities for youth. Sukhu highlighted the steps being taken by the government to support athletes. The prize money for winners of international competitions such as the Olympics, Paralympics and Asian Games, has been significantly increased. Gold medalists now receive Rs. 5 crore, silver medalists Rs. 3 crore and bronze

medalists Rs. 2 crore. Similarly, in the Asian Games and Para Asian Games the prize money for gold medalists was increased to Rs. 4 crore, with Rs. 2.5 crore and Rs. 1.5 crore for silver and bronze medalists, respectively. He said that Paralympians like Nishad Kumar and Ajay Kumar have been recognized with substantial monetary rewards for their achievements.

Classifieds

BEDAKHLI

I, Rakesh Kumar S/o Nanak Chand R/o Quarter No. A-9, 220 KB, Ferozepur Cantt (PB) hereby inform that my son Abhishek Hans and his wife Dimple Behal are out of my control and are threatening us. I have evicted Abhishek Hans and Dimple Behal from my movable and immovable property. If they do any wrong thing or deal with anyone, they will be responsible themselves. I and my family will not be responsible.

Army No. 19002366F

L/NK Sahib Singh S/o Gurmeet Singh, R/o VPO, Kahnua Tehsil & Distt. Gurdaspur (Pb) presently serving in Indian Army Unit 23 Sikh C/o 56 APO declare that in my Army Service record, name and Date of birth of my mother wrongly recorded as Surinder Kaur and 02-06-1959. Her correct name and DOB are Salinder Kaur and 09-07-1965. Concerned notice.

Ranvir Kaur D/o Gurbhagat Singh and W/o Manpreet Singh R/o H-10-12, Street No-7, 66 Ft Road, Near Sarao Public School, New Professor Colony, Village Jalpur, Bir Bahadurgarh, Patiala, Punjab - 147021, have changed my name to Ranveer Kaur.

I, Madhu Raj W/o Raj Kumar resident of Vill. Ghulla, PO. Ranjit Bagh District Gurdaspur. Have changed my name from Madhu Raj to Madhu concerned Notice please. I Harjinder Singh Mann S/O Sher Singh Mann R/O Kishanpura Kalan Distt. Moga Have Changed My Name To Harjinder Singh Mann. I Paramjit Kaur Mann W/O Harjinder Singh Mann R/O Kishanpura Kalan Distt. Moga Have Changed My Name To Paramjit Kaur Mann. I Balpreet Kaur (D/O Waryam Singh) W/O Prabhdeep Singh Kauldhar W/O Vpo. Nathawal Tehsil Raikot District Ludhiana Have Changed My Name To Balpreet Kaur Kauldhar.

Niranjan Devi Legally Spouse Of Rajeev Kumar Resident At Bangraha, Dalsinghara, Kancha, Samastipur, Bihar Pin 848503, Have Charged My Name From Niranjan Devi To Niranjan Devi Vide Affidavit Dated 09 December 2024 Before At Notary Ferozepur.

I, R Lakshmi Devi Is Legally Wife Of Hav (Ds), Venkateswarlu R Unit 408 Gun Msl Regt C/O 56 APO Residing At H. No. 45-3-100 Dwaraka Nagar Colony Badangpet Po. K.V.Rangareddy District. (Ts) Pin 500058 Declare That My Date Of Birth 13.07.1986 Wrongly Written In My Husband Army Service Records But My Correct Date Of Birth Is 13.06.1986 In My Adhar Card And In My Pan Card. I, Army No. 15329280m Rank Hav Name S. Arockinam Of Unit 20 Engr Regt. C/O 56 APO, Pin-914020, Have Changed My Son Name From A Jose Daniel To Jose Daniel Vide Affidavit Notary Ferozepur. I Sarbjett Kaur Wife Of Gurjant Singh Resident Of Street No. 2 Backside R.S.D College Ferozepur City Have Changed My Name To Sarabjit Kaur. I Sukhdip Kaur, Wife Of Naseeb Singh, Son Of Nihal Singh, Resident Of Village Mumara Tehsil & District Fardikot. I Have Changed My Name Sukhdeep Kaur To Sukhdip Kaur. I Naseeb Singh Son Of Nihal Singh, Resident Of Village Mumara Tehsil, & District Fardikot. I Have Changed My Name Nasib Singh To Naseeb Singh. I hitherto known as Gurjeet Singh S/o Harbans Singh R/o H.No. 3564/5, Rajbar Road, Patiala, Punjab have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Gurjeet Singh Gill. I, Ravinder Singh S/o Jasvir Singh R/o VPO. Khorthan, Tehsil Banga, Distt. SBS Nagar, Punjab have changed my name from Ravinder Singh to Singh Ravinder. (Surname as Singh). I, Sadhu Singh S/o Piara Singh R/o H.No. 44/1, Arjan Nagar, Jalandhar, Punjab have changed my name from Sadhu Singh to Sadhu Singh Cauli. (Surname as Cauli) I, Surbhi W/o Piyush Kohli R/o Dhariwal (Gurdaspur) have changed my name to Surbhi Kohli. Concerned notice. I, Deepak Kumar S/o Jagir Masih R/o Village Nawwan Pind Sardara Da, PO Tibber Distt Gurdaspur (Pb) have changed my minor daughter's name from Jassica to Jessica Sahota. Concerned notice. I Nirmal Kaur w/o Kamal Singh R/o H.no.78 vill. Amipur Tehsil ambala distt. Ambala that I have changed my name from Nirmala Devi to Nirmal kaur. Concerned notice. I, Sunita Rani Chouhan W/o Guralp Singh R/o #9 Mohalla Sainian Wala, Near Baby Model School, Chhat Banur, District SAS Nagar, Punjab, have changed my name from Sunita Rani Chouhan to Sunita Rani. I, Meenu Goyal W/o Sh. Parikshit Goel R/o H.No. 2173 Urban Estate Jind Tehsil and District Jind Have Changed My Name From Meenu Goyal to Meenu Goel.

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, No. 15576436N Hav Pardeep Kumar S/O Ram Saroop R/o Vpo. Badla Teh-Dasuya (Hoshiarpur) Punjab, declare that in my Army record my mother Rama Devi date of birth written 24-03-1961 wrongly. Actually her date of birth is 07-03-1956 as per her Aadhar card records. I, No. 15576436N Hav Pardeep Kumar S/O Ram Saroop R/o Vpo. Badla Teh-Dasuya (Hoshiarpur) Punjab, declare that in my Army record my wife Rajni Kumari date of birth written 10-08-1985 wrongly. Actually her date of birth is 10-06-1985 as per her Aadhar card records. I, Sarabjit Kaur W/O Dvr. Name Amrik Singh of HT 141 DMC R/O Vill & Po. Beri Teh & Distt. Gurdaspur Pb, India, declare that in my husband service documents my wrongly entered DOB 20-03-1973. But my correct DOB is 01-01-1974. So amended my date of birth from 20-03-1973 to 01-01-1974 in my husband service documents. I Bhinder Kaur am legal spouse/dependent of No.JC-512661P, Rank NB Sub Gurmkh Singh Presently at Vill. Sultanpur (Badhrawan), Teh.-Malerkotla, PO-Malerkotla Distt. Sangrur, Punjab, India declare that my mother's army record my name entered as Surinder Kaur and DOB wrongly entered as 29.07.1961 But correct DOB is 01.07.1968 I Bachittar Singh am legal spouse/dependent of No.-JC-512661P, Rank NB Sub Gurmkh Singh Presently at Vill. Sultanpur (Badhrawan), Teh.-Malerkotla, PO-Malerkotla Distt. Sangrur, Punjab, India declare that my father's army record my name entered as Bachittar Singh and DOB wrongly entered as 11.05.1958 But correct DOB is 01.06.1961 I, Sumit Chopra S/O Ashwani Kumar Chopra, R/O H No. 246, Professor Colony, Yamuna Nagar, Hr - 135001; Declare That Name Of Mine, My Mother And My Father Has Been Wrongly Written As Sumeet Chopra, Raman And Ashwani Kumar In My 10th And 12th Class Mark Sheets Cum Certificates. The Actual Name Of Mine, My Mother And My Father Are Sumit Chopra, Raman Chopra And Ashwani Kumar Chopra. I, Smt. Sukhvinder Kaur W/o Baldev Singh M/o NO.18003138P Hav. Amandeep Singh serving in 52 Engr. Regt R/o Village - Mustafabad Saidian, PO Hemrajpur, Tehsil & Distt - Gurdaspur (PB) have changed my name from Sukhvinder Kaur to Sukhvinder Kaur and date of birth from 20/01/1957 to 02/04/1957 E-Stamp No (Affidavit) IN-PB-86575515295169W date 07/12/2024 produced before Notary Public, Gurdaspur. Please note all concerned.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Sahil S/o Suresh Kumar R/O Malka Wala Darwaja Siwan (Kathal), have changed my name to Sahil Kumar. That Sahil is my name and Kumar is Surname. I, Tejnoor Setia S/O Amandeep Singh R/O Ram Nagar Tohana (Fatehabad), have changed my name from Tejnoor Singh. That Tejnoor is my name and Singh Surname I, Charanjit Kaur W/O Harpal Singh R/o VPO Rainawali Tehsil Tohana Distt Fatehabad have changed my name Charanjit Kaur to Charanjit Kaur. I, Swarlekha Chaudhary W/O Gaurav Pratap R/O Golden Avenue-II Opposite Kuber School Roorkee Road, 250001 Meerut (U.P) have changed my name from Swarlekha Chaudhary to Swarlekha Pratap I, Vinod Chawla S/O Jiwan Chawla R/O H.No.24, Gali No.5, Tehsilpuria Near Dr. Surinderpal Amritsar have changed my minor Daughter name from Eshana to Eshana Chawla I, Muskan D/O Service No Jc-732529a Rank Sub Name Pradip Kumar. Of Unit H. No. 611/28, 33Foot Gali, Bhiwani Road Bye Pass, Sharma Nagar Jind Tehsil and District Jind Have Changed My Name From Vinod To Vinod Kumar Lather. I, Vishal S/o Banke Lal Garg, R/O H No. - 1264, Yamuna Gali, PO: Yamuna Nagar, Distt. Yamuna Nagar, Haryana-135001; have changed my name to Vishal Garg. I Sukhbir Kaur W/O Kalramvir Singh Village Gag Sultan PO Ghogra Tehsil Dasuya Distt Hoshiarpur Have Changed My Name from Sukhbir Kaur To Sukhvir Kaur. I Ranjit Singh S/O Harbhajan Singh R/O Vpo Majara Teh Balachaur District Sbs Nagar Have Changed My Name Singh As Surname Ranjit As Given Name. I, Lakhveer Kaur W/o Jaitinder Singh Sandhu R/o Vill: Shahzada Sant Singh (Malasian) Distt. Ferozepur have changed my name to Lakhveer Kaur and my surname is Kaur. I Satnam Singh Gill S/o Balvir Singh R/o Vill-Pherruaian Teh-Raikot, Distt. Ludhiana, have changed my name to Satnam Singh. I, Manjit Kaur W/o Charanjit Singh R/O Patti Uppal, Vpo Shaina, Tehsil Tapa, District Barnala, have changed my name as Manjit Kaur Sran. I, Harpreet Singh Sandhu S/O Mehal Singh R/O Vill: Noorpur Teh-Zira (Ferozepur) have changed my name to Harpreet Singh. I Dilbag Singh Man S/O Jiwan Singh Man R/O 1880, Sector - 7 Urban Estate, Karnal (Rural) (part) (1), Karnal, Haryana - 132001, have changed my name to Dilbag Singh Mann. I Ashok Kumar & Ashok Kumar Chaudhary S/o Girdhari Lal R/o H.No.142, Dalima Vihar, Ward No.6, Rajpura, Patiala, Punjab - 140401 is one and the same person.

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, No. 15576436N Hav Pardeep Kumar S/O Ram Saroop R/o Vpo. Badla Teh-Dasuya (Hoshiarpur) Punjab, declare that in my Army record my mother Rama Devi date of birth written 24-03-1961 wrongly. Actually her date of birth is 07-03-1956 as per her Aadhar card records. I, No. 15576436N Hav Pardeep Kumar S/O Ram Saroop R/o Vpo. Badla Teh-Dasuya (Hoshiarpur) Punjab, declare that in my Army record my wife Rajni Kumari date of birth written 10-08-1985 wrongly. Actually her date of birth is 10-06-1985 as per her Aadhar card records. I, Sarabjit Kaur W/O Dvr. Name Amrik Singh of HT 141 DMC R/O Vill & Po. Beri Teh & Distt. Gurdaspur Pb, India, declare that in my husband service documents my wrongly entered DOB 20-03-1973. But my correct DOB is 01-01-1974. So amended my date of birth from 20-03-1973 to 01-01-1974 in my husband service documents. I Bhinder Kaur am legal spouse/dependent of No.JC-512661P, Rank NB Sub Gurmkh Singh Presently at Vill. Sultanpur (Badhrawan), Teh.-Malerkotla, PO-Malerkotla Distt. Sangrur, Punjab, India declare that my mother's army record my name entered as Surinder Kaur and DOB wrongly entered as 29.07.1961 But correct DOB is 01.07.1968 I Bachittar Singh am legal spouse/dependent of No.-JC-512661P, Rank NB Sub Gurmkh Singh Presently at Vill. Sultanpur (Badhrawan), Teh.-Malerkotla, PO-Malerkotla Distt. Sangrur, Punjab, India declare that my father's army record my name entered as Bachittar Singh and DOB wrongly entered as 11.05.1958 But correct DOB is 01.06.1961 I, Sumit Chopra S/O Ashwani Kumar Chopra, R/O H No. 246, Professor Colony, Yamuna Nagar, Hr - 135001; Declare That Name Of Mine, My Mother And My Father Has Been Wrongly Written As Sumeet Chopra, Raman And Ashwani Kumar In My 10th And 12th Class Mark Sheets Cum Certificates. The Actual Name Of Mine, My Mother And My Father Are Sumit Chopra, Raman Chopra And Ashwani Kumar Chopra. I, Smt. Sukhvinder Kaur W/o Baldev Singh M/o NO.18003138P Hav. Amandeep Singh serving in 52 Engr. Regt R/o Village - Mustafabad Saidian, PO Hemrajpur, Tehsil & Distt - Gurdaspur (PB) have changed my name from Sukhvinder Kaur to Sukhvinder Kaur and date of birth from 20/01/1957 to 02/04/1957 E-Stamp No (Affidavit) IN-PB-86575515295169W date 07/12/2024 produced before Notary Public, Gurdaspur. Please note all concerned.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Sahil S/o Suresh Kumar R/O Malka Wala Darwaja Siwan (Kathal), have changed my name to Sahil Kumar. That Sahil is my name and Kumar is Surname. I, Tejnoor Setia S/O Amandeep Singh R/O Ram Nagar Tohana (Fatehabad), have changed my name from Tejnoor Singh. That Tejnoor is my name and Singh Surname I, Charanjit Kaur W/O Harpal Singh R/o VPO Rainawali Tehsil Tohana Distt Fatehabad have changed my name Charanjit Kaur to Charanjit Kaur. I, Swarlekha Chaudhary W/O Gaurav Pratap R/O Golden Avenue-II Opposite Kuber School Roorkee Road, 250001 Meerut (U.P) have changed my name from Swarlekha Chaudhary to Swarlekha Pratap I, Vinod Chawla S/O Jiwan Chawla R/O H.No.24, Gali No.5, Tehsilpuria Near Dr. Surinderpal Amritsar have changed my minor Daughter name from Eshana to Eshana Chawla I, Muskan D/O Service No Jc-732529a Rank Sub Name Pradip Kumar. Of Unit H. No. 611/28, 33Foot Gali, Bhiwani Road Bye Pass, Sharma Nagar Jind Tehsil and District Jind Have Changed My Name From Vinod To Vinod Kumar Lather. I, Vishal S/o Banke Lal Garg, R/O H No. - 1264, Yamuna Gali, PO: Yamuna Nagar, Distt. Yamuna Nagar, Haryana-135001; have changed my name to Vishal Garg. I Sukhbir Kaur W/O Kalramvir Singh Village Gag Sultan PO Ghogra Tehsil Dasuya Distt Hoshiarpur Have Changed My Name from Sukhbir Kaur To Sukhvir Kaur. I Ranjit Singh S/O Harbhajan Singh R/O Vpo Majara Teh Balachaur District Sbs Nagar Have Changed My Name Singh As Surname Ranjit As Given Name. I, Lakhveer Kaur W/o Jaitinder Singh Sandhu R/o Vill: Shahzada Sant Singh (Malasian) Distt. Ferozepur have changed my name to Lakhveer Kaur and my surname is Kaur. I Satnam Singh Gill S/o Balvir Singh R/o Vill-Pherruaian Teh-Raikot, Distt. Ludhiana, have changed my name to Satnam Singh. I, Manjit Kaur W/o Charanjit Singh R/O Patti Uppal, Vpo Shaina, Tehsil Tapa, District Barnala, have changed my name as Manjit Kaur Sran. I, Harpreet Singh Sandhu S/O Mehal Singh R/O Vill: Noorpur Teh-Zira (Ferozepur) have changed my name to Harpreet Singh. I Dilbag Singh Man S/O Jiwan Singh Man R/O 1880, Sector - 7 Urban Estate, Karnal (Rural) (part) (1), Karnal, Haryana - 132001, have changed my name to Dilbag Singh Mann. I Ashok Kumar & Ashok Kumar Chaudhary S/o Girdhari Lal R/o H.No.142, Dalima Vihar, Ward No.6, Rajpura, Patiala, Punjab - 140401 is one and the same person.

