



Winter haze shrouds National Capital

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

A bitter cold wave, and dense fog gripped Delhi-National Capital Region on Tuesday, with air quality plunging back into the 'severe' category and drastically reducing visibility across the city. The Air Quality Index (AQI) of Delhi stood at 433 while the minimum temperature was 5.9 degrees Celsius, two notches below normal while the maximum temperature settled at 24.4 degrees Celsius, two notches above normal. The AQI was expected to remain in the 'severe' category for the next two days.

Of Delhi's 35 monitoring stations, 28 recorded the air quality in the 'severe' category, with some breaching the 450 mark that is classified as 'severe plus'. Monitoring stations in Mandir Marg, Jahangirpuri,

Narela, Nehru Nagar, Patparganj, Punjabi Bagh, Rohini, ITO, Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, DTU, Major Dhyana Chand National Stadium, Mandir Marg, Pusa, Shadipur recorded the AQI in the 'severe' category. The AQI was in the 'severe plus' category in Alipur, Anand Vihar, Ashok Vihar, Bawana, Burari, CRRI Mathura Road, North Campus, Okhla Phase 2, Sirifort, Sonia Vihar and Vivek Vihar. According to India Meteorological Department (IMD), meteorological conditions are likely to be unfavourable for effective dispersion of pollutants.

The major source of Delhi's pollution was vehicular emission, contributing 18.8 per cent of PM2.5. There was no contribution of stubble burning to Delhi's pollution as the season is over in Punjab and Haryana. PM2.5 remained

the primary pollutant, with levels recorded at 252 micrograms per cubic metre at 4 pm. Meanwhile, haze and cold wave conditions have caused severe disruption across the region. Thick fog enveloped various parts of the district, severely reduced visibility and created challenges for commuters. According to the IMD the national capital registered a minimum temperature of 4.5 degrees Celsius at 5.30 am, which later settled at an average of 5.9 degree Celsius. The temperature in certain areas of Delhi went even below 4.5 degrees Celsius. The minimum temperature in Pusa was recorded at 3.5 degrees Celsius, while in Anjanagar, the minimum temperature was recorded at 4 degrees Celsius. At Najafgarh, the minimum temperature was

slightly higher, at 6.2 degrees Celsius. As temperatures dropped further and fog reduced visibility, the Delhi airport administration implemented low visibility procedures on Tuesday. Moderate fog reported at Safdarjung airport. Safdarjung airport recorded lowest visibility 350m at 8 am, which improved thereafter becoming 400m at 8.30 am. Palam airport recorded lowest visibility 600 m during 8 am hours to 9 am hours which improved thereafter becoming 700m at 9.30 am. However, the Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA) authority clarified that flight operations were not affected by the current conditions. A passenger advisory was issued, urging travelers to check with their respective airlines for the latest flight updates. "Low visibility procedures are in

place at Delhi airport. Flight operations remain normal. Passengers are advised to contact their airline for updated flight details," the airport administration posted on X.

Meanwhile, Delhi-NCR schools on Tuesday switched to the hybrid mode of conducting classes following the re-imposition of anti-pollution measures under the Stage IV of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP). According to the revised GRAP schedule, classes for students in grades VI-IX and XI in Delhi, Gurugram, Faridabad, Ghaziabad and Gautam Buddha Nagar must operate in hybrid mode (physical and online) under Stage IV. However, students of class X and XII have to attend school in-person.

You are responsible for the mess: SC tells Greater Noida Authority

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Considering the plight of the hassled homebuyers, the Supreme Court on Tuesday asked the Greater Noida Industrial Development Authority (GNIDA) to submit a proposal for grievance redressal, and imposed Rs 5 lakh cost on it for failing to file a timely response.

A Bench comprising Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna and Justice Sanjay Kumar expressed dissatisfaction over the approach of GNIDA and said, "You are responsible for the mess. Of course, developers made money from the homebuyers. But that does not condone your acts."

The Bench said it may order a CBI probe into the whole "mess" if the GNIDA did not come up with a plan to redress the grievances of the homebuyers. "You come up with a plan in 10 days... otherwise we will order a CBI investigation... You will have to ensure that interests of homebuyers are safeguarded. You are also part of the problem. You allowed this mess to be created," the CJ said.

The Bench suggested the GNIDA to take over the entire land, develop the projects and give the flats to the homebuyers. Seeking a detailed affidavit from GNIDA, the Bench asked it to provide information including the date of allotment of the land and the date of execution of the lease deeds in favour of the private



company. Besides seeking a comprehensive proposal for the homebuyers, the Bench asked the GNIDA to give information on why the allotment of land was not cancelled when the developers violated the terms of the projects.

Senior advocate Shoeb Alam, appearing for over 800 homebuyers, said a PSU was willing to develop the stalled projects and pay up the dues to GNIDA and others, and moreover, no creditors or investors would have to suffer haircuts.

The top court was hearing about 12 appeals arising out of a National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) judgment in relation to the insolvency proceedings of debt-ridden realty firm Earth Infrastructure.

The NCLAT had declined a plea of a batch of homebuyers who challenged the NCLT's approval of Alpha Corp Development's bid to acquire Earth Infrastructure. The NCLAT had on June 8, 2021, approved the resolution plan from Alpha Corp Development. The committee of creditor of the Earth Infrastructure had voted in favour of Alpha Corp with a majority of 99 per cent.

Due to the protracted legal battle, five housing projects, three in Greater Noida and two in Gurugram, of the realty firm are stalled leaving hundreds of homebuyers in the lurch. Earlier, Alpha Corp had said it would invest around Rs 900 crore to complete the three stalled projects of Earth Infrastructure that it acquired through the insolvency process at Greater Noida.

The housing projects were launched between 2010 and 2012, but were not completed in the stipulated time period. Approximately 2,900 units were to be developed in these projects. Ananta by Alpha Corp (erstwhile Earth Copia), Sector 112, Gurugram, is a housing project launched in February 2011; Earth Sapphire Court, Greater Noida, is a commercial project launched in July 2010 and Earth Techone, located on Yamuna Expressway in Greater Noida, is a mixed project launched in June 2012.

Will NEET-UG exam be conducted online soon?

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

With controversies following the medical entrance exams every year, the Centre on Tuesday said the Education and Health Ministry is deliberating whether to conduct medical entrance exam NEET-UG offline, or in online mode, and a decision in this regard is expected soon.

Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan has held two rounds of talks with the Union Health Minister JP Nadda in this regard.

Currently, NEET-UG is conducted offline, wherein students have to solve multiple choice questions on an OMR sheet. The National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) is the largest entrance exam in the country in terms of the number of candidates appearing for the test. In 2024, a record over 24 lakh candidates took the exam.

While NEET was under the scanner over several irregularities, including alleged leaks, UGC-NET was cancelled as the ministry received inputs that the integrity of the exam had been compromised. Both matters are being probed by the CBI. Two other exams, CSIR-UGC NET and NEET PG - were cancelled at the last moment as a pre-emptive step.

Pradhan also said the



National Testing Agency (NTA) will not conduct any recruitment exams from 2025, instead focus only on higher education entrance tests. The agency will be restructured next year and new posts are being created. The move is part of examination reforms based on the recommendations of a high-level panel set up earlier this year following alleged leaks in the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET) medical entrance exam and a series of cancellations of others due to suspected leaks and other glitches.

"The administrative ministry of NEET is the Health Ministry and hence we are in talks with them about whether NEET should be conducted in pen and paper mode or online mode. We have had two rounds of talks

with the Health Ministry led by JP Nadda. Whatever option will be considered best suited for conducting the exam, NTA is ready to undertake the exercise," Pradhan told a Special Press briefing on the current state on primary, secondary, higher and technical education in the country.

The Minister said a decision in this regard is expected soon and the reforms will be implemented in the 2025 edition of the exam. "What will be NEET's methodology, what will be the protocol... A decision is expected soon. We will notify it soon," he added.

The NTA conducts the NEET every year for admission into medical colleges. A total of 1,08,000 seats are available for the MBBS course. Of the seats available for the MBBS course, approximately 56,000 seats are in government

hospitals and about 52,000 are in private colleges. Admissions to undergraduate courses in Dentistry, Ayurveda, Unani, and Siddha also utilise the results of the NEET for admission.

The idea of switching to Computer Based Test (CBT) mode for NEET is not new and has been deliberated several times before. However, the push for the exam reforms came following the paper leak controversy earlier this year. In the line of fire over alleged irregularities in NEET and PhD entrance NET, the Centre had in July set up the panel to ensure transparent, smooth and fair conduct of examinations by NTA.

According to the high-level panel headed by former ISRO Chief R Radhakrishnan, multi-stage testing for NEET-UG could be a viable possibility that needs to be followed up. "An acceptable framework with thresholds and test objectives of scoring and ranking at each stage, and number of attempts etc. May be evolved," the panel has recommended in its report.

A DIGI-EXAM system to check impersonation, multi-stage and multi-session testing, test centre allocation policy, setting up secured test centres in each district and mobile testing centres in rural and remote areas are among the recommendations made by the high-level panel.

An Imperial legacy

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Monday disposed off a 16-year-old case relating the trademark of Delhi's iconic 'The Imperial' hotel after the members of Akoi family, who own and operate the hotel, reached a settlement. The settlement acknowledged that the trademark "Imperial" is jointly owned by Hardev Singh Akoi (50 per cent) and his brother Jasdev Singh Akoi's children, Raidev Singh Akoi (25 per cent), and Gobind Singh Akoi (25 per cent).

"In terms of the settlement, the families of Hardev Singh Akoi and late Jasdev Singh Akoi admit/acknowledge that as on date, Hardev Singh Akoi [50%], Raidev Singh Akoi [25%] and Gobind Singh Akoi [25%] are the joint and exclusive owners of the trademark: Imperial and that no one will separately apply or have any rights in the trademark: Imperial or any other trade mark, trade name, copyright, whether registered or unregistered, identical or deceptively similar," said Justice Mini Pushkarna of Delhi High Court in the order.

