



# the pioneer

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WORLD 8

BIDEN COMMUTES ROUGHLY 1,500 SENTENCES, PARDONS 39 PEOPLE IN BIGGEST SINGLE-DAY ACT OF CLEMENCY



## One Nation, One Election, One Decision

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre's call for 'One Nation One, Election' inched closer to realise its dreams of simultaneous polls by paving the way to table the proposal in the Parliament next week after the Union Cabinet on Thursday approved two bills, including one to amend the Constitution to implement 'One Nation, One Election'. Sources said the Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi gave nod to draft legislations to hold simultaneous polls to the Lok Sabha and Legislative Assemblies only.

While a high-level committee led by former president Ram Nath Kovind had also proposed holding the municipality and panchayat polls along with the national and state elections in a phased manner, the Cabinet decided not to touch the subject currently.

The Constitution Amendment Bill to hold simultaneous polls to the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies will not require ratification by at least 50 per cent of the states, the sources noted. Another Constitution Bill proposed by the Kovind panel was aimed at creating provisions to hold simultaneous elections to municipalities and panchayats, along with the elections to the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies, by inserting a new Article 324A. It would have required ratification by half of the State Assemblies.



File photo: PTI

But the Union Cabinet has kept the local body polls out of as of now.

The second Bill will be an ordinary one to amend provisions in three laws dealing with Union Territories that have Legislative Assemblies, Puducherry, Delhi and Jammu and Kashmir, to align the terms of these Houses with other legislative Assemblies and the Lok Sabha as proposed in the Constitution Amendment Bill. The statutes it proposes to amend are the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi Act-1991, the Government of Union Territories Act-1963 and the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act-2019. The proposed Bill will be an

ordinary legislation, not requiring a change in the Constitution and will also not need ratification by the states.

The Government is keen on holding wider consultations on bills that are likely to be referred to a parliamentary committee. The sources said the Government also wants to consult the speakers of various state legislative Assemblies through the committee.

Moving ahead with its 'One Nation, One Election' plan, the Government in September accepted the recommendations of the high-level committee for holding simultaneous polls for the Lok Sabha, state Assemblies and local bodies in a phased manner. In its report submitted to the

Government in March, just before the general election was announced, the panel recommended implementing 'One Nation, One Election' in two phases.

While the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and its allies are pushing for simultaneous polls, several opposition parties have opposed the idea. The Government is of the view that simultaneous polls will reduce expenditure in the long run and different parts of the country will not be under the Model Code of Conduct throughout the year due to various polls.

Simultaneous polls were held in the country between 1951 and 1967. The concept of simultaneous elections has featured in many reports and studies since 1983, essentially

implying a return to the previous practice of conducting polls concurrently. Congress reiterated its opposition to the very idea of simultaneous polls and accused the Government of trying to divert attention from "questions being raised on the electoral integrity of the democratic system".

### ELECTIONS FOR THE LOK SABHA AND ALL STATE ASSEMBLIES CAN BE HELD TOGETHER:

For synchronising the Lok Sabha and Assembly elections, the President shall notify the date of the first sitting of the Lok Sabha after a general election as the "appointed date".

Tenure of all State Assemblies formed via polls after the "appointed date" and before the expiry of the full term of the Lok Sabha will only be for the period ending up to the subsequent parliamentary polls. After this one-time transitory measure, all Lok Sabha and Assembly polls will be held simultaneously.

Fresh elections could be held to constitute a new Lok Sabha in the event of a hung House or a no-confidence motion or any such event. Where fresh elections are held for the House of the People (Lok Sabha), the tenure of the House will be "only for the unexpired (remaining) term of the immediately preceding full term of the House".

When fresh elections are held for state legislative Assemblies, then such new Assemblies — unless sooner dissolved — shall continue up to the end of the full term of the Lok Sabha.



AAP National Convener Arvind Kejriwal launches the 'Mukhya Mantri Mahila Samman Yojna' to give a monthly assistance of Rs 1,000 to women in Delhi. Photos: Ranjan Dimri/The Pioneer

## Eye on Polls, Kejriwal announces Mukhya Mantri Mahila Samman Yojna

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

With the Assembly polls drawing closer, after giving five 'revdis' (freebies) including free DTC bus rides to women, Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) national convener Arvind Kejriwal on Thursday announced his sixth freebie, of giving monthly assistance of Rs 1,000 to women in Delhi each month, under the 'Mukhya Mantri Mahila Samman' Yojna. He also promised the amount would be raised to Rs 2,100 if the AAP government returned to power. The scheme was approved by the Delhi Cabinet despite objections by the Planning Department and Finance Department.

The scheme needs Rs 4,560 Crore annually for the year 2025-26. The scheme was initially announced in the 2024-25 Budget with an allocation of Rs 2,000 Crore. The scheme, however, seemed to have hit the bureaucratic

logjam with the Finance department flagging budgetary constraints. The scheme is on the lines of 'Majhi Ladki Bahin Yojana' in Maharashtra, 'Ladli Behna Yojna' in Madhya Pradesh, 'Gralahaxmi' scheme of Kerala, 'Kalaigari Magalir Urumi' of Tamil Nadu and 'Laxmir Bhandar' of West Bengal that played a major role for the ruling party to defeat anti-incumbency factor.

Addressing a press conference along with Chief Minister Atishi, Kejriwal announced the Delhi Cabinet has approved the scheme and women can begin their registration from Friday. However, he clarified the elections are likely to be announced soon and therefore the money could be credited in beneficiaries' accounts only after the polls as the date for the crucial polls would be announced in the next 10 to 15 days.

Delhi Chief Minister Atishi, meanwhile, said if the Model Code of Conduct comes into force after January 13, the first installment will be transferred into the bank accounts of eligible women before elections.

The Planning Department in its noting said that as against the estimated Revenue Receipts of Rs 65034.69 Crore during 2024-25, total expenditure of Rs 77700 crore (including Expenditure on Programs/ Projects and Other Expenditure) is projected and the gap between receipts and total expenditure i.e. deficit is proposed to be covered by 'NSSF Loan' and unspent balance. As the opening balance is about exhausted, therefore, implementation of proposed new scheme involves huge amount of funds i.e. Rs 4560 crore through Loan is not appropriate and good for the financial health of the Government.

## No surveys, suits related to Places of Worship Act till hearing over: SC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In an important development, the Supreme Court on Thursday restrained all courts from entertaining fresh lawsuits and passing any effective interim or final orders in pending cases seeking survey or to reclaim religious places, especially mosques and dargahs. Observing the court couldn't decide the matter without the Centre's response, the Bench comprising Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna and Justices Sanjay Kumar and KV Viswanathan asked the Government to file its reply to the pleas and cross petitions in four weeks. It also granted four weeks to other parties to file their rejoinder after the Centre filed its reply.

"As the matter is sub-judice in this court, we deem it appropriate that no fresh suit would be registered and proceedings are undertaken till further orders of this court," the CJ-led Bench said. The order stalls proceedings in about 18 lawsuits filed by various Hindu parties seeking survey to ascertain original religious character of 10 mosques including Gyanvapi at Varanasi, Shahi Idgah Masjid at Mathura and Shahi Jama Masjid at Sambhal where four persons' lives were



snuffed out in clashes.

The special Bench was hearing about six petitions, including the lead one filed by lawyer Ashwini Upadhyay and BJP leader Subramanian Swamy, challenging various provisions of the Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991. The 1991 law prohibits conversion of any place of worship and provides for the maintenance of the religious character of any place of worship as it existed on August 15, 1947. However, the dispute relating to Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid at Ayodhya was kept out of its purview.

There are several cross petitions which seek strict implementation of the 1991 law to maintain communal harmony and to preserve the present status of mosques, sought to be reclaimed by Hindus on the ground that they were temples before

invaders razed them. The Bench made it clear that it would be examining the "vires (legality), contours and ambit" of the 1991 Law and it was imperative to ask other courts to "stay off their hands" till it passed any further orders.

"In pending suits, the courts will not pass any effective interim or final order, including order of survey, till further orders," the Bench said. Senior advocate J Sai Deepak, appearing for a Hindu party, opposed the order restraining all other courts and said the parties should have been heard before such a direction. The CJ said it was quite natural to ask courts to not to pass any order as the Supreme Court was hearing the larger issue. The Bench said if parties insisted then, the matter could be sent to a High Court. "Can the trial courts overreach the Supreme Court," asked the Bench and said the apex court was already dealing with the validity of the law. Notably, the Bench had issued notice to parties, including the Centre, on the lead petition in September, 2022. The Bench also appointed nodal counsel for assisting it in the hearing on the pleas which would be listed after eight weeks.

## All is not well in the House

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■ NEW DELHI

In a peculiar move, the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Thursday jumped to the Well, and aisle of the Rajya Sabha protesting against the Opposition, who too were on their feet, trading charges over a no-trust motion brought against Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar.

While a legislative business was scheduled to be tabled by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman when the upper house resumed post lunch, BJP MPs immediately raised slogans on the allegations of the Congress leadership's "links" with billionaire investor George Soros.

Though Lok Sabha after morning two adjournments resumed post lunch and continued till late evening smoothly discussing a Bill on Disaster Management Amendment Bill, Rajya Sabha witnessed yet another 12th day of ruckus, and this time members of the Treasury Benches were more aggressive than the Opposition who until last week were on their feet. As Dhankhar rejected notices by the Opposition when the House started in the morning amidst sloganeering by the Congress. Leader of House Union minister JP Nadda rose to speak and strongly condemned Congress president, and Leader of Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge for criticising the Chairman at a Press conference outside the House on Wednesday. Citing a rule, Nadda said questioning or criticising a ruling of the Chairman amounts to contempt of both the House and the Chair. "At a press conference on Wednesday, Khargeji criticised the Chairman. This is objectionable and condemnable. It sets a wrong precedent.



Union Minister Giriraj Singh staged a protest over Congress leader Sonia Gandhi's alleged links with an organisation funded by the George Soros Foundation. PTI

This needs to be condemned by one and all," Nadda said. Refuting Kharge's allegation made at the press conference that he was not given an opportunity to speak in the House, he said letters were written by the Chairman to the Leader of Opposition (LOP) time and again, asking him to participate and come to the Chairman's chamber. But Kharge did not go to the Chairman's chamber and also did not attend the last meeting of the Business Advisory Committee, he said. "The Congress has even tried to demean the constitutional post by criticising 'the Chair as a cheerleader' on its official social media handle", Nadda pointed out. Nadda then gave ammunition to the Congress as soon as he touched upon the relationship between George Soros and (Congress leader) Sonia Gandhi who were present in the House triggering a

protest by the Opposition leaders. The Chairman gave the floor to Kharge to respond to Nadda's remarks but the Congress leader could not speak much as the members of the treasury benches were on their feet, sloganeering. "They want to divert attention from the main issue," Kharge said amid intense sloganeering from the treasury benches. Kharge urged the Chair to bring the House in order, but Dhankhar adjourned the proceedings till 2 pm. As the House reassembled at 2 pm, the Trinamool Congress (TMC) sought permission to raise a point of order on the Bangladesh issue to which the Chair said it was not a point of order prompting the party members to raise slogans. Dhankhar then asked former prime minister HD Deve Gowda to speak, however his speech was lost in the din.

## NDMC presents surplus budget of ₹463.40 Crore

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

In a big relief to the residents of New Delhi, the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) did not hike the property tax rate in Lutyn's Delhi. The NDMC budget proposal tabled in the council, proposes to 'setting up a 'Veerangna Museum' by Comprehensive Conservation of Gole Market Heritage Building and its adjoining areas, night/staggered timing of cleaning of public spaces, new design of school uniforms, tablets for students, smart parking, mist spray kits on poles for clean air and two



Photos: Ranjan Dimri/The Pioneer

foot over bridges at AIIMS Gate No.1, Aurobindo Marg and Delhi High Court near Gate No.5.

Presenting a surplus budget of Rs Rs 463.40 Crore projected in 2025-26, the NDMC chairman Keshav Chandra announced that there will not be any hike in the current rates of property tax for the year 2025-26. The council is expecting to collect Property Tax of Rs. 1150 Crore in Revised Estimates 2024-25 and Rs. 1290 Crore in BE 2025-26. According to the budget document, the total receipts of the Budget Estimates (BE) 2025-26 are Rs. 5770.60 Crore against Rs. 5319.75 Crore provided in Revised Estimate 2024-25. The total actual receipts in 2023-24 were Rs. 5005.05 Crore. The BE 2025-26 for the revenue receipts are Rs. 5100.32 Crore against Rs. 4730.31 Crore provided in RE 2024-25 and actual of Rs. 4417.12 Crore in 2023-24.

## Grandmaster D Gukesh is youngest-ever world champion

PTI ■ SINGAPORE

Indian Grandmaster D Gukesh on Thursday became the youngest World Chess Champion at 18 years, after beating title-holder Ding Liren in the last game of a nerve-wracking showdown to herald a new era of dominance for the country's chess players. Taking forward the incredible legacy of the great Viswanathan Anand, Gukesh became only the second Indian to clinch the coveted prize after the iconic player, who owned the crown five times in his career. After settling into "semi-retirement", the 55-year-old Anand, incidentally, played a pivotal role in shaping Gukesh at his chess academy in Chennai. Gukesh secured the requisite 7.5 points as against 6.5 of his Chinese rival after winning the 14th and last classical time control game of the match that seemed headed for a draw for most part. As winner, he will walk away with a whopping USD 1.3 million (approx Rs 11.03 Crore) from the



India's D Gukesh reacts after beating title-holder China's Ding Liren in the 14th and last game of the FIDE World Chess Championship 2024, in Singapore. PTI

2.5 million prize purse. "I was dreaming this moment for the last 10 years. I am happy that I realised the dream (and made it) into reality," the soft-spoken Chennai-lad told reporters after the historic triumph here. "I got a bit emotional because I was not expecting to win. But then I got a chance to press on," he added. The triumph was expectedly hailed across India with Prime Minister Narendra Modi hailing it as "historic and exemplary". "This is the result of his unparalleled talent, hard work and unwavering determination," PM Modi posted on X.

The reticent teenager grinned widely and raised his arms in celebration after the victory, a stark contrast from the poker face he usually sports while playing. Even on Thursday, when the analysts had proclaimed that the match, in all likelihood, would go into a tie-breaker, Gukesh's face hardly gave anything away as he gained the upper-hand.

## Centre needs 2,000 more IAS, IPS!

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre, on Thursday, informed the Parliament about a shortage of Government officers at the top level, mentioning that there are 1,316 and 586 vacant posts of Indian Administrative Service (IAS) and Indian Police Service (IPS). Union Minister Jitendra Singh said that, out of the total sanctioned strength of 6,858 IAS, there were 5,542 officers in-position, as on January 1, 2024, in a written reply to the Rajya Sabha. There were 4,469 IPS officers working against their sanctioned strength of 5,055, Singh, the Minister of State for Personnel told the RS. Of the 1,316 vacant posts of

IAS, 794 were meant for direct recruitment, and 522 were promotion posts, he said. Of the 586 vacant IPS posts, 209 were of direct recruitment, and 377 were promotion posts, the Minister said. There are 2,151 Indian Forest Service (IFS) officers in-position, against their sanctioned strength of 3,193, Singh said. Of the 1,042 vacant IFS posts, 503 were for direct recruitment and 539 promotion posts, he added. The IAS, IPS and IFS officers are selected through the Civil Services examination conducted by the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) annually. The minister, also shared details of appointments made to IAS, IPS and IFS from General, Scheduled Castes (SCs),

Scheduled Tribes (STs) and Other Backward Classes (OBCs) during the last five years. During the 2022 civil services examination (CSE) year, 75 General, 45 OBC, 29 SC and 13 ST appointments were made in the IAS. Similarly, 83 General, 53 OBC, 31 SC and 13 ST were appointed in the IPS during the same period. A total of 43 General, 51 OBC, 22 SC and 11 ST appointments were made in the IFS during CSE 2024, according to the data shared by the minister. The Government also stated that Central ministries and departments are directed from time-to-time to fill up vacancies in a time-bound manner.

# Classifieds

## BEDKHALI NOTICE

**I, Kuldeep S/o** Bhim Singh R/o village Dahar, Panipat Halia declare that my son Kaushal is out of my control and is a victim of bad company. He is missing from home since 22/10/2022. Therefore I evict my son from my movable and immovable property. He will be responsible for any transaction done by him in future. I will not be responsible for anything.

**I, Roopwati W/o** Ramdass R/o # 534 Indira Colony Manimajra Chandigarh My son Arvind and his wife Bimla are out of my control, I disown them from my all moveable/Immovable Properties. Anybody dealing with them at his/ her own Risk.

**I, Smt. Soma Devi W/o** Late Sh. Krishan Lal S/O Nanak Chand R/O 256, Gurunanak Nagar, Ambala Cantt declare that my Son Rajiv Kumar and his wife Smt. Rekha Rani are out of my Control. So I Disown them from my all Movable Immovable Properties.

**मैं सावित्री देवी** पत्नी स्व. राम लाल शास्त्री निवासी प्लेट नं.-101, जी. टी. 8, अमिन्स ग्रीन, गांव व डाकघर झरमरी, तहसील डेरा बस्सी, जिला साहिबजादा अजित सिंह मुहौली (पंजाब) से संबंधित करती हूँ कि मेरी बेटी मीनू पत्नी श्री नेतर प्रकाश और उसका बेटा करण भगत-विशाल भागत मेरे करने से बाहर है इसलिए मैं इनको अपनी चला अचल सम्पत्ति से बेदखल करती हूँ इनके किसी प्रकार के लेन देन के लिये मैं जिम्मेवार नहीं होंगी।

**मैं, देवेन्द्र सिंह** पुत्र श्री चतर सिंह निवासी गांव कच्छल, तहसील व जिला हिसार खान करता हूँ कि मुरा लड़का अजय और पुत्रवधु नीषु दोनों मेरे व मेरे परिवार के कर्ते सुने से बाहर है अतः मैं मेरे लड़के अजय तथा पुत्रवधु नीषु को अपनी चला अचल सम्पत्ति से बेदखल करती हूँ। भविष्य में इनसे किसी भी प्रकार का लेन देन करने वाला स्वयं जिम्मेवार होगा, मुझे व मेरे परिवार को कोई जिम्मेवारी नहीं होगी।

## PUBLIC NOTICE

**I, Wasim S/o** Muzaffar Hussain R/O House no.227, masjid wali gali , Zirakpur, SAS Nagar, I, break my relationship with my wife Farana. If anyone has transacted with her in any way or in my name or dose so in future they will be responsible for the same.

**I, Jeet Kaur W/o** Sh. Amit R/O Vill. Phosgarh Tehsil & Distt. Karnal, Haryana inform that in the 10th certificate of my daughter Palak Lather, my name is Harjeet Kaur, whereas my correct name is Jeet Kaur and in other documents also my name is recorded as Jeet Kaur. Is. Therefore, my name Jeet Kaur should be recorded in the 10th certificate of my daughter Palak Lather.

**I, Chirag S/o** Sh. Karan Singh R/O H.No. 1598/21, Chuniपुरा, Rohtak- 124001 declare that my name has been mentioned as Chirag in my all documents i.e. Aadhar card, PAN card, educational documents etc. My name has been mentioned as Chirag S/O Sh. Karan Singh in my Passport. Now I want to add my surname i.e. Dalal with my name i.e. Chirag in my passport. In future my name shall written as Chirag Dalal in my passport.

**I, Reena Kumari W/o** No.10136003L Hav Rajesh R/O Vill Kayla, Teh & Distt Bhiwani declare that my name is recorded as Reena Devi in my husband service record which is wrong. My correct name is Reena Kumari which should be corrected in my husband service record.

**I, No.104929732L** Rank HAV Name Devendra Kumar, presently residing at Vill- Bundela Bigha, PO- Rauna, Teh & Distt- Gaya State- Bihar, PIN- 804404, have changed name of my son from Puspender Kumar to Puspender Kumar as affirmed vide Affidavit No. IN-PB8782856064822W dated 11.12.2024 in the court Bathinda Punjab.