Regional Office, 1st Floor, Vijay Nagar, Near Football Chowk Jalandhar 0181-5057841, E-mail : operations.pjkr@bankofbaroda.com

Table with 5 columns: Sl. No., Name of the Loanholder, Address of the Loanholder, Locker Number, Branch name. Lists various loanholders and their details.

Notice to the locker holders of Bank of Baroda regarding the payment of rent of lockers. Includes details about the locker holders and the bank's policy.

STATE BANK OF INDIA

Whereas the undersigned being the authorised officer of the State Bank of India under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (No.3 of 2002) and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a Demand Notice to borrower(s)/guarantor(s) on the date mentioned hereunder, calling upon the borrower(s)/guarantor(s), to repay the amount mentioned in the respective demand notice, within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

Table with 5 columns: Name of the Borrower/Guarantor(s), Description of the Immovable Property, Date of Demand Notice, Date of Possession Notice, Amount Outstanding as per Demand Notice. Lists various borrowers and their property details.

वैदेशिकी सूचना

मैं, मोहन लाल पुत्र लाल चन्द निवासी सिकान नं. 143-बी, गांधी कालोनी, नजदीकी मरान मॉडर, तहसील व जिला सिस्सा बखान करता हूँ कि मेरा एकमात्र जमीन कागजात है और मुझे मेरे कर्नले-सुनने से बाहर है और अपनी मामूली करता है। इसलिए मैं अपने लड़के राजीव कागजात उर्फ राजू को अपनी तमाम चल-अचल सम्पत्ति से बंधलक करता हूँ। भविष्य में ये किसी भी किसी प्रकार का लेन-देन करेगा या कोई आसामाजिक कार्य करेगा उसका वह स्वयं जिम्मेदार होगा। मेरी व मेरे परिवार को कोई जिम्मेदारी नहीं होगी।

पब्लिक नोटिस: गुरविंदर सिंह (आधार नंबर 315894363543) जो सातनाम सिंह/रो विलेज पुरापुर कान्हा, पुलिस स्टेशन रंगारंग नंगल (गुरदासपुर) और शरान्जित कौर (आधार नंबर 816357679185) जो चानन सिंह विलेज धारदो, पो डिस्ट्रिक्ट मेहता (अमरितसर) के बीच विवाह के अभाव में अलग हो चुके हैं, यह घोषणा करता है कि वे एक-दूसरे को अपने अलग-अलग नामों से शादी करने की अनुमति देते हैं।

DIRECTORATE OF PUNJAB STATE LOTTERIES

Table with 5 columns: Prize Amount, Common to all series, Last 4 digits. Lists various lottery prizes and their corresponding numbers.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Gurvinder Singh (Aadhaar number 315894363543) S/o Satnam Singh R/o Village Pura Pur Kanha, Police Station Rangarang Nangal (Gurdaspur) and Sharanjit Kaur (Aadhaar number 816357679185) D/o Chanana Singh of village Dharido, Po District Mehta (Amritsar) have been divorced by mutual consent in the presence of police, panches, sarpanches and relatives. The boy and the girl can get married wherever they want, no one will have any objection. The boy and the girl have given an affidavit to each other with the consent of the boy and the girl. A fine of Rs 2 lakh will be collected from the party refusing and giving to the other party.

Disclaimer: The Pioneer does not take responsibility for the contents for the advertisement (Display/Classified) carried in this newspaper. The Paper does not endorse the same. Readers are requested to verify the content on their own.

Pawar calls for ballot paper based polls in rebel village

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

During his visit to Markadwadi village in western Maharashtra's Solapur district which created history last week by attempting unsuccessfully to hold a "mock ballot paper poll", NCP (SP) President Sharad Pawar on Sunday gave a fervent call for dumping the Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) and reverting to the ballot paper-based electoral system.

Interacting with the villagers of Markadwadi in Solapur district, Pawar exhorted the Gram Sabha of not just that particular village but the Gram Sabhas of all villages in Malshiras taluka to pass resolutions opposing the conduct of elections through EVMs and making a strong case for reverting to the system of ballot papers. This, he said, was essential because the people had lost faith in the EVMs.

"Based on such resolutions, we will take up the matter with the Election authorities in Maharashtra, the chief minister, the Election Commission of India (ECI) and the Prime Minister of the country. We will also raise the issue in the ongoing winter session of Parliament," Pawar said.

Alluding to an unsuccessful attempt made by the villagers



to hold a "mock ballot paper poll" on December 3 in the wake of shocking results in the recent State Assembly polls, Pawar said: "There is something wrong with the EVMs. There are strong doubts in the minds of the people about the authenticity of the polls held through EVMs. Since you people have created awareness among us, the only thing that can be done is to bring about a change in the electoral

system that is adopted in the country now and revert to the use of ballot papers to hold the elections." Taking a strong exception to the manner in which the police prevented the villagers from holding the "mock ballot paper poll" on December 3, Pawar said: "I was surprised to learn about things that happened in your village. Whatever you people did was not official. The people of your village sat

down and decided to go in for re-voting and you decided to vote once again in a different way. But, why did the police prevent you from holding such an unofficial poll? What does the law say?" "From what happened in the recent Assembly elections, there are serious doubts about the electoral process involving EVMs in the minds of the voters. The doubts have to be removed.

In advanced countries like the USA and UK, votes are cast through ballot papers. Not all countries in Europe conduct elections through EVMs like we do," the NCP (SP) chief said.

Referring to chief minister Devendra Fadnavis' objection to his visiting Markadwadi village to interact with the local people on EVMs, Pawar said: "The chief minister advised me against visiting your village. What wrong have I done? Is it wrong to visit your village? Is it wrong to take care to know about the doubts that you people have (about EVMs) and try to bring about necessary change? After all, what is democracy for? What are people's rights?"

Maintaining that "politics should not be brought into this", Pawar said: "I would like to tell the chief minister, we do not want to bring politics into this. We will provide all the information to the government, the Centre and ECI. If possible, the chief minister can himself visit the village and listen to what people say and work towards making necessary course corrections"

Pawar said that on behalf of the people of Markadwadi village, he and his party

would raise the EVMs issue in Parliament and seek reforms in the current electoral process.

Meanwhile, Maharashtra BJP president Chandrashekhar Bawankule came down strongly against Pawar for visiting Markadwadi village and for allegedly spreading lies and deceiving the people of Maharashtra

"Sharad Pawar should accept defeat. He suffered a great loss in these elections. The kind of lies they said in the Lok Sabha elections were all rejected by the people. Pawar Sahab has gone to Markadwadi. It doesn't behove a person of his age to mouth lies," Bawankule said.

"The people of Maharashtra respect Pawar Sahab. Several elections have been held in Markadwadi. Several elections have been held through EVMs in Maharashtra. But at no point in time in the past the Opposition had rejected the poll outcome as it is doing now. The Opposition leaders did not say anything about the EVMs when it won 31 seats in Lok Sabha polls," Bawankule said, adding that the NCP (SP) chief was doing all this to create an excuse as the MVA was all set to lose the upcoming local body elections in the state.

HSIIDC to build new township in Gurugram district

PARVESH SHARMA ■ GURUGRAM

Haryana State Industrial and Infrastructure Development Corporation (HSIIDC) has prepared a plan to build an industrial township on 3,000 acres near Pachgaon Chowk. With this township, HSIIDC will build the fourth township in the district. Earlier, townships have been built in Udyog Vihar, IMT Manesar and Sohna.

It may be noted that more than 10,000 small and big industries are operating in all the townships of HSIIDC.

"HSIIDC will start the process to develop a new township on three thousand acres near Pachgaon Chowk from next year. The corporation has 3 thousand acres of land in two parts near Pachgaon Chowk. There are about 1,300 acres of land in one part and 1,700 acres in the other part," said an HSIIDC official.

A plan has been prepared and after assessing how much it will cost to develop basic facilities in the township, the headquarters plan will be sent to the government for

approval.

The corporation has three thousand acres of land in Pachgaon near Kundli-Manesar-Palwal (KMP). After the development of IMT township here, industries will have a lot of convenience in getting and sending goods.

Direct connectivity of IMT township with KMP will be arranged. Metro will be extended from Rajiv Chowk to Global City and from there directly to Pachgaon Chowk via Manesar. People coming from Delhi will be able to reach Pachgaon by travelling directly by metro.

Apart from this, the government has also planned to establish five new cities on both sides of KMP. There will also be planning for other cities to be built along KMP. Apart from Sonapat, Gurgaon, one of the five new cities will also be built along KMP in the area around Bahadurgarh.

This city is number two on the list of Panchgaon of the state government. This city will be built on about 50 thousand hectares of land of villages around Bahadurgarh.

India will soon create comprehensive anti-drone unit to secure borders: Shah

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ JAIPUR

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday said India will soon create a comprehensive anti-drone unit to secure its borders as the "menace" of unmanned aerial vehicles is going to get serious in the coming days.

Addressing BSF troops at the 60th Raising Day event of the force here at its training camp in Jodhpur, about 300 km from the India-Pakistan border, Shah said the initial results of a "laser equipped anti-drone gun-mounted" mechanism have been encouraging.

This has led to an increase in drone neutralisation and

detection cases, up from 3 per cent to 55 per cent, along the India-Pakistan border in Punjab, he said. "The drone menace is going to get more serious in the coming days... We are tackling this issue with a 'whole of government' approach with the defence and research organisations and the DRDO joining hands.

"We are going to create a comprehensive anti-drone unit for the country in the coming time," said Home Minister. According to official data, more than 260 drones have been downed or recovered from India's border with Pakistan this year as compared to about 110 in 2023. The maximum

number of such interdictions of drones carrying arms and drugs have taken place in Punjab and very few in Rajasthan and Jammu.

The Home Minister reviewed the ceremonial parade, took salute and awarded medals to gallantry award winners and some other decorations. The Border Security Force (BSF), which has a strength of about 2.65 lakh personnel, was raised on December 1, 1965. It is primarily tasked with guarding more than 6,300 kms of Indian fronts with Pakistan and Bangladesh apart from rendering a variety of duties in the internal security



domain of the country. Shah said the ongoing Comprehensive Integrated Border Management System (CIBMS) for securing India's borders with Pakistan (2,289 km) and Bangladesh (4,096 km) is a

work in progress. "We have had an encouraging response from the CIBMS deployed along the riverine border in Assam's Dhubri (India-Bangladesh international border) but some improvements are

required," he said.

The Minister also said that the Modi government's Vibrant Village Programme (VVP) for developing and bringing into the mainstream the population of northern borders will be implemented for all the frontier villages of the country. This is the Modi government's "biggest achievement" vis-a-vis enhancing border security and working for the population living in these remote areas with a fund allocation of Rs 4,800 crore. It is being run on an "experimental basis" in around 3,000 villages, he said.

Shah said the Union

government has sanctioned a "big" budget for strengthening India's borders -- fencing, frontier infrastructure, roads and other logistics.

"Securing global recognition and the number one place for India by 2047 is not possible without our security personnel... The jawans who guard our borders with dedication," he said. Shah said about 573 new border posts have been created by the Modi government apart from 1,812 km of roads.

BSF Director General (DG) Daljit Singh Chawdhary said 13,226 newly trained personnel have been posted in various battalions and

this will add to the "operational strength" of the force. An additional 4,000 freshly recruited personnel are under training while about 12,000 will join the force next month to learn security and combat skills before being posted at the borders, he said.

Chawdhary also spoke about the "increasing number" of drones carrying arms and drugs being sent by the enemy from across the Pakistan border. More than 250 drones have been intercepted this year on the western border, he said. "We have deployed a DRDO made anti-drone system to check this menace," he added.

Police procedure exhibition visited by Modi may be mounted at Maha Kumbh

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

An exhibition attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his visit here to witness the implementation of three new criminal laws in policing, may be taken to next year's Maha Kumbh Mela in Prayagraj, where an estimated 40 crore devotees are expected to come, officials said.

The temporary enclosure, resembling a hangar and covering an area of over 100,000 square feet, features eight setups where the processes involved in crime investigations are enacted by actors through skits. The skits offer visitors an understanding of the changes following the implementation of the three new criminal laws.

The massive structure also includes several displays explaining the new laws, procedures, and applications used by the police. The concept of using skits and



displays to simplify police procedures for the public was developed under the supervision of Union Home Minister Amit Shah. He personally reviewed at least three presentations on the concept and execution of the setup before the project was finalised, officials said.

Senior Superintendent of Police, Chandigarh, Kanwardeep Kaur, was tasked with giving a walkthrough of

the exhibition, during which she explained how police are implementing the changes in the Union Territory.

After witnessing the presentation on December 3, Modi instructed authorities not to dismantle it immediately and to keep the exhibition open for the public. The new laws - the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, and the Bharatiya

Sakshya Adhinyam - came into effect on July 1, replacing the British-era Indian Penal Code, Code of Criminal Procedure, and Indian Evidence Act.

Chandigarh has become the first administrative unit in the country to achieve 100 per cent implementation of the three laws. According to officials, around 250 to 300 people visit the exhibition every day at PEC College since it opened to the public. Chandigarh DGP SS Yadav said there are plans to take similar thematic displays to events like the Kumbh Mela and other large-scale gatherings with significant footfall. "We will also use this thematic display for the training of our personnel. We are coordinating with the authorities in Uttar Pradesh, and if they request, we will assist. The idea is under consideration. The aim is to spread awareness as widely as possible," he said.

"Kumbh Mela is a sacred event for the entire subcontinent, so with so many people attending, it is our duty as law enforcement to raise awareness about these three laws, which reflect our Bharatiyatva (Indian identity), Bharatiya Sanskriti (Indian culture), and our commitment to a developed country," he added.

Efforts will be made not only at the Kumbh Mela but also at other large events to set up awareness camps about the three laws, he said. "We are in touch with the relevant police forces," he added. The Mahakumbh is held every 12 years. The next mega event will take place from January 13 to February 26, 2025.

The area on the banks of the Sangam in Prayagraj, where the religious event will be organised, has been named Mahakumbh Nagar and officially notified as a new district by the state government.

3 students killed, 25 injured after school picnic bus overturns in Rajasthan's Rajsamand

PNS ■ JAIPUR

Three school students were killed and 25 others were injured when a bus overturned in Rajasthan's Rajsamand district on Sunday, police said. The accident occurred when the students of Mahatma Gandhi School, Amet were en route to Parshuram Mahadev temple in Desuri, Pali for a picnic by bus, District Superintendent of Police Manish Tripathi said.

There were 62 children and six teachers in the bus, he said. The bus went out of control and overturned near Desuri Naal, killing three students and 25 other children injured in the accident, while 37 students were sent home after first aid, the DSP said.

Charbhujia Station House Officer Govardhan Singh said that three students who died on the spot in the accident have been identified as Preeti, Aarti, and Anita. The injured have been admitted to the hospital and the bodies have been handed over to the family members after post-mortem, Tripathi said. A case has been registered against the bus driver and investigation is underway, the officer said.

Meanwhile, Chief Minister Bhajanlal Sharma and Governor Haribhau Bagade expressed condolences. The chief minister in a social media post said, "As soon as information about the accident was received, necessary instructions were given to the district administration officials to ensure proper and immediate medical treatment of the injured children."

"I pray to Lord Shri Ram to give a place to the departed souls in his feet and provide speedy recovery to the injured children. Om Shanti," he said in his post.

Bengal Transport Department issues guidelines for bus operators

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KOLKATA

In a bid to address the issue of road accidents due to reckless driving, the West Bengal Transport Department has issued guidelines for bus operators and asked them to display "antecedents and credentials" of drivers and conductors, including police complaints against them, inside vehicles and verify their driving track records before engaging them, an official said on Sunday.

The standard operating procedures (SOPs) issued by Transport Secretary Soumitra Mohan said a feedback mechanism, including a complaint register, should be kept ready in buses. These registers must be regularly reviewed and disposed and corrective measures must be taken, it said.

In view of several road accidents and fatalities due to "reckless driving, mechanical failure, lack of proper skill and awareness", it is felt imperative to frame and issue a detailed guideline to the transport operators and the crew operating public transport vehicles for checking such incidents in future," said the notice, issued on December 6.

Among the SOPs, the operators were asked to display the "antecedents and credentials of drivers and conductors, including police complaints, and driving track record should be duly verified before engaging them for operating a transport vehicle".