The Imperial, New Delhi, is a historic landmark that has witnessed significant events in India's history. Established in 1931, the hotel has been a favourite among dignitaries and celebrities alike. It was



founded by SBS Ranjit Singh, who passed it on to Rajdev Singh. Jasdev and Hardev were the children of Rajdev Singh. It was conceptualised in 1934 and officially opened in 1936 by Lord Willingdon, the Viceroy of India.

During India's struggle for Independence, the hotel served as a meeting place for prominent leaders like Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru. The Round Table Conferences, crucial discussions between British and Indian leaders, were held there. Post-independence, the hotel continued to be a hub for political and social gatherings.

The HC also found the settlement terms lawful and confirmed that no other disputes related to the trademark were pending. The parties agreed not to make individual applications for or claim rights in the trademark or any deceptively similar marks.

"It is submitted on behalf of the parties that during the pendency of the present proceedings, in order to maintain family peace, harmony and goodwill, all the family members have mutually agreed to settle the present suit amicably," read the order.

The HC accepted the settlement, decreeing the suit based on the agreed terms. It directed that the application, containing the original signatures of all parties, be placed in the case file. The Court also instructed that a decree sheet be drawn up and canceled all pending hearings. The dispute concerns the trademark "Imperial" and its lion logo, which were considered symbols of a prestigious hotel's goodwill. Brothers Hardev Singh Akoi and Jasdev Singh Akoi, joint owners of the hotel, disagreed over certain alterations to the trademark and its use.



Over 30 Delhi schools get bomb threats

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

More than 30 schools in Delhi received bomb threats through e-mails on Tuesday, marking the second such alarming incident this week and the fifth within just nine days leaving students, staff, and authorities on edge in the National Capital.

According to police sources, more than 30 schools including The Indian School in South Delhi, Ambience Public School in Safdarjung Enclave, Dilshad Public School in Dilshad Garden and Crescent School in outer Delhi, reported that bomb threats were received by police authorities.

On Monday, around 20 schools including DPS RK Puram, Gyan Bharati School in Saket and Ryan International School in Vasant Kunj among others had received threat emails.

Rapper Badshah caught in the wrong lane



PARVESH SHARMA ■ GURUGRAM

The Gurugram Traffic police has issued a challan of Rs 15,500 against Bollywood rapper Badshah while en route to Punjabi singer Karan Aujla's concert in Gurugram for driving on the wrong side of the road. The singer was reportedly riding a Mahindra Thar to reach Karan Aujla's concert in Gurugram on December 15, of which he was a part.

It is being said that the singer's convoy, comprising three cars, was reportedly driving on the wrong side of the road and disobeyed traffic norms, this led to outrage on social media.

However, it is being said that the vehicle did not belong to the rapper and was registered in the name of a youth from Panipat. After the post went viral, Gurugram traffic police took notice and issued a challan.

"3 vehicles of Punjabi singer Karan Aujla's convoy are going on the wrong side towards Airia Mall, and the bouncers are also misbehaving with the people, but Gurugram police are sleeping," an X user wrote.

To this, Gurugram police replied, "Challan has been generated on 16.12.2024 against wrong side driving according to MV Act." "A challan of Rs 15,500 has been issued against one vehicle remaining two of the convoy are being identified. Soon fines under the MV (Motor Vehicle) Act 2019 will be issued against them as well," said a traffic police officer on the condition of anonymity.

Omar Abdullah lays out a welcoming Wazwan

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah's warm hospitality has become the talk of the town in the corridors of power in Jammu and Kashmir. Last week when the CM hosted members of civil society at his official residence in Jammu he not only threw open the gates of his residence for the common citizens, but also invited a team of Kashmiri Chefs (Wazas) to cook sumptuous Kashmiri Wazwan, a multi-course meal.

It was after a long gap the guests at the official residence of the Chief Minister were treated with non-vegetarian food in Jammu. In addition to this, the newly elected CM



also hosted members of different delegations, resource persons heading different committees, and academicians, along with other prominent citizens at his residence.

Post Abrogation of Article 370 and 35-A, the gatherings at the Raj Bhawan hosted by Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha were commonly served

only vegetarian meals/snacks. A famous local caterer was also engaged by the Union Territory (UT) administration to organize lavish dinners and luncheon meetings to suit the taste buds of guests from different walks of life. The famous cuisines of different neighboring states of Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh were also given preference.

The traditional meat Kebabs and other non-vegetarian delicacies were replaced with Veg kebabs and other culinary delights on the regular menu.

Sharing his experience of breaking bread in the company of the CM, an eminent citizen told The Pioneer, "All those who attended the meeting were escorted by the Chief Minister himself inside the dining area where a lavish meal was served. Omar interacted with almost everyone present there and gave them a patient hearing. In the past, he remained occupied with his ministerial colleagues and other VIP guests. But this time we met a different version of Omar Abdullah. He was more polite, courteous, and accommodating."

Former Chief Ministers Dr Farooq Abdullah, Mufti Mohd Sayeed, Ghulam Nabi Azad, and Mehbooba Nafi were equally hospitable and frequently met guests at their residences to interact over lunch and dinner meetings.

नगर निगम रोहताक सार्वजनिक सूचना सर्व सहायक को सूचित किया जाता है कि नगर निगम, रोहताक को कर शाखा के सम्बन्धित कर रिहार्स में नई प्रोपर्टी...

PUBLIC NOTICE Public Notice It is informed to the general public that my client Sh. Anand Sharma S/O Ramher Sharma R/O Devru Road, Near Gas Agency, Rishi Kunj Colony, Sonapat...

LOST & FOUND I and S/O Rattan Lal R/O #767 Radha Swami Colony Fazilka I have given a public notice dated 29/10/2024 in respect of lost of the deed Vaska No 8485...

Table with 10 columns: Prize Amount, Common to all series, and various prize numbers. Includes 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th prize amounts.

FORM G INVITATION FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FOR ARJUN MALL RETAIL HOLDINGS PRIVATE LIMITED

Table with 2 columns: RELEVANT PARTICULARS and details. Includes name of company, address, website, and other relevant information.

सार्वजनिक सूचना मैं सीमा देवी पत्नी मनोहर सिंह निवासी मल्ला 174 तहसील कालका, जिला पंचकुला हरियाणा...

COURT NOTICE (Complaint - 138 Negotiable Instrument Act) IN THE COURT OF Ms. JASLEEN NARANG Judicial Magistrate 1st Class, Ludhiana...

NAME CHANGE I, Mousumi Devi (Aadhar No 3629 6353 0901) W/o Sh. Swapan Kumar Dev R/O #155A, Phase 2, Sector - B, Defence Colony, Ambala...

Table with 10 columns: Prize Amount, Common to all series, and various prize numbers. Includes 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th prize amounts.

COURT NOTICE (Complaint - 138 Negotiable Instrument Act) IN THE COURT OF Ms. JASLEEN NARANG Judicial Magistrate 1st Class, Ludhiana...

PUBLIC NOTICE THAT IS FOR NOTICE OF THE GENERAL PUBLIC that I, Manda Devi W/o Sh. Sun Chand, R/O Village Mohi Jag, Tehsil and Distt. Karnal, DECLARED that I lost my Previous Sale deed No. 13711 dated 02/11/2016...

Table with 10 columns: Prize Amount, Common to all series, and various prize numbers. Includes 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th prize amounts.

ICICI Bank advertisement including logo, address, and public notice regarding a willful defaulter.

सार्वजनिक सूचना इतर सहायक को सूचित किया जाता है कि नगर निगम, रोहताक को कर शाखा के सम्बन्धित कर रिहार्स में नई प्रोपर्टी...

PUBLIC NOTICE Sub: Transfer of Final Registration No. 33, Prov. Regn. No. 3261/Rewari-18T-A/HGB, Type-A, Rewari under Defence Scheme...

Table with 10 columns: Prize Amount, Common to all series, and various prize numbers. Includes 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th prize amounts.

SOUTH INDIAN BANK advertisement including logo, address, and details of an auction sale.

COURT NOTICE IN THE COURT OF SH. SIMRANDEEP SINGH SOHI Judicial Magistrate-1st Class Ludhiana

PUBLIC NOTICE THAT IS FOR NOTICE OF THE GENERAL PUBLIC that I, Saurabh Sharma S/O, Rajesh Sharma, R/O H.No.441, Ward no.1, Babain Road...

Indian Bank advertisement including logo, address, and details of a possession notice for immovable property.

COURT NOTICE (U/o 5 Rule 20 CPC) IN THE COURT OF Ms. Rinky Agnihotri Civil Judge (Junior Division), Ludhiana

PUBLIC NOTICE I am Divya, wife of Shri Ravi Garg, resident of 107 Model Town Pehowa distt. Kurukshetra, I declare that conveyance deed no. 970/1 dated 20.08.1991 & Conveyance deed no. 1009/1 Dated 03.09.1991...

HIMACHAL PRADESH PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT advertisement including logo, address, and details of an invitation for tenders.

SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE

ICICI Bank Branch Office: ICICI Bank Ltd., Plot No. 23, Shal Tower, 3rd Floor, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, New Delhi-110005

The Authorised ICICI Bank Officer under the Securitisation, Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, issued Demand Notices to the borrower(s) mentioned below, to repay the amount mentioned in the Notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said Notice.

Table with 5 columns: Sr. No., Name of the Borrower(s)/Loan Account Number, Description of Property/ Date of Symbolic Possession, Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand Notice (Rs), Name of Branch. Contains 5 entries for various borrowers in Ludhiana and Amritsar.

The above-mentioned borrowers/guarantors(s) is/are hereby issued a 30 day Notice to repay the amount, else the mortgaged properties will be sold for 30 days from the date of publishing this Notice, as per the provisions under Rules 8 and 9 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002.

SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE

ICICI Bank Branch Office: ICICI Bank Limited Plot No-23, Shal Tower, 3rd Floor, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, New Delhi-110005

The Authorised ICICI Bank Officer under the Securitisation, Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, issued Demand Notices to the borrower(s) mentioned below, to repay the amount mentioned in the Notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said Notice.