**I, No.15696878H** Rank HAV Name Mahant Gupta Unit 10 CSR(A) C/o 56 APO Bathinda Cantt. (Punjab) permanent resident of Vill-Chuhia, Post Ghanti, Chuhia, Distt. Deoria, State- Uttar Pradesh-274705 declare that I have changed my minor daughter name from Shristi to Shristi Gupta and her DOB is 08.12.2011 as per her Adhar card vide affidavit dated 10.12.2024

**I, No. 15694962K** Hav Suresh R, S/O S. Rajendran R/O COSW, HQ western command chandimandir cantt. panchkula declare that in school record of my daughter name written Lakshana Sri.S.Whereas her correct name S.Lakshana sri.

**I Ajay Kumar S/o** Bikram Singh R/o village Dhukli Po Mankpur the Nangal Distt Rupnagar Punjab declare that I my certificate my mother name mentioned as Bholi Devi, I my birth certificate my mother name mentioned as Raj Kumari, so Bholi Devi and Raj Kumari are two name of the same women, she know by both these names.

**I JC 241373M** Rank EX Risaldar Ashok Kumar S/O Suram Singh Ward no 07 Hardothala Road Dasuya Distt Hoshiarpur Punjab declare that in my Army's record My Wife Parveen Kumari Date of Birth written 10-09-1971 wrongly. Actually her Date of Birth is 28-01-1968 as per her aadhar card record.

## CHANGE OF NAME

**I Rawanti Devi W/o** No. 3170114A Rank Ex Naik Dharambir S/O Shri Indar Singh R/O H.No. 48, Sector-4, Rohtak, Tehsil Rohtak, Distt. Rohtak (Haryana) declare that I have changed my name from Rawanti Devi to Rajwanti. That my correct/actual DOB is 04.01.1966 instead of 25.07.1965. I know as only Rajwanti (New Name) and will annotate Date of Birth as 04.01.1966.

**I, Hitherto Known As** Satbir Alias Sukhbir Singh S/O Shri Baljeet Singh R/O Ddd 1233/1, Mehlana Road, Garhi Brahmanan, Sonipat, Haryana-131001, Have Changed My Name And Shall Hereafter Be Known As Satbir.

**I, Sunil Kumar Mural S/o** Shri Narain R/O H.No. 882, Ward No. 15, Shiv Nagar, Sonipat, Haryana have changed my name to Sunil Kumar for all future purposes.

**I, Ritu Garg W/O** Raman B Garg R/O #169, sector 49-A, Chandigarh, hereby declare that Ritu Garg is my full name not Ritu.

**I, Meenakshi W/o** Rajan Kumar R/O # 192, Sector -11, Panchkula Haryana have changed my name from Meenakshi to Meenakshi Malhotra.

**I Harsharan Singh** Brar S/o Jog Singh, Village Basti Nanak Pura, Chak Chibrnawli, Sri Muktsar Sahib Punjab have changed my minor son name from Zubair Singh Brar to Zubaaer Brar.

**I, Gurjot Singh S/o** Tarlochan Singh R/O Village Chakowal Brahmna, PO Kadiana, Distt. Hoshiarpur Punjab have changed my name from Gurjot Singh to Singh Gurjot. Singh as my surname. Concerned note.

**I, Ajay S/o** Ram Krishan Taneja R/O 309, Model Colony, Yamuna Nagar declare that I have changed my name from Ajay to Ajay Taneja.

**I, Gulshan S/o** Krishan Lal R/O Hanuman Gate, Jagadhri, Tehsil Jagadhri, Distt Yamuna Nagar have changed my name from Gulshan Sethi to Gulshan.

**I, Sonika W/o** Ajay Taneja R/O 309, Model Colony, Yamuna Nagar declare that I have changed my name from Sonika to Sonika Taneja.

**I, Uday S/o** Ajay Taneja R/O 309, Model Colony, Yamuna Nagar declare that I have changed my name from Uday to Uday Taneja.

**I, Kiran Lamba W/o** Sadanand R/o 31, Rampura Colony, Yamuna Nagar have changed my name from Kiran Lamba to Kiran.

**I, Saravjeet Singh S/o** Jaswant Singh R/O VPO Haveli, Distt Yamuna Nagar have changed my name from Saravjeet Singh to Singh Saravjeet.

**I, Suman W/o** Suresh Kumar R/O Village Sultanpur, Mustafabad, Tehsil Jagadhri, Distt Yamuna Nagar have changed my name from Suman to Suman Bala.

**I, Rajeev Kumar Mehta S/o** Bal Krishan Mehta R/O 1113/A, Tagore Garden, Yamuna Nagar have changed my name from Rajeev Kumar Mehta to Rajeev Mehta.

**We, Navdeep s/o** Sukhendar Singh & Rajni Sharma w/o Navdeep R/o VPO Yara, Tehsil Shahabad Markanda, Distt. Kurukshetra have changed our minor son's name from Priansh to Priansh Sharma. In future he should be known as Priansh Sharma.

**I, Harman Kaur D/o** Satnam Singh R/O Village Kandola Distt. Jalandhar 144103 Punjab have changed my name from Harman to Harman Kaur Concerned note.

**I, Satnam Singh S/o** Darshan Ram R/O Village Kandola Distt. Jalandhar 144103 Punjab have changed my name from Satnam to Satnam Singh. Concerned note.

**I, Smt Kuldeep Kaur** wife of No. 13971922H NK Sohan Lal (Retd) resident of Vill Kasrawal, PO Bariowal, Tehsil Mukerian, Distt Hoshiarpur (Pb) have changed my name from Kuldeep Kaur to Kuldeep Kaur. Concerned note.

**I, Anupam Kumar Dua S/o** D.L. Dua, R/O. #1051, Sector 46-B, Chandigarh. I have changed my name from Anupam Kumar Dua to Anupam Dua.

**I, Rajinder Kumar S/o** Dharam Pal R/O H.No.76, Gokal Nagar, Amritsar, Punjab have changed my name from Rajinder Kumar to Rajinder Chopra.

**I, Sarbjit Kaur** alias Amarjit Kaur W/o Jaswinder Singh R/O Village Kot Sidhu, Tehsil LopoKe/Ajnala, Distt. Amritsar, Punjab declare that Sarbjit Kaur and Amarjit Kaur is one and the same person.

**I, Amandeep Singh S/o** Vikramjit Singh R/O H.No 104 Leak wala Talab Jalandhar Road Batala Distt Gurdaspur declare that Amandeep is my given name and Singh is my Surname. Concerned note.

**I, Sanju Bala W/o** Rajesh Kumar R/O 8326/GF, Nine Homz Aman city, Kharar, Mohali have changed my name to Sunita Rani.

**I, Nutun W/o** Manoj Kumar # 212, Sector 25-D, Chandigarh have changed my name to Nutan.

**I, Badri Parshad S/o** Bishnath #195, Dadu Majra Colony, Chandigarh have changed my name to Badri Parshad Yadav.

**I, Ramesh Kumar S/o** Badri Parshad Yadav # 195, Dadu Majra Colony, Chandigarh have changed my name to Ramesh Kumar Yadav.

**I, Manu S/o** Alla Ditta R/O Village Abdullapur Tehsil Mukerian Distt Hoshiarpur have changed my minor son's name from John to John Gill. Concerned note.

**I, Prabhjot Kaur W/o** gurpreet Singh R/o vpo bahoru chabhal road amritsar 143009 have declare that kaur is my surname prabhjot is my given name

**I, Parminder Kaur W/o** Gurbhej Singh R/O.Village Malakpur, Post Office Nangal Dial Singh Amritsar have Changed my name from Palwinder Kaur to Parminder Kaur.

**I, Kanta Rani W/o** Raj Kumar R/O 329, Street No. 1, Shiv Nagar, Ward No. 17, Fatehabad, Tehsil and District Fatehabad, state that my name has been wrongly written as Kanta in my passport number L3737660, whereas my correct name is Kanta Rani which is registered in my Aadhar card and PAN card. Now I want to get my correct name Kanta Rani registered in my said passport.

**I, Smt. Gurmit Kaur W/o** No. 1547123W Late Hav Gian Singh R/O Vill. Talwandi Jattan PO Garhdiwala Tehsil Dasuya Distt. Hoshiarpur Punjab have changed my name from Gurmit Kaur (As per PPO) to Gurmeet Kaur.

**I, Gaurav Anand S/o** Naresh Anand R/O House No. 60, Near Gurudawra, Village Noorwala, Distt. Panipat declare that I have changed my name from Gaurav Anand to Gourav Anand, for all future purposes.

**I, Naresh Kumar S/o** Sh. Ram Saroop R/O House No. 60, Near Gurudawra, Village Noorwala, Distt. Panipat declare that I have changed my name from Naresh Kumar to Naresh Anand, for all future purposes.

**I, Bal Raj Mittal S/o** Baij Nath Mittal R/O H.No. 177, Sector 18, Huda, Jagadhri, Distt. Yamuna Nagar have changed my name from Bal Raj Kumar to Bal Raj Mittal.

**I, Purnima W/o** Bal Raj Mittal R/O H. No. 177, Sector 18, Huda, Jagadhri, Distt. Yamuna Nagar have changed my name from Purnima Garg to Purnima.

**I, Arun Kumar S/o** Shri Punjab Singh, #2511-B, near Kendriya Vihar, Gate No. 2, Ekta Vihar, Sunny Enclave, Sector 125, Kharar, SAS Nagar, Punjab have changed my name from Arun Kumar Dadwal to Arun Kumar.

**I, Satish Kumar S/o** Ram Chander R/O 83, Sector 15, Huda Jagadhri, Yamuna Nagar have changed my Name from Satish Kumar Saini To Satish Kumar.

I hitherto known as I Sarita W/o Chander Pal R/o 90, Top Khana Parade, Plot no. 65/57, Ambala Cantt, P.O Ambala, Haryana 133001 have changed my Name and shall hereafter be known as Babil Devi.

It is for general information that I, Sukhinder Singh S/O Preetam Singh R/O 175, Ghasit Pur, Ambala, Kuldeep Nagar, Haryana-133004 Declare that Name Of My Minor Son Has Been Wrongly Written As Samarpreet Singh In My Minor Son Samar Preet Singh Aged 17 Years In Her 12th Class Educational Documents. The Actual Name Of My Minor Son Is Samar Preet Singh Which May Be Amended Accordingly.

**I Ubale Suwarna Dattaraj W/o** No. 15774940Y Rank THM (OCC), Ubale Dattaraj Chandrakant Presently Residing at Post Madha, Tehsil Madha, District Solapur, Maharashtra, 413209, have changed my Name from Ubale Suwarna Duttaraj To Ubale Suwarna Dattaraj.

**I, Gita Devi** spouse of JC-377960-X Ex Hony (Sub Maj) Chandan Singh R/O H. No. 556, VPO - Kalpi, Teh - Barara, Distt - Ambala (Haryana) have changed my name from Gita Devi to Geeta Devi and DOB from 01. JAN .1969 to 19.JUN.1969 vide affidavit dated 12.12.2024 Date before Ambala Cantt

**I, Hebballewa** Lenkennavar M/O Service No. 4487190X Rank NK Name Ramaroodh Lenkennavar R/O 528, Ward No. 02, At/PO Katageri, Harjian Kerl, Badami, Post Katageri, Distt. Bagalkot, Karnataka 587205 & Presently Residing at 10 Sikhi C/o 56 APO have changed my Name from Hebballewa To Hebballewa Lenkennavar

**I Amar Jot S/o** Ramesh Kumar R/O VPO Dukheri (161), Distt. Ambala have changed my Name from Amar Jot To Amarjot Sharma.

**I, Dharvinder Kumar S/o** Tek Chand R/O 1098, Bangali Mohalla, Ambala Cantt. have changed my Name from Dharvinder Kumar Rao To Dharvinder Kumar

**I Service No. 2698493K** Rank Hav Name Ram Singh Meena Presently Residing at 11 GDRS C/o 56 APO have changed my Wife Name from Seema To Seema Devi.

**I, Rahul S/o** Suresh Kumar R/O H No. 2423 Sector 24-C, Chandigarh have changed my name from Rahul to Rahul Sharma.

**I, Vivek Kashyap** Son of Sh. Prem Chand Resident of village Chhobal Post Office Kumarhati, Tehsil-District Solan, Himachal Pradesh declare that I have changed the name of my son from Ghanendra Kashyap to Kavish Kashyap. In future my son should be known as Kavish Kashyap. all concerned please may note.

**I Lovleen Kaur W/o** Jagmohan Singh Seth R/O H.No. 94-A, Shivaji Marg, Near SBI Mall Road, Ambala Cantt 133001 have changed my name from Lovleen Kaur to Lovleen Kaur Seth.

**I Jai Kumar S/o** Late Shri Raj Kumar R/O Quarter No 202C, Police Line Ambala City have Changed my minor Son Name from Aviraj to Aviraj Sahni.

**I Pawan Kumar** Garg S/O Kailash Chander R/O H.No- 77 Sector-1 Huda Jai Land Ambala City have changed my name from Pawan kumar Garg to Pawan Kumar.

**I Jitender S/o** Sh. Chandri Ram resident of house no. 593 village kasan tehsil and district Kaithal 136027 have changed my name from Jitender to Jitender Mehra.

**I Nidhi Gulati W/o** Rachit Kumar Gulati R/O 211/7458/4, Bans Bazar, Ambala City have changed my name from Nidhi Wadhwa to Nidhi Gulati .

**I Balwan Singh S/o** Late Sh. Tek Ram R/O Khedi Masania, Tehsil Uchana, District Jind (Haryana) have declared that my son's name is Vinay Kumar in my service record, whereas my son's correct name is Vinay. Which is recorded in all his documents like Aadhar card, DMC, Voter card etc. My son's name should be changed from Vinay Kumar to Vinay in my service record.

**I, Karambir Kaur** (Aadhar No. 7832 7850 1528) W/O Sh. Jagtar Singh R/O Vill. Durana Teh. Alewa Distt. Jind (Haryana) 126111 Declare That I Have Changed My Name From Karamvir Kaur To Karambir Kaur. Concerned Pls. Note.

**I, Amit Kumar S/o** Kewal Krishan R/O Village Jakria, P.O Dinanagar, Tehsil Dinanagar, District Gurdaspur-143531 (Punjab), In My Passport No.Y3270203 My & My Father Name is Wrongly Entered as Amit Mehra & Kewal Kishan, Instead of Amit Kumar & Kewal Krishan, So Kindly Correct it.

**I JC-390497A** Sub Marimuthu S/O Periyasamy R/O WCSR C/O 56 APO declared that the name of my Son M Dheeraj who is studying in class 5th-E in APS Chandimandir erroneously written as Dheeraj M instead of M Dheeraj in his school record.

**I,15705945M** HAV Raatheesh E B R/O 31 NSR C/O 56 APO declared that in my Army Service Record the Name and DOB of my Mother has been erroneously mentioned as Ambika 01.01.1964 whereas her correct Name and DOB is Ambika P R 25.05.1961.

**I Shivani Mahajan W/O** Vikas Gupta R/O Patel Nagar, Gali no -2, Teh/Distt Pathankot Have Changed My Name From Shivani Mahajan To Shivani Gupta.

**I Kiran Devi W/o** Sh. Om Parkash R/O E2-8, Second Floor, DLF Valley, Near Amravati Enclave, Tehsil Kalka, District Panchkula, Haryana, Permanent Resident, Village Dhani Nangal Ugra, Tehsil Bawal, Distt- Rewari Haryana I have changed my minor son name from Yug to Yug Jangu.

**I, Tanya D/o** Sh. Manoj Kumar R/o village Mulahera, Palam Raod, Gurugram have changed my name from Tanya D/o Manoj Kumar to Tanya Yadav D/o Manoj Yadav for all future purposes.

**I, Khushi D/o** Tarabu Azad # 466/2, Gali No.2, Ward No.31, Near Idgaha, Pargati Nagar, Sonipat Haryana have changed my Religion from Muslim to Hindu.

**I, Praiksha W/o** Ranjan Mittal R/O #27, Model Town, Jind Road, Kaithal, Distt. Kaithal (Haryana) declares that I have changed my name from Praiksha Mittal. In future, I will be known by the name of Praiksha Mittal. All concerned please note.

**I, Ranjan Mittal S/o** Rajender Mittal R/O #27, Model Town, Jind Road, Kaithal, Distt. Kaithal (Haryana) declares that I have changed my minor daughter's name from Amyra to Amyra Mittal. In future, she will be known by the name of Amyra Mittal. All concerned please note.

**I, hitherto Known as** Sachin Kumar Son of Shamb Sunder Seth residing at Village Bhago Kanwan District Gurdaspur-143521 Punjab have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Ram Pyari

I, hitherto Known as Sachin Kumar Son of Shamb Sunder Seth residing at H.No.3-B, Lane No.1, Dayanand Nagar, District Amritsar-143001 Punjab have changed my name and Shall hereafter be known as Sachin Seth

I, hitherto Known as Vijay Kanta Sharma Wife of Dhani Ram Sharma residing at H.No.482, Basant Avenue, District Amritsar-143001 Punjab have changed my name and Shall hereafter be known as Vijay Kanta.

I, hitherto Known as Shilpi Vipul Agarwal Wife of Vipul Agarwal Daughter of Ramesh C Baluja residing at H.No.23, Ramayan Vihar, Ashapuram Stadium Road, District Bareilly-243122 Uttar Pradesh have changed my name and Shall hereafter be known as Shilpi Baluja

**I, Amritpal Singh S/o** Satnam Singh R/O Patti Bala Ki, Varpal, Amritsar have declare that Amritpal is my Given name and Singh is my Surname

**I, Parmjeet Kaur W/o** Gurmeet Kaur R/O H.No. 105, Sahibzada Aijt Singh Nagar Sri Muktsar Sahib Distt Sri Muktsar Sahib have changed my name from Paramjeet Kaur to Parmjit Kaur

**I, Manjeet Singh** Kachura S/o Veer Singh R/O Vill Suba Jadid, PO Canal Colony, District Ferozepur have changed my name from Manjeet Singh Kachura to Manjeet Singh

**I, Daljit Kaur W/o** Darbara Singh R/O Vill Bachwindi District Amritsar have changed my name from Daljit Kaur to Sukhwant Kaur

**I, Jasbir Singh S/o** Darshan Singh R/O VPO Bhangali Kalan Tehsil Majitha District Amritsar have changed name Jasbir Singh to Singh Jasbir

**I, Sunita** is spouse of No. 15502108L LD Shinde Dattatray Jagannath resident of Near Parclution Tank, Anap Wadi, Songaon, Tal-Rahuri, Ahmadnagar, Maharashtra-413711 now at 23 (I) Armd Bde Hq Sqn C/o 56 APO, have changed my name from Sunita to Shinde Sunita Dattatray vide affidavit no. IN-PB88410164592439W dated 12-12-2024, before Notary Public, Amritsar

**I, Balwinder Singh S/o** Gopal Singh R/O H.No.26 Dhamshew Nagar Kot Khalsa Po Khalsa College District Amritsar have declare that Balwinder is my Given name and Singh is my Surname.

**I, Satyavir Singh S/o** Sh. Kishan Singh, R/O H.No. 616, Ward No. 18, Shiv Colony, Jind-126102, have changed my name from Satyavir Singh Mor to Satyavir Singh.

**I, Rajvir D/O** Hans Raj R/O V.P.O Kot Fatuhi, Tehsil Garhshankar, District Hoshiarpur, Punjab-144519 have changed my name to Rajvir Kaur.

**I, Sonam Salvia** Khosla W/O Ajay Kumar Gill R/O H.No. 316, Ward No 6, Shehzada Nangal, Gurdaspur, Punjab-143521 have changed my name to Sonam Silvia Khosla.

**I, Monika** Alias Monika Bansal W/O Jatinder Paul R/O House No. 3058/2, Main Road, Sunder Nagar, P.O: Central Post Office, District: Ludhiana, Punjab-141008 have changed my name to Monika Bansal.

**I, Krish S/O** Vinod Bhatti R/O B-16/7, Pandora Mohalla Nawanshahr, SBS Nagar, Punjab-144514 have changed my name to Krish Bhatti.

**I, Jaspal Singh S/O** Chanan Singh R/O VPO-Kahma, Nawanshahr, Distt-SBS Nagar, Punjab-144512 have changed my name to Jaspal Singh Nindi.

**I, Verinder Pal S/o** Roshan Lal R/O B-21/54, New Sukhbiadd Distt. Hoshiarpur Punjab have changed my name from Verinder Pal to Varinder Pal. Concerned note.