The laminated photocopies of driving licences of bus staffers should also be displayed prominently. "Any adverse (improper or negative) track record of the crew member, including a driver or a conductor should be kept in mind before appointing or allowing them to operate the vehicle," the notice said.

The move comes in the wake of reports that the buses and drivers involved in road accidents had hundreds of



cases related to traffic violations and rash driving and fines against them, and most of these were not acted on and the fines not realised, a transport official said.

In the past, there had been cases of pilferage of fuel from parked buses on city roads in which drivers were found to be involved and were arrested by police.

The arrests showed operators have "no say in appointing drivers" in different routes, and the arrested drivers had criminal cases against them in the past, the official said. The SOPs also advocated regular refresher courses, spanning 7-15 days, to make drivers and conductors aware of safety rules and good behaviour.

The transport department specifically asked the operators to scrap the existing commission system as this arrangement is seen one of the reasons behind road accidents and rash driving. The driver or conductor of a bus reaching the terminus before the earlier one on the same route gets a commission and the bus running late is fined.

"The route and timetable of each stage carriage should be displayed in the vehicle and must be strictly followed," the notice stipulated as among the guidelines. No bus shall pick up or drop passengers beyond 30 metres of designated bus stops/terminus/depots, it said.

A senior transport official said private bus operators and state transport undertakings have been asked to comply with the guidelines which are essential for bringing order into the chaotic city transport system.

BJP's Rahul Narwekar set to return as Maharashtra Assembly Speaker

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

The election of ruling BJP MLA Rahul Narwekar as the Speaker of the Maharashtra Assembly became a mere formality on Sunday, after the Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) chose not to put up any candidate against him.

Narwekar -- accompanied by Maharashtra chief minister Devendra Fadnavis and his deputies Eknath Shinde and Ajit Pawar -- on Sunday filed his nomination for the Speaker's election scheduled for Monday.

Given that no one from the Opposition filed nomination for the elections to the Speaker's post, Narwekar will be declared elected unopposed as the Speaker of the Maharashtra Assembly on Monday.

Narwekar, who was the speaker in the 14th assembly for two and a half years, is



known for his controversial rulings on the disqualification pleas of Shiv Sena and NCP.

It may be recalled that on February 15, 2024, Narwekar had declared the Ajit Pawar-led faction as the "real NCP", while dismissing pleas seeking disqualification of the MLAs belonging to both the factions.

Narwekar's ruling had come close on the heels of the Election Commission's February 6, 2024 order recognising the Ajit Pawar-led faction as the "real NCP",

giving it control over the party's name and "clock" symbol, the Speaker ruled that between the two feuding factions, the Ajit Pawar faction enjoyed "overwhelming majority".

Narwekar's ruling on NCP was akin to the one he gave on January 10, 2024 in the case of the Shiv Sena, when he had ruled that the Shiv Sena-led by Maharashtra chief minister Eknath Shinde was the "real Shiv Sena" and not the one headed by former chief minister and Shiv Sena (UBT) head Uddhav Thackeray.

Though none of the Opposition parties have the requisite numbers to claim LoP's post, it is quite unlikely that Narwekar will consider the Opposition MVA's request for nominating a Leader of the Opposition (LoP) in the Maharashtra Assembly.

Drop in student numbers impacts Kota's coaching, hostel industry

PTI ■ KOTA/RAJASTHAN

Business has slowed down for coaching centres and hostels in Kota following negative publicity over student suicides, new guidelines regulating coaching centres and the expansion of coaching brands to other cities, according to industry stakeholders.

The number of students in Kota has fallen to 85,000 to 1 lakh this year from the usual 2 to 2.5 lakh, reducing the annual revenue to Rs 3,500 crore from Rs 6,500 to 7,000 crore, they said.

Despite the setback, stakeholders remain optimistic about the credibility of the Kota coaching model and its environment, that is absent in other cities.

Kota's educational system and environment are unmatched and will attract students back next session, which will compensate for

the decline, Govindram Mittal, Zonal Chairperson, United Council of Rajasthan Industries said.

He said that industrialists are also looking at alternative opportunities, with plans to establish Information Technology (IT) hubs in the city, modelled after Bengaluru.

Earlier this year, the Karnataka government approved a Bill seeking to reserve 50 per cent of management positions and 75 per cent of non-management positions in private sector for locals, drawing criticism from across the industry.

Industrialists here have approached companies based in Bengaluru to shift base to Kota and after a nod from these companies, land for IT sectors have been earmarked under the direction of Lok Sabha speaker and Kota-Bundi MP Om Birla, Mittal said.



www.dailypioneer.com

facebook.com/dailypioneer | @TheDailyPioneer | instagram.com/dailypioneer/

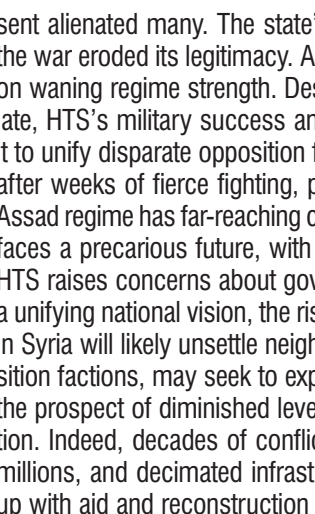
PAPER WITH PASSION

End of an era

The fall of Damascus to rebel forces and Bashar al-Assad's flight marks a watershed moment in Syrian history

The Assad family's grip on Syria, a legacy spanning more than five decades, has come to an end. The dramatic overthrow of Bashar al-Assad, following the rebel forces' breach of Damascus, marks the end of an era that began with his father, Hafez al-Assad. This monumental shift reshapes Syria's trajectory and poses critical questions for West Asia. The Assad dynasty began in 1970 when Hafez al-Assad seized power in a coup, transforming a politically unstable Syria into a tightly controlled state. Hafez's rule was characterised by ruthless centralisation, sectarian manipulation, and an iron grip on the military. His divide-and-rule tactics entrenched the Alawite minority—a historically marginalised community—to positions of power, ensuring the regime's survival at the expense of institutional robustness. Hafez's successor, his son Bashar, inherited a state rife with contradictions. Initially hailed as a potential reformer, Bashar's presidency quickly descended into authoritarianism, economic cronyism, and brutal suppression of dissent. His consolidation of power alienated Syria's rural majority and exacerbated sectarian tensions, sowing the seeds of unrest that erupted in 2011 during the Arab Spring.

Widespread poverty, corruption, and inequality under Bashar al-Assad's rule alienated vast swathes of the population. Economic mismanagement, compounded by a severe drought in the late 2000s, devastated rural livelihoods and drove migration to overcrowded urban centres, fueling discontent. The 2011 uprising ignited a protracted civil war that fractured Syria. While Bashar managed to cling to power for over a decade, the regime's reliance on military force to suppress dissent alienated many. The state's inability to provide security or basic services during the war eroded its legitimacy. A coalition led by Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) capitalised on waning regime strength. Despite its controversial history as a former al-Qaeda affiliate, HTS's military success and rebranding under Abu Mohammed al-Jolani enabled it to unify disparate opposition factions, culminating in the capture of Damascus. It fell after weeks of fierce fighting, prompting Bashar and his family to flee. The fall of the Assad regime has far-reaching consequences for Syria and the broader West Asia. Syria faces a precarious future, with no clear political alternative to the Assads. The rise of HTS raises concerns about governance and inclusivity in a post-Assad Syria. Without a unifying national vision, the risk of further fragmentation looms large. The power shift in Syria will likely unsettle neighbouring countries. Turkey, which has supported opposition factions, may seek to expand its influence. Iran, a long-time ally of Assad, faces the prospect of diminished leverage, while Israel watches the developments with caution. Indeed, decades of conflict have left Syria with a shattered economy, displaced millions, and decimated infrastructure. The international community will need to step up with aid and reconstruction efforts to prevent further suffering of Syrian people.



PICTALK



Tourists gear up to take a hot air balloon ride in Manali

Domestic compulsions get the better of Trudeau



SONAL SHUKLA

While the Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's focus on India may serve short-term political goals, it risks long-term damage to bilateral relations

Recently, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) made sensational claims accusing Indian diplomats of engaging in acts of violence, intimidation, and murder targeting Khalistani extremists, allegedly with the help of the Lawrence Bishnoi gang. This accusation came just two days before Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau was scheduled to testify before the Foreign Interference Commission, which was investigating allegations of Chinese interference in elections. These allegations suggested that such interference had benefited Trudeau's Liberal Party, contributing to its electoral success and the loss of seats for Conservative candidates. Notably, a day before the RCMP's claims, members of Trudeau's government leaked sensitive information to *The Washington Post* (WP) to amplify Ottawa's narrative internationally. On October 16, Trudeau appeared before the commission but devoted significant attention to India instead of addressing the allegations of Chinese interference. He admitted to having no "hard evidence" but only "intelligence inputs" regarding the claims against India, raising questions about his motives.

Political Diversion
Prime Minister Trudeau faces mounting dissatisfaction among Canadians over various domestic crises, including high living costs, an unaffordable real estate market, immigration issues, and rising unemployment. Economic challenges such as slow growth, a widening fiscal deficit, and stagnating per capita GDP have further eroded Trudeau's support. Additionally, accusations of personal extravagance and the unpopular carbon tax have compounded public frustration. Speculation abounds that Trudeau may also be contending with internal dissent within his party.

Khalistani Separatism
For decades, India has criticised Canada for allegedly providing a safe haven to Khalistani separatists, driven largely by domestic vote bank politics. The most egregious example of Canada's



leniency toward Khalistani extremists was the 1985 Air India Flight 182 bombing. Despite prior intelligence, Ottawa has been accused of failing to prevent the attack or bring its perpetrators to justice. Sikhs represent approximately 2.1% of Canada's population but hold disproportionate influence with 4.4% of parliamentary representation. While the majority of Sikh Canadians do not support Khalistan, a vocal minority of Khalistani extremists wields significant political influence through intimidation and mobilization. Their support ensures votes, financial contributions, and political protection, making Canadian politicians reluctant to alienate them. Maxime Bernier, leader of the People's Party of Canada, has openly criticized this dynamic. He condemned Trudeau and Conservative leader Pierre Poilievre for not naming "Khalistani Sikhs" while condemning attacks on Hindu temples, accusing them of pandering to extremist elements. Bernier argued that Canada must collaborate with India to address Khalistani extremism instead of jeopardising bilateral relations. Toronto MP Kevin Vuong also raised concerns over the growing threat to Hindu Canadians following recent attacks on temples.

India's Response



PRIME MINISTER TRUDEAU FACES MOUNTING DISSATISFACTION AMONG CANADIANS OVER VARIOUS DOMESTIC CRISES, INCLUDING HIGH LIVING COSTS, AN UNAFFORDABLE REAL ESTATE MARKET, IMMIGRATION ISSUES, AND RISING UNEMPLOYMENT.

Ottawa has accused India of being uncooperative in the investigation into the killing of Hardeep Singh Nijjar, a prominent Khalistani figure. However, some analysts suggest the issue lies in Canada's limited geopolitical leverage compared to the United States. For instance, WP reports allege that the CIA assisted in gathering evidence implicating Indian operatives in potential plots against Khalistani leaders. In contrast, Canada has only intelligence inputs from its Five Eyes partners and intercepted conversations of Indian diplomats. Ironically, while Canada prioritises the safety of Khalistani extremists, acts of violence, hate speech, and threats targeting Indian diplomats, temples, and community leaders have received little attention from Trudeau's government.

Trudeau's Dilemma
Recent revelations have further complicated Trudeau's position. Last month, RCMP Commissioner Mike Duheme claimed to have "irrefutable evidence" implicating senior Indian officials in Nijjar's murder. However, Trudeau later denied possessing any such evidence, calling leaks to *The Globe and Mail* baseless and criminal. This inconsistency has fueled speculation about Trudeau's motives and whether external pressures—such as U.S. intelligence directives or

political considerations—might be influencing his stance.

Future of India-Canada Relations
Despite robust people-to-people ties and ongoing trade, India's relationship with Canada has been fraught with tensions over Khalistani extremism. The issue transcends Trudeau or the Liberal Party and reflects deeper systemic problems in Canadian politics. Conservative leader Pierre Poilievre, while maintaining a neutral stance, has also avoided directly addressing Khalistani extremism, raising doubts about whether a change in government would significantly alter Canada's approach. India has historically responded to incidents involving Khalistani extremism in Canada with diplomatic protests and calls for accountability. However, experts argue that India should adopt a more proactive and sustained approach, raising the issue at international forums like the United Nations and during bilateral dialogues with Western nations. Emphasising the principles of hate speech and incitement laws, which exist in Canadian legislation, could strengthen India's case against Khalistani violence.

(The writer is a Public Policy Analyst and Lawyer National Law University, Jodhpur; views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

GOVT IGNORES PROTESTING FARMERS

Madam — The news, the government is not in a mood to talk to protesting farmers (December 8), is received with a lot of concern by many. The country witnessing the largest and the most prolonged protest in this decade is by the farmers. The woes of the farmers are genuine and can be better understood by the fact that millions of farmers had committed suicide due to the hostile policies of the government that plunges them in unbearable debt. Withdrawing subsidies, lack of control over the growing cost of the inputs and above all, lack of certainty over the returns in terms of the produce or the profit are the main reasons. The price of every product produced is fixed by the manufacturer. But agricultural products are the only exception. The farmer faces all the odds and bears all the pains with lofty hopes but miserably fails in the market due to the lack of a mechanism to get him reasonable returns. The field is left to the domination of the middlemen. Neither the producer nor the consumer gets the benefit. The government should take control of the entire mechanism and regulate it with norms that will not deprive anyone. It is unfortunate that the same person who was the Chief Minister of MP, where 6 protesting farmers were shot dead, is the Union Minister handling this ministry that again shoots at the farmers with teargas shells.

A G Rajmohan | Anantapur

INS TUSHIL JOINS FLEET

Madam — The Indian Navy will induct its latest multimedia stealth guided missile frigate, INS Tushil during a ceremony in Russia on December 9. It is really another milestone in the history of the Indian Navy. A frigate is a type of warship designed for various naval operations, including escorting large vessels and engaging in combat with enemy ships, submarines, and aircraft. It is the seventh ship in this series and

Air pollution menace



Air pollution is a significant national issue in India, affecting millions of people across the country. Several key points need to be considered to address this grave issue worsening over time. The loss of life expectancy and the impact of air pollution on quality of life are also affecting the economic growth of the country. It degrades the environ-

ment severely and exacerbates climate change by increasing greenhouse gas emissions. The government is quite aware of the major sources of air pollution, and there are laws to control them, but they are not being implemented strictly, for example, vehicular and industrial emissions, construction dust, and stubble burning due to various reasons, including political. Delhi often receives the most attention for its severe air pollution in terms of the local and central governments blaming each other and passing the buck. Political consensus is required to control sources of air pollution and implement and frame new laws to mitigate its impacts. So, it is appropriate and necessary to discuss air pollution in the Parliament.

O Prasada Rao | Hyderabad

World Climate Day: A call for inclusive and urgent action

Addressing climate change requires shared responsibility. Wealthy nations must fulfill financial and technical support commitments



EILIA JAFAR

Climate change disproportionately affects the world's poorest and most vulnerable communities. For them, it's not just an environmental issue but a daily struggle for survival. Living in precarious conditions, these populations bear the brunt of climate-induced disasters such as floods, droughts, and extreme weather, which devastate their homes, livelihoods, and food security. As global warming intensifies, it deepens social divides, further endangering marginalised groups and underscoring the urgent need for inclusive and compassionate action. The ILO's World Social Protection Report 2024-26, titled Universal Social Protection for Climate Action and a Just Transition, highlights the intersection of structural inequalities and climate vulnerability. It reveals that over 90 per cent of people in the 20 countries most affected by the climate crisis lack access to social protection, such as child or unemployment benefits. Similarly, in the 50 most climate-vulnerable nations, 75 per cent of the population-2.1 billion



people-remains unprotected. These gaps leave millions exposed to the worsening impacts of climate change. In India, climate change has become an immediate reality. The Yale Programme on Climate Change Communication found that 85 per cent of respondents had experienced global warming effects firsthand, an 11 per cent increase since 2021-22.

Unequal Toll
Vulnerable regions face higher mortality rates during climate-related disasters. Between 2010 and 2020, deaths from floods, droughts, and storms in high-vulnerability areas were 15 times higher than in low-vulnerability ones. In South Asia, climate-induced migration poses a growing threat. Research estimates that up to 45 million people in India could be displaced by 2050 due to rising sea levels and

shifting rainfall patterns. These patterns highlight the unequal risks faced by marginalised communities.

Socio-Economic Trade-Offs
Transitioning to renewable energy presents both opportunities and challenges. In India, while 85 per cent of people believe renewable energy will reduce air pollution, concerns about job losses and rising electricity costs persist. Balancing environmental goals with socio-economic realities is essential for equitable progress.