Table with 5 columns: Sr. No., Name of the Borrower(s)/ Loan Account Number, Description of Property/ Date of Symbolic Possession, Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand Notice (Rs), Name of Branch. Contains 6 entries for various borrowers in Patiala and Ludhiana.

The above-mentioned borrowers/guarantors(s) is/are hereby issued a 30 day Notice to repay the amount, else the mortgaged properties will be sold for 30 days from the date of publishing this Notice, as per the provisions under Rules 8 and 9 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002.

SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE

ICICI Bank Branch Office: ICICI Bank Ltd., Plot No. 23, Shal Tower, 3rd Floor, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, New Delhi-110005

The undersigned being the Authorised Officer of ICICI Bank Limited under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13 (12) R/w Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, issued demand notices upon the borrowers mentioned below, (on the underlying pool assigned to ICICI Bank by Dewan Housing Finance Ltd.) in relation to the enforcement of security with respect to a Housing Loan facility granted, pursuant to a loan agreement entered into between DHFL and the borrower, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

As the borrower failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken symbolic possession of the property described herein below in the exercise of powers conferred on him/her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on the below-mentioned dates. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to charges of ICICI Bank Limited.

Table with 5 columns: Sr. No., Name of the Borrower(s)/ Co-Borrower(s) (DHFL Old LAN & ICICI New LAN), Description of Property/ Date of possession, Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand Notice (Rs), Name of Branch. Contains 2 entries for borrowers in Patiala.

The above-mentioned borrowers/guarantors(s) is/are hereby given a 30 day notice to repay the amount, else the mortgaged properties will be sold for 30 days from the date of publication of this Notice, as per the provisions under Rules 8 and 9 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE (FOR IMMOVABLE PROPERTY)

Whereas, the Undersigned being the "Authorised Officer" of Punjab & Sind Bank, under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of the Security Interest Act 2002 in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(2) read with Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, issued a demand notice on the date mentioned against account calling upon the respective borrowers / guarantors to repay the amount as mentioned against account within 60 days from the date of notice / date of receipt of the said notice.

Table with 5 columns: Name of the NPA Account, Description of the Immovable Property, Date of the Demand Notice, Date of the Possession, Amount Outstanding. Contains 1 entry for Sh. Deepak S/o Late Sh. Ram Dass.

HIMACHAL PRADESH PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

Sealed item rate tender on form No. 6 & 8 are hereby invited by the Executive Engineer, HP PWD Division Tanda at Nagrota Bagwan on behalf of Government of Himachal Pradesh for the following work from the approved and eligible contractors enlisted in HP PWD (B & R) whose registration stood renewed as per revised rules so as to reach in his office on or before on 30.12.2024 up to 11:00 A.M. And the same shall be opened on the same day at 04:00 P.M. in the presence of intending contractors or their authorized representatives.

Table with 5 columns: Sr. No., Name of work, Estimated Cost, Earnest Money, Time limit. Contains 8 entries for various construction works in Distt Kangra.

Terms & Conditions:- 1. The contractor/firm should be registered as or dealer GST No. 2. The intending contractor / firm have to produce the copy of latest enlistment and renewal enlisted in HP/PWD. 3. If any of the date mentioned above happened to be Gazetted Holidays the same shall be processed on next working day.

Executive Engineer H.P.P.W.D. Division Tanda at Nagrota Bagwan HIMSUCHANA AVAM & JAM SAMPARK (On behalf of Governor of Himachal Pradesh) RO NO. 3969/2024-2025 Dt. 17-12-2024

SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE

ICICI Bank Branch Office: ICICI Bank Ltd., Plot No. 23, Shal Tower, 3rd Floor, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, New Delhi-110005

The undersigned being the Authorised Officer of ICICI Bank Limited under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13 (12) R/w Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, issued demand notices upon the borrowers mentioned below, (on the underlying pool assigned to ICICI Bank by Dewan Housing Finance Ltd.) in relation to the enforcement of security with respect to a Housing Loan facility granted, pursuant to a loan agreement entered into between DHFL and the borrower, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

As the borrower failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken symbolic possession of the property described herein below in the exercise of powers conferred on him/her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on the below-mentioned dates. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to charges of ICICI Bank Limited.

Table with 5 columns: Sr. No., Name of the Borrower(s)/ Co-Borrower(s) (DHFL Old LAN & ICICI New LAN), Description of Property/ Date of possession, Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand Notice (Rs), Name of Branch. Contains 1 entry for Yash Pal/ Honey Kumar.

The above-mentioned borrowers/guarantors(s) is/are hereby given a 30 day notice to repay the amount, else the mortgaged properties will be sold on the expiry of 30 days from the date of publication of this Notice, as per the provisions under Rules 8 and 9 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

Authorized Officer ICICI Bank Limited Date: December 18, 2024 Place: Ludhiana

SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE

ICICI Bank Branch Office: ICICI Bank Ltd Office Number 201-B, 2nd Floor, Road No. 1 Plot No-B3, WIFI IT Park, Wagle Industrial Estate, Thane (West)- 400604

The Authorised ICICI Bank Officer under the Securitisation, Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, issued Demand Notices to the borrower(s) mentioned below, to repay the amount mentioned in the Notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said Notice.

Table with 5 columns: Sr. No., Name of the Borrower(s)/ Loan Account Number, Description of Property/ Date of Symbolic Possession, Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand Notice (Rs), Name of Branch. Contains 1 entry for Rajan Verma & Jagdish Chander.

The above-mentioned borrowers/guarantors(s) is/are hereby issued a 30 day Notice to repay the amount, else the mortgaged properties will be sold for 30 days from the date of publishing this Notice, as per the provisions under Rules 8 and 9 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002.

Sincerely Authorised Signatory For ICICI Bank Ltd. Date: December 18, 2024 Place: Amritsar

SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE

ICICI Bank Branch Office: ICICI Bank Limited Plot No-23, Shal Tower, 3rd Floor, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, New Delhi-110005

The Authorised ICICI Bank Officer under the Securitisation, Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, issued Demand Notices to the borrower(s) mentioned below, to repay the amount mentioned in the Notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said Notice.

Having failed to repay the amount, the Notice is issued to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken symbolic possession of the property described below, by exercising powers conferred on him/her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on the below-mentioned dates. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to charges of ICICI Bank Limited.

Table with 5 columns: Sr. No., Name of the Borrower(s)/ Loan Account Number, Description of Property/ Date of Symbolic Possession, Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand Notice (Rs), Name of Branch. Contains 1 entry for Rajeev Jain/Sandhya Jain.

The above-mentioned borrowers/guarantors(s) is/are hereby issued a 30 day Notice to repay the amount, else the mortgaged properties will be sold for 30 days from the date of publishing this Notice, as per the provisions under Rules 8 and 9 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002.

Date: December 18, 2024 Place: Mohali

SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE

ICICI Bank Branch Office: ICICI Bank Limited Plot No-23, Shal Tower, 3rd Floor, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, New Delhi-110005

The Authorised ICICI Bank Officer under the Securitisation, Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, issued Demand Notices to the borrower(s) mentioned below, to repay the amount mentioned in the Notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said Notice.

Having failed to repay the amount, the Notice is issued to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken symbolic possession of the property described below, by exercising powers conferred on him/her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on the below-mentioned dates. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property. Any dealings with the property will be subject to charges of ICICI Bank Limited.

Table with 5 columns: Sr. No., Name of the Borrower(s)/ Loan Account Number, Description of Property/ Date of Symbolic Possession, Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand Notice (Rs), Name of Branch. Contains 1 entry for Jindal Trading Company/ Sunita Devi.

The above-mentioned borrowers/guarantors(s) is/are hereby issued a 30 day Notice to repay the amount, else the mortgaged properties will be sold for 30 days from the date of publishing this Notice, as per the provisions under Rules 8 and 9 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002.

Date: December 18, 2024 Place: Sonapat

सर्वजनिक सूचना इस पब्लिक नोटिस के माध्यम से जन्म-मरणपत्र को सुविधा प्रदान करने हेतु निम्नलिखित जानकारी प्रदान की जा रही है...

सर्वजनिक सूचना इस पब्लिक नोटिस के माध्यम से जन्म-मरणपत्र को सुविधा प्रदान करने हेतु निम्नलिखित जानकारी प्रदान की जा रही है...

सर्वजनिक सूचना इस पब्लिक नोटिस के माध्यम से जन्म-मरणपत्र को सुविधा प्रदान करने हेतु निम्नलिखित जानकारी प्रदान की जा रही है...

PUBLIC NOTICE This is to inform the public that the original property conveyance deed for Plot No. E-9, TDI Infra Corp., PANJAB (Haryana) purchased from TDI INFRACORP (INDIA) LTD now owned by Mr. Rajan Thapar and Mrs Punam Thapar have been lost/misplaced somewhere.

सर्वजनिक सूचना इस पब्लिक नोटिस के माध्यम से जन्म-मरणपत्र को सुविधा प्रदान करने हेतु निम्नलिखित जानकारी प्रदान की जा रही है...

PUBLIC NOTICE It is hereby informed that the No. 2113/MIG/IA Sec-6, Housing Board Colony, Karnal stands in the name of Smt. Vikas S/o Sh. Mangal Dass R/o No. 109, DRP Enclave Ansal Road, Sector-36, Karnal declare that my mother Smt. Kailash Rani W/o Mangal Dass has died on 11.07.2019.

सर्वजनिक सूचना इस पब्लिक नोटिस के माध्यम से जन्म-मरणपत्र को सुविधा प्रदान करने हेतु निम्नलिखित जानकारी प्रदान की जा रही है...

PUBLIC NOTICE It is hereby informed that the No. 2113/MIG/IA Sec-6, Housing Board Colony, Karnal stands in the name of Smt. Vikas S/o Sh. Mangal Dass R/o No. 109, DRP Enclave Ansal Road, Sector-36, Karnal declare that my mother Smt. Kailash Rani W/o Mangal Dass has died on 11.07.2019.