**I Rajni w/o** Naveen Kapoor r/o.h.no.131 virat nagar phase-2 model town panipat declare change my name From Rajni to, Rajni Rani and in future my name is Rajni Rani.

**I Pawanesh Kumar** Chhabra S/O Tilak Raj R/O Near Geeta Bhawan, Kolkapura, Distt Faridkot Has Changed My Name From Pawanesh Kumar To Pawanesh Kumar Chhabra, Kindly Note

**I Charanjeet Kaur** Spouse Of Army No 4485844 X, Rank L/Hav, Name Jasvir Singh R/O Village Bhaddal, Po Sainfalpur, Tehsil/District Rupnagar (Ropar) Punjab. Have Changed My Name Charanjeet Kaur To Charanjit Kaur.

**I, No. 14685409K** Nk Satya Dev S/O Shri. Ram Krishan R/O Unit 906, Ad Regt.(Sp)Wksp Chandimandir Cantt. Panchkula Declare That In School Record Of My Son Name Written Ansa Bharti.Whereas His Correct Name Ansh Bharti.

**I, Sonika Devi W/o** Shri Mohinder Singh R/O House No.111a, Sada Shiv Enclave Baltana Zirakpur Sas Nagar Have Changed My Name Fromsonika Devi To Sonika.

**I, Gagandeep**, Son Of Ashok Kumar, Village Nurpurbedi, District Rupnagar, Declare that My Name Is Gagandeep And My Surname Is Also Gagandeep.

**I Tohid S/O** Abdul Hakim R/O Shop No. 38, Saini Vihar, Ravindra Enclave Road, Phase 5, Baltana Zirakpur Sas Nagar Punjab Have Changed My Name From Tohid To Jaheed Mirja.

**I Krishan Gopal S/o** Charanjeet Chopra R/O House No. 186, 22 Acre, Barnala Punjab Have Changed My Name From Krishna Gopal To Krishan Gopal Chopra

**I, Monika W/O** Krishan Gopal Chopra R/O House No. 186, 22 Acre, Barnala Punjab Have Changed My Name From Monika To Monika Chopra

**I, Sukh Ram S/O** Raj Kumar Resident Of Ward No. 2 Ram Nagar Colony Mukerian, Distt. Hoshiarpur (Pb), Have Changed My Minor Son Name From Mukul To Mukul Kumar

**I, Geetika Ajmani** D/O Subhash Chander R/O H No 33-F, Block-F, Rishi Nagar, Ludhiana Declared Esha and Geetika Ajmani is One And Same Person. I Am Known with Both Names.

**I Karan S/o** Yash Pal Sharma R/O H.No C-54, GHS-80, 4th floor, Sector 20 Panchkula, Haryana, have changed my name from Karan to Karan Sharma.

**I Nirmal Batra w/o** Ramesh Batra R/O w/o 12 H.No. 1686 Old Bazar, Kharkhoda Teh. Kharkhoda Distt. Sonapat declare that I know as Nirmal Batra & Nirmala Kumari. That these both names are mine. I know with both names Nirmal Batra & Nirmala Kumari.

**I Kiran** mother of Ananya, R/O #228 sector 14, part-2. UE-Karnal declares that I have changed my minor daughter's name from Ananya to Ananya Sachdeva for all future purposes.

**I Arun S/O** Vishan Dass R/O 2150, VPO Kunjapura, District Karnal have changed my name from Arun to Arun Kumar Wadhwa. In future, I will be known as Arun Kumar Wadhwa.

**I Milan S/o** Mangat Ram r/o Village Lehal PO Dharwal district Gurdaspur have changed my name from Milan to Milan Bhagat. Concerned note.

**I Prince S/o** John r/o Ludhiana mohalla, Dhariwal district Gurdaspur have changed my name from Prince to Prince Sahota. Concerned note.

**I Bhagwanti W/o** Sh. Radhe Krishan Bhatia R/O H.No.C-274, Ghossian Mohalla, Karnal have changed my name from Bhagwanti to Renu Bala. In future, I should be known as Renu Bala.

**I, Naveen S/o** Sh. Rajesh Kumar R/O Barwa, Tehsil Siwani, Distt. Bhiwani declare that I have changed my name from Naveen to Naveen Chawla for all purposes.

# Chaos Erupts as BJP, Cong, SAD Leaders Allege Harassment of Candidates

MONIKA MALIK ■ CHANDIGARH

Amid high tension on the final day of filing nominations for the Punjab Municipal Elections, political tempers flared across the state, particularly in Patiala. Leaders from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Congress, and Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) accused the ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) of using state machinery to harass and intimidate their candidates.

The BJP claimed that its candidates faced targeted harassment, with several allegedly detained or assaulted while attempting to file nominations. Party spokesperson Pritpal Singh Baliawal, sharing videos and pictures to substantiate his claims all through the day, said: "Nomination papers of candidates Varun Jindal (Ward 46) and Sushil Nayyar (Ward 34) were torn outside the Deputy Commissioner's office in Patiala. Another candidate, Nikhil Kumar Kaka, was detained by the police before reaching the nomination venue."

Adding to the drama, Congress leaders, including Punjab Youth Congress chief Mohit Mohindara, alleged that their candidates were threatened and confined. "Our candidates were rounded up before reaching the nomination venue

and illegally detained," Mohindara claimed. Former Akali mayor Amarinder Bazaz echoed similar grievances, stating, "Officials and police deployed at the Mini Secretariat threatened to use lathi-charge to prevent us from filing nomination papers. This is outright intimidation."

High drama ensued outside the Patiala Mini Secretariat as leaders and workers clashed with authorities. Extra police personnel were stationed to prevent unauthorized entry, further fueling tensions.

Meanwhile, AAP dismissed the allegations as baseless. "Opposition parties are resorting to theatrics because they sense defeat in the upcoming elections," said an AAP spokesperson.

The leaders from both the Congress and BJP have earlier also raised concerns over alleged delays in issuing No Objection Certificates (NOCs). They also claimed that officials are often unavailable at their offices, causing further frustration. In response, the Election Commission has clarified that NOCs may be treated as affidavits if required to facilitate the nomination process.

Despite the chaos, candidates from all parties remain determined, setting the stage

for a fiercely contested municipal election. The polls, scheduled for December 21, will cover five municipal corporations—Amritsar, Jalandhar, Ludhiana, Phagwara, and Patiala; and 44 municipal councils, with results likely to shape the political landscape in Punjab.

The municipal elections will cover a voter base of 37.32 lakh, including 19.50 lakh men and 17 lakh women. Voting hours this year have been extended from 7 am to 4 pm, which gives an extra hour of voting compared to previous elections.

The elections aim to elect 381 members to municipal corporations and 598 members to municipal councils. To ensure smooth polling, stringent security measures have been put in place. Each polling station has been assigned three security personnel, and a complete ban on weapons has been enforced until the conclusion of the electoral process. District authorities have been instructed to seize licensed weapons and maintain law and order during the polls.

## Upset Cong Worker Fields Pet Dog as Candidate in Amritsar

In a quirky yet poignant turn of events, "loyal" Congress worker Mehak Rajput from Amritsar has nominated her

pet dog, Jimmy, as a candidate for the Punjab municipal corporation elections. Mehak, disheartened by the party's decision to deny her a ticket from Ward 38, filed Jimmy's nomination papers at the SDM-1 office, sparking a buzz across the city.

Expressing her frustration, Mehak said: "This is my way of protesting against the party's neglect of my two decades of loyalty and hard work. If Jimmy's nomination is rejected, I will contest as an independent candidate."

Mehak explained that her unconventional move was intended to highlight the party's arbitrary decision-making process. "Leadership in my ward should be based on commitment and dedication. Sadly, the Congress seems to have overlooked these values," she added.

Although animals cannot legally file nominations, Mehak's symbolic gesture has gained traction, with her launching a social media campaign for Jimmy to draw attention to her plight. Her unusual protest has not only raised eyebrows but also ignited a debate on the criteria for awarding party tickets.

As Jimmy becomes an unlikely mascot for political dissent, Mehak's bold stand has left many wondering about the deeper rifts within the Congress party.

# BJP struggled with candidate selection; Banking on Hindu-urban support

MONIKA MALIK ■ CHANDIGARH

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in Punjab faced an unusual conundrum ahead of the civic elections — finding suitable candidates to contest the polls. Once a party where ticket requests poured in by the dozen, the saffron party this time struggled to attract even its seasoned members. The absence of prominent leaders from the candidate list has sent shockwaves through political circles, raising serious questions about the party's internal dynamics.

Discontent brewed within the BJP as party loyalists criticized a lack of strategy, discipline, and effective leadership. The focus on accommodating turncoats, particularly from the Congress, has left dedicated workers feeling alienated. This disarray comes amid the party's repeated electoral failures in Punjab — be it assembly, Lok Sabha, or bypolls. As the BJP attempted to present a united front for the upcoming municipal elections, cracks within its foundation became more evident than ever.

There was a time when securing a BJP ticket in Punjab required influence and connections, with aspirants lobbying from grassroots leaders to top brass. Today, the scenario has flipped entirely. The party's initial candidate list for Jalandhar's municipal polls has sparked disbelief. Many of the chosen faces are political novices, some unaware of the names of district-level leaders, signaling a troubling shift in BJP's approach.

Even for Patiala urban body polls, the names of prominent leaders like Anil Bajaj, Balwant Rai, and Chaudhari Jagdish were notably missing from the list. This was not the result of a calculated strategy, rather it was a forced move. Reliable sources revealed that several senior leaders have withdrawn from the electoral race, disillusioned by the party's declining reputation in Punjab. For them, the lack of a cohesive plan and the absence of clear leadership made contesting elections seem futile.

The BJP's organizational framework in Punjab has been steadily eroding. Insiders

blamed the situation on influential leaders who failed to maintain the party's discipline. A culture of favouritism, where Congress defectors were welcomed and given tickets over loyal BJP members, has alienated the grassroots cadre. Many former BJP stalwarts who defected to other parties and later returned were rewarded generously, only to abandon the party again. This pattern has disheartened loyalists, leading to a sharp decline in party morale.

Moreover, the party has failed to define its state-level leadership clearly. With no clarity of its state unit president Sunil Jakkhar's "resignation" and no visible frontrunner to lead the charge, workers feel directionless. This lack of clarity rendered the saffron brigade incapable of mounting an effective challenge to its rivals in Punjab's political landscape.

BJP's struggles in Punjab's civic polls are emblematic of a deeper malaise within the state unit. By sidelining loyal workers and relying on turncoats, the party has alienated its core supporters. The absence of experienced leaders from the polls reflected their waning faith in the organization's ability to recover.

For a party that once prided itself on discipline and strategic acumen, the current state of affairs in Punjab signaled the need for urgent introspection.

The BJP, for the first time since severing its decades-long alliance with the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD), is set to contest Punjab's civic body elections independently. The party is optimistic, bolstered by its improved vote share in the parliamentary polls held earlier this year, surpassing that of the SAD. It also banks on its appeal in urban areas with a strong Hindu voter base, where it expects to perform well. Despite not winning even a single seat in Lok Sabha elections, BJP got an 18.5 percent vote share — double what it got in 2019 when the party was in alliance with the SAD.

"Even though Punjab Congress president Amrinder Singh Raja Warring secured a win in the Ludhiana Lok Sabha seat, BJP's Ravnesh Singh Bittu demonstrated significant strength by leading in

five key urban assembly segments — North, West, East, South, and Central. This reflects the party's growing influence in urban constituencies, signaling a potential advantage in the upcoming municipal elections," said a senior BJP leader in Ludhiana. The BJP, emboldened by its strong performance in Patiala's urban wards during the recent Lok Sabha elections, is contesting the polls with renewed vigor. In Patiala alone, the BJP claims to have led in 49 out of 60 wards during the parliamentary polls.

## BJP Seeks Governor's Intervention for Fair Civic Polls; Alleges AAP Misusing State Machinery

Amid the ongoing civic election process in Punjab, the BJP has written a detailed letter to the Governor, alleging grave misconduct by the ruling AAP. The BJP has accused AAP of leveraging state machinery to intimidate opposition candidates and manipulate the electoral process. Among the allegations is a troubling incident in Patiala, where a candidate was allegedly unlawfully detained by the police immediately after filing his nomination papers.

BJP, in its letter, urged the Governor to ensure free and fair municipal elections, highlighting the misuse of power by the AAP-led Government. "We draw your attention to the pressing need for impartiality in the upcoming municipal elections in Punjab. It has come to light that the Punjab government, under political bias, is deploying state machinery for electoral gains. Such actions undermine democratic processes and erode public trust in the fairness of elections," read the letter.

The saffron party also raised concerns about widespread malpractice, claiming that opposition candidates are being systematically targeted. According to BJP leaders, nomination papers are being torn in front of police officials, and candidates are being blocked from filing their papers at Returning Officers' (RO) offices. Similar incidents, they said, were witnessed during recent panchayat elections, which were marred by violence.

## BJP govt must talk to farmers to end Dallewal's fast: Bhupinder Hooda

PNS N CHANDIGARH

Former Haryana Chief Minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda on Thursday said the BJP government must give up its rigid attitude and talk to the protesting farmers, as the condition of their leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal, who is on a fast-unto-death, is continuously deteriorating.

Dallewal is sitting on fast at the Khanauri border point in Punjab since November 26 to press the Centre to accept farmers' demands, including a legal guarantee of MSP for their crops, among others.

"The farmers are not raising any new demands. They are only reminding the government of its own promises. They want legal guarantee of MSP for their crops, which is completely justified. The government made the same promise to the farmers to end their stir (in 2021)," Hooda said. He said the BJP government should give up its rigid attitude and talk to the farmers.

Calling the move to stop farmers from marching to Delhi an anti-democratic step of the BJP government, Hooda said, "Instead of suppressing the voice of the farmers, the government should find a solution through talks. In a democracy, everyone has the right to travel anywhere and express their views peacefully. But the BJP government is snatching this right from the farmers."

The farmers have agreed to go to Delhi on foot, without tractor-trolleys, and stopping them in such a situation is completely undemocratic, he said.

## Before 'one nation, one election', ensure 'one nation, one education and one healthcare': CM Mann

PNS ■ NEW DELHI/CHANDIGARH

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Thursday said that before 'one nation, one election', the Union Government must ensure 'one nation, one education and one healthcare'.

Mann, interacting with the media persons outside the Parliament House, said that it is strange that instead of implementing one nation, one education and one treatment in the country, the Modi Government is keen for implementing one nation, one election. "This is an arbitrary move. While the former will benefit the masses in entire country, the latter will only fulfill the political motives of the saffron party," said Mann, adding that it is unfortunate that the rather than public welfare the Modi government is keen on ensuring its well-being only, adding that this is dictatorial attitude which is not in interest of regional parties and states.

Replying to a query, the Chief Minister said that now Punjab has the best law and order situation in the country due to strenuous efforts of the state government. He said that security of the residents in the topmost priority of his government and they are committed for this cause. Mann said that the social bonding in state is so strong that any seed could grow on the fertile land of



Punjab but seed of hatred will not germinate here at any cost.

The Chief Minister said that Punjab is a sacred land of great Gurus, saints and seers who have shown us the path of mutual love and tolerance. He said that the state government is already probing the unfortunate incident of firing on Akali leader Sukhbir Singh Badal and the conspiracy will be exposed soon.

"SGPC has, for the reasons best known to them, not supported the Punjab Police in enquiry by denying the CCTV footage of the Sri Harminder Sahib complex... Now when the footage has been attained enquiry will be expedited," he said.

The Chief Minister said that it is a matter of immense pride and satisfaction that the party has got office in Parliament House. He recalled his stint as MP in the Parliament of India adding that this platform should be duly utilized for raising the issues of public importance.

## Cold wave grips Punjab and Haryana

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Haryana's Hisar reeled under severe cold as the mercury dropped to 1.6 degrees Celsius on Thursday as biting chill prevailed at many places in the state and neighbouring Punjab. According to the meteorological department's daily weather report, among other places in Haryana, Karnal reeled under biting cold recording a minimum of 3.6 deg C. The minimum temperatures were recorded well below normal limits at other places in Haryana.

The maximum temperatures hovered between 19-22 degrees Celsius at most places in the two states on Thursday. Rohtak recorded a low of 4.4 degrees Celsius, Sirsa 4 degrees Celsius while Ambala's low settled at 7.8 degrees Celsius. Chandigarh, the common capital of Haryana and Punjab, also experienced a cold night, recording a temperature of 4.7 degrees Celsius. In Punjab, Faridkot recorded a low of 3 degrees Celsius, Pathankot 4.3 degrees Celsius, Bathinda 4.6 degrees Celsius and Patiala 4.5 degrees Celsius. Amritsar recorded a low of 5 degrees Celsius while Ludhiana's minimum settled at 6.2 degrees Celsius.

## Himachal Cabinet notifies homestay rules, extends special package to disaster-hit areas

PNS ■ SHIMLA

The Himachal Pradesh Cabinet on Thursday approved the recommendations of a sub-committee led by Industries Minister Harshwardhan Chauhan on the operation of homestays in the state, and decided to notify the Himachal Pradesh Homestays Rules, 2024.

According to the new provisions, preference will be given to bonafide Himachalis, while the requirement to obtain no objection certificates (NOCs) from the HP Pollution Control Board, local bodies or any other department has been waived, an official statement said.

The meeting chaired by Chief Minister Sukhvir Singh Sukhu also decided to extend the special relief package given to the disaster-hit areas in 2023 to people affected by natural disasters at Samej and Rampur in Shimla district, Jaun-Bagipur and Nirmand in Kullu district, and Tikkam Thalu-Kot in Mandi



district during this year's monsoon, in which more than 30 people lost their lives with several still missing.

Under the special package, the affected families will receive enhanced relief for their losses, while those whose houses were completely destroyed would get an increased compensation of Rs 7 lakh instead of Rs 1.5 lakh, the statement said.

The Cabinet also accepted the recommendations of a high-powered committee on hydropower headed by Revenue Minister Jagat Singh Negi.

Accordingly, the government will assess and formulate a policy to revive about 700 projects of up to 25 MW capacity,

which showed no visible progress. At the meeting, nod was given to implement a standard operating procedure (SOP) for promptly removing fallen or damaged trees lying on the roadsides.

The Cabinet also decided to grant powers to the district forest officers (DFOs) to manage up to 50 trees in order to streamline the process, reduce cost and ensure timely completion of infrastructure projects like schools, hospitals and roads, the statement said.

It also gave nod to engage 80 'Khanan Rakshaks' (mining guards) in the industries department, fixing the age limit

between 20 and 30 years, besides approving the filling of 26 posts under various categories in the saik welfare department, along with 17 posts of Punjabi language teachers and 14 posts of Urdu language teachers in the education department.

According to the statement, the Cabinet has decided to amend the HP District Mineral Foundation Trust Rules, 2016, providing for clear demarcation of the directly and indirectly affected areas and expanding the radius of the directly affected areas from 5 km to 15 km.

It mandating that at least 70 per cent of DMF funds must be utilised exclusively in the affected areas.

# Farmer leader Dallewal on hunger strike for 17 days, writes heartfelt letter to PM

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Farmer leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal, who has been on a hunger strike for the past 17 days, on Thursday sent a heartfelt and alarming letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the 305th day of the ongoing 'Delhi Chalo Andolan 2.0'. The letter, Dallewal referred to as his "first and last communication" to the Prime Minister, demanded the fulfillment of promises he made regarding the legal guarantee Minimum Support Price (MSP) and other critical farmer-related issues.

Dallewal's message was direct and forceful, warning that in case of his death, the responsibility will lie with the Prime Minister Modi. The desperate tone reflected the gravity of his situation as his health continues to deteriorate under the effects of his prolonged fast.

The senior farmer leader's health has become a significant concern, with reports from his medical team indicating severe physical deterioration. Doctors monitoring his condition, including specialists from the US, have warned that his kidney could fail at any time, and

his liver is under stress due to the extended period without food. The medical bulletin also reported a loss of over 12 kilograms in weight, and the risk of a heart attack is looming. Despite these grave warnings, Dallewal remained steadfast in his resolve, emphasizing the dire need for the government to honour its promises to the farmers.