Addressing Inequities
Effective climate solutions must consider inequality. For example, carbon pricing can disproportionately burden low-income households if not implemented thoughtfully. Similarly, conservation efforts restricting access to forests can harm Indigenous livelihoods. Community engagement is crucial to creating inclusive policies. In India's Bundelkhand region, local water management projects have reduced migration by improving resource access, demonstrating the potential of community-led solutions.

Equitable Climate Action
India's commitment to carbon

neutrality by 2070 and interim goals for 2030 signal progress. Achieving these targets will require collaboration across governments, businesses, and communities, alongside investments in renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, and green infrastructure. Educational initiatives promoting climate literacy are vital. Empowering communities with knowledge enables them to advocate for their needs and engage in decision-making.

The Cost of Inaction
Failing to act will have catastrophic consequences. Global temperatures could rise by over 3°C, intensifying extreme weather and threatening ecosystems. In South Asia, climate disasters already displace millions, while extreme heatwaves in India with temperatures surpassing 50°C-disrupt lives and livelihoods. Human-induced warming now accelerates at 0.26°C per decade, emphasising the urgency for immediate and sustained action.

(The writer is a leader in disaster management, specializing in governance, climate change adaptation, and gender inclusion. Views are personal)

Bal Govind | Noida

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



FIRST COLUMN

DUMBPHONE IS A SMART CHOICE

Their growing popularity reflects a cultural shift, one that values mindful technology use over constant connectivity



SHAINY SHARMA

In a world where smartphones dominate our lives, many adults are turning to dumbphones to reclaim their time and mental well-being. Today, the young generation is realising that giving a child a smartphone means not just giving them access to the world but vice-versa too. Smartphones are more than just a tool for connection. It is a portal that opens them up to endless possibilities, distractions, and influences beyond one's control. Dumbphones which are also known as feature phones, are basic mobile phones that are designed primarily for calling and texting, with limited or no access to advanced internet features, applications or modern smartphone capabilities.

Unlike smartphones, which run on complex operating systems like iOS or Android, such phones usually have a simple operating system that is focused on basic functions like voice calls, text messaging, and sometimes simple games. Such phones often lack features such as social media apps, internet browsing, and advanced gaming.

They have a small monochrome or basic colour screen with no touch interface and a physical keypad. Moreover, due to their simple hardware and minimal functionality, such phones last for several days on a single charge, which is a significant advantage over smartphones. Today, the popularity of dumbphones stems from the increasing realisation of how smartphones have transformed daily life.

For many, smartphones are indispensable tools for communication, navigation, and productivity. However, their omnipresence also



comes with downsides such as excessive screen time, reduced attention spans, social media addiction, and mental health issues such as anxiety and depression.

There is no denying that technology is a powerful tool, but one mustn't forget that it is also one that can easily overshadow real-life experiences. In giving a child a phone, one must be prepared to teach them how to balance its use and ensure that the digital world doesn't replace the beauty of curiosity, creativity, and genuine human connection. The rise of dumbphones reflects a broader cultural shift toward digital mindfulness and the re-evaluation of technology's role in our lives.

As more individuals and families prioritise mental health and meaningful interactions, technological companies may feel pressured to design devices and platforms that promote healthier usage patterns. Moreover, this trend serves as a reminder of the need for balance in a hyper-connected world. While technology has undoubtedly enhanced productivity and convenience, its overuse can detract from the quality of life. Dumbphones symbolise a conscious effort to reclaim control and foster a deeper connection with the world around us.

The growing adoption of dumbphones highlights a societal push-back against the distractions and pressures of modern technology. By choosing dumbphones, individuals are making a bold statement that life's richness is found not in the screens we stare at, but in the people and experiences that surround us.

(The writer is an educator; views are personal)

Advancing the Centre's liberalisation agenda



UTTAM GUPTA

Agri-marketing reforms can be achieved by enabling bulk buyers to purchase directly at farm gates and creating multiple private-sector e-trading platforms

In June 2024, the Union Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' welfare set up a 12-member committee, under the chairmanship of additional secretary, Faiz Ahmed Kidwai with the mandate to formulate a national policy framework for marketing of farm items and suggest measures to ensure the remunerative prices to farmers. The committee has recommended (i) allowing direct farm-gate purchases of agriculture commodities by bulk buyers, including organised retailers, without having to go through the state-notified mandis or pay the various levies that the operators of these market yards charge; (ii) declaring warehouses, silos and cold storages, including those run by private agencies, as "deemed market yards" (DMYs); (iii) establish and operate multiple e-trading platforms, including e-NAMs (electronic-national agriculture market) in the private sector.

Will the suggested measures help in achieving the stated objective? At present, agriculture marketing is carried out under the respective state laws viz. APMC (Agricultural Produce Market Committee) Act which has widely varying provisions. This hampers the free movement of the agri-produce between different states. Even within a state, there isn't a free flow of the agri-produce as for the administration of marketing it is divided into several market areas and farmers in a given area can sell their agri-produce only at the designated APMC Mandi.

Between APMC Mandis, also market regulations vary widely. At the mandi, a cartel of licensed traders and commission agents (known as artisans in local parlance, their job is facilitating transactions between the farmer and the buyer) rules the roost.

The duo exploit the farmer to the hilt by giving a low price, rejections, weighing less, delaying payment, etc. Levies such as market fees, anthias commission, rural development cess (RDC) etc further erode her netback. The APMC mandis can handle only a fraction of the quantity farmers bring to sell. So, most of them are forced to come to private local markets, where sales are legally barred.

At these markets, they end up selling their produce to traders at throwaway prices. The latter have the blessings of corrupt bureaucrats and politicians and hence, won't face any action for violating the law. True, state agencies such as The Food Corporation of India (FCI), purchase in mandis specified crops for running welfare Schemes. They make purchases at the minimum support price (MSP) notified by the Centre. But, their purchases are limited. Even so only 6 per cent of farmers - mostly rich with larger land holdings - get access to government procurement.

Although many states have made enabling provisions for setting up private wholesale markets, private markets have come up only in a few states. This is because some states have not framed rules and in others, the rules are far from conducive to attract private entrepreneurs. A few states like Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Rajasthan and Karnataka have made provisions for farm-gate purchases but these transactions are restricted to select commodities for defined periods, and that too, after paying the taxes to the respective APMCs. Even the e-NAM (an online trading platform for agri-produce launched by the Centre in April 2016, was



ALTHOUGH MANY STATES HAVE MADE ENABLING PROVISIONS FOR SETTING UP PRIVATE WHOLESALE MARKETS, PRIVATE MARKETS HAVE COME UP ONLY IN A FEW STATES. THIS IS BECAUSE SOME STATES HAVE NOT FRAMED RULES AND IN OTHERS, THE RULES ARE FAR FROM CONDUCTIVE TO ATTRACT PRIVATE ENTREPRENEURS

intended to provide a unified market - at the national and state level - to give multiple options to farmers for selling their produce and fetch a better price helped much.

This is because the states haven't made necessary amendments in their laws to provide for electronic trading in agri-produce. Moreover, many APMCs have not set up an e-auction platform. The proof of the pudding is in the eating. Out of a little over 7000 regulated wholesale APMC mandis, just about 20 per cent of 1400 have been integrated into the e-NAM platform. Besides, the farmers registered on the e-NAM portal are 17.5 million which is around 12.5 per cent of the total 140 million.

As for business transacted on the portal, this hovers around 12 per cent of the total value of annual trade in agri-commodities (excluding dairy and meat products). At a fundamental level, the problem has to do with the continued stranglehold of the states on APMCs. In fact, for almost everything that stakeholders need to do for doing business on e-NAM be it pan-State/India license for traders, letting farmers sell on the portal (instead of only at designated Mandi) and so on, they need to get permission from the state authorities.

To cap it all, extant laws don't permit private entities to engage in agri-marketing. Now, the Committee's recommendations to allow direct farm-gate purchases of agri-commodities by bulk buyers, including organised retailers without having to go through the state-notified mandis or pay the various levies that the opera-

tors of these market yards charge-giving warehouses, silos and cold storages, including those run by private agencies, DMYs status and setting up multiple e-trading platforms including e-NAMs in the private sector essentially seek to give more options to farmers for selling their produce. But, the million-dollar question is How do you make these ideas work? For bulk buyers to directly purchase from farmers - bypassing APMCs - the concerned State will have to make provision in its APMC Act. Likewise, to enable farmers to sell straight from warehouses, silos and cold storages etc, the State has to amend the law. Similarly, for buying and selling to happen on the e-platform, the State will have to make necessary amendments to the Act.

This is acknowledged by none other than the Committee itself when it says "To align with the proposed national policy, the states and union territories would have to notify state policy on agri-marketing as the subject falls in the domain of states". But, the states are unlikely to give the desired relaxations in their laws. In the past, they have done little to liberalise agri-marketing despite much prodding by the Centre; Remember a Model Agricultural Produce and Livestock Marketing (Promotion and Facilitation) Law passed by the latter in 2017 which gave more options to farmers for selling besides a 'single pan-State license' for traders buying from anywhere in the State. But, this was ignored by the states.

Faced with the unwillingness of States to unshackle the farmers

from the clutches of APMCs and the dire need to open up agri-marketing, the Union government used its powers under the Constitution to offer them a parallel front. In September 2020, it enacted the Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2020 to regulate inter-state trade and intra-state trade, providing for freedom of choice to the farmer or trader to conduct trade and commerce while allowing traders to purchase specified farm commodities directly from farmers anywhere in the country, even outside the State APMCs.

To realise the full potential of this law and give legal protection to farmers while engaging with buyers, it enacted two other laws viz. Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Act, 2020 and the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act, 2020. Unfortunately, bowing to year-long protests by a handful of farmers and the Supreme Court order in January 2021 staying their implementation, Modi announced their repeal on November 19, 2021. The SC never said these laws were unconstitutional.

A revolutionary move by the Centre to give a remunerative price to the majority of poor farmers and increase their income was sabotaged by middlemen/traders who had much to gain from the continuation of the status quo. The situation can be retrieved only if the SC pronounces its verdict on merit.

(The writer is a policy analyst; views are personal)

Embedded insurance: Bridging India's coverage gap and transforming insurtech

By enhancing accessibility, streamlining processes and catering to underserved markets, embedded insurance is poised to revolutionise insurtech sector

As one of the largest and fastest-growing economies in the world, India has a lot of potential in both general and commercial insurance sectors. Even though the coverage of life and health insurance in India has been consistently increasing, there is a significant gap in terms of commercial insurance, as around 95 per cent of SMEs in the country are uninsured. However, this gap can be bridged by the emergence of embedded insurance, which has disrupted the Insurtech sector.



ADITYA DADIA

a service. Embedded insurance is quite popular among retail and individual customers. At the same time, its role will be extremely critical in the commercial insurance segment. **What is Embedded Insurance:** Embedded insurance refers to integrating insurance products with the journey of non-insurance products and services. It is different

from conventional insurance processes where customers look for policies. Here, insurance is offered as an integral part of a transaction and is often tailored to the buyer's needs.

The model is based on leveraging the latest technologies, such as APIs, that help in providing instant coverage at the point of sale. One such example is travel insurance offered by airline companies, railways, and bus operators offered to travellers when booking tickets. The concept is a bit different in the context of commercial insurance. Here, embedded solutions are gaining traction through partnerships with supply chain platforms and B2B marketplaces.

Some examples include cargo insurance, business liability

coverage and other protections that help companies protect their assets.

Driving the Growth of Insurtech: The convenience and accessibility offered by embedded insurance are quite significant. Since it is integrated with different services, various aspects, including customer KYC, are often not required. Policies are generated and applicable at the point of sale.

This enhances the scope of insurance and ensures that overall customer experience is improved drastically. The overall level of customer experience and trust in the core service and the insurance offered improves due to this integration. It also enables insurers to reach underpenetrated markets like Tier-2 and Tier-3



cities in India, where digital platforms accelerate adoption. With digitalisation and an increase in the number of internet users (and smartphones), this trend will continue in the future as well. Impact on the Indian Insurtech Sector Embedded insurance can provide a much-needed boost to the Insurtech sector by devising the development of personalized, on-demand

products tailored to customer needs.

Since the demand for different types of digital services such as e-commerce, fintech apps, and ride-sharing platforms, is increasing, insurance companies have an excellent chance to enhance user convenience and relevance by integrating their services. This trend has led to increased partnerships between legacy insurance players and start-ups.

Even the existing service providers (besides insurance companies) have tried embedded insurance to ensure scalability and operational efficiency. As there is significant scope for bridging the underinsured in India, this can be an excellent tool through which insurance companies can reach untapped markets and deliv-

er high returns. Embedded insurance can be critical in bridging the insurance gap and fostering financial inclusion.

Challenges and Opportunities: However, despite the increase in overall popularity and usage, embedded insurance faces numerous challenges in India. First, there are regulatory issues, as integrating insurance with non-insurance products demands compliance with stringent industry norms and approvals. There can be challenges relating to filing insurance claims.

There are also privacy-related issues, as embedded insurance depends on leveraging customer data for personalised offers. However, despite these limitations, there are numerous opportunities to

cover a large proportion of the uninsured population. As different sectors and industries are digitised at a good pace, the future of embedded insurance has immense potential for customised and micro-insurance products catering to diverse consumer needs.

Summing Up Embedded insurance has redefined the delivery of insurance services through integration in daily transactions. In the Indian context, the overall increase in the number of digital users and rapid transformation of industries gives an excellent opportunity for insurance companies to bridge the existing insurance gap; the opportunities in this field will be immense.

(The writer is the founder of Alwrite; views are personal)

SYRIANS CELEBRATE BASHAR ASSAD'S EXIT

AP ■ DAMASCUS

Crowds gathered in Syria's Damascus on Sunday to celebrate the fall of Bashar Assad's government with chants, prayers and the occasional gunfire after opposition fighters entered the capital following a stunning advance.

Rami Abdurrahman of the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a Syrian opposition war monitor, said Assad took a flight from Damascus and left early Sunday. There was no immediate official statement from the Syrian government and Assad's whereabouts remain unknown.

It was the first time opposition forces had reached Damascus since 2018 when Syrian troops recaptured areas on the out-

Syria except for one that links Beirut with Damascus. Jordan closed a border crossing with Syria, too.

Yemen's leader welcomes the fall of Syria's government: The head of Yemen's internationally recognised government welcomed the fall of the government of President Bashar Assad of Syria.

"It's a historic moment," Rashad al-Alimi, who chairs the ruling presidential council, wrote on X platform of Assad's downfall. "It's time for the Iranian regime to stop meddling in Yemen, respect its sovereignty and identity."

Al-Alimi, who is backed by Saudi Arabia, was referring to Iran's support of Houthi rebels who are at war with Yemen's internationally recognised government for a decade.

couches against the backdrop of mosaiced walls, while others walked out with chairs and other items under their arms. On the massive parking lot off front, cars drove in circles honking ecstatically.

In central Damascus' Umayyad Square, drivers passing by also honked jubilantly, while young men piled onto a tank abandoned in the square.

Syrians cross over from Lebanon, facing an uncertain future but hopeful for change: At Lebanon's Masnaa crossing into Syria, the mood was festive Sunday with some local Lebanese residents handing out congratulatory sweets to Syrians lined up to return to their country.

Sami Abdel-Latif, a refugee from Hama who was heading to Syria to join his wife and four

lowing the downfall of Syria's Bashar Assad.

Many welcomed Assad's ouster after decades of repression under his rule and that of his father Hafez Assad. Others, however, expressed concerns about the future of Syria, mostly given the extremist past of rebel commanders, especially Abu Mohammed al-Golani who leads Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, labelled a terrorist by the United States.

EU top diplomat welcomes Bashar Assad's ouster: The European Union's top diplomat welcomed the fall of Bashar Assad and said that the collapse of his rule underlines how weak his supporters in Moscow and Tehran have become.

"The end of Assad's dictatorship is a positive and long-awaited development," EU for-



A giant picture of Syrian President Bashar Assad lies on the ground as a Syrian opposition fighter stands nearby, inside the Presidential Palace in Damascus, Syria on Sunday. AP/PTI



Syrians celebrate the arrival of opposition fighters in Damascus on Sunday. AP/PTI

Syria" "The Syrian people have experienced appalling suffering," the chancellor said in an emailed statement. "The end of Assad's rule over Syria is therefore good news."

Airstrikes reported in the area of the Mezzeh military airport: An Associated Press journalist in Damascus reported airstrikes in the area of the Mezzeh military airport, southwest of the capital Sunday. The airport has previously been targeted in Israeli airstrikes, but it was not immediately clear who launched Sunday's strike.

Opposition forces announce curfew in Damascus: The command of the Syrian armed opposition says it will impose Sunday a curfew in Damascus, starting at 4 pm local time till 5 am on Monday.

The Military Operations Administration, which posted the decision on Telegram, did not give a reason for the curfew.

France welcomes the fall of Bashar Assad: The French

Foreign Affairs ministry said France "welcomes" the fall of Bashar Assad's government "after more than 13 years of violent repression against its own people."