हल्फिया बयान मैं राजेश कुमार पुत्र श्री जगदीश निवासी गांव कुसर तहसील गणियां, जिला सिरसा अपने हक के बयान करती हूँ कि मेरे कुल रिश्ते के संबंधित मेरे पिता जी का नाम जगदीश कुमार (JAGDISH KUMAR) था...

सर्वजनिक सूचना सर्व साधारण को सुविधा प्रदान करने हेतु निम्नलिखित जानकारी प्रदान की जा रही है...

सर्वजनिक सूचना सर्व साधारण को सुविधा प्रदान करने हेतु निम्नलिखित जानकारी प्रदान की जा रही है...

PUBLIC NOTICE This notice informs the general public and concerned individuals that Sh. Satish Kumar Manchanda, Rachna, Chander Karnal, and Vignu Karnal, residents of House No. 1899, Sector-7, Karnal, have applied to Property Tax Branch Municipal Corporation Karnal office to register their names in the Property Tax ID No. 1E1W7872.

सर्वजनिक सूचना मैं रीना रानी पत्नी नरेश कुमार पुत्र गोधा राम निवासी फतेहाबाद, तहसील बंग जिला फतेहाबाद बयान करती हूँ कि मेरे नाम एक रजिस्ट्री जयसिरी अमल डीडी रजिस्ट्री करीबी नंबर 7457 दिनांक 09.03.2015 खास नंबर 145/18-19/80 (1-1) मूले मालिक व काबिज हूँ जिसकी रजिस्ट्री नंबर 3665 दिनांक 18.07.2011 को बस स्टैंड के पास दिनांक 10.10.2024 को मुझे मिला है।

MUNICIPAL CORPORATION, CHANDIGARH (Licensing Branch) PUBLIC NOTICE It was notified for the information of general public that Sh. Pawan Mahajan S/o Late Sh. Tilak Raj has applied for transfer of Shed No. 22, Rehri Market, Sector 23-C, Chandigarh after death of his father.

सर्वजनिक सूचना सर्व साधारण को सुविधा प्रदान करने हेतु निम्नलिखित जानकारी प्रदान की जा रही है...

सर्वजनिक सूचना मैं रीना रानी पत्नी नरेश कुमार पुत्र गोधा राम निवासी फतेहाबाद, तहसील बंग जिला फतेहाबाद बयान करती हूँ कि मेरे नाम एक रजिस्ट्री जयसिरी अमल डीडी रजिस्ट्री करीबी नंबर 7457 दिनांक 09.03.2015 खास नंबर 145/18-19/80 (1-1) मूले मालिक व काबिज हूँ जिसकी रजिस्ट्री नंबर 3665 दिनांक 18.07.2011 को बस स्टैंड के पास दिनांक 10.10.2024 को मुझे मिला है।

Public Notice It is informed to General public that Mrs. Sonu W/o Raj Kumar R/o 18/718, D Block, Indrapuri Mohalla, Sira-125055 has lost his Previous Original Sale deed no. 398 dated 20-04-2012 of property measuring 2 Marle or 60.5 Sq Yards comprised in Khewet no. 256, Registered at Registrar, Sira which is owned and possessed by me and I am availing loan from India Shelter Finance Corporation Ltd. If anyone has objection, then he/she may notify with proof to the given contact to Bank's Advocate, within 7 days from the date of publication.

Public Notice I Kusum Rani wife of Darshan Kumar son of Ram Lal resident of Fatehabad District, District Fatehabad declare that I am owner and occupant of a registry whose original deed is Registry Waska No. 5872 dated 27/12/2012 Khawara No. 123/25 (6-9) 5 Marla whose registry number is 6712 dated 07.12.2011, register number 4768 dated 16.12.2010 which got lost near the bus stand on 06.12.2024. Which has not been found even after a lot of searching. In this regard, FIR No. 132560072402054 has been registered on 16.12.2024. If anyone has any objection or claim in this regard, then he can make his claim with proper proof within 15 days. J.D. Narang Advocate, District Court Fatehabad M. 9416091444



www.dailypioneer.com

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

PAPER WITH PASSION

A timely assurance

Sri Lanka assures New Delhi that it will not permit anybody to use its territory to threaten India's security

In what must come as music to the ears of the Indian government, the Sri Lankan President has said that his country will not allow anyone to use its territory to threaten India's security. This assurance comes at a time when China is aggressively pursuing 'Mission Indian Ocean' - which targets India. In a joint statement issued, Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Dissanayake made Colombo's position clear during his dialogue with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi. This assurance is seen as a critical development in India-Sri Lanka relations, especially given China's use of Sri Lanka's Hambantota Port for docking its naval surveillance and spy ships, including the ballistic missile tracking ship Yuan Wang 5. China's growing footprint in the Indian Ocean has raised red flags for New Delhi. The Hambantota Port, now under a 99-year lease to China following Sri Lanka's inability to service its debt, has become a hub for Chinese naval operations. Over the past two years, Beijing has stationed the Yuan Wang



5, a 25,000-tonne satellite and missile tracking ship, at Hambantota multiple times. This vessel, equipped with advanced tracking and communication systems, has been closely monitoring satellite and missile activities in the region, creating strategic challenges for India. In 2022, Sri Lanka briefly delayed the docking of Yuan Wang 5 following Indian concerns but eventually allowed the vessel to dock under the guise of 'replenishment.' Since then, Chinese surveillance ships have regularly patrolled the Indian Ocean, adding to India's apprehensions about Beijing's strategic intentions in the region. The agreement between India and Sri Lanka ensures that Sri Lankan territory, including its waters,

will not be used in any manner that could harm India's security or regional peace. This is a welcome relief for New Delhi, which views such commitments as crucial for maintaining stability in the Indian Ocean Region. This of course hasn't happened overnight. India's steadfast support for Sri Lanka during its economic crisis in 2022 has further solidified the bond between the two nations. President Dissanayake expressed gratitude for India's timely assistance, which was instrumental in stabilising Sri Lanka's economy during one of its most challenging periods. As far as China is concerned it has been courting Sri Lanka for the sole purpose of encircling India and getting a foothold in Indian Ocean. China's influence in Sri Lanka has grown significantly, particularly after Colombo defaulted on its \$1.7 billion loan for the Hambantota Port project. India has consistently raised concerns about the strategic implications of Chinese investments and activities in Sri Lanka. In this background the assurance of Sri Lankan president signals Sri Lanka's intent to balance its ties with both regional powers while safeguarding regional stability. The agreement also underscores Colombo's recognition of the importance of India's security and regional stability and paves the way for a stronger, more strategic India-Sri Lanka alliance in the years to come.

PICTALK



Tourists enjoy paragliding, in Manali

Nepal embraces China's BRI

Nepal's deepening ties with China through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) have set alarm bells ringing in New Delhi



PARUL CHANDRA

India has cause for extreme worry. In yet another indicator of China's growing sway over Nepal, the two are moving forward to implement Beijing's ambitious Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in the Himalayan nation. India is not only opposed to this in principle on grounds of sovereignty but also fears it will enable China to increase its already considerable inroads into Nepal.

If 2017 marked Nepal's initial step to coming on board the BRI with an MoU, the year 2024 marks a giant leap for the Himalayan nation in that direction. A framework agreement for cooperation on the BRI was signed during Nepalese PM K P Sharma Oli's visit to China in early December, apart from nine other pacts. With the strategically located Himalayan nation having become a hub for Great Powers contestation, the US too would be uneasy with the latest Beijing-Kathmandu tango. While the US had managed to get Nepal on board its own Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) Compact to fund Kathmandu's power and transport infrastructure, the BRI seems far broader. Kathmandu is trying to play down the framework as just a continuation of the 2017 MoU. The framework, however, underlines Kathmandu and Beijing's renewed push for the BRI, an initiative on which New Delhi harbours deep suspicions for what it perceives as China's hegemonic ambitions through debt-trap diplomacy. Sovereignty is another major concern, with the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), another project under BRI, passing through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. India is certainly worried about PM Oli-led Nepal once again moving into China's sphere of influence. The CPN-UML leader is widely seen as being pro-China, and bilateral ties with India were prickly during his previous stints as the PM. India has yet to host Oli since he took charge as PM in July



this year for the fourth time, with him first heading for Beijing, in a break from the tradition of visiting New Delhi. Also, showing scant regard for New Delhi's sensitivities, the Oli government recently allowed 220 Buddhist monks from China to travel to Lumbini, the birthplace of Gautam Buddha even as the Nanhai Buddhism Shenzhen roundtable was being held in Kathmandu. Oli delivered the inaugural address at this roundtable. There were also reports the China-appointed Panchen Lama would travel to Lumbini, though it did not eventually happen. The Oli government's encouragement of Beijing's concerted moves to claim Buddhism as a shared heritage will not go down well with New Delhi, which has been making its efforts to build on its shared Buddhist heritage with Nepal. Kathmandu's thrust on greater economic cooperation with Beijing - the BRI is part of this endeavour - would also whittle down India's influence over Nepal. The BRI framework agreement, incidentally, also envisages the opening of branches of Chinese banks and financial institutions in



WITH THE STRATEGICALLY LOCATED HIMALAYAN NATION HAVING BECOME A HUB FOR GREAT POWERS CONTESTATION, THE US TOO WOULD BE UNEASY WITH THE LATEST BEIJING-KATHMANDU TANGO

Nepal. India has traditionally had deep economic linkages with Nepal, nurtured in no small measure due to reasons of geography - the two neighbours share a long and porous 1,751-km-long border.

This, along with the landlocked nature of Nepal, has helped India become its largest trading partner. During the 2022-23 fiscal, bilateral trade was pegged at \$8.85 billion. This included \$8 billion of exports from India to Nepal, with \$840 million of exports in the reverse direction. As per the Nepal Rastra Bank, India's share in Nepal's trade accounted for 64.1% in 2022-23. PM Oli sees cooperation on BRI as a means to forge closer economic ties with China, with the framework agreement resolving to deepen the economic partnership by "injecting new momentum to trade, infrastructure and connectivity cooperation". Not a single project under the BRI rubric has been executed in Nepal since the 2017 MoU. Nepal would be hoping that the 10 initial projects, including those meant to boost regional connectivity, will now see the light of day. India has its work cut out and should

ensure it does not come across as overbearing. India's approach in the Kalapani-Lipulekh-Limpiyadhura border dispute, where New Delhi ignored Kathmandu's request for foreign secretary-level talks, is a case in point.