In his letter, Dallewal, who leads the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (non-political), reflected on the broken promises from the BJP-led Central Governments. He recalled how, in 2011, Narendra Modi, while serving as Gujarat Chief Minister, advocated for the MSP to be legally guaranteed, but since then, no concrete steps have been taken. Dallewal also recalled promises made in 2014 and 2018 regarding the Swaminathan Commission's recommendations on crop pricing, which remain unfulfilled despite the assurance of immediate implementation. These unkept promises have led to a deep sense of betrayal and frustration among the farmers, which has now reached a critical point, he added.

Dallewal's open letter fol-

lowed a series of protests that began on February 13, when farmers, under the banner of Kisan Mazdoor Morcha (KMM) and SKM (non-political), initiated their 'Delhi Chalo' movement. After being blocked from entering Delhi by security forces at Haryana borders, Punjab's farmers have been encamped at the Shambhu and Khanauri borders for nearly a year now. Over the months, the farmers have repeatedly made it clear that their demands, which include a legal guarantee for MSP and the implementation of the Swaminathan Commission's formula for crop pricing, are non-negotiable.

The government medical teams attempted to check Dallewal's health on Thursday, but their access was initially blocked by the farmers. This was followed by a series of consultations with US-based oncologists and cardiologists, who have been closely monitoring his health since the onset of the fast. Punjab Government also sent a medical team to assess Dallewal's condition. Despite these efforts, his health continues to worsen.

In addition to Dallewal's

personal health crisis, there is growing concern about the Government's approach to the protests. Farmers have accused the Central Government of failing to engage meaningfully with their concerns, despite multiple appeals and protests. The KMM and SKM leaders have now issued a stark warning — If anything happens to Dallewal, the Central Government will be held responsible for any loss, particularly if force is used to disperse the protests.

Amidst the growing tensions, farmer leaders have ramped up their support for Dallewal by increasing his security. A video message was released late on December 11 evening, warning of potential government attempts to detain Dallewal and suppress the protests. In response, the farmers are taking extra precautions to ensure his safety.

The letter sent by Dallewal is a culmination of months of frustration, determination, and sacrifice. The ongoing protest has now entered a crucial phase, with farmers announcing plans to send the third jatha (group) of protesters to Delhi as part of the Dilli Chalo march.

## Hassle-free delivery of public services is Govt's topmost priority: Hry CM directs officers

PNS ■ GURUGRAM/KURUKSHETRA

Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini on Thursday said that ensuring hassle-free delivery of public services is the utmost priority of the state Government and for this, the officers concerned of all departments must visit the field to ensure that the services are provided to the public without any delay. "No laxity will be tolerated and strict action will be taken against any officer if complaints are received from the citizens," Saini warned.

Presiding over the District Public Relations and Grievances Committee meeting in Gurugram, Saini issued strict directions to the officers concerned to ensure cleanliness in the district. Special attention should be given to cleanliness in the city to make Gurugram clean and beautiful, he added.

The Chief Minister said that during the next month's meeting, he would personally see the steps taken by the officers concerned to ensure cleanliness in Gurugram. Ensure that the general public should not face any problem due to unclean surroundings, said Saini.

During the meeting, a total of 23 grievances were tabled before the Chief Minister, of which 19 were resolved on the spot. He directed the officers to submit the status report of the remaining complaints tabled in the meeting.



Saini, while taking cognizance of the issue related to the treated water quality from all Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs), directed that the quality of treated water be regularly checked for a clean environment. He further directed that officers ensure that after lab tests, the water should only be provided to farmers for agricultural work.

On the occasion, taking strict cognizance of a complaint regarding illegal encroachment on government land in village Sarai Alawardi, the Chief Minister directed the municipal corporation officers to immediately remove all illegal encroachments from the land. A community hall should be constructed on this land to provide better facilities for public events, he directed.

While hearing complaints regarding sewerage issues from different areas, Saini directed the officers concerned to ensure sewerage systems are

strengthened according to the growing population's demands to ensure proper water drainage. Revised plans should be prepared when laying new sewer lines in any area, and consultations should be held with the respective RWAs and local residents, directed Saini.

## 'Govt to provide Rs 20 lakh Medical Insurance cover for every Athlete'

In another event while attending the closing ceremony of the Haryana Kushti Dangal in Kurukshetra, Saini said that State's athletes have brought laurels on the global sports stage.

To ensure welfare of the players of the state, he said that the government has resolved to provide a medical insurance cover of Rs. 20 lakh to every athlete. Besides this, annual incentives of Rs. 50 lakh, Rs. 30 lakh, and Rs. 20 lakh will also be awarded to the top three

Akharas at the state level, and Rs. 15 lakh, Rs. 10 lakh, and Rs. 5 lakh will be awarded to the top three Akharas at the district level. Earlier, the Chief Minister felicitated the winners of the Dangal and extended best wishes. He said that over 500 wrestlers participated at district and regional levels in the two-day event, with 16 of the 32 finalists being female wrestlers, marking a proud moment for the state.

Saini shared that the government has ensured employment for outstanding athletes through the Haryana Outstanding Sports Persons Service Rules 2021. Under this, 550 new posts have been created in the sports department, and 224 athletes have been provided government jobs. Provision of reservation for direct recruitment of athletes in Group-A to Group-D posts have also been made, he said.







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PAPER WITH PASSION

## Empowering young innovators

Prime Minister Modi highlights the role of young minds in tackling real-world challenges with creativity and technology

The best way to predict the future is to invent it, said Alan Kay. And indeed how true it is for a nation. A nation that invents and finds solution to its problems marches on the path to progress. Echoing the same sentiment, Prime Minister Narendra Modi highlighted the pivotal role of innovation in nation-building during his interaction at the Smart India Hackathon (SIH) 2024, emphasising how young minds are shaping the future through creativity and technological ingenuity. The event, which included participation from over 1,300 student teams across India, showcased groundbreaking ideas aimed at solving real-world challenges. The SIH is a testament to the transformative power of education and innovation in building a self-reliant India. The event not only bridges the gap between academia and industry but also fosters a culture of collaboration and problem-solving. At the National Institute of Technology (NIT) Srinagar, which hosted the grand finale of the software edition for the first time, 25 exceptional teams from 21 states convened to present their innovative solutions.



The hackathon addressed 250 problem statements submitted by 54 ministries, departments, state governments, public sector units (PSUs), and industries, covering sectors like healthcare, sustainability, education, disaster management and agriculture. With a 240 per cent increase in participation compared to the previous year, SIH 2024 is the largest edition to date, involving over 86,000 teams at the institute level and 49,000 at the national level.

Among the standout participants was the 'Big Brains Team' from NIT Srinagar, led by Syeeda Aiemen D Saleem. The team worked on an AI-powered Virtual Reality Friend, a tool designed to assist children with autism spectrum disorder and intellectual disabilities. The project, developed under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, aims to help children enhance social and interactive skills in a simulated environment. PM Modi lauded the team's empathetic approach, emphasising the global relevance of such solutions and their potential to transform lives. PM Modi's interaction with the participants highlighted his vision of leveraging local innovation to address global challenges. He stressed that solutions tailored for India's unique needs could resonate globally, contributing to the world's progress. "Every child has the right to grow and prosper, and innovative solutions like these ensure no one is left behind," he remarked. By providing a platform for young minds to explore, collaborate and innovate, the Smart India Hackathon is shaping the next generation of problem-solvers and leaders. As India aims to establish itself as a global innovation hub, initiatives like SIH play a crucial role in realising this vision, reaffirming the transformative power of education and technology in nation-building.

### PICTALK



Young women visit a snow covered park after snowfall in Shimla

# AI's boost to the spirit of service

From streamlining efforts to enhancing inclusivity, AI is reshaping how volunteers connect, contribute and make an impact



RAJDEEP PATHAK

Volunteering has long been a vital pillar of community development, social change, and global solidarity, offering individuals a meaningful way to contribute to society while fostering personal growth. In today's interconnected and fast-paced world, the concept of volunteering is undergoing a dynamic transformation, largely driven by advances in technology. The International Volunteer Day (IVD), celebrated globally on December 5, 2024, under the theme "Economic and Social Development," highlighted the pivotal role of volunteers in shaping a better world. Sub-themes emphasised their contributions to alleviating crises and supporting underprivileged populations affected by natural disasters, man-made crises, or socio-economic challenges. Volunteers have consistently been on the frontlines of crisis management, stepping in where governments and organisations often encounter limitations. Whether during pandemics, natural disasters, or humanitarian emergencies, their role remains indispensable, particularly for vulnerable populations. The advent of advanced technologies, particularly Artificial Intelligence (AI), is significantly reshaping the landscape of volunteerism.

AI enhances the efficiency, inclusivity, and accessibility of volunteering initiatives, ensuring they have a far-reaching impact. By leveraging AI-driven tools, organisations are creating platforms that align volunteer skills with opportunities, reduce mismatches, and optimise efforts. This transformation not only improves the volunteer experience but also amplifies the positive outcomes for communities in need.

AI-powered platforms such as "HelpFinder" are revolutionising how volunteers are matched with organisations. By analysing data on individual skills, interests, and locations, these platforms ensure that volunteers are placed where they can make the most meaningful contributions. This precision reduces mismatches, boosts retention rates, and fosters a sense of accomplishment among volunteers. During crises, AI-powered systems can quickly



analyse data to identify affected areas and volunteer availability, enabling swift deployment to critical zones. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, AI-driven platforms like "OneRescue" coordinated volunteer initiatives for contact tracing, mental health support, and supply distribution, proving invaluable in mitigating the crisis.

Corporate social responsibility initiatives also benefit from AI. Tools like "Benevity" facilitate employee engagement by connecting them with volunteer opportunities that align with organisational goals. These solutions ensure streamlined coordination, impactful volunteering, and sustained enthusiasm among participants. AI-powered chatbots further enhance volunteer experiences by providing instant support, answering queries and assisting with training.

In India, a nation of 1.45 billion people, the ethos of service is deeply ingrained in its culture. Family values, religious teachings, and community traditions emphasise the importance of helping others. Today, AI is augmenting these efforts. Chatbots are used to handle volunteer queries related to vaccination drives, maternal health, women's and children's safety, and more. In the UK, AI-driven systems have optimised food bank logistics and facilitated grocery deliveries to vulnerable indi-

viduals, demonstrating how technology empowers volunteers to make a tangible difference.

Innovative applications like "Be My Eyes" enable volunteers to assist visually impaired individuals remotely, while platforms like "GoodSAM" connect trained volunteers with emergency services in real time. For example, volunteers alerted through GoodSAM can provide critical assistance such as CPR or use an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) before professional help arrives. Virtual volunteering has further expanded opportunities for professionals to contribute their expertise remotely. Platforms like "Catchafire" and the UN's Online Volunteering Service facilitate mentoring, legal advice, language translation, and more, breaking geographical barriers and making volunteering more inclusive. Digital tools have eliminated traditional obstacles to volunteering, such as physical distance, time constraints, and accessibility issues. People with disabilities, caregivers, or those in remote locations can now volunteer from their homes. This inclusivity aligns with the 2024 IVD theme, fostering collaboration among diverse communities toward the shared goal of economic and social development.

By harnessing the right technology and resources, volunteers can work together to

address pressing global challenges.

In natural disasters like hurricanes, earthquakes, and floods, volunteers equipped with drones and AI tools can map affected areas and deliver supplies more efficiently. Apps like "Zello" enable seamless communication during emergencies, transforming smartphones into walkie-talkies for coordination. In efforts to combat poverty and hunger, volunteers support food banks, organise community kitchens, and deliver resources. Digital tools like "ShareTheMeal," a United Nations World Food Programme crowdfunding app, empower individuals to donate meals with a simple tap, making a significant impact on global hunger.

Education is another critical sector where volunteering, supported by technology, has made remarkable strides. Online platforms have democratised access to education, reaching remote and underserved communities. Initiatives like "Code.org" empower volunteers to teach coding skills, equipping students with the tools needed for a technology-driven future. Gender-focused volunteer programmes address inequality by providing legal aid, counseling and advocacy for women's rights, further demonstrating the transformative power of volunteering.

(The writer is Programme Executive, Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti; views are personal)



AI ENHANCES THE EFFICIENCY, INCLUSIVITY AND ACCESSIBILITY OF VOLUNTEERING INITIATIVES, ENSURING THEY HAVE A FAR-REACHING IMPACT. BY LEVERAGING AI-DRIVEN TOOLS, ORGANISATIONS ARE CREATING PLATFORMS THAT ALIGN VOLUNTEER SKILLS WITH OPPORTUNITIES, REDUCE MISMATCHES AND OPTIMISE EFFORTS

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### INDIA'S SOFT POWER POLICY

Madam — The ongoing conflict in Gaza and Israel's military action against Hamas have drawn global attention. In this context, Israeli Ambassador to India, Reuven Azar, praised India's soft power policy, underlining its relevance in international diplomacy. He acknowledged that Israel, due to its heavy reliance on military strength, has lagged in areas like information management and public relations. India has strengthened its global position through diplomacy, cultural influence, and dialogue as key tools of soft power.

Initiatives like yoga, cultural exchanges, and multilateral diplomacy have not only earned India international goodwill but also enhanced its global image. Despite its firm stance against terrorism, India has effectively combined dialogue and public relations to make its policies inspirational for the global community. In contrast, Israel's excessive reliance on military power weakens it in ideological battles, further complicated by adversarial propaganda from Arab media. Military strength alone is insufficient; tools of soft power, such as dialogue, empathy, and media management, are essential for long-term success. India's example demonstrates that balancing soft and hard power not only safeguards national interests but also garners global acceptance. Israel should take inspiration from India's strategy to refine its policies and strengthen its information and public relations framework.

R K Jain | Barwani

### TACKLING ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS

Madam — Apropos of the headlines 'Identify illegal Bangladeshi immigrants, orders LG' (December 11), it is welcome that prominent Ulemas and Muslim leaders have taken up the issue of illegal Bangladeshi immigrants with the government and thus depoliticised the issue in favour of the Muslim community, Delhi, and the entire country. There are countrywide agitations and

## UNEP honours Madhav Gadgil



India's veteran ecologist and nature scientist Madhav Gadgil has been named as one of the six 'Champions of the Earth' by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) for 2024. He is renowned for his seminal work in the ecologically fragile Western Ghats region of India, which is a unique global biodiversity hotspot. Gadgil made an extensive study on the Western Ghats region, chairing the Western

Ghats Ecology Expert Panel in 2011, and came out with a list of grim and grave findings for the Western Ghats region.

The panel's report, which is popularly known as the Gadgil report, recommended in 2011 that the entire hill range be declared an ecologically sensitive area and recommended a ban on mining, quarrying, industries, new thermal power plants, hydropower projects, and large-scale wind energy projects. Gadgil's bold and honest recommendations faced opposition from some of the state governments, political bigwigs, industries, and local communities. Braving all odds, he championed the protection of the earth and the environment. Gadgil's research has helped to protect marginalised people, promote community-driven conservation of ecosystems and influence policymaking at the highest level.

M Pradyu | Kannur

demonstrations against atrocities on Hindus in Bangladesh and Bangladeshi illegal immigrants. The issue of illegal immigrants, whether from Bangladesh, African countries, or any other country, being detrimental to the integrity of the country, law and order, and social fabric and homogeneity poses potential challenges of demographic change, crime control, drug menace, security, and anarchy.

However, this is a very formidable challenge for the government to work out the strategy and implement it in view of the opposition from the immigrants and their local political harborers. A question will certainly arise why only in Delhi and why not in the entire country. There may be a spate of court cases as well in view of the large-scale illegal issue of identity cards of Aadhar, PAN, or BPL. It is, therefore, imperative that a nationwide strategy should be evolved and implemented firmly. Of course, the political parties following an appeasement agenda and vote bank politics will leave no stone unturned to disrupt it, but

it is a national priority and a security threat.

Vinod Johri | Delhi

### VOTERS' NAME DELETED

Madam — The deletion of the eligible voter's name before the election has encroached about the entire country and is intensifying terrifically. The senior AAP leader Sanjay Singh highlighted an application for the deletion of 3,800 voters' names in just the RK Puram constituency. Such incidents are frequently observed before polls, which wrest the voting rights and thwart them to contribute to choosing preferred leaders. It's an out-and-out violation of the Universal Adult Franchise" in the largest democratic country. It's a grave issue that demands urgent action. The EC must not turn into a complaint tool instead of a neutral body and deploy every effort to address it and ensure the voter's right.

Jakir Hussain | Kanpur

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

## The transformative role of interactive learning in education

This modern approach is not just a shift in teaching strategies but a leap toward preparing students for the dynamic demands of the future workforce

The landscape of education has evolved significantly, with technological advancements and the integration of AI, making interactive learning a favoured approach. Because interactive learning fosters engagement, critical thinking and long-term memory, it makes it possible for knowledge to be assimilated more thoroughly.

This is unquestionably an improvement over the conventional approaches, which mostly emphasise rote memory and depend largely on textbook-based techniques. The abilities needed in today's dynamic environment are better suited for interactive learning. Passively absorbing knowledge using conventional teaching approaches results in surface learning, which is ultimately counterproductive. According to National Training Laboratories research, passive learning techniques like reading and lectures only have recall rates of 5-10 per cent.

**The Advent of Interactive Learning:** A more hands-on approach is provided by interactive learning, which combines technology, teamwork,



and real-world problem-solving. This increases engagement and extends retention. Digital tools, project-based learning, and group discussions are all included in this approach's scope. Students in interactive classrooms outperformed those in traditional lectures by 6 per cent on examinations, according to Harvard University research. Here are some ways that interactive learning approaches work better than conventional strategies:

**1. Enhanced Retention:** According to National Training Laboratories research, active learning strategies like practice-by-doing and group discussions had higher retention rates, ranging from 50 to 75 per cent. Students may directly apply STEM principles

through hands-on experiences. According to research from the American Society for Engineering Education, pupils who participated in interactive STEM activities learned much more than those who received standard instruction.

**2. Encouraging Critical Thinking:** Interactive learning promotes creativity and critical thinking by allowing students to investigate other viewpoints and pose questions. According to a McKinsey & Company research, interactive learning environments foster critical thinking and reflection while increasing student engagement and fostering productive social interactions. Another immersive method of student engagement is gamification, which boosts students' incentive to tackle challenging issues and permits in-depth learning.

**3. Real-World Application:** Project-based learning, which links education to real-world issues and increases the applicability of information in practical contexts, is a crucial element of interactive learning. In contrast to students who studied using tradition-

al techniques, students who participated in project-based programs demonstrated superior application of information to real-life circumstances, according to a 2022 research by Edutopia.

**4. Future Ready:** Through more engaging and relevant instruction, interactive learning equips students to overcome obstacles more effectively than traditional approaches ever could. To educate students for the uncertain and constantly changing times, education must emphasise abilities like problem-solving, teamwork, and flexibility in today's competitive labor market.

Interactive approaches also boost motivation and encourage teamwork, which aids students in honing their communication and teamwork abilities. The global EdTech market is expected to grow to \$404 billion by 2025, according to EdTechXGlobal. Students that use an interactive learning technique not only perform better academically but are also better prepared to handle problems in the real world.

(The writer is Founder Zamit; views are personal)



AARUL MALAVIYA



## FIRST COLUMN

### INDIA SHARES ITS VISION FOR WEST ASIA

The Manama Dialogue provided India with a platform to outline its vision for regional stability



KUMARDEEP BANARJEE

Even as Syria was undergoing huge regime change, with a possibility of leaving a long-lasting impact on the geo-political mix of West Asia, India's external affairs minister was delivering a lecture on the changing dynamics of international cooperation at the Manama Dialogue. The Manama dialogue is a platform to bring policy makers, and ministers to discuss and debate the strategic defence, security and foreign challenges of West Asia. The dialogue happening against the backdrop of the fast-changing narrative in Syria provided India with a unique opportunity to weigh on its most pressing concerns in and for the region. Syria has been ruled by the Assad dynasty for nearly 50 years. However, this dynastic rule converted the country, on the border of Turkey and Jordan into a brutal police state. Russia and Iran had been supportive of the Assad dynasty, for strategic reasons. Iran supported the regime, to build its axis of resistance against Israel, while Russia, has air force and naval bases in Syria. Global leaders are watching the Syria theatre closely even as Israel continues its war in the neighbourhood. The storming of Israeli troops in Gaza and Ukraine, distracted Iran and Russia, which led to the exit of Bashar Al Assad last week. However, what is of concern to many would be, the rise of rebel leader Abu Mohammed al-Jawfani, an ex-Al Qaeda member.