The ministry said in a statement: "The Syrian people have suffered too much. Bashar Assad has bled dry country, emptied of a large part of its people who, if not forced into exile, have been massacred, tortured and bombarded with chemical weapons by the regime and its allies."

UN envoy for Syria expresses hope but warns of immense challenges: The UN envoy for Syria says the ouster of President Bashar Assad has created an opportunity to address the country's deep problems and create a brighter future after years of conflict. But he says "immense" challenges remain.

Geir Pederson told reporters that the changes in Syria now raise hope for millions of refugees, internally displaced, political prisoners and families

whose loved ones have disappeared.

Turkish foreign minister calls on world to help stabilise Syria: Hakan Fidan said Sunday that "Syria has reached a stage where the Syrian people will shape the future of their own country," calling on the international community to support Syrians. Fidan is attending the Qatari diplomatic forum that started late Saturday and is hosting eight countries with an interest in Syria, including the US and Iran.

Assad's whereabouts are unknown: Syrian Prime Minister Mohammed Ghazi Jalali said in a video statement that the government was ready to "extend its hand" to the opposition and turn its functions over to a transitional government. A video shared on Syrian opposition media showed a group of armed men escorting him out of his office and to the Four Seasons hotel on Sunday. Rami Abdurrahman of the Syrian

Observatory for Human Rights told The Associated Press that Assad took a flight Sunday from Damascus.

A senior diplomat from the United Arab Emirates, which had sought to rehabilitate Assad's image and has welcomed high-profile exiles in recent years, declined to comment on his whereabouts when asked by reporters at a conference in Bahrain.

Anwar Gargash said Assad's destination at this point is a "footnote in history," comparing it to the long exile of German Kaiser Wilhelm II after World War I.

Assad has been accused of war crimes and crimes against humanity during the war, including a 2013 chemical weapons attack on the outskirts of the capital.

There was no immediate comment from Iran, which had been Assad's staunchest supporter. The Iranian Embassy in Damascus was ransacked after apparently having been abandoned.

skirts of the capital following a yearslong siege.

The night before, opposition forces had taken the central city of Homs, Syria's third largest, as government forces abandoned it. The rapidly developing events have shaken the region. Lebanon said it was closing all its land border crossings with

Families wander through the presidential palace in Damascus, taking pictures: Families wandered through the high-ceilinged halls of the presidential palace in Damascus on Sunday, along with some armed men. Some paused to take family portraits or selfies on the few remaining

children, said while the future in Syria is still uncertain, "anything is better than Bashar." He said he expected some chaos initially but that eventually the situation would settle down.

Egyptians express mixed feelings over collapse of Assad's government: Egyptians expressed mixed feelings fol-

eign policy chief Kaja Kallas posted on X.

German Chancellor calls for speedy return of order in Syria: Reacting to the fall of Bashar Assad's government, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz said Sunday that "what matters now is that law and order are quickly restored in

China asks rebel forces to ensure safety of Chinese nationals

PTI ■ BEIJING

A concerned China on Sunday asked the rebel forces, which took control of the Syrian capital, overthrowing President Bashar al-Assad, to ensure the safety of Chinese nationals and its institutions in the country.

Reacting to the rebel takeover of Syria, China, which had backed the Assad regime, said it was closely following the situation in the Arab country and hoped that stability would return as soon as possible.

A Foreign Ministry statement here said the Chinese Embassy is open in Damascus and extending all possible assistance

to its nationals.

"We urge relevant parties in Syria to ensure the safety and security of the Chinese institutions and personnel in Syria," it said.

The Chinese government has been actively helping Chinese nationals who wish to leave the country to do so in a safe and orderly way, staying in contact with those still in Syria and offering them advice on how to stay safe, it said.

"The Chinese Embassy is still up and running and carrying out its duty in Syria. We will continue to make every possible assistance to Chinese nationals in need," it said.

Earlier, as the rebel forces

advanced towards Damascus, China voiced deep concern over the situation in Syria and said it would support the country in its efforts to safeguard national security and stability.

State-run Xinhua reported from Damascus on Sunday that opposition forces in Syria seized control of the capital "in a stunning turn of events following a rapid offensive that saw major Syrian cities 'falling like dominos within days'."

After taking over, opposition fighters appeared on state television channels to announce what they described as the fall of Damascus and the end of President Assad's rule, the report said.

al-Golani: Leader of insurgency that toppled Assad?

AP ■ BEIRUT

Abu Mohammed al-Golani, the militant leader whose stunning insurgency toppled Syria's President Bashar Assad, has spent years working to remake his public image, renouncing longtime ties to al-Qaida and depicting himself as a champion of pluralism and tolerance. In recent days, the insurgency even dropped his nom de guerre and began referring to him by his real name, Ahmad al-Sharaa. The extent of that transformation from jihadi extremist to would-be state builder is now put to the test.

Insurgents control capital Damascus, Assad has fled into hiding, and for the first time after 50 years of his family's iron hand, it is an open question how Syria will be governed.

Syria is home to multiple ethnic and religious communities, often pitted against each other by Assad's state and years of war. Many of them fear the possibility Sunni Islamist extremists will take over. The country is also fragmented among disparate armed factions, and foreign powers from Russia and Iran to the United States, Turkey and Israel all have their hands in the mix.

The 42-year-old al-Golani — labeled a terrorist by the United States — has not appeared publicly since Damascus fell early Sunday. But he and his insurgent force, Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, or HTS — many of whose fighters are jihadis — stand to be a major player. For years, al-Golani worked to consolidate power, while bottled up in the province of Idlib in Syria's northwest corner as Assad's Iranian- and



Russian-backed rule over much of the country appeared solid.

He maneuvered among extremist organisations while eliminating competitors and former allies. He sought to polish the image of his de-facto "salvation government" that has been running Idlib to win over international governments and reassure Syria's religious and ethnic minorities. And he built ties with various tribes and other groups. Along the way, al-Golani shed his garb as a hard-line Islamist guerrilla and put on suits for press interviews, talking of building state institutions and decentralizing power to reflect Syria's diversity.

"Syria deserves a governing system that is institutional, no one where a single ruler makes arbitrary decisions," he said in an interview with CNN last week, offering the possibility HTS would eventually be dissolved after Assad falls. "Don't judge by words, but by actions," he said.

Al-Golani's beginnings in Iraq: Al-Golani's ties to al-Qaida stretch back to 2003, when he joined extremists battling US troops in Iraq. The Syrian native was detained by the US military but remained in Iraq. During that time, al-Qaida usurped like-minded groups and formed the extremist

Islamic State of Iraq, led by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi.

In 2011, a popular uprising against Syria's Assad triggered a brutal government crackdown and led to all-out war. Al-Golani's prominence grew when al-Baghdadi sent him to Syria to establish a branch of al-Qaida called the Nusra Front. The United States labeled the new group as a terrorist organisation. That designation still remains in place and the US government has put a \$10 million bounty on him.

The Nusra Front and the Syrian conflict: As Syria's civil war intensified in 2013, so did al-Golani's ambitions. He defied al-Baghdadi's calls to dissolve the Nusra Front and merge it with al-Qaida's operation in Iraq, to form the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, or ISIS. Al-Golani nonetheless pledged his allegiance to al-Qaida, which later disassociated itself from ISIS. The Nusra Front battled ISIS and eliminated much of its competition among the Syrian armed opposition to Assad. In his first interview in 2014, al-Golani kept his face covered, telling a reporter for Qatari network Al-Jazeera that he rejected political talks in Geneva to end the conflict. He said his goal was to see Syria ruled under Islamic law and made clear that there was no room for the country's Alawite, Shiite, Druze and Christian minorities.

Consolidating power and rebranding: In 2016, al-Golani revealed his face to the public for the first time in a video message that announced his group was renaming itself Jabhat Fateh al-Sham — the Syria Conquest Front — and cutting its ties to al-

Qaida. "This new organisation has no affiliation to any external entity," he said in the video, filmed wearing military garb and a turban.

The move paved the way for al-Golani to assert full control over fracturing militant groups. A year later, his alliance rebranded again as Hayat Tahrir al-Sham — meaning Organisation for Liberating Syria — as the groups merged, consolidating al-Golani's power in northwest Syria's Idlib province.

HTS later clashed with independent Islamist militants who opposed the merger, further emboldening al-Golani and his group as the leading power in northwestern Syria, able to rule with an iron fist. With his power consolidated, al-Golani set in motion a transformation that few could have imagined. Replacing his military garb with shirt and trousers, he began calling for religious tolerance and pluralism.

He appealed to the Druze community in Idlib, which the Nusra Front had previously targeted, and visited the families of Kurds who were killed by Turkish-backed militias.

In 2021, al-Golani had his first interview with an American journalist on PBS. Wearing a blazer, with his short hair gelled back, the now more soft-spoken HTS leader said that his group posed no threat to the West and that sanctions imposed against it were unjust.

"Yes, we have criticised Western policies," he said. "But to wage a war against the United States or Europe from Syria, that's not true. We didn't say we wanted to fight."



Syrian opposition fighters remove a government Syrian flag from an official building in Salamiyah, east of Hama, Syria AP/PTI

Israeli forces have seized buffer zone in Golan Heights

AP ■ DAMASCUS

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu says Israeli forces have seized a buffer zone in the Golan Heights established by a 1974 ceasefire agreement with Syria.

He spoke on Sunday after a lightning rebel advance ended Syrian President Bashar Assad's rule.

Netanyahu said the decades-old agreement had collapsed and that Syrian troops had abandoned their positions, necessitating the Israeli takeover.

Israel captured the Golan Heights in the 1967 Mideast war and annexed it. The international community, except for the United States, views it as occupied Syrian territory.

Iran says Syrians should decide country's future

Damascus: Iran, which had strongly backed President Bashar Assad's deposed government, says Syrians should decide their country's future without "without destructive, coercive, foreign intervention."

The statement from the Foreign Ministry on Sunday was the country's first official reaction to the overthrow of Assad's government by rebel forces, who reached capital Damascus over the weekend.

Iran has been a staunch supporter of Assad throughout the nearly 14-year civil war.

Instructions to transfer power peacefully

Moscow: Russia's Foreign Ministry claimed Sunday that Bashar Assad had left Syria after negotiations with rebel groups, and gave "instructions" to "transfer power peacefully".

In a post on the Telegram messaging app on Sunday, the ministry said Moscow had not directly participated in these talks. It also said it has been following the "dramatic events" in Syria "with extreme concern". It also said Russian troops stationed in Syria have been put on high alert and that as of early after-

noon Sunday, there was "no serious threat" to the security of Russia's military bases there.

Russia has waged a military campaign in Syria since September 2015, teaming up with Iran to allow Assad's government to fight armed opposition groups and reclaim control over most of the country. While Russia now concentrates the bulk of its military resources in Ukraine, it has maintained a military foothold in Syria and keeps troops at its bases there.



FILE: Syrian President Bashar Assad (right) speaks with Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi (left). AP/PTI

Trump calls for 'immediate ceasefire' in Ukraine after meeting Zelenskyy in Paris

AP ■ KYIV

US President-elect Donald Trump on Sunday called for an immediate ceasefire in Ukraine, shortly after a meeting in Paris with French and Ukrainian leaders, claiming Kyiv "would like to make a deal" to end the more than 1,000-day war.

to bring the fighting to an end. Trump's remarks came after a meeting Saturday with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and his French counterpart, Emmanuel Macron, that Zelenskyy later described as "constructive". Speaking to reporters later that day, Zelenskyy insisted that any peace deal "should be just" for Ukrainians, "so that Russia and Putin or any other aggressors will not have the opportunity to return". In a separate social media update Sunday, Zelenskyy asserted that Kyiv has so far lost 43,000 soldiers since Moscow's all-out invasion on Feb 24, 2022, while a further 370,000 have been wounded. Both Russia and Ukraine have been reluctant to publish official casualty figures, but

Western officials have said that the past few months of grinding positional warfare in eastern Ukraine have meant record losses for both sides, with tens of thousands killed and wounded each month. Meanwhile, President-elect Donald Trump on Sunday said Syrian President Bashar Assad has fled his country and his protector, Russia led by Vladimir Putin, "was not interested in protecting him any longer". In a post on social media platform Truth Social, Trump also wrote that Russia "lost all interest in Syria because of Ukraine, where close to 600,000 Russian soldiers lay wounded or dead". He added that "Russia and Iran are in a weakened state right now, one because of Ukraine and a bad economy,

the other because of Israel and its fighting success". Syrian refugees in Beirut say they want to go home: Syrian refugees in Beirut rejoice Assad's downfall on Sunday, with some saying they are considering returning to Syria. "After all these years of suffering, God granted us relief," Hilal Youssef, a Syrian from Hama, said on Sunday. "We will go back to Syria with pride and joy. We got rid of this army. We got rid of the injustice that we lived before and freed Syria. Now we can go there anytime we want." "For sure we want to go back," said Bilal al Khleif, also from Hama. Refugees will return "to Hama, to Damascus, to Idlib and all areas and chant Freedom," he said.

South Korean prosecutors detain ex-defence chief over imposition of martial law

AP ■ SEOUL

South Korean prosecutors on Sunday detained a former defence minister who allegedly recommended last week's brief but stunning martial law imposition to President Yoon Suk Yeol, making him the first figure detained over the case. The development came a day after Yoon avoided an opposition-led bid to impeach him in parliament, with most ruling party lawmakers boycotting a floor vote to prevent the two-thirds majority needed to suspend his presidential powers. The main opposition Democratic Party said it will prepare a new impeachment motion against Yoon. On Sunday, ex-Defence Minister Kim Yong Hyun was taken into custody at a Seoul detention facility after undergoing an investigation by prosecutors, a law enforcement official said, requesting anonymity in line with privacy rules. The official gave no further details. But South Korean media reported that Kim voluntarily appeared at a Seoul prosecutors' office, where he had his mobile phone confiscated and was detained. The reports said police searched Kim's former office and residence on Sunday. Repeated calls to Seoul prosecutors' offices and police agency were unanswered. Senior prosecutor Park Se-hyun said in a televised statement Sunday that authorities launched a 62-member special investigation team on the mar-

ital law case. Park, who will head the team, said the probe would "leave no suspicions". Yoon accepted Kim's resignation offer on Thursday after opposition parties submitted a separate impeachment motion against him. Kim is a central figure in Yoon's martial law enforcement, which led to special forces troops encircling the National Assembly building and army helicopters hovering over it. The military withdrew after the parliament unanimously voted to overturn Yoon's decree, forcing his Cabinet to lift it before daybreak Wednesday. In Kim's impeachment motion document, the Democratic Party and other opposition parties accused him of proposing martial law to Yoon. Vice Defence Minister Kim Seon Ho told parliament that Kim Yong Hyun ordered the deployment of troops to the National Assembly. The Democratic Party called Yoon's martial law imposition "unconstitutional, illegal rebellion or a coup". It has filed complaints with police against at least nine people, including Yoon and Kim, over the alleged rebellion. In a statement Wednesday, Kim said that "all troops who performed duties related to martial law were acting on my instructions, and all responsibility lies with me". Prosecutor General Shim Woo Jung told reporters on Thursday the prosecution plans to investigate the rebellion charges against Yoon following complaints. While the presi-

dent mostly has immunity from prosecution while in office, that does not extend to allegations of rebellion or treason. The Defence Ministry said it has suspended three top military commanders over their alleged involvement in the martial law imposition. They were among those facing the opposition-raised rebellion allegations. On Saturday, Yoon issued an apology over the martial law decree, saying he won't shirk legal or political responsibility for the declaration. He said he would leave it to his party to chart a course through the country's political turmoil, "including matters related to my term in office". Since taking office in 2022 for a single five-year term, Yoon has struggled to push his agenda through an opposition-controlled parliament and grappled with low approval ratings amid scandals involving himself and his wife. In his martial law announcement on Tuesday night, Yoon called parliament a "den of criminals" bogging down state affairs and vowed to eliminate "shameless North Korea followers and anti-state forces". The declaration of martial law was the first of its kind in more than 40 years in South Korea. The turmoil has sparked alarm among key diplomatic partners like the US and Japan. The scrapping of Yoon's impeachment motion is expected to intensify protests calling for his ouster and deep-

en political chaos in South Korea, with a survey suggesting a majority of South Koreans support the president's impeachment. Yoon's martial law declaration drew criticism from the conservative ruling party, but it is determined to oppose Yoon's impeachment apparently because it fears losing the presidency to liberals. Ruling People Power Party leader Han Dong-hun said Sunday the PPP will work with the government to determine Yoon's early and orderly exit from office in a way that minimises confusion, but he didn't say when that would happen. He also claimed Yoon will not be involved in state affairs, including foreign policy. Yoon's presidential office didn't immediately respond. The Democratic Party criticised Han Dong-hun's comments, saying that the exclusion of an incumbent president from state affairs isn't supported by the constitution. The party said authorities should immediately arrest Yoon and all others implicated in the case. The presidential office said Sunday that Yoon accepted the resignation offer by Safety Minister Lee Sang-min, who has also faced an opposition-led impeachment motion over his alleged role in the martial law enforcement. In a parliamentary hearing on Friday, Lee, one of Yoon's closest associates, defended Yoon's martial law decree, saying the president exercised his powers "within the boundaries of constitutional processes and law".