It led Oli, in his earlier stint as the PM, to cock a snook at New Delhi by changing his country's map showing the disputed territories as part of Nepal. Neither did New Delhi show respect due to a close neighbour when it decided to give a quiet burial to the joint 2018 Eminent Persons Group (EPG) report, which suggested that the 1950 Treaty of Peace And Friendship be replaced with a new one? Nepal has also been unhappy with India's refusal to give overflight rights for aircraft using the Chinese-built Gautam Buddha International Airport in Lumbini. India would do well to remember that its domineering approach only serves to alienate a close neighbour further and push it into China's ever-willing embrace. India should not lose sight of its strategic imperatives. (The writer is a senior journalist; views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Rural education needs reform



For a majority of Indian school children, especially from rural pockets, a feeling of uneasiness sets in when they hear something in English. They find it difficult to listen to and understand the English language. In a country like India, classes of mixed-ability

groups are a feature of every small village. While the teaching-learning process is done in the local language in rural villages, most of the competitive examinations are held in the English language. The rural atmosphere doesn't provide these students the opportunity to speak and learn English. In fact, in many northern villages, English becomes the third language, with the local language and Hindi as the first and second languages, respectively. The policymakers have to bridge the urban-rural divide when it comes to English teaching. An English teacher, teaching in rural schools, has to come up with innovative strategies in the classrooms. Skilled and committed teachers need to be appointed at the primary level, and they should be upgraded and trained to meet the problems faced by the learners.

R Sivakumar | Gandhi Nagar

HEALTHCARE REFORMS FOR PUBLIC

Madam - If the AAP government has done one good thing for society by making Mohalla clinics, the BJP has done another by making Jan Aushadi chemist shops. One can now get a free consultation from the AAP clinic and get medicines at nearly one-fifth the rate from a Jan Aushadi shop, thereby catering to the health aspect of a common man. The prominent good work visible on the ground needs to be applauded for both. The belief that a drug in a normal chemist shop is better than the generic drug being sold by a Jan Aushadi shop (popularly known as 'Modi ki Dukaan' in Patiala) is a myth that can be best removed by the doctors to their patients depending on the degree of moral courage they have to refuse obligations of pharmaceutical companies and give priority to generic rather than trademarked medicines to their patients. The fleeing private pharmacies need to be brought down to their knees in the interest of the public for their overinflated rates of medicines.

R S Narula | Patiala

PURCHASING POWER DECLINES

Madam - For the success of any economy, a vibrant market with sound and sustained demands is imperative, as production and market cannot flourish in a dry market. To vibrate the market, people's purchasing power should be increased by ensuring employment and a viable wage. The Indian economy is driven with an objective of enriching the rich, leaving the 81 crore poor in a lurch to manage sustaining life with 5 kgs of free rice per month. Even the small employed section is left without a reasonable increase in wage and faces the untamed inflation. The changes being pushed through in the name of labour reforms are going to pull down demands and create telling effects on the already volatile economy. Such a programme inevitably leads to dwindling demands. Course correction is inevitable to ensure bridging the gap between the poor and the affluent.

A G Rajmohan | Anantapur

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

INDIA STRUGGLES IN BRISBANE TEST

Madam - While Travis Head hits a century again in the Brisbane test, it was a surprising and grave omission of the crafty and successful off-spinner Washington Sundar for the third test at Gabba. While Sundar has been among the wickets in recent tests and also did well with the bat, the head coach and the out-of-form skipper Rohit Sharma couldn't realise the need for a quality off-spinner is a blunder at the moment. The need for the quality off-spinner is mandatory when the Aussies have two solid left-handers, Travis Head and Alex Carey. When Head is the consistent match winner for the Aussies, leaving Washington Sundar out will prove costly for India in this test. Whenever there were solid left-hand batters, the formulae of the Indian team in the past from the era of Skipper Ajit Wadekar used to play Erapaali Prasanna and S Venkataraghavan proved to be of great success. After Rohit won the toss and put the Aussies to bat first, the Aussies had scored 445, and now the pressure will be on the Indian batters, who may succumb to pressure again, as proved by losing the 4 top order for a paltry 51. After having won the first test under the standby skipper Jasprit Bumrah, Rohit Sharma seems to have not yet learnt the lesson that the composition of the right combinations is important to be in the match. Missing a clever off-spinner can never be an easy task for the team to come back once they lose the grip in the first innings, which is what's happening at present in Brisbane. Bumrah alone can't take the match away from the opponents; this needs to be realised by head coach Gautam Gambhir. By dropping down in the order, Skipper Rohit is unbeaten on zero, and Rahul, with 33 against his name, has been the only consolation for the fans while rain stopped play. Rain God can be the only saviour as it looks for the team to have a sigh of relief. Rohit and Kohli must take a voluntary exit rather than bring the morale down of the team at this juncture.

A P Thiruvadi | Chennai

Why reading and writing matter more in the age of AI

As AI grows increasingly sophisticated, our commitment to these skills will determine whether we remain active participants in innovation—or passive consumers



BIJU DHARAMAPALAN

In an era increasingly defined by technological innovation, reading and writing—cornerstones of human intellect—are facing a profound transformation. While artificial intelligence (AI) bots like OpenAI's ChatGPT and Google Bard redefine the boundaries of information generation, the necessity of cultivating human literacy has never been more crucial. The transition from Neanderthals to modern humans (Homo sapiens) involved significant cognitive and cultural advancements, but Neanderthals themselves did not read or write. Reading and writing developed after modern humans became the dominant hominin species. These are not merely communication tools but exercises that keep our cognitive faculties sharp and resilient. When we read, our brains decode symbols, conjuring vivid images, emotions, and concepts. This intricate process activates the left temporal cortex, which is responsible for language processing, and strengthens neural connectivity. Studies



underscore that reading enhances memory, concentration, and analytical thinking. Engaging with diverse genres deepens empathy and broadens perspectives, fostering a nuanced understanding of the world. Writing, on the other hand, is an intellectual partner to reading. Crafting words—whether in a journal, essay, or story—requires us to organise thoughts, synthesise ideas, and express them clearly. This process activates the prefrontal cortex, the brain's hub for decision-making and problem-solving. Writing is more than an intellectual task; it is therapeutic. Research shows that expressive writing can alleviate stress, enhance mood,

and even bolster the immune system. The tactile act of writing also strengthens memory, embedding information deeply within our minds. Reading and writing foster neuroplasticity, enabling the brain to adapt and form new connections. They are antidotes to cognitive decline and shields against neurodegenerative diseases like Alzheimer's. Regular engagement with these skills cultivates intellectual independence, creativity, and emotional depth—uniquely human attributes. Yet, as AI bots revolutionise the way we consume and produce information, there is an alarming decline in human literacy. Tools like Book AI, which transforms any book into a conversational chatbot, exemplify AI's capacity to digest and reproduce complex information effortlessly. AI lacks the intrinsic human qualities of creativity, empathy, and ethical judgment. As AI literacy surges, the stagnation of human literacy risks creating a dangerous imbalance. Over-reliance on AI can diminish critical think-

ing and communication skills, weakening the very attributes that distinguish humans from machines. While the fear of displacement is understandable, the answer lies in shifting our perspective. AI is not an adversary but a powerful partner that can amplify human capabilities and drive innovation. Individuals can leverage their unique strengths to complement AI capabilities by prioritising the development of reading and writing skills. In an environment controlled by artificial intelligence, these abilities are necessary to navigate complicated concepts, understandably articulate them, and affirm human importance. The development of artificial intelligence highlights the significance of human expertise rather than diminishing it. By committing to studying throughout our lives, we can ensure that technology will not replace our humanity but rather improve it. (The writer is an adjunct faculty at the National Institute of Advanced Studies; views are personal)



FIRST COLUMN

REDISCOVER HAPPINESS

Happiness is a state of mind that transcends life's adversities



RAVI VALLURI

A couple first met in an estimable business school in India where they were conferred reputable degrees in management. The couple soon migrated to the land of El Dorado in search of greener pastures, seeking professional and economic security. They were a happy couple as the angels showered gargantuan benediction. Soon, a new dimension to their lives arrived in the form of angelic twins. When the twins turned six months old, it was time to visit the hometown of their parents. They were received by sentimental and misty-eyed grandparents.

The sojourn concluded the mother and twins were afloat on a flight back to their home. However, fate had other plans and a double whammy struck the family. The father never reached the airport as he was killed in a car crash on the way to the airport. The disconsolate woman became a mental wreck, her moments of happiness fastened only in her memory bank and the picture album. The alluring woman was transfigured into stone. A cousin empathised with her distraught mental state and robustly suggested that she undertake the Happiness Course of the Art of Living. After considerable blandishment and extensive persuasion, she enrolled for the course and deposited all her emotions and feelings while undergoing the unique rhythmic breathing technique of Sudarshan Kriya. Life need not be tragic if only we realise that happiness is a state of mind that can



be achieved independent of material success.

As per ancient Japanese mythology, the light from Tsukuyomi, the Shinto God of the moon could induce illusions and delusions. Hecate, the Greek Goddess of the dark moon bestowed visions, but also caused humans to be afflicted with insanity. The human body is made up of seventy per cent of water elements. Full moon water recharges the body, mind and spirit and bestows harmony on our thought processes. Therefore, practising the Full Moon Meditation has a consequential and noteworthy influence on the mind, whereby one is suffused with efficacious thoughts and purges nugatory ones. It was a cathartic experience for the young single mother to emerge from her traumatic experience by unflinchingly practising this technique. It is an established fact that the Sakyan prince, Siddhartha, upon attaining enlightenment on the full moon day metamorphosed into the Compassionate One, Gautama Buddha and made a prescient statement, "Thousands of candles can be lit from a single candle, and the life of the candle will not be shortened. Happiness never decreases by being shared." How does one define an efficacious emotion called happiness? Happiness is a state of well-being, jollity, blitheness and primarily to be contented in life. The amphitheatre of the mind is a veritable nuclear reactor, where waves of thoughts and emotions arise and subside. These in turn determine our happiness quotient and consequentially the quality of our lives.