Syria despite the dynastic rule managed to maintain a secular political outlook where minorities and diverse groups did not feel any discrimination. Many fear that the rebel leader with Al Qaeda credentials, may push the state to a hardline Islamist nation. Almost every nation in the neighbourhood including Israel is watching the unfolding situation care-



fully. Delhi has been agnostic to the regime change, even though the Assad dynasty has been supportive of India's position on Kashmir, and its stance with Islamabad. Any unfriendly regime in the region would weaken India's position and could be a security concern as well.

Against this backdrop, the Manama dialogue, with several leaders from the West Asia and the Indo-Pacific, provided an important platform for engagement. Mentioning the ongoing conflicts impacting the region S Jaishankar said, "And this today would extend from Gaza to Lebanon and now to Syria as well. But at the same time, we have to be realistic about competing interests in this region... The second political-diplomatic cooperation that we can think of is really at a time when the world is polarised if not downright violent, how do you prevent an escalation of tensions, how do you prevent conflict from spreading further. In recent times, for all of us, the relationship or absence of it between Israel and Iran has been particularly a source of concern, so some of our diplomatic efforts has focused on that particular aspect. There has been the situation in the Red Sea as well. On a more positive note, the third aspect of the political-diplomatic, I would say, we are also looking at certain trend lines coming out of this region. We have been a supporter of the Abraham Accords and some years ago, we started a grouping called I2U2, which involves India, Israel, the US and the UAE. It is still at a relatively early stage and we certainly hope that in the coming days that its a group that will grow."

India in the past decade, has a trade-oriented foreign policy outlook, where, it knows that nothing binds countries more than an economic partnership. Mr Jaishankar mentioned that India has nearly \$170- 180 billion with the ten-member Gulf Cooperation Council and significant economic relations with countries in the Mediterranean. A new US president from January would also be a key benchmark to watch out for days to come. The relationships are most likely to be economic and based on mutual interests.

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

# The dawn of a new era: Syria's path forward

As Syria comes to terms with Assad's departure, the road ahead promises opportunities for renewal but is fraught with risks that will test the resolve of its new leadership



NISHAKANT OJHA



The fall of Bashar al-Assad's regime and the appointment of Mohammed al-Bashir as Syria's Prime Minister on December 10, 2024, mark a watershed moment in the nation's history, offering a mix of promise and uncertainty. This transition signals the end of an era defined by authoritarian rule, civil war and foreign interventions, ushering in a period of both opportunity and immense challenge. Assad's departure, driven by a combination of Russian withdrawal and external pressures, has created a power vacuum with significant implications. Mohammed al-Bashir, a moderate politician known for his diplomatic acumen, has pledged to prioritise national reconciliation and reconstruction. His leadership represents a shift from the autocratic governance of the past toward a more inclusive and reform-oriented approach. However, stabilising Syria remains an uphill battle. Despite al-Bashir's efforts, large swathes of the country remain fragmented, with control divided among Kurdish forces, remnants of opposition groups, and radical elements. Moreover, millions of Syrians continue to suffer from displacement, poverty and inadequate access to basic services, underscoring the dire need for humanitarian aid and international support. Compounding these challenges is Syria's shattered economy, which demands both immediate stabilisation and long-term rebuilding strategies. The role of covert operations by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in the fall of Assad's regime cannot be overlooked. Since the early years of the Syrian Civil War, the CIA has employed programmes such as Operation Timber Sycamore to train and arm select rebel factions, aiming to counter Assad's government, which had strong backing from Russia and Iran. These operations evolved



PRIME MINISTER AL-BASHIR HAS OUTLINED A ROADMAP FOR SYRIA'S RECOVERY, FOCUSING ON POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, AND SOCIAL REFORMS

to include intelligence gathering, cyberattacks, and psychological warfare. Although they played a critical role in destabilising Assad's regime, the complexities of such interventions also fueled unintended consequences, such as the empowerment of extremist factions. For the US, this strategy yielded key geopolitical advantages, including weakening Iranian influence, reducing Russia's foothold in the region, and bolstering counterterrorism efforts. Prime Minister al-Bashir has outlined a roadmap for Syria's recovery, focusing on political, economic, and social reforms. Politically, his plans include forming a transitional government representing Syria's diverse ethnic and political groups and drafting a new constitution that decentralises power and protects minority rights. On the economic front, his administration is prioritising infrastructure development, attracting international investments, and combating corruption to lay the foundation for sustainable growth. Socially, reintegration programs aim to facilitate the return of displaced Syrians and rehabilitate former combatants, while expanded healthcare and education services seek to address the needs of the war-affected population. The fall of Assad and the emergence of al-Bashir have far-reaching implications for the broader West Asia. Regionally, these developments could recalibrate power dynamics, reducing Iran's influence in Syria while opening avenues for normalisation with Israel, partic-

ularly in areas of border security and economic cooperation. On a global scale, Russia's diminished role in Syria marks a strategic loss for Moscow, while China may see opportunities to extend its Belt and Road Initiative into the region's reconstruction phase. Russia's longstanding support for Assad, which began with its military intervention in 2015, faced significant challenges in recent years. Strained by its involvement in Ukraine and Western sanctions, Moscow has grappled with resource constraints, prompting a recalibration of its Middle Eastern strategy. Domestic criticism of prolonged military engagements has further pressured the Kremlin to scale back its commitments in Syria, leaving Assad vulnerable to internal and external pressures. Globally, the Syrian transition carries profound security implications. The power vacuum left by Assad's fall risks a resurgence of extremist groups like ISIS and al-Qaeda, which could exploit the instability to regain strength and pose threats beyond Syria's borders. The ongoing refugee crisis also looms large, with continued instability potentially driving more Syrians to seek asylum abroad, challenging neighboring countries and Europe alike. Additionally, proxy conflicts fueled by regional rivalries and superpower tensions threaten to entangle Syria in broader geopolitical frictions. The transition from Assad to al-Bashir represents a pivotal juncture in Syria's history, offering a chance for renewal amid deep-seated

challenges. While the road to stability and prosperity is fraught with obstacles, a coordinated international effort combined with meaningful domestic reform holds the potential to guide Syria toward a more peaceful and resilient future. The coming months will be decisive in determining whether this new chapter in Syria's turbulent narrative leads to lasting progress. The transition from Bashar al-Assad's regime to Mohammed al-Bashir's leadership marks a critical turning point in Syria's history, offering a glimmer of hope amid a legacy of conflict and instability. Al-Bashir's vision for political reform, economic recovery, and social inclusion aims to chart a new course for a nation shattered by years of war. However, the challenges are immense: fragmented control, a dire humanitarian crisis, and a collapsed economy require urgent attention and sustained international support. On the global stage, the fall of Assad has reshaped regional dynamics, reducing Iranian influence and opening new avenues for diplomacy while exposing Syria to the risks of renewed extremism and geopolitical competition. Whether Syria's new leadership can successfully navigate these complexities and steer the nation toward stability depends on the cohesion of its domestic efforts and the willingness of the international community to provide coordinated and meaningful support. *(The writer is an eminent expert on counter terrorism and West Asian affairs; views are personal)*

## Bridging India's urban-rural divide: Empowering rural learners through skilling

India's vast diversity extends beyond culture and language, manifesting in unequal access to education, skilling and employment opportunities

India is a country with great linguistic, cultural, racial, social and economic diversity. People living in urban areas have access to opportunities for skilling, education and employment that are not easily available to people in semi-urban and rural areas. Over the last decade or two, there has been considerable growth and development in the skilling and education ecosystem due to a multitude of factors. Governments - both central and state - have realised that the only way India can benefit from its tremendous demographic dividend is by ensuring that individuals in the working age are equipped with the knowledge and skills required to thrive in increasingly global workplaces.



NAGESH SINGH

Central and state skilling entities have created massive systems that reach every district around India and make top-quality resources available to hitherto underserved audiences. The corporate sector, leveraging the prevalent Corporate Social Responsibility laws, has also contributed significantly to this by collaborating with government agencies and supporting them with co-

funding, content, certification and job opportunities. The Directorate General of Training (Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship) manages a network of tens of thousands of institutions that collaborate with the corporate sector and civil society to make high-quality skilling available to hundreds of thousands of learners every year. All India Council for Technical Education, through its network of thousands of engineering institutions, offers cutting-edge training and internship opportunities to learners around India, irrespective of their location or socio-economic limitations. Edunet Foundation, for example, makes courseware and skills across the IT spectrum

available to learners across engineering colleges, National Skills Training Institutes and Industrial Training Institutes nationally, directly working with lakhs of learners every year. These programs are offered in blended mode, leveraging classroom learning, synchronous video, online content and hands-on project work. While there is availability of skilling and education opportunities, there are several issues that limit the benefits of these programs. The foremost problem is access to technology. Since the courses are offered in blended mode, learners need access to computers with high bandwidth internet connectivity and not just mobile phones. Almost every household in



India has access to mobile phones but larger devices that are more conducive to experiential learning in technology are not widely available. Both government and corporate stakeholders can make a huge difference by making current technology platforms available to learners in rural areas by donating and/or set-

ting up labs and digital libraries within the premises of existing educational institutions in these areas. The second issue is access to local employment. Most jobs - especially the technology-centric ones - are centred around major cities and towns. For learners who are unable to migrate to employ-

ment, this is a huge barrier. Additionally, of course, there are many problems associated with mass migration to urban areas. There is a need to create local career opportunities that allow people to gainfully work wherever they are, without the need to migrate to a larger city or town. This may be done by a steady focus on entrepreneurship that creates jobs locally and helps in the development of rural areas. Rural micro-entrepreneurship, especially focused on agriculture and associated areas, can solve many of the problems associated with mass-migration and lopsided economic development. Local businesses, thus created, will drive the local economy and create local

employment. A stronger focus on rural enterprise will help India by ensuring inclusive economic development. There are several programs by the government and the corporate sector that are trying to achieve this, but they need to be enhanced and made more potent with support from civil society. In an environment where rural learners have access to technology and employment opportunities, skilling initiatives by the government and the corporate sector will make a bigger impact. Learners will be able to learn and earn locally, thereby bridging the urban-rural divide. *(The writer is chairman, Edunet Foundation; views are personal)*

# Biden commutes roughly 1,500 sentences, pardons 39 people in biggest single-day act of clemency

AP ■ WASHINGTON

President Joe Biden is commuting the sentences of roughly 1,500 people who were released from prison and placed on home confinement during the coronavirus pandemic and is pardoning 39 Americans convicted of nonviolent crimes. It's the largest single-day act of clemency in modern history. The commutations announced Thursday are for people who have served out home confinement sentences for at least one year after they were released. Prisons were uniquely bad for spreading the virus and some inmates were released in part to stop the spread. At one point, 1 in 5 prisoners had COVID-19, according to a tally kept by The Associated Press. Biden said he would be taking more steps in the weeks ahead and would continue to review clemency petitions. The second largest single-day act of clemency was by Barack Obama, with 330, shortly before leaving office in 2017. "America was built on the promise of possibility and second

chances," Biden said in a statement. "As president, I have the great privilege of extending mercy to people who have demonstrated remorse and rehabilitation, restoring opportunity for Americans to participate in daily life and contribute to their communities, and taking steps to remove sentencing disparities for non-violent offenders, especially those convicted of drug offenses." The clemency follows a broad pardon for his son Hunter, who was prosecuted for gun and tax crimes. Biden is under pressure from advocacy groups to pardon broad swaths of people, including those on federal death row, before the Trump administration takes over in January. He's also weighing whether to issue preemptive pardons to those who investigated Trump's effort to overturn the results of the 2020 presidential election and are facing possible retribution when he takes office. Those pardoned Thursday had been convicted of nonviolent crimes such as drug offenses and turned their lives around, White House lawyers said. They include

a woman who led emergency response teams during natural disasters; a church deacon who has worked as an addiction counsellor and youth counsellor; a doctoral student in molecular biosciences; and a decorated military veteran. The president had previously issued 122 commutations and 21 other pardons. He's also broadly pardoned those convicted of use and simple possession of marijuana on federal lands and in the District of Columbia, and pardoned former US service members convicted of violating a now-repealed military ban on consensual gay sex. Rep. Jim McGovern, D-Mass., and 34 other lawmakers are urging the president to pardon environmental and human rights lawyer Steven Donziger, who was imprisoned or under house arrest for three years because of a contempt of court charge related to his work representing Indigenous farmers in a lawsuit against Chevron. Others are advocating for Biden to commute the sentences of federal death row prisoners. His attorney general, Merrick

Garland, paused federal executions. Biden had said on the campaign trail in 2020 that he wanted to end the death penalty but he never did, and now, with Trump coming back into office, it's likely executions will resume. During his first term, Trump presided over an unprecedented number of federal executions, carried out during the height of the pandemic. More pardons are coming before Biden leaves office on Jan. 20, but it's not clear whether he'll take action to guard against possible prosecution by Trump, an untested use of the power. The president has been taking the idea seriously and has been thinking about it for as much as six months — before the presidential election — but has been concerned about the precedent it would set, according to people familiar with the matter who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity to discuss internal discussions. But those who received the pardons would have to accept them. New California Sen. Adam Schiff, who was the chairman of the congressional committee that investigated the violent Jan. 6

insurrection, said such a pardon from Biden would be "unnecessary," and that the president shouldn't be spending his waning days in office worrying about this. A president has the power to both pardon, in which a person is relieved of guilt and punishment, or commute a sentence, which reduces or eliminates the punishment but doesn't exonerate the wrongdoer. It's customary for a president to grant mercy at the end of his term, using the power of the office to wipe away records or end prison terms. Before pardoning his son, Biden had repeatedly pledged not to do so. He said in a statement explaining his reversal that the prosecution had been poisoned by politics. The decision prompted criminal justice advocates and lawmakers to put additional public pressure on the administration to use that same power for everyday Americans. It wasn't a very popular move; only about 2 in 10 Americans approved of his decision, according to a poll from The Associated Press-NORC Centre for Public Affairs Research.

# Russian forces edge closer to key eastern Ukraine city

AP ■ KYIV

Fighting around the key eastern Ukraine city of Pokrovsk is "extremely intense" after a monthslong Russian push, Ukraine's top military commander said, with analysts estimating Russian forces are now within just a few kilometres of the city. Ukrainian troops repelled nearly 40 Russian attempts to storm defences around Pokrovsk over the previous 24 hours, the General Staff said in a battlefield report Thursday. "Russian occupiers are throwing all available forces forward, attempting to break through the defences of our troops," Ukrainian army chief Gen. Oleksandr Syrskiy said in a Facebook post late Wednesday. His forces are outnumbered, he said. Ukraine's stretched defences in Donetsk have been creaking since early this year under a fierce Russian drive to capture its neighbour's entire eastern Donbas region. Russian forces are trying to overwhelm Ukraine's battle-

field defences with sheer numbers of troops and powerful glide bombs that blast fortifications to smithereens. Pokrovsk, which had a population of about 60,000 before Russia's full-scale invasion in February 2022, is one of Ukraine's main defensive strongholds and a key logistics hub in the Donetsk region. Its capture would compromise Ukraine's defensive abilities and supply routes and would bring Russia closer to its stated goal of seizing the entire Donetsk region. But Ukraine's dogged resistance and Western military aid have rendered the gains costly for the Kremlin in losses of troops and armour. A major worry for the Kyiv government is that tens of billions of dollars of key US military support to hold Russia at bay may dry up under President-elect Donald Trump. The Institute for the Study of War estimated late Wednesday that Russian forces have moved to within about 6 kilometres of Pokrovsk, approach-

ing from the south. The Donetsk operation has had "a massive cost" for Russian forces, the Washington-based think tank said. Those losses "will temper their ability to translate these gains into more far-reaching offensive operations" in the months ahead, it said. Though the Russian push has been slow moving, it has recently accelerated in Donetsk and compelled Ukrainian defenders to make localised retreats. Major battlefield victories have eluded the Russians. Ukrainian media have reported tensions between Ukraine's commanders as the military pressure has built. Unconfirmed reports said Syrskiy, the military chief, had personally taken charge of some brigades around Pokrovsk. A renowned Ukrainian military officer, Serhii Filimonov, commander of the 59th Motorized Brigade, described Pokrovsk's defence as a "disaster."

### PUBLIC NOTICE

M/S SIGNATUREGLOBAL HOMES PRIVATE LIMITED (CIN: U70100DL2008PTC176641)  
Registered Office: 13th Floor, Dr. Gopal Das Bhawan, 28, Barakhamba Road, Connaught Place, New Delhi-110001, Phone: 0124-4908200, 011-49281700  
Email: Compliance@signatureglobal.in

Whereas M/s Signatureglobal Homes Private Limited (hereinafter referred as "Company") is in the process of developing of an Independent Residential Floors namely: "Signature Global Park-II Phase-II" situated at village- Dhunela, Sector-36, Sohna, District- Gurugram, Haryana over an area measuring 2.70 Acres under License No. 39 of 2019 dated 01.03.2019 granted by Director, Town and Country Planning, Haryana and having RERA Registration No. 42 of 2021 Dated 27.07.2021, Extn. No. 16 of 2023 Dated 19.06.2023.

And Whereas the Company has applied for change in Bank Account from Kotak Mahindra Bank Ltd. to Standard Chartered Bank and accordingly the company has obtained In-principal approval for change of bank accounts from Haryana Real Estate Regulatory Authority, Gurugram. Accordingly vide this public notice, the general public is hereby notified/informed that the following changes in bank accounts:

Particulars	Previous Bank Accounts	New Bank Accounts
Bank Name	Kotak Mahindra Bank Ltd.	Standard Chartered Bank
IFSC Code	KKBK0000261	SCBL0036025
Master Collection Account No. (100%)	8045100105	53105107551
RERA Account No. (70%)	8045100099	53105107578
Promoter Free Account No. (30%)	8045951592	53105107586

M/s Signatureglobal Homes Private Limited Place: Gurugram  
Date: 13/12/2024

### PUBLIC NOTICE

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Email: Compliance@signatureglobal.in

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And Whereas the Company has applied for change in Bank Account from Kotak Mahindra Bank Ltd. to Standard Chartered Bank and accordingly the company has obtained In-principal approval for change of bank accounts from Haryana Real Estate Regulatory Authority, Gurugram. Accordingly vide this public notice, the general public is hereby notified/informed that the following changes in bank accounts:

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M/s Signatureglobal Homes Private Limited Place: Gurugram  
Date: 13/12/2024

### AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROJECT UNDER THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING POLICY 2013 OF THE GOVERNMENT OF HARYANA

Applications are invited from the general public for booking of Residential Apartments in the Affordable Housing Project proposed to be developed as per terms and conditions of the policy prescribed by the Town & Country Planning Department, Government of Haryana vide Notification No.PF-2748921 dated 19.08.2013 (Details available at the Department website i.e. [www.tcp.haryana.gov.in](http://www.tcp.haryana.gov.in)).

S. No.	Unit Type	Carpet Area (Sq. Ft.)	Total Units of General Category	Total Units of Management Quota	No. of Units
1	Type-I	644.65	108		108
2	Type-II	644.65	95	13	108
3	Type-III	637.00	54		54
	<b>Total</b>		<b>257</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>270</b>

1. Project Approvals: Coloniser/Developer: Sniffex Projects Private Limited. Licence No./Year: 133 of 2023 dated 26.06.2023, Building plans approved on 19.03.2024 vide Memo No. ZP-1862/JD(RA)/2024/10267 & RERA Registration No. RC/REP/HARERA/GGM/14/546/2024/41 dated 15.04.2024.