Search for UnitedHealthcare CEO's killer yields evidence, but few answers

AP ■ NEW YORK

They have seen him smiling on a hostel security camera, but don't know his name. They found the backpack he discarded while fleeing, but don't know where he's gone. As the search for UnitedHealthcare CEO Brian Thompson's killer goes on, investigators are reckoning with a tantalizing dichotomy: They have troves of evidence, but the shooter remains an enigma. Police don't know who he is, where he is, or why he did it — though they are confident that it was a targeted attack instead of a random act. "The net is tightening," New York City Mayor Eric Adams said Saturday. Hours after he spoke, police divers were seen searching a pond in Central Park, where the killer fled after the shooting. Officers have been scouring the park for days for any possible clues and found his bag there Friday. Retracing the gunman's steps using surveillance video,

police say, it appears he left the city by bus soon after the shooting Wednesday morning outside the New York Hilton Midtown. He was seen on video at an uptown bus station about 45 minutes later, NYPD Chief of Detectives Joseph Kenny said. With the high-profile search expanding across state lines, the FBI announced late Friday that it was offering a USD 50,000 reward for information leading to an arrest and conviction, adding to a reward of up to USD 10,000 that the NYPD has offered. Police say they believe the suspect acted alone. Police provided no updates on the hunt Saturday, but investigators are urging patience — even with a killer on the loose. Hundreds of detectives are combing through video recordings and social media, vetting tips from the public and interviewing people who might have information, including Thompson's family and coworkers and the shooter's randomly assigned roommates at the Manhattan hostel where

he stayed. "This isn't Blue Bloods! We're not going to solve this in 60 minutes," Kenny told reporters Friday. "We're painstakingly going through every bit of evidence that we can come across." The shooter paid cash at the hostel, presented what police believe was a fake ID and is believed to have paid cash for taxi rides and other transactions. He didn't speak to others at the hostel and almost always kept his face covered with a mask, only lowering it while eating. But investigators caught a break when they came across security camera images of an unguarded moment in which he briefly showed his face soon after arriving in New York on Nov 24. Police distributed the images to news outlets and on social media but so far haven't been able to ID him using facial recognition — possibly because of the angle of the images or limitations on how the NYPD is allowed to use that technology, Kenny said.

On Friday evening, investigators found a backpack in Central Park that had been worn by the gunman, police said. They didn't immediately reveal what, if anything, it contained but said it would be tested and analyzed. Another potential clue, a fingerprint on an item he purchased at a Starbucks minutes before the shooting, has so far proven useless for identifying him, Kenny said. Aided by surveillance cameras on nearby every building and block, police have been able to retrace the shooter's movements. They know he ambushed Thompson at 6:44 am as the executive arrived at the Hilton for his company's annual investor conference, using a 9 mm pistol that resembled the guns farmers use to put down animals without causing a loud noise. They know ammunition found near Thompson's body bore the words "delay," "deny" and "depose," mimicking a phrase used by insurance industry critics.

Blast in Dutch apartment kills at least 5

AP ■ THE HAGUE

Emergency services on Sunday searched for a second day through the debris of an apartment block that was destroyed by an explosion and fire, killing at least five people, but held out little hope of finding any more survivors. The cause of the Saturday morning disaster was unclear. Mayor Jan van Zanen said investigators were looking into "all possibilities". Police said they are looking for a car seen leaving the scene in case that helps with the investigation. The fire service said five bodies were found, and five injured people were rescued. The mayor said rescuers were no longer looking for survivors but for eventual bodies, given that the "slim chance of survival" under what's left of the apartments. However, one person was rescued alive many hours after the explosion.

Taiwan reports 14 Chinese warships near island

AP ■ TAIPEI

China sent 14 warships, seven military aircraft and four balloons near Taiwan between Saturday and Sunday, according to Taiwan's Defence Ministry, as Beijing ramps up pressure on the island it claims as its own. China's military activities came amid speculation Beijing might organise military drills around the island in response to Taiwanese President Lai Ching-te's recent visit to Pacific allies, including US stops in Hawaii and Guam. China claims Taiwan, a self-ruled democracy of 23 million people, as its own territory, and bristles at other countries' formal exchanges with Taiwan. The United States, like most countries, doesn't recognize Taiwan as a country but is its main unofficial backer and sells it arms.

The Chinese government has pledged to annex Taiwan, through military force if necessary, and sends ships and military planes near the island almost daily. The 14 warships, seven military planes and four balloons were reported over 24 hours between 6 am on Saturday and 6 am on Sunday, according to Taiwan's Defence Ministry. The ministry said six of the aircraft crossed the median line of the Taiwan Strait, an unofficial demarcation zone between Taiwan and China. One of the balloons brushed over the island's northern tip, according to the ministry. Lai on Friday called on China to refrain from threats and said Beijing's military exercises "will not be able to win the respect" of neighbouring countries. Lai's first overseas trip since taking office in May included visits to the Marshall Islands,

Tuvalu and Palau, three of the 12 countries that have diplomatic ties with Taiwan. The rest of the world, including the US, has official ties with China. Lai's stops in Hawaii and Guam — from where he had phone calls with US Congress leaders — angered China, which opposes US arms sales and military assistance to Taiwan. There was widespread speculation China might organize war games around Taiwan in response to the visit, though it was unclear when they might start. In October, China held drills around Taiwan involving a record one-day total of 153 aircraft, 14 navy vessels and 12 Chinese government ships in response to a Lai speech in which he rejected Beijing's claims over Taiwan. Beijing has labelled Lai a separatist and refuses to speak to him.

Trump's return may be boon for Netanyahu

AP ■ TEL AVIV

Shortly after Donald Trump's win in last month's US election, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu rushed to congratulate the president-elect: "History's greatest comeback!" he gushed. If Trump's staunchly pro-Israel first term and his nominations for top administration positions are any indication, Netanyahu's glee is justified. But much has transpired since Trump left office in early 2021. The wars in the Middle East, the lofty ambitions of Netanyahu's far-right governing coalition and Netanyahu's personal relationship with him could dampen that enthusiasm and complicate what on the surface looks like a seamless alliance. "For Bibi, this is his dream. He wanted this," said Mazal Muallem, an Israeli journalist and Netanyahu biographer, referring to the Israeli leader by his nickname. "For Bibi, it's too good to be true." With Netanyahu set to testify in

his corruption trial and facing an international arrest warrant over the war in Gaza, Trump's backing will be all the more significant. During Trump's first term, he adopted policies largely favorable to Netanyahu. Trump broke with longstanding US policy to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital, moving the US Embassy to the contested city over Palestinian objections. He recognized Israel's claim to the Golan Heights, which the international community considers occupied Syrian territory. He also turned a blind eye to Israeli settlement construction in the occupied West Bank and presented a peace plan that would leave dozens of settlements intact. The Palestinians seek all of the West Bank, captured in 1967, as the heartland of a future state, with east Jerusalem as its capital. The international community considers settlements in both areas illegal. At Netanyahu's urging, Trump withdrew the US from an Obama-era deal between world

powers and Iran over its nuclear program and ramped up sanctions against Iran, while also killing a top Iranian general. And in the final days of his presidency, Trump brokered a series of diplomatic deals between Israel and Arab countries, shattering a longstanding assumption that Arab countries would not normalize ties without progress on Palestinian statehood. The accords marked a major foreign policy achievement for Netanyahu. Likely to top Netanyahu's wish list this time around is for Trump to be tough against Iran or perhaps even provide Israel with the weaponry it needs for an effective strike against Iran's nuclear program. Netanyahu will also want to see progress on normalization with Saudi Arabia, but he will seek to minimize Israeli concessions to the Palestinians in return. And he will likely expect Trump to give Israel a free hand in Gaza and not pressure it to withdraw troops, even under a ceasefire deal.

In the weeks since Trump's reelection, Netanyahu and his allies have expressed hope that the good times will return after strained relations with the Biden administration. "The belief for now is that Trump will deliver," said Aviv Bushinsky, a former adviser to Netanyahu. He said Netanyahu's appointment of a hard-line settlement advocate as ambassador to Washington was a sign of the Israeli leader's confidence in the future under Trump. Netanyahu could certainly use the boost, especially after seeing his popularity drop after the Oct 7, 2023, Hamas attacks. Despite important battlefield gains against Hamas, including the death of its leader in October, and the recent ceasefire that ended nearly 14 months of fighting with the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah, opinion polls have repeatedly predicted that Netanyahu's governing coalition would fall far short of a required majority to stay in power if new elections were held now.

Imran's party to launch more protests

PTI ■ PESHAWAR

Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province Ali Amin Gandapur, the firebrand leader of Imran Khan's party, has warned of launching more protests against the federal government to secure the release of the jailed former premier. "We will continue launching attacks like the battle of Panipat. We will conquer if

demands are not met," Gandapur told reporters on Saturday, referring to a historic battle in the subcontinent. "We have launched just five attacks and will continue to launch the rest," he said while referring to the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party's march on November 24 in Islamabad to demand the release of Khan. Khan's party launched a protest on November 24 after he issued

a "final call", demanding the restoration of his party's electoral mandate, the release of detained party members, and the reversal of the 26th Amendment which he said had strengthened a "dictatorial regime". During the "do-or-die" protest in Islamabad, PTI leadership, including Gandapur and Khan's wife Bushra Bibi, vanished from the scene when the law enforcers launched an operation to clear Islamabad's Red Zone of protesters on the night between November 26-27. Gandapur's statement came

two days after Khan Friday warned the government of launching a "civil disobedience" movement if his demands, including the judicial probe into the crackdown on party supporters, were not met. Gandapur accused the government of killing his party's supporters after imposing Section 245.

'Reindeer' volunteers bring holiday magic to Ukrainian kids living on frontlines

AP ■ IZIU (UKRAINE)

Hopes for victory, a swift end to the war and prayers for their loved ones' survival or return from Russian captivity are among the wishes scattered throughout letters sent to a volunteer group by Ukrainian children living in frontline areas. While the volunteers, who are named reindeer after the magical beasts that pull Santa's sleigh, cannot fulfil many of these dreams, they strive to deliver on the simpler ones, such as requests for power banks to help families endure outages, bicycles, books, and even pets. Every winter, the volunteers travel to heavily damaged cities to deliver gifts and ensure that, despite the war, Ukrainian children can celebrate the holiday season just like their peers around the world. This year, the group received 2,310 letters, according to project manager Inna Achkasova from the NGO Ukrainian

Frontiers, who launched the St Nicholas' Reindeers initiative in 2015. The children's wishes are published on the project's website. Donors affectionately known as magicians then choose a letter and buy the requested gift to make that child's dreams come true. The reindeer then deliver those gifts. "Children are those who have no choice whatsoever. No one asks them whether they want to stay or leave," says project psychologist Kateryna Shutalova. "What happens to them is never their choice. And this makes them the most vulnerable." But every child gets only one childhood, even if it's shaped by war. That's why, in their letters, the horrors that have impacted their lives coexist with wishes similar to those of children everywhere. "My father is in captivity, and I live with my mother and brother," one boy wrote in his letter. He continued: "I love

playing football and practice it professionally. I want a leather football." Volunteers sift through all the letters, enduring the tragic stories of each child, to sort and deliver the gifts correctly. Among the writers are children who have lost loved ones to shelling, endured Russian occupation, seen their homes destroyed, have parents serving on the frontlines, or were forced to flee to escape the war. "What struck me wasn't their wishes but how deeply children feel the need to tell their stories," Shutalova says. Wearing reindeer antlers, the volunteers set out on their journey on Dec 6, when Ukraine celebrates St Nicholas Day. Their journey is expected to last until mid-January. On a frosty morning in Kharkiv, covered by the season's first snow, a team of volunteers departs in two buses filled with gifts, headed for the formerly Russian-occupied city of Izium, around 55 km from the

frontline. At first, when the celebration has started, the children observe cautiously, their expressions sombre, but that mood doesn't last. With each activity, they became more cheerful and engaged. One of them is 9-year-old Alina Soboleva, who remains detached despite the volunteers' efforts. She watches the festivities unfold with a quiet gaze. Her grandmother, Svitlana Lokotsh, explains that Alina has been withdrawn since witnessing the deaths of her mother and other grandmother in a shelling in the courtyard of their home. Alina had been watching through the window as her mother spoke on the phone. When the shell struck, a fragment hit her mother in the neck. Her grandmother rushed outside to help and was killed by another shell. In her letter, Alina asked for two pet mice. She said it was her dream. "Our only wish is for peace and

quiet," says Lokotsh, who took Alina in after her mother's death. "So the children don't have to be afraid." Shutalova explains that parents often find it hard to talk to their children about the war. They're either afraid, lack the emotional resources, or are overwhelmed by their feelings. "But for children to process what they've been through, they need to talk, play, and express those emotions," she says. At the celebration, parents stand against the walls, smiling as their children laugh and play despite having endured so much at such a young age. Among them is Anna Bolharska, a 32-year-old mother of two. Her father-in-law was killed and her brother-in-law was injured during the occupation. In the spring of 2022, she and her children fled Izium amid relentless shelling, only returning after Ukrainian forces liberated the city in September that year.

"I don't like to remember those times. We try to move forward because dwelling on it is too hard mentally," Bolharska says. "We try not to remind the children and to keep them distracted." Her 9-year-old daughter, Myroslava Bolharska, dreams of becoming a veterinarian. In her letter, she asked for a guitar. "During the war it seems everyone's dreams have changed - to wish for the war to end," she wrote. The reindeers' winter journey will take them to over 40 towns in the coming weeks. They hope to realise many dreams and bring joy to the kids, even though some of their wishes are impossible to fulfil. "Some children wrote in their letters that they want their childhood back," project co-founder Inna Achkasova says, adding that the reindeer volunteers aim to ensure that every child feels seen, heard and loved.

PUBLIC NOTICE
Whereas, Titan Infracon LLP is in the process of obtaining occupation certificate for Tower-2, in the I.T. Park Colony, area admeasuring 6.445 acres (License number-47 of 2008), Sector-48, Gurgaon, Haryana. And whereas, the office of Director, Town and Country Planning, Haryana, Chandigarh, has directed Titan Infracon LLP to seek objections from the allottees of Tower-2 in the project for construction of additional floor i.e. G+13, as against sanctioned of G+12 Floors (in sanctioned Plan 12" Floor is sanctioned as double height). Accordingly, vide this public notice objections are hereby invited from the allottees of Tower-2 in the Project seeking amendments in the existing Building plans as well as grant of occupation certificate. The copy of the existing approved building plan and as built drawings being approved is available at our office and on website www.titaninfracon.com. Any allottee of Tower-2 in the Project, may file his/her objection in the Senior Town Planner, Gurgaon, HUDA Complex, Sector 14, Gurgaon or to us at www.titaninfracon@gmail.com, within 30 days of publication of this public notice, failing which it shall be assumed that there are no objections towards the grant of occupation certificate as well as amendment in the existing building plans.

PUBLIC NOTICE
I, Rajender Kumar Vashisht, son of Late Chhittarpal Sharma resident of House No. 867P, Sector 15, Part 2, Gurgaon, Haryana, hereby declare that we have disowned our son, Tushar Vashisht, son of Shri Rajender Kumar Vashisht, in all respects. This disownment is due to his behaviour towards us and his lack of contact or cohabitation with us for more than three years. Consequently, Tushar Vashisht shall have no right, claim, or interest in any of our movable or immovable properties, bank accounts, or other assets. We further notify the general public that any dealings with Tushar Vashisht concerning any properties, accounts, or other assets belonging to us shall be deemed illegal and void, and the concerned parties will do so entirely at their own risk and responsibility.

THE PIONEER CLASSIFIEDS

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Anita Rawat D/o Late Sh. Satya Singh R/o H3/124 A and B, Flat No.C-2, SE Mahavir Enclave, Palam Village, New Delhi-45 declare that the name of my father has been wrongly mentioned as Sate Singh my matriculation certificate. The actual name of my father Late Sh. Satya Singh, which may be amended accordingly.

PD(1038)C

FDI inflows in India cross \$1 Trillion

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows into India have crossed the USD one trillion milestone in the April 2000-September 2024 period, firmly establishing the country's reputation as a safe and key investment destination globally.

According to data from the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), the cumulative amount of FDI, including equity, reinvested earnings and other capital, stood at USD 1,033.40 billion during the said period.

About 25 per cent of the FDI came through the Mauritius route. It was followed by Singapore (24 per cent), the US (10 per cent), the Netherlands (7 per cent), Japan (6 per cent), the UK (5 per cent), UAE (3 per cent) and Cayman Islands, Germany and Cyprus accounted for 2 per cent each. India received USD 177.18 billion from Mauritius, USD 167.47 billion from Singapore and USD 67.8 billion from the US during the period under review, as per the data.