There once lived a farmer, who grew apples. He perpetually grumbled that there was not adequate produce to sustain the family. Providentially, there was a spurt in production and apples grew in plenitude. Still dissatisfied, the farmer cavilled that he was now laden with gruelling work, apples were rotting and prices now plunged! Sage Patanjali in his Yoga Sutras has postulated certain cardinal principles to live harmoniously, encompassed in happiness. These are non-violence, truthfulness, no regrets, not accepting invectives or salutations hurled by people, physical cleanliness of the body, inner contentment, forbearance or penance, self-study or examination of the mind and development and finally love and surrender to the supreme cosmic force.

(The writer is the CEO of Chhattisgarh East Railway Ltd. and Chhattisgarh East West Railway Ltd. He is a faculty of the Art of Living; views are personal)

Pesticides are poisoning the Punjab soil



AS MITTAL

Punjab's agriculture is facing a harrowing reality—its lifeblood, the soil, is being contaminated by toxic pesticide residues at alarmingly high levels



It's time to face the disturbing truth about Punjab's agriculture—and it's a nightmare. In districts like Bathinda, Mansa, and Ludhiana, up to 60 per cent of farm soil samples are infested with toxic pesticide residues—including the deadly chemicals endosulfan and carbofuran—at levels far beyond what's even remotely safe. This isn't just a warning; it's a full-blown crisis, a ticking time bomb, the result of irresponsible, reckless pesticide and fertiliser abuse running rampant in our fields.

On World Soil Day—December 5th—we're forced to confront the cold reality of a rapidly disintegrating agriculture system, while the world's been talking about "Caring for Soils: Measure, Monitor, and Manage"! The consequences of this madness are devastating. Our once fertile land is transforming into a barren wasteland, and that's only the beginning. These toxic chemicals aren't just staying in the soil. They're seeping into our food chain—contaminating every bite we take and slowly poisoning us all. But it doesn't stop there. These toxic residues are embedding themselves into our very DNA, passing down a legacy of genetic mutations to our children and grandchildren.

We are breeding a future full of compromised health and genetic decay. This is a catastrophe that will echo across generations. We're not just destroying our present health; we're condemning our children to inherit the consequences of our stupidity and greed. The survival of future generations is at risk, and the clock is ticking—every moment of inaction is a moment closer to irreversible genetic damage. It's time to wake up, stop burying our heads in the sand, and confront this crisis head-on before it's too late for the survival of future generations.

The Pesticide Management Bill, 2020: India's regulatory framework for pesticides, established in 1968, is woefully outdated and incapable of addressing the modern-day challenges posed by the rampant overuse of agrochemicals. Although efforts to amend this framework have been ongoing since 2008, significant gaps remain in safeguarding farmers, consumers, and the environment. The legislation—still governed by the Insecticides Act of 1968 and the Insecticides Rules of 1971—requires comprehensive reforms to address the multifaceted risks associated with pesticide overuse. The Pesticide



INDIA'S REGULATORY FRAMEWORK FOR PESTICIDES, ESTABLISHED IN 1968, IS WOEFULLY OUTDATED AND INCAPABLE OF ADDRESSING THE MODERN-DAY CHALLENGES POSED BY THE RAMPANT OVERUSE OF AGROCHEMICALS

Management Bill (PMB) 2020 was introduced to replace outdated legislation, but critical concerns must be addressed. While the bill outlines pesticide registration and licensing procedures, it must protect farmers more adequately from hazardous exposure. Statistics from Pesticide Action Network (PAN) International paint a grim picture: approximately 11,000 deaths globally are attributed to accidental pesticide poisoning annually, with India accounting for a staggering 6,600 fatalities. These numbers highlight critical deficiencies in pesticide usage protocols and safety measures.

Farmers and rural communities often bear the brunt of chemical exposures, especially in agriculturally intensive regions. For instance, Punjab, which heavily depends on rice and wheat cultivation, reports alarming pesticide consumption rates. With an average usage of 77 kg/hectare, significantly above the national average of 62 kg/hectare, Punjab ranks third in India after UP and Maharashtra for pesticide consumption.

A study by the Central Soil Salinity Research Institute (CSSRI) revealed that 6.74 million hectares of land in India are affected by salinity, a condition exacerbated by the overuse of agrochemicals. Persistent pesticide application has been found to reduce microbial biomass by 30-50 per cent, compromising soil fertility and diminishing the land's ability to provide essential nutrients to crops.

A Call for Robust Regulation Pesticides—insecticides, fungicides, or herbicides—play a vital role in modern agriculture. However, their toxic nature necessitates stringent oversight throughout their lifecycle, from production to disposal. The current regulatory framework lacks provisions for periodic review of registered pesticides based on emerging toxicological data. This oversight exposes the public to significant health risks, particularly in a country where improper handling of pesticides is widespread.

Training and Awareness: A Neglected Imperative Over the past three decades, the indiscriminate use of pesticides has surged, often driven by aggressive marketing strategies that portray chemical inputs as indispensable for high crop yields.

The limited scale of training initiatives highlights the need for more current efforts. Between 1994-95 and 2021-22, the Plant Protection Department of Agriculture and Farming Welfare Ministry trained only 585,000 farmers in Integrated Pest Management (IPM), a dismal figure in a nation with over 150 million farmers. According to the International Code of Conduct on Pesticide Management, governments and industry stakeholders must provide comprehensive training and information to farmers and retailers. Yet, the implementation of these guidelines still needs to be more robust. Retailers often serve as farmers' sole point of contact, and in many cases, they disseminate misleading or incomplete information. Data Collection: Bridging Critical Gaps The absence of robust data collection mechanisms further undermines India's regulatory ecosystem.

The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) documents pesticide poisoning deaths only if they are registered as medico-legal cases, excluding countless instances of non-institutional exposure and chronic health effects. This data void impedes effective policymaking and perpetuates a lack of accountability among stakeholders.

Addressing Weak Grievance Mechanisms: One of the most glaring deficiencies in India's pesticide regulation is the lack of accessible grievance redressal systems. Farmers and agricultural workers exposed to pesticides face prohibitive costs and lengthy procedures when seeking justice. Meanwhile, state governments can impose only temporary bans on hazardous pesticides, typically lasting 60 days, exposing vulnerable communities to ongoing risks.

Personal Protective Equipment: A

Forgotten Necessity The Pesticide Management Bill 2020 neglects the safety of small-scale farmers, who often lack access to affordable, climate-appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE). Farm workers face heightened health risks without mandatory provisions requiring them to supply adequate protective gear, especially in hot and humid agricultural regions. Labelling and Consumer Protection India's pesticide labelling standards fall short of both domestic and international norms. Safety information is frequently crammed into illegible leaflets, leaving farmers ill-informed about risks and proper usage.

Although the Consumer Protection Act theoretically covers farmers, legal recourse against manufacturers for misleading labels or substandard products is rarely pursued. The Way Forward India can no longer afford to ignore the human and environmental toll of unsafe pesticide practices. Establishing a robust, farmer-centric legal framework aligned with international standards is the only way forward to ensure safe and sustainable agriculture. A gradual shift towards agro-ecological farming methods that emphasise non-chemical pest management is imperative. The government must phase out hazardous pesticides and promote environmentally friendly alternatives to safeguard farmers' health and ensure consumer food safety. Addressing the gaps in the Pesticide Management Bill 2020 and adopting proactive measures, such as mandatory training and the provision of accurate information on pesticide usage and risks, are critical steps towards securing safe and healthier future generations.

(The Author is Vice-Chairman of Sonalika IITL Group, Vice-Chairman of the Punjab Economic Policy and Planning Board, Chairman of ASSOCHAM Northern Region Development Council and President of Tractor and Mechanization Association. Views expressed are personal)

India@2024: A resilient economy on the fast track to growth

But challenges such as persistent inflation, a slowdown in the banking sector and environmental concerns continue to pose hurdles

India has firmly established itself as the fastest-growing economy among the G20 nations, with a projected GDP growth rate of 6.5 per cent-7 per cent for the fiscal year 2024-25. This remarkable trajectory underscores the nation's economic resilience and immense potential despite global challenges. The year 2024 presents a vivid picture of India's economic landscape, marked by notable achievements and emerging challenges.



KAJLEEN KAUR

direct investment (FDI) has also shown a dramatic surge, rising 45 per cent year-on-year to USD 29.79 billion in the first half of 2024-25, with key inflows in services, telecom, and pharmaceuticals. Complementing this momentum, India's foreign exchange reserves swelled to \$704.89 bil-

lion, driven by an \$87.6 billion increase this year alone. This growth includes a \$10.468 billion boost in foreign currency assets and a \$2 billion rise in gold reserves, which now stand at \$65.7 billion.

India's fintech sector continues to shine on the global stage, ranking as the third-largest fintech economy after the USA and the UK. The country also boasts the fourth-largest stock market in the world, with a market capitalisation of \$4.33 trillion, surpassing Hong Kong. A significant milestone in digital payments was achieved with the Unified Payments Interface (UPI), which saw transaction values soar to an astounding Rs 200 trillion in 2024, compared to Rs 139 trillion in the previous year. India even showcased its

UPI prowess on a global stage, introducing the system at the Eiffel Tower in Paris as part of a digital payments agreement with France.

The Goods and Services Tax (GST) revenue collection also reached unprecedented levels, hitting Rs 2.10 lakh crore—a substantial 12.4 per cent increase from the previous year. This growth was driven by a robust 13.4 per cent rise in domestic transactions and an 8.3 per cent increase in imports, showcasing the strength of India's tax infrastructure.