2. Location: Sector 4, Sohna, District - Gurugram, Haryana.

3. Provisions: Project land is 8.76875 Acre. However the same is developed phase-wise as per DTCP Phasing Approval ZP-1862/JD(RA)/2024/1092 dated 05/12/2023. Under the Phase I there were 1105 residential units however land admeasuring 1.9875 acre comprising 270 residential units was mortgaged with DTCP hence 835 units were allotted vide Draw of Lot held on 28/06/2024. Now balance 270 units are de-mortgaged vide release of mortgage deed dated 20.11.2024 bearing document no 11392 hence the present offer is for balance 270 units under Phase I, in the present offer of 270 units, 5% (13 units) are reserved for Management Quota and balance 95% (257 Units) are for general public. Community Facility: - One Community Hall of more than 2000 sq. ft. and one Anganwad-cum-creche of more than 2000 sq. ft.

4. Apartment Details: Type I: 2 BHK - 108 no. of apartments of 644.65sq.ft. carpet area and balcony with an aggregated area of 99.67sq.ft. with a two-wheeler parking. Type II: 2 BHK - 95 no. of apartments of 644.65sq.ft. carpet area and balcony with an aggregated area of 145.74sq.ft. with a two-wheeler parking. Type III: 2 BHK - 54 no. of apartments of 637sq.ft. carpet area and balcony with an aggregated area of 93sq.ft. with a two-wheeler parking. Type II: MQ '2 BHK' - 13 no. of apartments of 644.65sq.ft. carpet area and balcony with an aggregated area of 145.74sq.ft. with a two-wheeler parking.

5. Allotment Rate of Apartment (All inclusive)+ Taxes & other charges as applicable will be extra. Type I: Rs. 30,20,533/- per apartment + Taxes as applicable extra. Type II: Rs. 30,20,925/- per apartment + Taxes as applicable extra. Type III: Rs. 29,78,100/- per apartment + Taxes as applicable extra.

The above rates are as per the rates prescribed under the Affordable Housing Policy, 2013 of the Government of Haryana vide Notification No. PF-2748921 dated 19.08.2013 including the amendments thereof (Details available at Department website i.e. [www.tcp.haryana.gov.in](http://www.tcp.haryana.gov.in)). However, possession charges and registration fees etc. are extra.

6. Payment Terms: i. With Application: Booking amount i.e. 5% of Carpet area of apartment: Type I: Total amount of Rs. 1,45,046/-; Type II: Total amount of Rs. 1,45,046/-; Type III: Total amount of Rs. 1,43,325/-; ii. 20% of total cost shall be payable on Allotment and the balance consideration amount shall be paid according to the construction-linked payment plan of the project duly approved by HARERA, as applicable in terms of construction stages at the relevant point in time. No interest shall accrue before the due date of payment. Any default in payment shall attract interest at the rate specified in Rule 15 of the Rules 2017 by HARERA.

7. Board Specifications of the Apartment: Drawing Room/ Lobby Flooring: Tiles / IPS | Drawing Room/ Lobby Wall Ceiling finish: OBD / Color Wash | Bedrooms Flooring: Tiles / IPS | Bedroom Wall Ceiling finish: OBD / Color Wash | Toilet Walls Finish: Tiles Up to 4 feet and OBD/ Color wash in balance area | Toilet Flooring: Tiles / IPS | Kitchen Flooring: Tiles / IPS | Kitchen Wall Finish: Tiles Up to 2 Feet high above stove/ Tile Counter and OBD / Color wash in balance area | Fixture & Fittings: Single bowl steel sink & CP / PVC/ PTMT Fittings | Balcony Flooring: Tiles / IPS | Windows: MS-Z-section & Glass / Alu steels & Glass | Door Frame / Doors: MS/ Fiber Door frames with flush Door/ Fiber Door | Common Area Flooring: Stone / Tiles / IPS | Lift Lobby : Stone / Tiles/ IPS | Chinaware: Standard Fittings | Electrical: ISI marked products for wiring, Switches and circuits | Security: Gated Complex

8. Applications Timelines: i. Application form will be filled online by Registration on <http://edraw.tcp.haryana.gov.in/tcp-dms/home> ii. Booking start from 14/12/24 00:01 iii. Payment closure date 28/12/2024 23:59 iv. Last date of submission of application form is 30/12/2024 23:59

**Eligibility:**

- The applicant should not be debarred from entering into legally binding contract under any prevailing law.
- Any person can apply, however, preference will be given to PMAY beneficiaries, including their spouse or dependent children, identified by the Urban Local Bodies Department, Haryana, under the "Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojna for All" program. First priority shall be given to the identified beneficiaries of the state of Haryana. Thereafter, for the remaining flats, preference will be given to persons, including their spouse or dependent children, who do not own any flat/plot in any HUDA developed Colony/sector or any licensed colony in the urban areas in Haryana, UT of Chandigarh, and NCT.
- Any applicant can submit only one application. A successful applicant under this policy shall not be eligible for the allotment of any other flat under this policy in another colony. In the event that he/she is successful in more than one colony, he/she will have the choice to retain only one flat. Supportive affidavits and certificates suggesting eligibility are mandatory to be uploaded on the TCP website while submitting the application for allotment.

**Allotment Criteria:**

- The allotment of apartments shall be done through e-draw of lots in the presence of a committee consisting of Deputy Commissioner or his representative (at least of the cadre of Haryana Civil Services), Senior Town Planner (Circle Office), DTP of the concerned district and the representative of colonizer concerned.
- After fixation of date for draw of lots, an advertisement shall be issued by the Developer informing the applicants about the details regarding date/time and venue of the draw of lots in the same newspapers on which the original advertisement was issued.
- For detailed criteria and time-frame to be adopted for scrutiny and allotment, the applicants may also refer to the details in the Affordable Housing Policy, 2013 including the amendments thereof notified vide No. PF-2748921 dated 19.08.2013 (Available at the Department website i.e. [www.tcp.haryana.gov.in](http://www.tcp.haryana.gov.in)).

**Disclaimer:**

- The Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act 2016 and the rules made thereunder have brought significant changes to the real estate sector. The Promoter/Developer is fully committed to comply with the provisions laid down under RERA. The promoter/developer urges every applicant to inspect the site where the project is proposed to be constructed and not rely merely upon or be influenced by any architectural impression, plan, or sales brochure. Therefore, applicants are requested to exercise personal judgment prior to submitting an application for booking.
- The images shown on TCP Site / offer of Application are indicative designs and for illustrative purposes only. Further designs may vary in form and finish for the above project details. Specifications can also be accessed at the Haryana Real Estate Regulatory Authority website, i.e., <https://haryana.era.gov.in>.

# Indian student dead, 4 injured in UK road accident

PTI ■ LONDON

A 32-year-old Indian student has died in a road accident in eastern England's Leicestershire while four other people were hospitalised with serious injuries, according to

police. Chiranjeevi Panguluri died on the spot as a passenger in a car that ended up in a ditch and three co-passengers, one woman and two men, and the driver were all taken to hospital, the Leicestershire Police

said of the accident which was reported on Tuesday morning. A 27-year-old man, arrested on suspicion of causing death by dangerous driving, has since been released on bail. "Chiranjeevi Panguluri, 32, was

the passenger in a grey Mazda 3 Tamura, which was travelling county bound from Leicester towards Market Harborough, before leaving the road and coming to rest in a ditch," a police statement read.

### PUBLIC NOTICE

REG: FREE HOLD DDA Built-up MIG Flat No. 39-D, on First floor, Block-BB, Category-MIG. Situated at Janak Puri Residential Scheme, Janak Puri, New Delhi-110058, "hereinafter referred to as the 'Property'". Be it known to all that our client, Mr. Mukul Kapur (hereinafter called the "Purchaser") intends to purchase the said property from Mr. Ajay Sharma and Mr. Rajeev Sharma (hereinafter called the "Seller"). In this connection, the seller has informed the purchaser that they are the joint owners of the said property. The seller has further informed the purchaser that the said property was owned by Mr. Vishnu Kumar Sharma vide Conveyance Deed executed by POI through DDA. The said Deed is registered as Document No. 11033, Book No. I, Volume No. 10399, Page No. 78-79 on 01.08.2012 (SRO-VII). Mr. Vishnu Kumar Sharma expired and the said property was inherited by his legal heirs viz. (1) Mr. Ajay Sharma (2) Mrs. Shalini Bhardwaj, and (3) Mr. Rajeev Sharma. Thereafter, a Relinquishment Deed was executed by Mrs. Shalini Bhardwaj in favour of Mr. Ajay Sharma and Rajeev Sharma in respect of her undivided share in the said property. The said Deed is registered as Document No. 11760 on 25.05.2022 (SRO-IIB-Janak Puri). Thus, Mr. Ajay Sharma and Mr. Rajeev Sharma (present seller) became the legal owners of the said property. The seller has also informed the purchaser that the said property is not mortgaged anywhere and there is no charge or dispute or any litigation pending regarding the said property. Any person including Bank's, Financial Institution's, relative's having any claim, right, title or any interest of any nature whatsoever into or upon the aforesaid property is hereby called upon to make the same known, in writing, with documentary evidence, by Registered AD Post, to the undersigned at the address mentioned herein below within 07 days of publication of this notice and in the event of no response having been received to the notice, the title of the seller to the said property shall be deemed to be clear of any charge or encumbrance of any nature whatsoever and any subsequent claim shall not bind our client/Purchaser, in any manner whatsoever. Shivkant Arora, Advocate M/s Intelective Law Offices A-74, LCF Defence Colony, New Delhi-110024

### PUBLIC NOTICE

To be known to all that I, Deepak Kumar Talukadar S/o Late P. C. Talukadar, Flat No.-118-B, Pocket-B, MIG Flat Dilshad Garden, Delhi-110095 have lost my DDA Possession Letter, Electricity and Water NOC issued by DDA against MIG Flat No.-118-B, Pocket-B, Dilshad Garden, Delhi-110095 against File No. L022(1010)86/DG(NP) An NCR to this effect has been lodged in the police station Delhi (LR No.2376337/2024 Dated 07.12.2024) Any person claiming any right, interest, having any objection or found in possession of original documents may write/contact me/us at the above address/phone : 9873922945 within 15 days from the publication of this notice. The person claiming any right, interest, objection with respect to the this property can personally inform or write to Dy. Director LAB or Director (H-1), D-Block, 3rd Floor, Vikas Sadan, INA, New Delhi.

### PUBLIC NOTICE

It is to inform to the public at large that Mrs. Shiba Warsi had acquired Upper Ground Floor Front Side with roof rights area measuring 70 sq. yds., Built up property bearing No. J-74-75, Kharsa No. 54/6, situated in the area of Village Kharsa, about of J. Eden Laxmi Nagar, Ilaga Shahdara, Delhi vide Regd. G.P.A dt 25.11.2019 along with ATS & Will executed by Mrs. Shalini Jain and Now Mrs. Shiba Warsi is the undisputed owner of the said property. OR Any person / firm / institution / company having any claim or right in respect of the said Property by way of inheritance, share, sale, agreement, lease, license, gift, possession, legal heirs, partners or encumbrance howsoever or otherwise is hereby required to intimate in writing to the undersigned within 07 days from the date of publication of this notice of his/her share or claim, if any, with all supporting documents at below mentioned address. After evaluation of notice period, the claim, if any, of such person shall be treated null and void and also treated as waived and not binding on our client. Ajay Kumar Giri (Advocate) H.No. 26/161, Basement, Vikram Vihar, Lajpat Nagar 4, New Delhi -110024

### PUBLIC NOTICE

It is publicly notified that E-286B, SECTOR-22, NOIDA, DISTT- GAUTAM BUDDHA NAGAR, UTTAR PRADESH-201301 has been allotted in the name of DEEPAK SHARMA S/O BP SHARMA R/O B-4/28, SAFDARJUNG ENCLAVE, NEW DELHI and will be executed in favour of MR. RAMESH BEHAL S/O LATE SHRI H. BEHAL RESIDENT OF E-286B, SECTOR-22, NOIDA, DISTT-GAUTAM BUDDHA NAGAR, UTTAR PRADESH-201301 and will be executed at Noida so with the help of the notice it is informed the transfer of the above house in favour of MR. RAMESH BEHAL S/O LATE SHRI H. BEHAL RESIDENT OF E- 286B, SECTOR-22, NOIDA, DISTT-GAUTAM BUDDHA NAGAR, UTTAR PRADESH-201301. If any one has any objection her/she may submit his/her, objection in the Housing Department of Noida. Authority alongwith sufficient proofs within 30 days of the publication of this notice

### कार्यालय नगर परिषद बदनावर, जिला-धार

बदनावर, दिनांक 11.12.2024

क्रमांक/ई-टेंडर/2197/2024

ई-निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना ( द्वितीय ) -

एतद् द्वारा समस्त समक्ष श्रेणी पंजीकृत ठेकेदार/फर्म को सूचित किया जाता है कि, निम्नलिखित कार्य को निविदा ऑनलाईन ई-प्रोक्यूमेंट पोर्टल [www.mptenders.gov.in](http://www.mptenders.gov.in) के माध्यम से आमंत्रित को जाती है।

ई-टेंडर आई.डी. क्रमांक	कार्य का विवरण	कार्य की अनुमानित लागत रु. एवं समयावधि	निविदा प्रपत्र का मूल्य एवं अमानत राशि रु.	निविदा द प्रस्तुत करने की अंतिम तिथि एवं समय
2024_UAD 387597_1	Interception & diversion of Nallahs with STP works Project of Badnawar town for Balwari river under SBM 2.0	1111.00 लाख 18 माह	30,000/- 5,55,500/-	26.12.2024 5:30 PM

नोट :- उपरोक्त कार्य के Amendments केवल वेबसाइट पर ही Corrigendum/addendum details अन्तर्गत प्रकाशित किये जावेंगे। अन्य विवरण उपरोक्त पोर्टल पर अथवा कार्यालय में कार्यालयीन समय पर देखे जा सकते हैं।

मौना शोखर यादव अध्यक्ष नगर परिषद बदनावर

राजेंद्र सिंह पवार (फुदा बापू) उपाध्यक्ष नगर परिषद बदनावर

अनिता टिपक जादव निर्माण सभापति नगर परिषद बदनावर

संतराम चौहान मुख्य नगर पालिका अधिकारी नगर परिषद बदनावर

### PUBLIC NOTICE

M/S SIGNATUREGLOBAL HOMES PRIVATE LIMITED (CIN: U70100DL2008PTC176641)  
Registered Office: 13th Floor, Dr. Gopal Das Bhawan, 28, Barakhamba Road, Connaught Place, New Delhi-110001, Phone: 0124-4908200, 011-49281700  
Email: Compliance@signatureglobal.in

Whereas M/s Signatureglobal Homes Private Limited (hereinafter referred as "Company") is in the process of developing of an Independent Residential Floors namely: "Signature Global Park-I (1)" situated at village- Dhunela, Sector-36, Sohna, District- Gurugram, Haryana over an area measuring 3.91 Acres under License No. 18 of 2021 dated 16.04.2021 granted by Director, Town and Country Planning, Haryana and having RERA Registration No. 62 of 2021 dated 11.10.2021.

And Whereas the Company has applied for change in Bank Account from SBM Bank Ltd. to Standard Chartered Bank and accordingly the company has obtained In-principal approval for change of bank accounts from Haryana Real Estate Regulatory Authority, Gurugram. Accordingly vide this public notice, the general public is hereby notified/informed that the following changes in bank accounts:

Particulars	Previous Bank Accounts	New Bank Accounts
Bank Name	SBM Bank (India) Ltd.	Standard Chartered Bank
IFSC Code	STCB0000065	SCBL0036025
Master Collection Account No. (100%)	20052021001867	53105107527
RERA Account No. (70%)	20052021001874	53105107535
Promoter Free Account No. (30%)	20052021001881	53105107543

M/s Signatureglobal Homes Private Limited Place: Gurugram  
Date: 13/12/2024

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Email: Compliance@signatureglobal.in

Whereas M/s Signatureglobal Homes Private Limited (hereinafter referred as "Company") is in the process of developing of an Independent Residential Floors namely: "Signature Global Park-I (2)" situated at village- Dhunela, Sector-36, Sohna, District- Gurugram, Haryana over an area measuring 1.09 Acres under License No. 18 of 2021 dated 16.04.2021 granted by Director, Town and Country Planning, Haryana and having RERA Registration No. 02 of 2023 dated 02.01.2023.

And Whereas the Company has applied for change in Bank Account from SBM Bank Ltd. to Standard Chartered Bank and accordingly the company has obtained In-principal approval for change of bank accounts from Haryana Real Estate Regulatory Authority, Gurugram. Accordingly vide this public notice, the general public is hereby notified/informed that the following changes in bank accounts:

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Bank Name	SBM Bank (India) Ltd.	Standard Chartered Bank
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Email: Compliance@signatureglobal.in

Whereas M/s Signatureglobal Homes Private Limited (hereinafter referred as "Company") is in the process of developing of an Independent Residential Floors namely: "Signature Global Park-III (2)" situated at village- Dhunela, Sector-36, Sohna, District- Gurugram, Haryana over an area measuring 1.5375 Acres under License No. 40 of 2019 dated 01.03.2019 granted by Director, Town and Country Planning, Haryana and having RERA Registration No. 64 of 2021 Dated 13.10.2021.

And Whereas the Company has applied for change in Bank Account from Kotak Mahindra Bank Ltd. to Standard Chartered Bank and accordingly the company has obtained In-principal approval for change of bank accounts from Haryana Real Estate Regulatory Authority, Gurugram. Accordingly vide this public notice, the general public is hereby notified/informed that the following changes in bank accounts:

Particulars	Previous Bank Accounts	New Bank Accounts
Bank Name	Kotak Mahindra Bank Ltd.	Standard Chartered Bank
IFSC Code	KKBK0000261	SCBL0036025
Master Collection Account No. (100%)	8045100075	53105107594
RERA Account No. (70%)	8045100082	53105107608
Promoter Free Account No. (30%)	8045951608	53105107616

M/s Signatureglobal Homes Private Limited Place: Gurugram  
Date: 13/12/2024

### PUBLIC NOTICE

M/S SIGNATUREGLOBAL HOMES PRIVATE LIMITED (CIN: U70100DL2008PTC176641)  
Registered Office: 13th Floor, Dr. Gopal Das Bhawan, 28, Barakhamba Road, Connaught Place, New Delhi-110001, Phone: 0124-4908200, 011-49281700  
Email: Compliance@signatureglobal.in

Whereas M/s Signatureglobal Homes Private Limited (hereinafter referred as "Company") is in the process of developing of an Independent Residential Floors namely: "Signature Global Park-III" situated at village- Dhunela, Sector-36, Sohna, District- Gurugram, Haryana over an area measuring 4.74 Acres under License No. 40 of 2019 dated 01.03.2019 granted by Director, Town and Country Planning, Haryana and having RERA Registration No. 40 of 2020 Dated 09.11.2020, Extn. No. 06 of 2023 Dated 20.03.2023.

And Whereas the Company has applied for change in Bank Account from Kotak Mahindra Bank Ltd. to Standard Chartered Bank and accordingly the company has obtained In-principal approval for change of bank accounts from Haryana Real Estate Regulatory Authority, Gurugram. Accordingly vide this public notice, the general public is hereby notified/informed that the following changes in bank accounts:

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Bank Name	Kotak Mahindra Bank Ltd.	Standard Chartered Bank
IFSC Code	KKBK0000261	SCBL0036025
Master Collection Account No. (100%)	8045100075	53105107594
RERA Account No. (70%)	8045100082	53105107608
Promoter Free Account No. (30%)	8045951608	53105107616

M/s Signatureglobal Homes Private Limited Place: Gurugram  
Date: 13/12/2024





**USP**



**Chairman XI's team defeated MD XI's team by 6 wickets.**

In the first match of the cricket competition played on the occasion of the 18th Foundation Day of Himachal Pradesh Power Corporation Limited, the team of Chairman XI in Bishop Cotton School ground defeated MD XI's team by 6 wickets. MD XI's team batted first and scored 152 runs losing 8 wickets in the scheduled 20 overs. Hemant Bhardwaj scored 47 runs, Deepak Dogra scored 30 runs and Abhishek Verma scored 23 runs. Loveish Latka from Chairman XI and took three wickets for 12 runs in four overs. Pritam took three wickets for 23 runs. Chairman XI team achieved the target set by losing 5 wickets in 19 overs. Chairman XI and such Narendra Thakur contributed the maximum 63 runs and Puneet scored 25 runs and Pawan Thaliyari scored 15 runs.