The key sectors attracting the maximum of these inflows include the services segment, computer software and hardware, telecommunications, trading,



construction development, automobile, chemicals, and pharmaceuticals. According to the Commerce and Industry Ministry, since 2014, India has attracted a cumulative FDI inflow of USD 667.4 billion (2014-24), registering an increase of 119 per cent over the preceding decade (2004-14).

"This investment inflow spans 31 states and 57 sectors, driving growth across diverse industries. Most sectors, except strategically important sectors, are open for 100 per cent FDI under the automatic route. FDI equity inflows into the

manufacturing sector over the past decade (2014-24) reached USD 165.1 billion, marking a 69 per cent increase over the previous decade (2004-14), which saw inflows of USD 97.7 billion, an official has said.

To ensure that India remains an attractive and investor-friendly destination, the government reviews FDI policy on an ongoing basis and makes changes from time to time after having extensive consultations with stakeholders.

The overseas inflows into India are likely to gather momentum in 2025, as

healthy macroeconomic numbers, better industrial output and attractive PLI schemes will attract more overseas players amid geopolitical headwinds, experts said.

They added that despite the global challenges, India is still the preferred investment destination.

Avimukt Dar, Founding Partner, INDUSLAW, said the inflows are likely to continue in a robust form. There is strong anticipation that private equity financing in the tech sector, which had slowed down in the past, will pick up again since various funds

have enjoyed good exits in the public markets and are ready to deploy again.

"The government can continue with structural reforms, particularly in the space of M&A, by nudging SEBI to make the public takeover regime more friendly for foreign players," Dar said.

Rumki Majumdar, an economist at consultancy Deloitte India, said FDI inflows are likely to remain modest amidst expected policy changes in the US and the impact of policy stimulus on China's economy.

Geopolitical situations may alter supply chains, and trade regulations would dampen investors' sentiments, keeping capital flows volatile, she said, adding that the government will have to prioritise infrastructure capex with timely project execution, boost workforce skilling via PPPs and incentives, invest in digital ecosystems for productivity gains, and foster R&D for digital solutions that help inclusion and formalisation of the economy. Commenting on the data, Manav Nagaraj, Partner, Shardul Amarchand Mangaldas & Co, said FDI in India is likely to continue to rise in all areas - early stage investments, growth capital and strategic investments.

"India as an investment destination has historically been and continues to be attractive for foreign investors across various countries, whether from the US, UK, continental Europe or Asian countries," he added.

FDI is allowed through the automatic route in most of the sectors, while in areas like telecom, media, pharmaceuticals and insurance, government approval is required for foreign investors.

Under the government approval route, a foreign investor has to get a prior nod from the ministry or department concerned, whereas, under the automatic route, an overseas investor is only required to inform the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) after the investment is made.

At present, FDI is prohibited in some sectors. They are lottery, gambling and betting, chit funds, Nidhi company, real estate business, and manufacturing of cigars, cheroots, cigarillos and cigarettes using tobacco. FDI is important for India as it will require huge investments in the coming years for the infrastructure sector to boost growth. Healthy foreign inflows also help in maintaining the balance of payments and the value of the rupee.



FPIs return to Indian equities with ₹24,454 Crore inflow in December first week

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

After heavy selling in the past two months, foreign investors have staged a strong comeback to Indian equities with a net investment of Rs 24,454 crore in the first week of December amid stabilising global conditions and expectations of potential US Federal Reserve rate cuts.

This revival follows significant outflows in the preceding months, with foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) pulling out a net Rs 21,612 crore in November and a massive Rs 94,017 crore in October - the worst monthly outflow on record. Interestingly, September had marked a nine-month high for FPI inflows, with a net investment of Rs 57,724 crore, highlighting the volatility in foreign investment trends.

With the latest inflow, FPI investments have reached Rs 9,435 crore in 2024 so far, data with the depositories showed.

Looking ahead, the flow of foreign investments into Indian equity markets will hinge on several key factors. These include the policies implemented under Donald Trump's presidency, the prevailing inflation and interest rate environment, and the evolving geopolitical landscape, Himanshu Srivastava, Associate Director, Manager Research, Morningstar Investment Research India, said.

Additionally, the third-quarter earnings performance of Indian companies and the country's progress on the economic growth front will play a crucial role in shaping investor sentiment and influencing foreign inflows,

he added. According to the data with the depositories, FPIs have made a net investment of Rs 24,454 crore this month (till December 6).

Trivesh D, COO, Tradejini, a stock trading platform, attributed the latest inflow to improving global conditions and the possibility of US Fed rate cuts.

Also, the recent correction in the market could have prompted FPIs to build some exposure, Srivastava said. Additionally, uncertainty over Chinese equities on the back of proposed tariffs by US President-elect Donald Trump on China and other several nations could have prompted FPIs to look back at Indian equities, which offer much clearer long-term growth prospects, despite relatively high valuations, he added.

VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Financial Services, said the shift in FPI strategy is evident in stock price movements, especially in large-cap banking stocks, where FPIs have been selling. This segment still has upside potential as it remains fairly valued and continues to grow at a steady pace, with more domestic institutional and retail investments expected to flow in, he added.

Additionally, the IT sector is poised to perform well and attract increased FII interest. On the other hand, FPIs pulled out Rs 142 crore in the debt general limit and invested Rs 355 crore in the debt Voluntary Retention Route (VRR) during the period under review. So far this year, FPIs invested Rs 1.07 lakh crore in the debt market.

Markets to track inflation data, global trends, FII trading this week: Analysts

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Investors' sentiments will be guided by a host of domestic and global macroeconomic data announcements this week, along with the trading activity of foreign investors and trends in world stocks, analysts said.

Besides, the rupee-dollar trend and movement of global oil benchmark Brent crude will also be crucial in dictating terms in the market, experts added.

"The domestic stock market is likely to be shaped by a mix of global cues, domestic economic indicators, and the flow of investments from foreign and domestic institutional investors. Key factors like the rupee's exchange rate and crude oil prices will play a critical role in determining market trends.

"Globally, geopolitical tensions, particularly the ongoing Russia-Ukraine



conflict, continue to pose challenges. However, recent declines in the dollar index and US bond yields have created a more favourable environment for emerging markets like India," Pravesh Gour, Senior Technical Analyst, Swastika Investmart Ltd, said.

On the economic front, significant macroeconomic releases, including retail inflation and industrial production data from India as well as US core CPI, are expected to influence overall

market sentiment, Gour added. Last week, the BSE benchmark jumped 1,906.33 points or 2.38 per cent, and the NSE Nifty climbed 546.7 points or 2.26 per cent.

"FIIs turning buyers in early December, in a total reversal of their sustained selling strategy during the last two months, has altered the market sentiments. The change in FII (Foreign Institutional Investors) strategy is getting reflected in stock price

movements, particularly in large-cap banking stocks in which FIIs have been sellers," VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Financial Services, said.

The release of US CPI inflation data will give some insights into the Fed's December meeting, an expert said.

"The markets' attention is expected to turn towards macroeconomic indicators like IIP and CPI inflation. Additionally, the trend of FII inflows, following their recent buying spree, will remain a key focal point for market participants," Ajit Mishra - SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said.

Siddhartha Khemka, Head - Research, Wealth Management, Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd, said this week will see significant economic data releases, including GDP numbers from Japan and the UK, along with China's CPI and India's CPI.

Mcap of six of top 10 most valued firms jump ₹2 lakh Crore

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The combined market valuation of six of the top-10 most-valued firms jumped Rs 2,03,116.81 crore last week, with Tata Consultancy Services and HDFC Bank emerging the biggest gainers, in-line with an optimistic trend at the Dalal Street.

Last week, the BSE benchmark jumped 1,906.33 points, or 2.38 per cent, and the NSE Nifty climbed 546.7 points, or 2.26 per cent.

While Reliance Industries, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, Infosys, and State Bank of India were the winners from the pack, Bharti Airtel, Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC), ITC, and Hindustan Unilever emerged the

laggards.

The market valuation of TCS surged Rs 62,574.82 crore to Rs 16,08,782.61 crore. HDFC Bank added Rs 45,338.17 crore taking its market valuation to Rs 14,19,270.28 crore. The valuation of Infosys jumped Rs 26,885.8 crore to Rs 7,98,560.13 crore and that of Reliance Industries soared Rs 26,185.14 crore to Rs 17,75,176.68 crore.

State Bank of India's market capitalisation (mcap) climbed Rs 22,311.55 crore to Rs 7,71,087.17 crore and that of ICICI Bank rallied Rs 19,821.33 crore to Rs 9,37,545.57 crore. However, Bharti Airtel's valuation eroded Rs 16,720.1 crore to Rs 9,10,005.80 crore. The mcap of ITC declined Rs 7,256.27 crore to Rs 5,89,572.01 crore.

Cars set to get expensive from January as OEMs announce price hikes



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Prices of various car models - ranging from entry-level hatchbacks to high-end luxury offerings - are set to rise as automakers have announced price hikes with effect from January.

Carmakers cite an increase in input costs and operational expenses as the main reason to implement price increases from the next month. Industry experts, however, note that the exercise is also undertaken by automakers every year in December to shore up sales volume in the last month of the year, as customers postpone buyouts to later months to get the new year manufactured units.

"We have seen a few cycles of price increase in India. It happens at the beginning of the calendar year and financial year, but few OEMs pick the timing based on their planned launches as well," Deloitte India Partner Rajat Mahajan said.

auto OEMs in the second quarter, he added.

"Due to the festive season, the price revisions were not done. Hence, this is expected at the beginning of Q4.

"Rising input costs of few materials, shifting consumer preferences on advanced features but a low willingness to pay, clubbed with the pressure of supporting dealers to offset high inventory carrying costs despite high festive discounts are putting a burden on profitability," Mahajan stated.

Icra Vice President & Sector Head - Corporate Ratings Rohan Kanwar Gupta said automakers generally take a price increase at the start of the calendar year to help offset factors like the increase in operational costs on account of inflationary pressures and commodity prices etc.

"The recent price hikes announced by various car makers are for the same reason. It must be noted that there are already healthy discounts on offer across a variety of models in the passenger vehicle industry, with the industry focused on

bringing down inventory levels," he added. The country's largest carmaker Maruti Suzuki India plans to hike vehicle prices by up to 4 per cent from January. The company, which sells models ranging from entry-level Alto K10 to multi-utility vehicle Invicto, said it is taking a price hike in light of rising input costs and operational expenses.

"While the company continuously strives to optimise costs and minimise the impact on its customers, some portion of the increased cost may need to be passed on to the market," it stated. Rival Hyundai Motor India is also looking to increase the prices of its model range by up to Rs 25,000 from January 1, 2025.

The price increase has been necessitated due to an increase in input costs, adverse exchange rate and increase in logistics costs, the maker of Verna and Creta said. Mahindra & Mahindra will hike prices of its SUVs and commercial vehicles by up to 3 per cent from January. The adjustment is in response to the rising costs due to inflation and increased commodity prices, Mahindra & Mahindra said.

Similarly, JSW MG Motor India said it will increase prices of its entire model range by up to 3 per cent from next month. The price increase is a result of continuously rising input costs and other external factors, the automaker stated. Honda Cars India is also considering a price increase but is yet to decide on the quantum.



Khorlochhu Hydropower Project in Bhutan to commission in 2029: Tata Power CEO

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The construction work of the Rs 6,900 crore Khorlochhu Hydropower Project in Bhutan has started, and the plant is likely to be commissioned by 2029, Tata Power CEO and MD Praveer Sinha has said. The 600 MW project is being developed on the Kholongchhu River in the eastern part of the neighbouring nation. "We are looking at Bhutan. Work has already started for the 600 MW project in Khorlochhu...The tunnel diversion work," Sinha told PTI in reply to a question on plans for hydro projects outside India.

The project is expected to be commissioned in September 2029, he said. In August, Tata Power and Bhutan-based Druk Green Power Corporation Ltd (DGPC) partnered to develop the hydropower project at an estimated cost of Rs 6,900 crore. The partnership involves a 40 per cent equity

investment by Tata Power in Khorlochhu Hydro Power Ltd, a public-private partnership company.

Later in November, Tata Power announced entering into a strategic partnership with Druk Green Power Corporation Ltd (DGPC) to develop a portfolio of 5,000 MW of clean energy capacity in the Himalayan nation. DGPC, a subsidiary of Druk Holding and Investments Ltd, is the sole generation utility of Bhutan.

As part of the partnership, another project of 1,125 MW will be set up in Bhutan, the CEO said. The pre-construction work of Dorjilung HEP (hydroelectric project) will start in January 2025, and the project is expected to be commissioned by mid-2031, Sinha said.

When asked if the company is also looking to set up any such projects in Nepal, he said that as of now, there are no such plans. However, if any opportunities come, it can be evaluated, Sinha said.

CII urges govt to stick to fiscal deficit target

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Industry body CII has suggested the government to stick to the fiscal deficit target of 4.9 per cent of GDP for 2024-25 and 4.5 per cent for 2025-26, cautioning that "overly aggressive targets" beyond these could adversely affect India's economic growth. "India has been growing rapidly amidst a slowing global economy. Prudent fiscal management for macroeconomic stability has been pivotal to this growth," said Chandrajit Banerjee, Director General, CII, elaborating on suggestions for the forthcoming Union Budget.

CII also highlighted the announcement in the Union Budget 2024-25 to keep the fiscal deficit at levels that help reduce the debt-to-GDP ratio. In preparation for this, the forthcoming budget could lay out a glide path to bring the central government's debt to below 50 per cent of GDP in the medium term (by 2030-31), and below 40 per cent of GDP in the long term, CII has suggested.

Such an explicit target will have a positive impact on India's sovereign credit rating and further on the interest rates in the economy, the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) stated. "To aid longer-term fiscal planning, the government should consider instituting Fiscal Stability Reporting. This could include issuing annual reports on fiscal risks under different stress scenarios and



the outlook for fiscal stability. The exercise will help forecast potential economic headwinds or tailwinds and assess their impact on the fiscal path," it said.

The reporting can also include long-term (10-25 years) forecasting of fiscal positions, accounting for the impact of factors like economic growth, technological change, climate change, demographic changes, etc. Several countries have adopted this proactive ranging from 10 years in Brazil to 50 years in the UK.

"Looking at the next year's budget, CII has suggested sticking to the fiscal deficit target of 4.9 per cent of GDP for FY25 and a target of 4.5 per cent for FY26. However, CII has also pointed out that overly aggressive targets beyond the ones mentioned could adversely affect growth," the industry body said. CII has suggested three interventions to nudge states towards fiscal prudence.

Firstly, the states could be encouraged to institute state-level Fiscal Stability Reporting. Secondly, states have been allowed to borrow directly

from the market, following the recommendations of the 12th Finance Commission. States also provide guarantees in case of borrowing by state PSEs, which have implications for the state's fiscal health.

Third, the central government could create an independent and transparent credit rating system for states to incentivise them to maintain fiscal prudence. The rating of states could be used to grant them greater autonomy in deciding how to borrow and spend. Additionally, the central government can use the Credit Rating of states as one of the parameters in deciding transfers to states, including for schemes like Special Assistance as Loan to States for Capital Expenditure.

"Such rewards will act as a strong incentive for state governments to prioritise fiscal prudence and fiscal sustainability of state finances," said Banerjee. In addition to the fiscal prudence at the state level is equally crucial for the overall macroeconomic stability and fiscal sustainability.