Amid these promising figures, certain challenges continue to loom. Inflation, as measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI), remains persistently high, exceeding 5 per cent. The banking sector has



witnessed a slowdown, with credit growth declining to 11 per cent in November 2024 from 20.6 per cent the previous year. Deposit growth also moderated, with banks adding Rs 13.8 lakh crore in deposits between April and November, compared to Rs 16.1 lakh crore during the same period

last year. In response, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) reduced the cash reserve ratio (CRR) by 50 basis points to 4 per cent in December to improve liquidity and stimulate credit growth.

Qualitative indicators present a mixed picture. India climbed 14 ranks on the UNDP

Gender Inequality Index, highlighting significant strides in bridging the gender gap. It also improved its position on the Global Innovation Index, rising from 40th to 39th among 133 global economies, driven by entrepreneurial activity, vibrant startups, and successful public-private partnerships. The Human Development Report 2023-24 placed India at 134th among 193 countries, reflecting gains in life expectancy, education, and Gross National Income. However, no progress was seen in the Happiness Index, where India remains at 126th, largely due to dissatisfaction among older citizens, perceived discrimination, and poor health metrics. Moreover, India continues to struggle in environmental performance,

ranking 176th out of 180 countries. Challenges such as air quality, biodiversity loss, and greenhouse gas emissions demand urgent attention.

As India navigates these complexities, it is also undergoing key transitions. The US economy has entered a new phase, and India sees a shift in RBI leadership, with Sanjay Malhotra taking over as the 26th Governor after Shaktikanta Das's tenure. While the final assessment of FY2024-25 remains pending, India's growth story offers optimism for a brighter future and a strong foundation for the vision of 'Viksit Bharat@2047'.

(The writer is an assistant professor at Sri Guru Gobind Singh College of Commerce, University of Delhi. Views expressed are personal)

Political strife erupts over South Korean court as it is set to determine fate of impeached Yoon

South Korea's acting leader vowed Tuesday to convey to the world that things are back to normal following parliament's impeachment of conservative President Yoon Suk Yeol, but rival parties began squabbling over the mechanics of a court ruling to determine whether to formally unseat or reinstate him.

Yoon faces allegations of rebellion and abuse of power over his martial law introduction. Investigative authorities want him to appear for questioning later this week, but officials at Yoon's office and residence on Monday refused to receive requests for his appearance.

Judge rejects Trump's bid to dismiss hush money conviction because of SC immunity

A judge Monday rejected a President-elect Donald Trump's bid to have his hush money conviction dismissed because of the U.S. Supreme Court's recent ruling on presidential immunity.

Trump's lawyers then cited the Supreme Court opinion to argue that the hush money jury got some improper evidence, such as Trump's presidential financial disclosure form, testimony from some White House aides and social media posts made while he was in office.

Taipei mayor urges China to lessen confrontation

The China-friendly mayor of Taiwan's capital, Taipei, on Tuesday called for less confrontation between the sides, even as Beijing continues to send warships and fighter jets to intimidate the self-governing island democracy.

Yoon faces allegations of rebellion and abuse of power

Investigative authorities want him to appear for questioning later this week, but officials at Yoon's office and residence on Monday refused to receive requests for his appearance.

PUBLIC NOTICE: We, Raghbir Singh Sandhu and Smt. Navpreet Singh R/o DDA SFS Flat no. 1344, Third Floor, Sector-8, Pocket B&C, Vasant Kunj, Delhi-110070...

SIGNAL & TELECOM WORKS IN KATHIHAR DIVISION: Tender Notice No. N-2024-K-27. Date: 13-12-2024. E-Tender are invited by the undersigned for the following work...

CORRIGENDUM - 1 AGAINST E-TENDER NOTICE NO. : KYQ-CDO-ETP-02-24-25, DATED: 30-11-2024. E-TENDER NOTICE NO. KYQ-CDO-ETP-02-24-25, dated: 30-11-2024 against the work - Construction of ETP waste water recycling plant...

PUBLIC NOTICE: Be it known to all that my client Sh. Sukdev Singh Gulati S/o. Late S. Tara Singh Gulati R/o House No. 36, Third Floor, Road No. 64, West Punjabi Bagh, New Delhi-110026...

PUBLIC NOTICE: Notice is hereby given that my client Sushil Tandon is the owner as well as Partner of M/s. Dooan Caterers in process to avail the working capital against his property bearing No. XY, corner Corporation No. 5198 (Part) in Ward No. XI, area measuring 80 sq. yds. situated at Gali Bahadur Dass Bazar, Road, Pahar Ganj, New Delhi-110055...

Office of the Superintending Engineer 3rd Circle, Public Works Department, Pithoragarh. Letter No. : 6242 / 208C(Yata 'D')-03/2024. Dated : 17/12/2024. National Competitive E-Tender Notice.

Earthquake causes damage in Vanuatu

A powerful magnitude 7.3 earthquake struck just off the coast of Vanuatu on Tuesday, causing widespread destruction in the South Pacific island nation as the injured began arriving at a hospital and unconfirmed reports of casualties emerged.

REBUILDING BRIDGE WORKS

E-Tender Notice No. 110/W-2/APDJ Dated: 13-12-2024. E-Tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following works: Tender No. 35-AP-II-2024. Name of Work: Rebuilding of Br. No.- 12A (1x1.83 m Brick Arch) by 1x2.50 m RCC Box culvert at Km-207/8 between Fakirgram Jn.-Golaganj Jn. Tender Value: ₹2,25,27,199.76/- Earnest Money: ₹2,62,600/- Date & Time of closing of Tender: 13.00 hrs. on 08-01-2025 & will be opened at 15.00 hrs. on 08-01-2025.

STATION DEVELOPMENT WORKS

E-Tender Notice No. 113/W-2/APDJ Dated: 13-12-2024. E-Tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following works: Tender No. 29-AP-III-2024. Name of Work: At Dalgau (DLO) - Development of Goods Yard, Merchant Room, Goods office, Labour Rest Room, CCTV, Toilets, Water Dust Proof wall, alternative entry to Goods siding connecting road in connection with station development. Tender Value: ₹10,46,91,339.56/- Earnest Money: ₹6,73,500/- Date & Time of closing of Tender: 13.00 hrs. of 03-01-2025 & will be opened at 15.00 hrs. of 03-01-2025 hrs.

PD(1088)A I, Mem Baty, Mother of JC-471486N Sub Maj Bhim Singh, R/o Vill- Bahwalpur, PO- Fatehpur Billoch, PS+Teh- Ballabgarh, Dist- Faridabad, Haryana-121004, have changed my name from Mem Baty to Mem Vati, vide affidavit dated 17/12/2024 before Notary Public Delhi.

PD(1089)C I, Ashok Kumar S/o Late Sh. Raghunath R/o G-1552, Gaur Cascades, Rajnagar Extension, Ghaziabad-201017 (U.P) have changed my name from Ashok Kumar to Ashok Kumar Malik. Henceforth I would be known by the name of Ashok Kumar Malik for all future purposes.

PD(1090)C I, Malti Singh, W/o Chhaviraj Singh, R/o 19-M-Block Anandvas J J Colony Shakurpur Delhi-34, have changed my name from Rajkumari to Malti Singh.

PD(1091)A I, HEMLATA W/o LATE SH. SURYA MOHAN THAKUR have lost my original Share Certificate of FLAT NO.B-502, SWAMI DAYANAND CGHS LTD., PLOT NO.5, SECTOR-6, DWARKA, NEW DELHI, finder please contact: 9811558356

TRACK MAINTENANCE WORK AT KATHIHAR DIVISION: E-Tender Notice No. KIR/Engg./52 of 2024 Dated: 11-12-2024. E-Tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following works: Tender No. 1. Brief Description of work: Track Maintenance work and other ancillary work for the period of 2 years under the jurisdiction of ADEN/Barsoli Jn. Tender Value: ₹5,64,49,141.37/- Earnest Money: ₹4,32,300/- Tender No. 2. Brief Description of work: Track Maintenance work and other ancillary work for the period of 2 years under the jurisdiction of ADEN/Malda Town. Tender Value: ₹9,99,01,736.89/- Earnest Money: ₹6,49,500/- Date & Time of closing of Tender: 15.00 hrs. of 09-01-2025 & opened at 15.30 hrs. of 09-01-2025.

PUBLIC NOTICE: Notice is hereby given on behalf of Mrs. Archana Jain w/o late Nareesh Chandra (Nareesh Chand Jain) Ms. Anshul Jain D/o late Nareesh Chand Jain, Ms. Unnati Jain D/o late Nareesh Chand Jain and Ms. Varnika Jain D/o late Nareesh Chand Jain...

DRM (W), Kathihar, NORTH EAST FRONTIER RAILWAY. Station Development Works. E-Tender Notice No. 113/W-2/APDJ Dated: 13-12-2024. E-Tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following works: Tender No. 29-AP-III-2024. Name of Work: At Dalgau (DLO) - Development of Goods Yard, Merchant Room, Goods office, Labour Rest Room, CCTV, Toilets, Water Dust Proof wall, alternative entry to Goods siding connecting road in connection with station development.

MADHYA PRADESH JAL NIGAM (A Govt. of Madhya Pradesh Undertaking) "B" Arera Hills, Bhopal-462004

Ph. : 0755-2579034, 2579874, Fax : 0755-2579873, www.mppjalnigam.mp.gov.in. E-mail : mpjalnigam@mp.gov.in, CIN-U41000MP2012SGC028798. NIT No. 23-35/SQC/Proc./MPJNM/2024-25. Bhopal, Dated : 16.12.2024. NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER.

Table with columns: NIT No., Zone, PIU, Total Villages, PAC (Rs.), Total PAC (Rs.), Duration (months), EMD (Rs. Lakh), Document Fee (Rs.). Lists various water supply schemes across different zones.