The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) Chandigarh Branch Office, in association with the Department of Food, Civil Supply, and Consumer Affairs (Legal Metrology), Punjab, organized a State-Level Committee (SLC) on Standardization meeting on December 1, 2024. The meeting witnessed the participation of principal secretaries from various departments of Punjab, including Technical Education and Industrial Training, Public Works Department (PWD), Medical Education, PUNGRAIN, Chamber of Commerce, Local Government, and Food, Civil Supply, and Consumer Affairs. A notable highlight of the event was the inauguration of a Punjabi-language comic book by Sh. KAP Sinha, Chief Secretary of Punjab. The comic aims to create awareness among young children about the importance of standards, promoting early learning on the subject. The initiative was well-received and appreciated by all attendees.



**Centre for Research in Rural and Industrial Development (CRRID), Sector 19, Chandigarh**

Indian Farmers Fertilizer Cooperative Ltd (IFFCO), Chandigarh National Workshop on "Nutraceutical and Phytonutrient Health Benefits of Barley as a Staple Food" and "Role of Nano Fertiliser in Agriculture Sustainability and Clean Green Environment". The Centre for Research in Rural and Industrial Development (CRRID), Sector 19, Chandigarh, organized a National Workshop on "Nutraceutical and Phytonutrient Health Benefits of Barley as a Staple Food" and "Role of Nano Fertiliser in Agriculture Sustainability and Clean Green Environment". The event was supported by the Indian Farmers Fertilizer Cooperative Ltd (IFFCO), Chandigarh. The session commenced with a warm welcome from Dr. Bindu Duggal, Director (Acting) CRRID. Dr. Ranjodh Singh Bains, (Department of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, Government of Punjab), provided a brief introduction of the speakers and outlined the objectives of the workshop. He emphasized the importance of barley and nanotechnology, particularly its role in benefiting farmers and the wider community. The speaker for the first lecture was Prof. Dr. Omvir Singh (Principal Scientist), Barley Improvement, IIWBR, Karnal. Prof. Singh compared barley to other common cereals like wheat and rice, emphasizing on its nutrition, especially in terms of protein. He explained that barley has much less gluten compared to wheat, which contains 80% gluten which leads to serious health issues such as cancer, kidney damage, and leaky gut syndrome. Prof. Singh also highlighted the importance of gut health, calling the gut as the "second brain". Environmentally, barley requires less water for cultivation and is suitable for organic farming.

**Trident ranks among 'India's Largest Companies' in Fortune 500 India**

Punjab / Chandigarh: Trident Limited has made a notable leap in the latest Fortune 500 India rankings, climbing 8 spots to secure the 321st position, up from 329th last year. This growth highlights Trident's strong performance across its diverse sectors, including textiles, paper, and energy. In addition to this achievement, Trident has been recognized in the Dun & Bradstreet - D&B Top 500 Value Creators list, further scoring its ability to drive value for stakeholders. These accomplishments reflect the company's continued commitment to innovation, operational excellence, and its leadership position in India's business landscape.

**State Election Commission, Punjab**

1. Disposed of with liberty to avail the necessary remedies but at the appropriate stage. 2. However, the respondent No.2 is directed to lawfully decide the representation (dated 12.12.2024) filed by the petitioners, today itself. The respondents concerned are also directed, that as and when municipal elections are conducted to the Municipal Corporation concerned, thereupon the respondents concerned, shall ensure that complete compliance is made to the guidelines issued by the State Election Commission, Punjab, relating to Videography of the nomination process till its withdrawal. 3. Chief Secretary, Government of Punjab, is directed to circulate this order to all the Returning Officers concerned.

**GNPA of PSBs declines to 3.12 per cent in Sept: FinMin**

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Gross non-performing assets (NPAs) of public sector banks (PSBs) have declined to a decade low of 3.12 per cent at the end of September 2024 from a peak of 14.98 per cent in March 2018 on the back of measures like the 4Rs - recognition, recapitalisation, resolution, and reform - taken by the government, the finance ministry said on Thursday. Since 2015, the government implemented a comprehensive 4Rs strategy of recognising NPAs transparently, resolution and recovery, recapitalising PSBs, and reforms in the financial system to address the challenges faced by PSBs, it said. Capital adequacy ratio of PSBs improved 393 bps to reach 15.43 per cent in September 2024 from 11.45 per cent in March 2015, it said. During 2023-24, PSBs recorded the highest-ever aggregate net profit of



Rs 1.41 lakh crore against Rs 1.05 lakh crore in 2022-23, it said, adding that the figure was Rs 0.86 lakh crore in the first half of 2024-25. In the last three years, PSBs have paid total dividend of Rs 61,964 crore, it said. "PSBs continue to expand their reach to every nook and corner of

the country to deepen financial inclusion. Their capital base has strengthened and their asset quality has improved. Now they are able to go to market and access capital instead of depending on the government for recapitalisation," it said. To deepen financial inclusion in the country, 54 crore Jan Dhan accounts and more than 52 crore collateral-free loans under various flagship financial inclusion schemes - PM-Mudra, Stand-Up India, PM-SVANidhi, PM Vishwakarma - have been sanctioned, it said. Under the Mudra scheme, 68 per cent of beneficiaries are women and under PM-SVANidhi scheme, 44 per cent of beneficiaries are women, the finance ministry said. The number of bank branches has gone up from 1,17,990 in March 2014 to 1,60,501 in September 2024. Of 1,60,501 branches, 1,00,686 are in rural and semi-urban (RUSU) areas, it said. KCC Scheme aims to provide the

short-term crop loan to farmers, it said, adding that the total number of operative KCC Accounts as on September 2024 stood at 7.71 crore with total outstanding of Rs. 9.88 lakh crore. The Government of India (GoI) has consistently supported the MSME sector in terms of flow of credit at affordable rates through various initiatives, it said. "The MSME advances registered a CAGR of 15 per cent during the last three years. Total MSME advances as on March 31, 2024 stood at Rs 28.04 lakh crore, posted an annual growth of 17.2 per cent," it said. The gross advances of scheduled commercial banks, which grew from Rs 8.5 lakh crore to 61 lakh crore during 2004-2014, has significantly increased to Rs 175 lakh crore in March 2024, according to the finance ministry. Besides, the government has also announced a slew of measures towards welfare of employees working in PSBs.



**Auto component industry grows 11 per cent to ₹3.32 lakh Crore in Apr-Sept: ACMA**

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The automotive components industry grew 11 per cent year-on-year to Rs 3.32 lakh crore in the first half of the current fiscal, industry body ACMA said on Thursday.

The turnover of the automotive component industry in the April-September period of last fiscal stood at Rs 2.98 lakh crore. "With vehicle sales across all segments reaching pre-pandemic levels and despite geopolitical challenges on the exports front, the auto components sector witnessed a steady growth in both domestic and international markets in the first half of FY2024-25," Automotive Component Manufacturers Association of India (ACMA) President Shradha Suri Marwah said. She said the festive season brought significant sales across most segments of the vehicle industry. "However, reflecting on the past eight months of this fiscal year, while two-wheelers have shown promising growth, sales of passenger vehicles and commercial vehicles have been relatively moderate," she added. On the exports front, with geological challenges, delivery time and freight costs have once again gone up, Marwah said. "That said, in value terms, the industry remains in robust health, signalling stability and resilience amidst evolving market dynamics," she added. The components industry continues to make investments for purposes of higher value addition, technology upgradation and localisation to stay relevant to both domestic and international customers, Marwah said. ACMA Director General Vinnie Mehta said that with vehicle sales and exports displaying steady performance, the auto component industry demonstrated a growth of 11.3 per cent scaling a turnover of Rs 3.32 lakh crore in the first half of FY 2024-25. Auto component supplies to all the segments - OEMs (original equipment manufacturers), exports as also the aftermarket remained steadfast, he added. Exports grew by 7 per cent to USD 11.1 billion (Rs 93.34 lakh crore) while imports grew by 4 per cent to USD 11 billion (Rs 92.05 lakh crore) with USD 150 million in surplus, the industry body said. The aftermarket, estimated at Rs 47,416 crore, also witnessed a growth of 5 per cent year-on-year, it added. Similarly, component supplies to OEMs in the domestic market grew by 11 per cent year-on-year to Rs 2.83 lakh crore, ACMA said.

**India, UK talks on proposed trade agreement may start in Jan: Official**

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India and the UK are expected to hold the next round of talks for a proposed free trade agreement (FTA) in January to resolve the pending issues and close the negotiations, a senior official said on Thursday. The talks for the proposed FTA began in January 2022. The 14th round of talks stalled as the two nations stepped into their general election cycles. In November, an official statement said that the dates for the FTA talks in early 2025 would be finalised through diplomatic channels. The negotiations would resume the discussions from the progress achieved



previously and seek to bridge the gaps for expeditiously closing the trade deal. The next round of talks is likely to start at January-end, the official said. The Indian industry is demanding greater access for

as scotch whiskey, electric vehicles, lamb meat, chocolates and certain confectionary items. Britain is also looking for more opportunities for UK services in Indian markets in segments like telecommunications, legal and financial services (banking and insurance). The two countries are also negotiating a bilateral investment treaty (BIT). There are 26 chapters in the agreement, which includes goods, services, investments and intellectual property rights. The bilateral trade between India and the UK increased to USD 21.34 billion in 2023-24 from 20.36 billion in 2022-23.

**Cumulative capex of airports expected to grow 12 per cent at ₹60,000 Crore in three years: Report**



PTI ■ MUMBAI

The cumulative capex (capital expenditure) of Indian airports is expected to grow 12 per cent at Rs 60,000 crore in the three years through FY27 from Rs 53,000 crore during 2022-2024, to add required infrastructure for about 65 million passengers per annum, ratings agency CRISIL said on Thursday. CRISIL said 70 per cent of this capex is expected to be funded through debt. The ratings agency said its projections are based on a study of 11 private airports in the country that account for 60 per cent of the total passenger traffic in FY24. In addition to the expected growth in passenger traffic, increase in tariffs and spending within the airport ecosystem will lift revenue of private Indian airports at an

average growth rate of 17 per cent between FY25 and FY27, it said. That, coupled with improved funding access and a predictable regulatory regime, will support the strong credit profiles of private airports. "The number of passengers at Indian airports is expected to clock a compounded annual growth rate (CAGR) of 8-9 per cent over fiscals 2025-2027 from 376 million last fiscal. Growth in domestic traffic, which comprises over 80 per cent of overall volume, will ride on rising demand from the business and leisure segments and government push to increase penetration of air travel," said Manish Gupta, Senior Director and Deputy Chief Ratings Officer, CRISIL Ratings. As of July 2024, the government had operationalised 84 airports

and 579 routes under its regional connectivity UDAN scheme to increase regional penetration, CRISIL said, adding that while the impact is small at present, with air traffic in these airports contributing around 2 per cent of domestic air traffic, these regional routes are important as they provide feeder traffic to the metro airports. International traffic will also grow, driven by increased business travel, easing visa requirements, and improving connectivity with airlines adding new routes, it said. To cater to this growth, airport operators are investing in aviation-related infrastructure such as terminal buildings and runways to create room for increased passenger flow. Additionally, airports are developing non-aeronautical offerings such as lounge, car parking, food and beverage spaces and retail outlets, which will help increase revenue, too, the ratings agency said. "Although around 70 per cent of capex is expected to be funded by debt, the credit profiles of private airports will remain strong over fiscals 2025-27 due to an average projected increase of 17 per cent in revenue of airports in the CRISIL Ratings study," CRISIL Ratings Director Ankit Hakhu said.

**Gold rises ₹500 per 10 gm; silver at ₹97,000 per kg**

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Gold prices climbed Rs 500 to Rs 80,900 per 10 grams in the national capital on Thursday due to persistent buying by retailers and jewellers, according to the All India Sarafa Association. The precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity finished at Rs 80,400 per 10 grams in the previous trading session. The yellow metal has jumped nearly Rs 2,000 in the past three sessions. Silver also rallied Rs 700 to Rs 97,000 per kg on Thursday. The white metal settled at Rs 96,300 per kg in the previous session. The price of gold of 99.5 per cent purity also surged Rs 500 to Rs 80,500 per 10 grams. It ended at Rs 80,000 per 10 grams on Wednesday. According to traders, persistent buying by jewellers and a firm trend in the international markets were among the factors that aided the rally in gold prices. Meanwhile, in futures trade on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), gold contracts for February delivery dipped Rs 114 or 0.14 per cent to Rs 78,888 per 10 grams.

**Green shoots on consumption growth, food inflation expected to come down: FICCI President**

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Green shoots are visible on the consumption front as food inflation has started receding, newly appointed FICCI President Harsha V Agarwal said. Food inflation is expected to come down to its normal level in the next two quarters, Agarwal said, adding that he is hopeful for a revival in consumption growth, aided by a good crop and increased spending by the government on the big-ticket infra projects and rural schemes in the December quarter. Government spending in the right areas - like increase in capex and ramping up infrastructure, rather than focusing on revenue expenditure - is helping the overall economy, he said. "We are seeing some green shoots where we believe food inflation is coming down... It has to come back to normal. It might take maybe one

quarter or so. But we are seeing situations where it is improving, and hence we are hopeful that consumption should increase," Agarwal told PTI. Government spending in the September quarter was low due to the general elections in the June quarter. However, it increased in the third quarter and is expected to continue in the fourth quarter as well, he said. "Going forward, we see that increasing in Q3 and substantially in Q4. So cumulatively, with all these things, we are hopeful that the consumption should improve going from here," he added. The government is focused a lot on the rural economy, which has done well in the second quarter. "What we hear is the kharif production is also going to be good this year. So from that perspective, overall, we are quite optimistic from the rural front. And from that is where you know the consumption also is com-



ing and it should increase," said Agarwal. Food inflation in India has been high in recent months, driven by rising prices of vegetables, fruits, oils, and fats. It has slowed down the consumption in urban areas, impacting purchase from the middle class. "The government has been doing those kind of tax reforms as and where needed" to boost the consumption, Agarwal said. However, he added, "maybe the salary has not gone up to the extent... That is why they are feeling the pinch."

With cooling of inflation and increase in private investments, demand of skilled jobs will increase, and overall things will become better, he said. According to the latest Consumer Price Index (CPI) data released by the National Statistics Office (NSO) on Thursday, inflation in the food basket reduced to 9.04 per cent in November compared to 10.87 per cent in October. Last week, while unveiling the bi-monthly monetary policy last week, former Reserve Bank of India Governor Shaktikanta Das said lingering food price pressures are likely to keep headline inflation elevated in the December quarter. Goenka, who is also Vice-Chairman & Managing Director of FMCG major Emami, said two segments - rural and premium products - are doing "much better". "The challenge is more in the area of the lower middle class, and middle class consumers, where the real hit is.

And since the discretionary spend as a percentage is anyway lower, any hit on the inflation has a direct impact," Agarwal said. However, he was "very hopeful, once the inflation is under control, it should improve and things will be much better". Over the cement sector, which faced a decline in price in last two quarters YoY, Agarwal said, "their prices might be declining, but still, all the cement companies are making good profit". He further added it "may be because in the industry now, consolidation is happening. Some of the larger players are fighting for the market share, etc". Agarwal said government programmes, such as the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme, have made a big difference in some key strategic sectors such as electronic, manufacturing of mobile phones, active pharmaceutical ingredients, etc.

# DEEP DIVE INTO KOLKATA'S PAST



Devasis Chattopadhyay takes you through nine compelling stories of forgotten lives that shaped the cultural and historical history of Kolkata, writes **ABHI SINGHAL**

**H**arry Hobbs of *Kolkata and Other Forgotten Lives* is a compelling and richly detailed collection of nine meticulously researched stories that uncover the hidden aspects of Kolkata's past, many of which are unknown even to the city's residents and historians. Drawing on obscure and forgotten sources such as dusty old files, yellowed newspapers, private family papers, memoirs, and government archives, this book brings to life the untold stories of Kolkata's lesser-known figures and the city itself.

include an opera impresario, an entertainer, a piano tuner, a mercenary, a hotelier, a writer, a publisher, a lawyer, and even a real-life police detective turned crime writer. These characters, often forgotten by history, made remarkable contributions to the fabric of Kolkata during a time of upheaval and change. The book reflects on a significant period of transformation, when Kolkata's unique and syncretic

The book deep dives into the fascinating history of Kolkata, providing an unexplored jist of the city's origins. Some historians believe that Kolkata is mentioned in the Mahabharata, while others trace its roots back to the Mauryan and Gupta periods. The author, *Devasis Chattopadhyay*, then traces the transformation of the city into a metropolis, paying particular attention to its growth and changes in the 19th century. This period, marked by significant social, cultural, and economic shifts, is expertly and theoretically woven into the narrative.

*Chattopadhyay* focuses on the lives of protagonists who were often overlooked by mainstream history as the middle and junior civil or military officials, puisne judges, and a wide array of other fascinating individuals. These



**ABOUT THE BOOK**  
 Book: Harry Hobbs of Kolkata and Other Forgotten Lives by Devasis Chattopadhyay  
 Publisher: Niyogi Books Private Limited  
 Price: ₹595 Pages: 316



identity was shaped, in part, by European and American settlers. It was an era when many of the things we now take for granted like the social norms, institutions, and innovations that were still in their infancy. Yet, the individuals featured in the book were instrumental in creating the cultural and historical landscape of the city. *Chattopadhyay's* narrative uncovers these hidden histories, offering a fresh perspective on Kolkata's past. One of the key figures in the book, Harry Hobbs, is also featured in the author's earlier work *Scoundrels and Scroungers*, where *Hobbs* noted that the principal cause of men's downfall up until the end of the 19th century was drinking. In his writings, he provides intriguing glimpses into a Kolkata of the past the one where European women worked as barmaids and a thriving but largely unspoken subterranean slave trade flourished. This was also a time when wealthy Bengali

Babus kept European concubines, and attending English theatre performances or listening to Italian opera was a common pastime among the city's elite. The book is divided into nine chapters, each focusing on a different historical figure: Major Harry H. Hobbs, The Shakespeare Family, Isaac Henry Townley Roberdeau, Richard Reid, Colonel Percy Wyndham, Shirley Tremearne, Henry Thoby Prinsep, David Nunez Cardozo, and others. Through these vivid and captivating stories, Harry Hobbs of Kolkata and Other Forgotten Lives provides a nuanced and fascinating portrait of Kolkata as a city in transition, shaped by diverse influences and inhabited by characters whose contributions to its rich history have long been forgotten. *Chattopadhyay's* work offers an enriching journey into the heart of Kolkata's past, illuminating the hidden lives that have shaped the city we know today.

## Najma's journey through politics

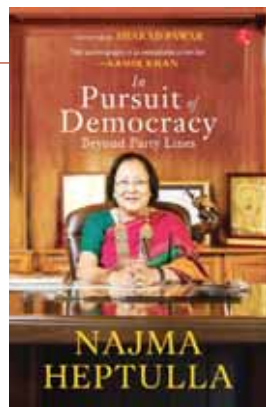
By **ABHISHEK SONKAR**



Heptulla's writing style is direct and conversational. It feels like she is talking to you, recounting her life over a cup of tea. She avoids heavy political

jargon, making the book a breeze even if you're not well-versed in politics. The narrative flows smoothly between her professional milestones and

personal reflections, making it engaging and balanced. This blend of warmth and clarity makes the book as much about Najma as person as it is about her as a politician. What stands out in this book is how Heptulla personalises her experiences. She is not just recounting political events; she is showing how they shaped her life and decisions. Whether you are a political junkie or someone interested in peeking behind the curtain of Indian politics, this book offers a thoughtful mix of history and heartfelt storytelling. Through her candid, no-nonsense style, Heptulla gives us an insider's view of what it is like to be a woman navigating Indian politics. Her journey from Congress to BJP and the challenges she faced along the way provide a unique perspective on party dynamics and leadership in India. The book also touches on broader issues in Indian politics, such as the trust deficit between Sonia Gandhi and herself, and the treatment of figures like PV Narasimha Rao and Dr Manmohan Singh by the party bosses. By sharing these personal stories, Heptulla humanises the political landscape, making it easier to understand the complex relationships and motivations that shape decision-making at the highest levels. *In Pursuit of Democracy* Heptulla offers more than just political memoirs; she provides a nuanced, first-person account of her time in power, shedding light on the behind-the-scenes dynamics that often go unnoticed. Whether you're a seasoned observer of Indian politics or someone who wants to understand the forces shaping the country's democratic processes, this book is a compelling read. It is not just about politics; it is about the life of a woman who has lived through some of the most transformative moments in Indian political history.