REVOLUTIONISING CHILDREN'S SKINCARE



IT IS IMPORTANT FOR THE PARENTS' TO FIND THE CORRECT SKINCARE FOR THEIR KIDS, WRITES **ABHI SINGHAL**

Children's skincare is a growing concern in today's world. As children are increasingly exposed to environmental factors and social media trends, maintaining their delicate skin's health becomes essential. Unlike adults, children's skin requires gentle, age-appropriate products that cater to their unique needs, promoting healthy hygiene habits from an early age. However, finding solutions that balance safety, effectiveness, and appeal can be challenging. Parents often struggle to navigate between harsh commercial products and ineffective alternatives, making it crucial to develop skincare routines tailored for children. Addressing these concerns, brands are stepping in to make skincare safe, enjoyable, and child-friendly. Today we talk about *Y Play Z*, a self-care and grooming product brand that is tailored for children. On talking to *Vidya Madhavan*, Founder and CEO, of

Y Play Z, she told *The Pioneer* that the inspiration behind *Y Play Z* has stemmed from a glaring gap in personal hygiene awareness for kids in India. Despite the growing exposure to trends through social media, children lack access to products designed specifically for their unique needs. Many existing options are either too harsh, ineffective, or unappealing for this age group, leading to poor hygiene habits. As a parent herself, *Vidya* noticed how challenging it was to find gentle, age-appropriate solutions that children could use independently and confidently. This realisation of her fueled the idea of creating a brand that not only addresses their skincare and hygiene concerns but also makes the process enjoyable. Everyone would get the harsh thought of exposing their child's skin to skincare at such an early age, addressing this the founder explained that the one thing everyone must understand is that



children today are growing up in a digital age where exposure to skincare trends on social media is inevitable. But her brand's goal is to help everyone do safe and responsible skincare for their little ones. *Vidya Madhavan* also talked about the challenges she faced while designing

products specifically for children and teenagers. On the same, she said that designing skincare products for the same presented unique challenges, particularly in balancing safety, efficacy, and appeal. Children's skin is delicate, requiring formulations free from harsh chemicals while teenagers face hormonal changes that demand targeted solutions, collectively after which she made the products. Also, *Vidya* said that through their pan-India research, *Y Play Z* identified key skin and body concerns among children and teenagers, such as dry skin, irritation, and the need for gentle hygiene solutions. Some *Y Play Z* products that are available are all-over soothing and restorative balm (*Soothe Operator*) is specially formulated to alleviate dry skin conditions, a common issue across age groups. Similarly, our natural, aluminum-free deo sticks (*Slide & Glide*) are uniquely curated

for teen skin, offering a safe and effective option for body odour management while being gentle and skin-friendly. The founder recommends *Grime Buster*, a 2-in-1 Face & Body Wash with a nourishing, hydrating formula for the ones with ultra-sensitive, eczema-prone skin. With that the *2-in-1 Face & Body Lotion* (*Hydration Hub*), enriched with *Mumuru Butter*, *Olive Squalane*, and *Rice Water* effectively relieves dryness and soothes sensitive skin with its anti-inflammatory properties. In a world where children's skincare is often overlooked, *Y Play Z* emerges as a brand that understands and prioritises the unique needs of young skin. With a focus on safety, efficacy, and appeal. The brand not only addresses common skincare challenges but also empowers parents to adopt safe and responsible skincare routines for their little ones.



As the winter chill sets in, the allure of warm, nutrient-dense foods becomes undeniable. Among these seasonal delights, walnuts shine as a superfood that not only enhances the taste of comfort foods but also fortifies your body against the rigors of winter. With their rich, buttery flavour and exceptional nutritional profile, walnuts are the perfect addition to your winter wellness routine.

[1] Winter-Proof Your Health with Nutritional Power: Walnuts are more than just a delightful snack; they are a treasure trove of nutrients that can keep your body thriving during the colder months.

□ A Boost of Antioxidants for Immunity: Walnuts contains some of the highest levels of antioxidants among nuts, with most found in their delicate skin. These antioxidants, including polyphenols that help strengthen the immune system and are crucial during winter when colds and flu are common. By neutralising harmful free radicals, walnuts can help your body fend off seasonal illnesses.

□ Heart Health During the Holiday Season - The indulgent foods of winter often lead to concerns about heart health. Walnuts, with their omega-3 fatty acids, monounsaturated fats, and magnesium, can mitigate these effects. They support heart health by reducing blood pressure and cholesterol levels, making them a guilt-free addition to festive treats.

□ Aiding Blood Sugar Stability: Winter celebrations can challenge blood sugar balance, but walnuts come to the rescue. Their low carbohydrate content and high fibre, protein, and healthy fats help regulate blood sugar levels. Regular consumption supports better insulin sensitivity, which is particularly helpful during a season of rich meals and sweet temptations.

□ Nourishing Your Mind in the Darker Months: The shorter days and longer nights of winter can affect cognitive function and



THE WARM COMFORT OF WALNUTS

A NUTRIENT-PACKED SUPERFOOD FOR WINTERS

mood. Walnuts, abundant in omega-3 fatty acids, vitamin E, and folate, are known to enhance brain health. Incorporating them into your diet can improve focus, memory, and emotional well-being can be a natural antidote to winter blues.

[2] Walnuts in the Kitchen: Perfect for Winter Recipes: The versatility of walnuts makes them ideal for winter cuisine.

□ As a Snack: Toasted walnuts with a sprinkle of cinnamon and honey are a warming, nutritious treat.

□ In Savoury Dishes: Add a crunch to creamy soups, winter salads, or hearty grain bowls with chopped walnuts.

□ For Baking: They're a star ingredient in festive cakes, spiced loaves, and chewy cookies.

□ As Garnish: Sprinkle over roasted vegetables or hot porridge for a delightful

combination of texture and flavour.

[3] Chilean Walnuts: A Winter Staple for Indian Consumers: Chilean walnuts have carved a niche in the Indian market by offering year-round access to premium-quality nuts. During India's off-season for walnuts, Chile steps in with its counter-seasonal production, ensuring a steady supply. Known for their light colour, consistent freshness, and superior flavour, Chilean walnuts align perfectly with the culinary traditions and health aspirations of Indian consumers.

[4] Chile's Natural Advantage: A Perfect Growing Environment: Chile's unique geography provides an ideal environment for cultivating world-class walnuts. Natural barriers such as the Andes Mountains and the Pacific Ocean shield walnut orchards from pests and diseases, resulting in high-quality produce. These nuts are celebrated for their uniform size, high yield, and rich taste, making them a favourite among health-conscious consumers.

[5] Seamless Seasonal Supply: Freshness Guaranteed: Chile's harvest season, from April to June, complements India's September to October walnut season. This ensures that Indian consumers have access to fresh walnuts even in the winter months. The consistent quality and availability of Chilean walnuts have made them a trusted choice for Indian households during the festive and winter seasons.

Walnuts are the ultimate winter superfood, providing essential nutrients to bolster your health during the colder months. From enhancing heart health to supporting cognitive function and boosting immunity, their benefits are as diverse as their culinary applications. So, this winter, make walnuts your go-to ingredient for health and comfort. A handful a day keeps the chill away!

— The article has been authored on behalf of the Chile Walnut team



Prioritising self-care and stress management enhances productivity and creates a fulfilling work-life balance, says **UPASANA ARORA**

Women juggle demanding careers with personal responsibilities. Whether they're leading teams, managing complex projects, or making critical decisions, the constant drive to excel in their professional lives can result in chronic stress and burnout. However, prioritising self-care and stress management is crucial not only for personal well-being but also for sustaining professional success over the long term. Nurturing one's mental and physical health can improve resilience, increase productivity, and build a greater sense of balance in life. Mindfulness is one of the most effective tools for managing stress. Mindfulness practices like meditation, deep breathing, and grounding techniques help women stay focused in the moment, reducing anxiety and preventing negative thought spirals that often arise in high-pressure situations. Mindfulness practices are effective tools for managing stress, especially for women in high-pressure roles. Techniques like meditation, deep breathing, and grounding exercises help individuals stay focused and present, reducing anxiety and breaking negative thought cycles that often arise in stressful situations. 10 to 15 minutes of daily meditation can promote calmness and mental clarity by encouraging a focus on the breath, allowing thoughts to come and go without judgment. Similarly, deep breathing exercises like diaphragmatic breathing help activate the body's relaxation response, lowering heart rate and blood pressure, which can have a profound impact on reducing overall stress levels. Women should try to maintain effective time management skills in high-pressure roles. By prioritising tasks, delegating responsibilities, and setting clear boundaries, women can manage their workload without sacrificing personal time or well-being. Further, physical activity is another powerful tool for stress management. Regular exercise not only maintains physical health but also releases endorphins, which help boost mood and energy levels. Women should aim to incorporate regular physical activity into their schedules, such as jogging, yoga, or even a brisk walk during lunch breaks, to improve mental clarity and reduce stress. Additionally, taking short movement breaks throughout the day can relieve physical tension and help clear the mind, especially for those who spend long hours at a desk or in meetings. Combining exercise with adequate rest and relaxation can significantly improve both mental and physical well-being. Sometimes, the pressures of high-pressure roles can



become overwhelming. In these instances, seeking professional help is not a sign of weakness but a necessary step toward maintaining mental health. Speaking with a therapist can help women manage stress, develop coping strategies, and gain a new perspective on work-related challenges. Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) and other therapeutic techniques can be particularly effective for stress management. Professional coaching or attending stress management workshops can provide women with specific tools and techniques for managing high-pressure situations more easily. Self-care and stress management are important components of sustaining long-term success, both professionally and personally, for women in high-pressure roles. By integrating mindfulness practices, managing time effectively, incorporating physical activity, setting boundaries, building a supportive network, and seeking professional help when needed, women can overcome the complexities of their roles without compromising their health. Self-care is not a luxury—it is a necessity.

— The author is the Managing Director, Yashoda Super Speciality Hospital, Kaushambi

Bumrah can't bowl from both ends, others need to take responsibility: Rohit

PTI ■ ADELAIDE

Jasprit Bumrah is only human and cannot always shoulder the responsibility of bowling opposition out all by himself, skipper Rohit Sharma said on Sunday, urging others to share the load with the premier fast bowler.

India lost to Australia by 10 wickets in the second Test and during the home team's first innings, only Bumrah stood out with a four-wicket haul.

"We are not just playing with one bowler. There are other bowlers also who will have to take responsibility and get the job done for the team, be it (Mohammed) Siraj, Harshit Rana, Nitish Reddy, Akash Deep or Prasidh (Krishna)," skipper Rohit had a loud and clear message for his bowling unit.

The captain understands that there is a bit of inexperience in the line-up and they will grow in confidence with time.

"These bowlers have just arrived in Test cricket, it's important to give them confidence. Whenever they play a match, it's important to give them confidence. We keep planning and discussing. But you can't expect Bumrah to bowl from both the ends and from morning to evening," Rohit said.

"It's very important to manage (all) bowlers. We discuss all this with each other. We talk to the bowler and then we make the decisions." Rohit said that he takes workload management of bowlers very seriously.

"I speak with him (Bumrah) whenever he finishes a spell. I enquire about how his body is feeling, is he (feeling) fresh or not? It's a five-match series, we want Bumrah to play all the matches and remain fresh," Rohit knows what his lethal weapon means in the larger context of the series.

Backing for young Harshit Rana Young Harshit Rana was clobbered for 86 in just 16 overs but the skipper was against making a two-Test youngster the fall guy for a comprehensive defeat in Adelaide.

"Rana didn't do anything wrong in the first Test. He did very well. He gave the team crucial breakthroughs when they were needed. I believe that if someone hasn't done anything wrong, he cannot be left out without a reason because then what confidence does the team get?"

"It happens, sometimes the team doesn't get what it wants. He came up against a good batsman who put pressure on him. But he has a heart and a passion so we should



back such (qualities in a player)," Rohit said.

"The player might think that you give me one match but leave me out in the next. This is not good for any player or any team, that's what I think. We should assess what the situation is and how helpful the conditions are," he elaborated.

While he doesn't want to judge Rana on the basis of one game but if change is warranted it would be done for benefit of the team.

"But judging someone after one match is not the right thing. We always keep (all) options open for any player to play since we have to win a Test match. If we must make such changes to win a Test, we will do that."

Rohit doesn't want to read too much into Siraj-Head incident. The Indian skipper feels that one doesn't need to read too much into the verbal altercation between Travis Head and pacer Siraj after the latter gave the left-hander angry send-off after a brilliant century.

While Head insisted that he acknowledged Siraj, saying "well bowled" after his dismissal, the Indian pacer countered by alleging that the Aussie batter was lying.

"There is a thin line between

getting aggressive and over-aggressive. It is my job as captain to see that no one crosses the line. But a few words can be exchanged. Siraj knows what he needs to do for the team and he will do everything required," Rohit defended his teammate.

Probed further by the Australian media, Rohit said: "When India and Australia play, these things happen. My job is not to look at one incident but at bigger picture." We didn't bat well enough, skipper admits

Not even being able to score 200 across both innings is certainly disappointing, and the skipper made no bones about it.

"When you come to Australia, I feel the best chance of winning a Test match is by putting runs on the board. We knew that there would be challenges with that ball. "But in the past, we've done that many times where the conditions have been a little challenging, and we've batted really well to put runs on the board, and then try and put pressure on the opposition," Rohit said.

"Like I said, that is the disappointing part, that we didn't bat well enough. We probably were 30-40 runs short with the bat in the first innings."

We left Perth in Perth and shut outside noise: Starc after Adelaide success

PTI ■ ADELAIDE

Mitchell Starc, one of the architects of Australia's comeback win in Adelaide, said the hosts had left the Perth debacle behind by shutting the "outside noise" following their heavy defeat in the series-opener.

A 295-run embarrassing defeat despite bowling India out for just 150 in the first innings invited criticism for the hosts from all quarters.

Living up to his reputation with the pink ball, left-arm quick Starc handed Australia a dream start by dismissing Perth centurion Yashasvi Jaiswal in the very first ball of the second Test en route to finishing with an impressive match haul of 8/108.

"There was a lot of outside noise after the game but we left Perth in Perth. Cannot really put my finger on it," Starc said after the end of the match.

About his approach with the pink ball, he said: "Nothing changes in my approach. Probably slightly fuller lengths. It (pink ball) is more like the white ball than the red ball.

"We were really positive with bat and ball and got the rewards. It's nice when the ball hits the stumps."

He further credited his skipper Pat Cummins for helping in his growth and highlighted improvements in his bowling,

including mastering deliveries that move away and those that swing back. He also talked about enhancement in his accuracy with the wobble seam technique.

"I have been learning a lot from Pat Cummins over the last seven years or so. So I have added to my bow the one that goes away and still able to bring one back.

"I always had that air speed and swing but I have also been someone who leaked a bit. Developing the wobble seam helped me improve my accuracy over the years. To be able to have the longevity is putting that hard yards in that people don't always see," he added.

Cummins also hailed Starc for his impact

"He's amazing. He's been doing it for over a decade. I feel very lucky and privileged to have him in the team."

"That's a great week for us. We were far from the team we wanted to be in Perth, but this was much better. It's always good to contribute with a few wickets myself."

Cummins also lauded Travis Head's game-changing innings of 140 from 141 balls that gave Australia a decisive first-innings lead.

"Head loves batting here. The game could have gone either way when he walked in, but he shifted the momentum in our favor."

Don't waste time in hotel, no room for optional practice sessions, says Gavaskar

PTI ■ ADELAIDE

Batting legend Sunil Gavaskar has urged India not to "waste" time in their hotel rooms after the early finish of the pink ball Test, but utilise the two extra days by sweating it out in training so they can bounce back in the third game.

India were thoroughly exposed in their 10-wicket loss in the second Test of the Border Gavaskar Trophy with the match ending in less than two-and-a-half days as Australia bounced back to level the five-game series 1-1.

"Look at the remainder of the series as a three-match series. Forget it was a five-Test series. What I would like this Indian team to do is use the next couple of days for practice," Gavaskar told the official broadcaster.

"It's very important. You can't be sitting in your hotel room or wherever you're going because you have come here to play cricket. "You don't have to practice the whole day. You can practice a session in the morning or afternoon, whichever time you choose, but do not waste these days. You would have been here playing a Test match if the

Test match were to go on for five days," he added.


The third Test begins on December 14 and Gavaskar said the Indians should utilise the intervening time to get their rhythm back.

"You have to get yourself that much more time to get into the rhythm because you have not got the runs. Your bowlers haven't got the rhythm. There are others too who need time in the middle," he added.

Indian pacers were found wanting on a fast wicket that offered lateral movement, giving away plenty of runs in the first innings and allowing Australia, especially centurion Travis Head, to take a huge 157-run lead.

Gavaskar added that he did not believe in the concept of optional practice sessions, stating that the decision should solely rest with the captain and coach, not the players.


"This optional practice session is something that I don't believe. The decision for optional training should rest with the captain and the coach. The coach should say, 'Hey, you hit 150, you don't need to come to practice. Hey, you bowled 40 overs in the match, you don't need to come to practice.'




Government of Haryana

International Anti-Corruption Day


9th December, 2024




1.71 lakh youth received Government jobs
"Bina Kharchi - Bina Parchi"




1332 criminal cases related to corruption registered against various officers/employees and 335 officers/employees sentenced to rigorous imprisonment by the court in 288 criminal cases of corruption



In the State, Government services are being provided directly to the eligible beneficiaries through 22,500 Atal Seva Kendras










To reduce corruption, 681 services and schemes of 54 departments/boards and corporations are available online through Saral portal



Since the Government already has Proactive-Data, now all types of Social Security Pensions are directly transferred to the beneficiary's account


Contact for Complaints Related to Corruption

 Helpline 1064, 0172-2970057 Toll free no. 1800 180 2022	 @cmohry (Direct Message Only)	 9417891064	 acb@hry.nic.in
 https://acb.haryana.gov.in			

“ भ्रष्टाचार से मुक्ति के लिए हर क्षेत्र और हर सेक्टर में भ्रष्टाचार के खिलाफ लड़ाई समय की मांग है और मेरे देशवासियों, मेरे प्यारे परिवारजनों, ये मोदी की प्रतिबद्धता है; यह मेरी व्यक्तिगत प्रतिबद्धता है कि मैं भ्रष्टाचार के खिलाफ लड़ना जारी रखूंगा।”

- नरेन्द्र मोदी

 Information, Public Relations & Languages Department, Haryana

www.goharyana.gov.in | @goharyana | @dipharyana