**ABOUT THE BOOK**  
 Book: In Pursuit of Democracy: Beyond Party Lines by Najma Heptulla  
 Publisher: Rupa Publications  
 Price: ₹695

## A Transformative Journey

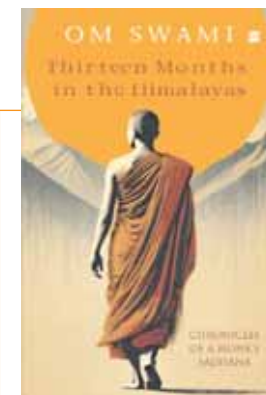
By **GYANESHWAR DAYAL**

**A** Transformative Journey of Faith, Endurance, and the Divine Om Swami's *Thirteen Months in the Himalayas* is a spellbinding account of one man's relentless pursuit of spiritual truth and divine connection. *Om Swami's Thirteen Months in the Himalayas* is an extraordinary account of one man's unwavering pursuit of spiritual truth and divine connection. Following his earlier memoir, 'If Truth Be Told', this book delves deeper into Swami's radical transformation from a successful entrepreneur to an ascetic devoted to discovering the Creator. Written with an almost poetic honesty, it presents a gripping narrative of discipline, endurance, and transcendence.

**A Journey of the Soul:** The Himalayas serve as more than just the backdrop for Swami's odyssey—they become a central character, mirroring the challenges and revelations of his inner world. The author's detailed descriptions of his austere lifestyle, rigorous sadhanas and encounters with celestial energies immerse readers in his spiritual journey. The book's raw and vivid prose captures the stark beauty of the mountains and the unforgiving nature of the terrain, where every moment is a test of will and faith.

**Spiritual Discipline Redefined:** What makes this book especially compelling is its depiction of extreme spiritual discipline. Swami's daily routine of meditation, mantras, and fasting is as exhausting to read about as it is inspiring. His ability to persevere through physical deprivation, isolation, and moments of self-doubt speaks to an exceptional strength of spirit. His writing makes you feel the depth of his longing to encounter God, transforming what could have been a remote subject into something deeply relatable. At its core, *Thirteen Months in the Himalayas* is a meditation on faith and purpose. It challenges readers to reflect on their own lives and the sacrifices they are willing to make in pursuit of their truths. The book inspires by showing what is possible when one's commitment to a goal is absolute, even when the goal is as abstract and immense as experiencing the divine.

**Accessible Yet Profound:** Om Swami's journey is deeply personal, yet its lessons transcend individual experience. This book is a rare gem that inspires introspection, courage and hope. Highly recommended for anyone seeking inspiration to explore the limits of human potential and the boundless nature of the divine.

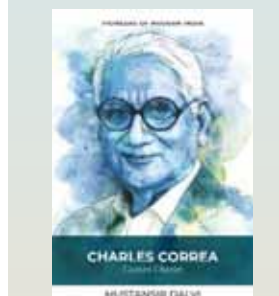


**ABOUT THE BOOK**  
 Book: Thirteen Months in the Himalayas by Om Swami  
 Publisher: HarperCollins  
 Price: ₹499

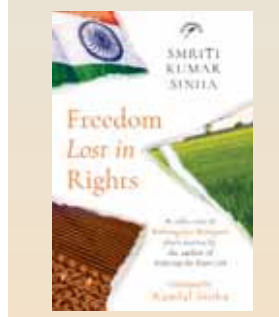
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 Price: ₹595



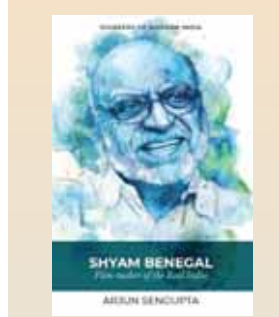
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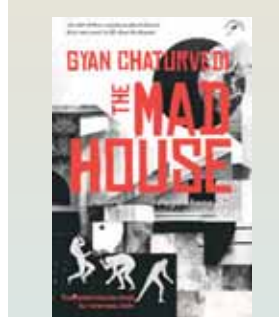
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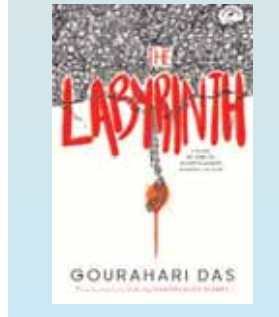
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 Publisher: Niyogi Books  
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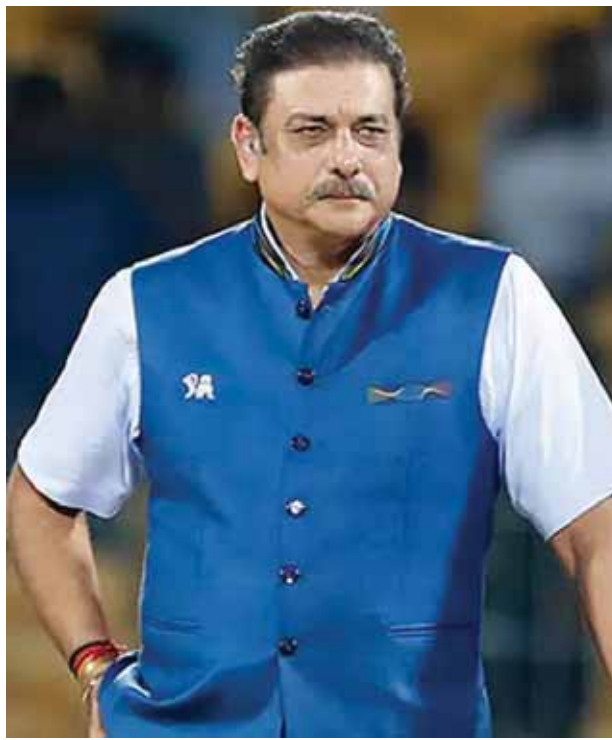
Book: The Labyrinth  
 Author: Gourahari Das  
 Publisher: Niyogi Books  
 Price: ₹295

# Rohit must return to opening if he has to throw the first punch: Shastri

PTI ■ BRISBANE

Former India head coach Ravi Shastri, who knows a thing or two about winning Test rubbers in Australia, on Thursday asked India skipper Rohit Sharma to return to the opening slot "if he has to throw the first punch" on an opponent brimming with confidence. Shastri was serving as team director when India won their maiden Test series in Australia in 2017-18 and was the head coach when the side rallied brilliantly to stun the hosts in the last tour in 2020-21. The move to slot Rohit at number six did not yield the desired results for India and they were hammered by 10 wickets in the second Test at Adelaide, leaving the five-match clash locked at 1-1 and with everything to play for in what Shastri believes could decide the fate of the series. "That's where he's (Rohit) been at his best over the last eight or nine years," Shastri was quoted as saying by "The

Age. "It's not that he's going to set the world on fire - he could - but that's the place that's best for him...If he has to do damage, if he has to throw the first punch, that's the best place from where he can do it." Rohit had only one fifty in his last 10 innings heading into the Pink-ball Test last week when Shastri, interestingly, advised against changing the opening combination of Yashasvi Jaiswal and KL Rahul after their success in the position while backing the captain to bat in the middle-order. Shastri said he has no doubt the winner of the third Test, starting here on Saturday, could go on to claim the series. "I feel whichever team wins this Test match will win the series. I have absolutely no doubt in my mind. So it is very, very important that India get the balance right, because Australia have got the confidence back," the former captain said.



The triumph of 2021 is considered one of the greatest in the history of Indian cricket and Shastri, while speaking at the first annual Usman Khawaja



Foundation lunch at the Gabba, said the unity showed by the team, despite restrictions due to COVID-19, played a big part in the historic win.

"In COVID, the first Test match you start with five bowlers and the same five bowlers don't play the last Test. That says it all, it's like Australia playing without these five bowlers in the last Test of the series, it's a different ball game. Plus you didn't have quite a few batsmen as well. So it's a tribute to the players. "You can only do so much as a coach from behind the scenes. At the end of it, it's the players who have to go out there and do their job and they were magnificent." Four years ago, after getting bundled out for their lowest Test total of 36 in Adelaide, India made a magnificent comeback to win two of the remaining three games and emerge winners. Shastri fondly recalled a conversation between Rishabh Pant and Shubman Gill, who was helping out the latter with some useful tips right after his dismissal, as India went for the jugular to score 140 odd runs in the final session of play to shock

the hosts at the Gabba, which was until then the home team's fortress. "I'll never forget it," Shastri said. "Last session, 140 runs to get. We had two different change rooms because of COVID. I went down from the coaches' room to have a chat with either Rishabh or (Chateshwar) Pujara. When I was about to reach the toilet, I heard a conversation between Gill and Pant. "Seventy-one overs bowled, Gill had got out for 91, and they were the two youngest players in the side, 21 and 22. "Nine overs left, they need the new ball, they'll bring (Marnus) Labuschagne on with his leg spin, you've got to score 45-50 runs there. "They are planning how they can reach closer to the end score, and no way was I going to stop them, I don't want to change that mindset. So I just walked past and said 'do what you have to do'. In the end, we chased down nearly 150 in that last session."



## Virat Kohli addresses team ahead of 3rd Test in Brisbane

PTI ■ BRISBANE

He used to be the cynosure of all eyes at training sessions during his captaincy days and Virat Kohli was once again the centre of attention as he addressed his teammates here on Thursday. After the demoralising 10-wicket defeat in the Adelaide day/night game, the visitors needed a bit of inspiration going into the crucial third Test of the series, and the youngsters in the side couldn't have got a better mentor than 'King' Kohli himself to guide them with his words of wisdom. The team huddles before the start of the training session has been a constant feature for years now and Kohli used to do a lot of talking during his days in charge. He did take a back seat once he left captaincy but with skipper Rohit also under immense pressure after four straight defeats, the senior-most player (in terms of Test debut) had to take the initiative ahead of the match starting here on Saturday. With vice-captain Jasprit Bumrah by his side, Kohli was

seen speaking animatedly to the group and everyone, including Rohit, listened to him with rapt attention. Rohit faces both new and semi-new ball in nets. Unlike before the pink ball Test, Rohit looked in far better shape during his net session at the Gabba but question marks remain over whether he would be back to opening the innings or stay put at No. 6, which isn't his preferred slot. On the day, while KL Rahul and Yashasvi Jaiswal once again faced the new ball at the nets, Rohit took on a slightly older Kookaburra at the beginning. Having faced that for some time, he did change nets with Rahul and also played a brand new red cherry for a while. The Gabba pitch has a decent grass cover and has always been one of the most traditional Australian wickets with both seam and bounce being on offer. Rohit's susceptibility has been against the moving deliveries more than bounce, and hence, it would be interesting to see if he takes on the challenge head on. After his session, Rohit and

head coach Gautam Gambhir were immersed in a lengthy chat and a from a distance, it looked like they were discussing technique. Gambhir was seen shaping up for some shadow drives, with Rohit watching him intently. Akash Deep looks better but will Gambhir drop Harshit? Akash Deep is believed to be the most consistent bowler in the Indian net session but that is no indicator that he will replace the young Harshit Rana, who was taken to task by Travis Head during the second Test in Adelaide. After four wickets on Test debut in Perth, Harshit was smashed for 86 in 16 overs but skipper Rohit came firmly to the youngster's defence. The burly Harshit can bowl the heavy ball and Gabba, just like the Optus Stadium track, could suit his style of bowling although he has been losing steam in subsequent spells after the opening one. Akash Deep at the other hand troubled Jaiswal twice, getting the outside edge of his bat, and those were clear catches in the slip cordon. He also got a pat on the back from the skipper.

## Gujarat Giants appoint Pravin Tambe as bowling coach; Marsh takes over as batting coach

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

Gujarat Giants on Thursday appointed former leg-spinner Pravin Tambe as their bowling coach, while Australian Daniel Marsh joined the side as batting coach ahead of Women's Premier League 2025. Michael Klinger, who joined the team last season, will continue as the Giants' head coach. Tambe, who made his IPL debut at the age of 41 back in 2013 for Rajasthan Royals, brings substantial coaching experience, having worked with Kolkata Knight Riders and Lucknow Super Giants. "I'm eager to work with this talented group of players to sharpen their skills and help



them excel," said Tambe. Marsh carries loads of experience, having served as head coach of the Tasmania men's team from 2013 to 2017 and was appointed as the assistant coach of the Australian women's cricket team in 2022. "I look forward to developing a fearless approach to our batting with the aim of

making our team one of the strongest batting units of the WPL," said Marsh. Ahead of the WPL 2025 auction to be held in Bengaluru on Sunday, the Giants had retained players such as Ashleigh Gardner and Beth Mooney. Gujarat Giants' retained players: Ashleigh Gardner, Beth Mooney, Dayalan Hemalatha, Harleen Deol, Laura Wolvaardt, Shabnam Shakil, Tanuja Kanwar, Phoebe Litchfield, Meghna Singh, Kashvee Gautam, Priya Mishra, Mannat Kashyap, Bharti Fulmali, Sayali Satghare. Released players: Sneha Rana, Kothryn Bryce, Trisha Poojitha, Veda Krishnamurthy, Tarannum Pathan, Lea Tahuu.

## Prasar Bharati to broadcast Hockey India League

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The upcoming Hockey India League, which is being revived after seven years, will be telecast live on the country's national broadcaster, Prasar Bharati. The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in this regard was signed in a ceremony between Abhishek Agarwal, Deputy Director General Sports, Prasar Bharati, and Hockey India Secretary General Bhola Nath Singh. Set to commence on December 28 in Rourkela, HIL will be broadcast live across the nation through Doordarshan and Prasar Bharati's new OTT platform -- Waves. This edition of the HIL is path-breaking because it will feature the inaugural season of the women's league alongside the men's competition. While the men's competition will be played in Rourkela, a four-team maiden tournament for the women will be hosted at Ranchi. Navneet Sehgal, chairman Prasar Bharati, emphasised the importance of this partnership. "This is a proud moment for hockey, a sport that has captured the hearts of millions of Indians, and for Prasar Bharati, as we come together to bring the Hockey India League to every corner of the country. Our goal is to showcase this prestigious league to households across India, including remote towns and villages where future hockey stars are emerging. "With Doordarshan's extensive reach and our OTT platform, Waves, we will ensure that the Hockey India League becomes a national celebration, inspiring a deeper connection between the sport and its fans. Together, we aim to elevate hockey's prominence and turn it into a true festival for the entire nation," he said.

## Momentum is with Australia after win at Adelaide, says Sunil Gavaskar

PTI ■ BRISBANE

The legendary Sunil Gavaskar feels Australia will have the momentum in the third Test against India starting on Saturday thanks to their victory in the Pink Ball Test at Adelaide last week. Australia levelled the five-match Border-Gavaskar Trophy 1-1 with a 10-wicket win in the day-night Test after losing the first Test at Perth by 295 runs. "The momentum that the Indian team got in Perth was lost during the 10-day gap. Now, the momentum is with Australia because they have won this Test match," Gavaskar told Star Sports. "After the Adelaide Test, a few days later, you are playing at The Gabba. So, the momentum is now with the



Australian team," he added. Speaking to the same channel, former spinner Harbhajan Singh said India should try to play their best cricket to register a win at the 'Gabba' before travelling to more favourable venues in Sydney and Melbourne. "Their best chances will be, I

think, in Sydney and Melbourne. Anyway, if you play your best cricket at The Gabba and win there, then you will definitely win one match out of Melbourne or Sydney," Harbhajan said. He said India have the ability to make a comeback into the series despite the heavy loss in Adelaide. "The equality of the first two Tests shows that both teams have the ability to come back. Australia has come back; now maybe it's India's turn to turn the tables," he said. The owner of 711 international wickets too agreed that the long interval between the first and second Test resulted in India losing the momentum. "This series is tough because both teams have had losses. What happened with Australia in Perth, maybe they didn't expect it. And what happened with India in Adelaide, maybe India also didn't expect it. "Although there was a very long gap in the middle between the two Tests, sometimes such a gap spoils the momentum, and it happened here," he said.

# Manchester City crisis deepens with loss to Juventus in Champions League

AP ■ PARIS

Manchester City plunged deeper into trouble in the Champions League by losing 2-0 at Juventus, the latest setback in a scarcely believable run of poor results for the ailing English champions. City dropped to 22nd place in the 36-team standings, with only the top 24 advancing. Progressing to the next round of the new-look format looked a certainty before the season for a team that was European champion in 2023 and has won the last four Premier League titles. But not anymore as City manager Pep Guardiola battles injuries and an apparent loss of belief among his players. City has won just one of its last 10 matches in all competitions, with goals by Dušan Vlahovic and Weston McKennie inflicting the latest defeat and igniting Juventus' qualification hopes. City midfielder Ilkay Gundogan described the team's problem as a "mental issue." Opponents "are able to break our rhythm with the smallest of things," Gundogan said on

Wednesday. "They don't even need to do much and it has such a big effect on us right now." Barcelona jumped into second place in the league standings, behind Liverpool, and is guaranteed to advance after a 3-2 win at Borussia Dortmund. Raphinha and Ferran Torres, with two goals, scored for Barca. Arsenal beat Monaco 3-0 mainly thanks to two goals by Bukayo Saka to move into third place and be the highest of six teams on 13 points. The top eight qualify directly for the last 16 and the teams placed No. 9-24 go into a two-legged playoff. Danger for City City has two games to save its faltering Champions League campaign and the first is against Paris Saint-Germain, another giant in trouble in 25th place — one spot out of the qualifying positions. Vlahovic put Juventus ahead in the 53rd when he powered a header goalward straight at City goalkeeper Ederson, who could only parry the ball over his own line. Two American substitutes



sealed the win for Juve, with McKennie volleying home from Timothy Weah's cross. Juventus moved into 14th place. Super-sub Torres Ferran Torres came off the bench to inspire Barcelona to a fifth win

in six games and push Dortmund, last season's runner-up, out of the top eight. Torres came on in the 71st to replace Robert Lewandowski, who had a quiet game against his former club. Just four minutes later, Torres scored a goal on the rebound from Dani Olmo's shot. Serhou Guirassy's second goal of the game levelled the score at 2-2 but Torres scored again in the 85th off Lamine Yamal's pass on the counter. Antoine Griezmann scored

Raphinha gave Barcelona the lead before Guirassy equalised from the penalty spot. Raphinha and Guirassy are tied for second place in the scoring chart on six goals, behind Lewandowski's competition-high seven. Home comforts for Arsenal Arsenal secured a third straight home win without conceding in the league stage, with Saka scoring in the 34th and 78th minutes and sending in a shot that was turned into the net by substitute Kai Havertz in the 88th. Arsenal is ahead of Bayer Leverkusen, Aston Villa, Inter Milan, Brest and Lille on goal difference. Lille won 3-2 at home to Sturm Graz on Wednesday. In-form Alvarez Man City could sure do with Julian Alvarez at the moment. With a brilliant curling finish to open the scoring, the Argentina striker helped Atletico Madrid beat Slovan Bratislava 3-1 and provide a timely reminder of what City is missing after selling him for more than USD 100 million in August. Alvarez has 12 goals for the season, with four coming in the Champions League. Antoine Griezmann scored

Atletico's other two goals at Metropolitan stadium as the Spanish team climbed to 11th place after a 10th straight win in all competitions. Tribute to grieving teammate When Lukasz Lakomy gave Young Boys the lead against Stuttgart, he ran toward the sideline and held up teammate Meschack Elia's jersey as others gathered around him. The gesture was a tribute after Elia's son died unexpectedly this week after a short illness. Elia wasn't playing as he was on his way to his native Congo, where his son died, to be with his family. Both teams wore black armbands and there was a moment of silence before the game, which was won 5-1 by Stuttgart. Late winner Tammy Abraham scored an 87th-minute winner as AC Milan beat Red Star Belgrade 2-1 to move one point off the top eight. Milan lost Alvaro Morata and Ruben Loftus-Cheek to muscle injuries in the first half. Benfica's five-match winning streak ended with a 0-0 home draw against Bologna, and Feyenoord had a 4-2 win over Sparta Prague.