Spain drawn with Italy, Belgium and Portugal in Euro 2025 group

AP ■ LAUSANNE
 World Cup winner Spain will chase a sweep of major women's soccer titles at the 2025 European Championship after drawing a group with Italy, Belgium and Portugal. A European title would complete the set for Spain women after winning the inaugural UEFA Nations League in February for coach Montse Tomé, who took over when the team and federation was in turmoil after the 2023 world title win in Sydney. Tomé is the only female coach in Spain's Euro 2025 group. Euro 2025 host Switzerland will open the 16-nation tournament against Norway on July 2 in Basel. The group also includes Iceland and Finland. The past two European champions, titleholder

England and Euro 2017 winner the Netherlands, landed in a strong group with top-seeded France and Wales. France and England reunite next July 5 in Zurich after coming through the same qualifying group, in which they traded away wins in a five-day spell and France finished on top of the standings. "We had some beautiful matches in May and June. It's a very good challenge," France coach Laurent Bonadei said. Germany, the record eight-time European champion, was drawn with Denmark, Poland and Sweden, the inaugural winner in 1984. Basel's St. Jakob Park stadium also will host the final on July 27. More than 700,000 tickets are publicly available for the 31 games being hosted in eight Swiss cities. Switzerland has the responsibility to continue the



momentum in European women's soccer after three successful major tournaments. France hosted the 2019 Women's World Cup, won by the United States; host England won the Euro 2022 final against Germany watched by more than 87,000 fans at Wembley Stadium; and Spain and England played for the 2023 world title at the first 32-team tournament, hosted by Australia and New Zealand. "For me it is the perfect moment for this tournament to come here," said retired Swiss great Lara Dickenmann, a two-time Champions League winner with Lyon. "It will be a game-changer for us," Dickenmann told The Associated Press. "It's going to be really important for the Swiss population but also for the Swiss media, Swiss politics, on any level that takes part in football." Switzerland will start against Norway — which lost the 2023 World Cup opening game against New Zealand — one month after the same teams meet in a Nations League group that also includes Iceland. Switzerland coach Pia Sundhage said she aimed to field her best team in what will be a final competitive warmup for Euro 2025. "Confidence can take any team anywhere," said Sundhage, the Swedish veteran who led the U.S. To back-to-back Olympic titles in 2008 and 2012. England coach Sarina Wiegman has won the past two Euros titles, after leading her native Netherlands to the 2017 title, and suggested it will be an open and exciting tournament in Switzerland. "It's not just three or four countries" who can win, Wiegman said.

FIFA set to announce its top players in men's and women's soccer in 'The Best' awards

AP ■ DOHA
 Real Madrid star Vinicius Junior is about to find out if he'll be finally getting his hands on a big global player award. FIFA's "The Best" awards take place on Tuesday, when the top men's and women's soccer players of 2024 will be announced based on voting by fans, the current captains and coaches of all national teams, and media representatives. It is FIFA's version of the older and more prestigious Ballon d'Or prize. Vinicius is on an 11-player shortlist for the best men's player, having been so disappointed to lose out to Manchester City midfielder Rodri for the Ballon d'Or in October that he and his Madrid team snubbed the ceremony in Paris in protest. The FIFA ceremony starts at



1700 GMT in Doha, where Madrid and Vinicius traveled on Monday for the Intercontinental Cup final against Pachuca. Rodri is also on the shortlist, along with Kylian Mbappé and Lionel Messi — last year's winner of the FIFA prize on a tiebreaker over Erling

Haaland. Barcelona playmaker Aitana Bonmati won the best women's player for 2023 and is seeking back-to-back FIFA prizes as one of four Spain players on the 16-woman shortlist. Bonmati has won the Ballon d'Or for two straight years, and won the Spanish league, Spanish cup and Champions League with Barcelona in 2024. The contenders have been selected based on their performances from Aug. 21, 2023, to Aug. 10, 2024. FIFA said the award winners have been decided by an "equally weighted voting system" between fans, the captains and coaches, and the media. The best men's and women's coaches and the best men's and women's goalkeepers will also be announced, along with the best men's and women's 11s and the Marta and Puskás Awards for the best goals in women's and men's soccer, respectively. Among those attending the gala dinner at the Aspire Academy in Doha will be FIFA President Gianni Infantino.

Americans now paid to play in Ryder Cup

AP ■ WASHINGTON
 Americans will be paid to play in the Ryder Cup for the first time under a new PGA of America program that gives them a \$200,000 stipend and \$300,000 for them to distribute to charity. The \$500,000 directed to each of the 12 players and the captain is an increase from the \$200,000 — strictly for charity — that began when the pay-for-play issue first arose in 1999 ahead of the Brookline matches. U.S. Captain Keegan Bradley said in a text he would be giving his entire allocation to charity. "We added the \$200,000 stipend out of respect for the players... So the players could have a say in where the money goes. It's recognition for all the players have done for the Ryder Cup over the years," President Don Rea said in a letter to past Ryder Cup captains, noting the stipend



would be separate from what players get for expenses. The PGA of America board met in person last week and approved the payment scheme. "We've had so many meetings for a long time and it hasn't gone up since 1999. We're talking 25 years that it's been at \$200,000," Rea said in a telephone interview, adding that \$500,000 "seemed like the right place to land." "Everyone is appreciative of what the players are doing for the Ryder Cup." That appreciation now

includes direct payment for their services, a change not only in the amount but 40% of it without stipulation where it goes. The original deal in 1999 was \$200,000 for each player, with half of that going to a college golf program and the other half to a charity of the player's choice. For the Rome matches in 2023, the entire \$200,000 went to whatever charity or foundation the players chose. Rea noted in his letter to past Ryder Cup captains that it was similar to what the PGA Tour does for the Presidents Cup. The Presidents Cup changed from players choosing a charity to players and captains getting \$250,000 without stipulation starting in 2022. The PGA of America announced its decision in a statement on its social media channels. "The players and captains, past and present, are responsible for the Ryder Cup becoming the most special competition in golf and one of the most in-demand events on the international sports scene," the PGA said. "While no players asked to be compensated, the PGA of America Board of Directors has voted to increase the allocation to the members of the U.S. Ryder Cup team from \$200,000 to be directed to charities — a figure unchanged since 1999 — to \$500,000, with \$300,000 of that to be directed to the charity or charities of the players' choice. The balance is a stipend."

Rohan Jaitley re-elected as DDCA president



PTI ■ NEW DELHI
 Incumbent Rohan Jaitley comfortably defeated former India cricketer and Lok Sabha MP Kirti Azad to be elected as the President of the Delhi and Districts Cricket Association (DDCA) for a third successive term. The 35-year-old Rohan, son of former Union Minister late Arun Jaitley, secured 1,577 votes compared to Azad's 777 in the race to the top position, which comes with a three-year term. His father had served as DDCA president for 14 years. As many as 2,413 votes were cast from among the 3748 members, and 1,207 votes

were required to win. In 2020, Rohan was elected unopposed after Rajat Sharma resigned midway during his term. A year later, he defeated advocate Vikas Singh to claim a full three-year run. Rohan had the backing of former BCCI acting president CK Khanna, who is considered an influential figure in Delhi cricket as he controls more than 1,000 votes. Khanna's daughter Shikha Kumar (1,246 votes), defeated Rakesh Kumar Bansal (536) and Sudhir Kumar Agarwal (498) to claim the vice-president's post.

Ashok Sharma (893) became the secretary, while Harish Singla (1328) was elected for the treasurer's post and Amit Grover (1189) won the joint secretary position. All office-bearers are elected for a three-year term. Anand Verma (985), Manjit Singh (1050), Navdeep M (1034), Shyam Sharma (1165), Tushar Saigal (926), Vikas Katyal (1054), Vikram Kohli (939) claimed the directors' post, which goes to polls every year. A member of the 1983 World Cup-winning team Azad, who represents Bardhaman-Durgapur constituency for the Mamata Banerjee-led Trinamool Congress party, had alleged corruption in the DDCA in the run up to the polls. He had alleged that the DDCA spent as much Rs 17.5 crore on installing floodlights when the much bigger Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad did the same for Rs 7.5 crore. He had also accused the incumbent DDCA administration of spending only a fraction of the approximately Rs 140 crore it received from the BCCI in the last financial year.



Hockey India League announces free entry for matches in Rourkela and Ranchi

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
 Hockey India on Tuesday announced free entry for fans for both men's and women's matches of the Hockey India League to be played at Rourkela and Ranchi. The eight-team men's HIL in a new format will start on December 28 at Rourkela's Birsas Munda Stadium and will conclude on February 1, 2025. The women's edition comprising four teams will be held at Ranchi's Marang Gomke Jaipal Singh Munda Astro Turf Stadium from January 12-26. Additionally, HI said select

matches of both men's and women's categories will be held at alternate venues to "expand the league's reach." "By foregoing revenue from ticket sales, Hockey India aims to build a stronger connection between the sport and its passionate supporters, encouraging more people to experience the thrill of live hockey," HI said in a media release. HIL governing committee chairman Dilip Tirkey said, "By offering free tickets, we are ensuring that everyone, regardless of financial status, has the opportunity to experience live hockey at its best."

West Ham share points with Bournemouth after late drama on England's south coast

AP ■ BOURNEMOUTH
 Enes Ünal scored a superb free kick in the last minute of normal time to rescue a point for Bournemouth in a 1-1 home draw against West Ham in the Premier League. Both sides struggled to break down their opponent and goalkeepers made timely saves at each end. But in the 87th minute, just when it looked like a 0-0 draw was on the cards, West Ham took the lead thanks to a VAR-assisted penalty. After a video review, referee Chris Kavanagh adjudged the ball to have struck Tyler Adams' hand and Lucas Paqueta made no mistake from 12 meters. That would have been hard on Bournemouth, which enjoyed the better of the second half but came up against the man of the match in West Ham goalkeeper Lukasz Fabianski. But in the 90th minute, Ünal curled a free kick into the top corner to give the Cherries a deserved share of the points.



"Credit to him, big moment, especially the reaction as well, I thought the boys were brilliant," Bournemouth forward Ryan Christie told broadcaster Sky. "And it was a moment of magic to get us level." There will be debate over the penalty decision and Christie lamented what he said was inconsistent decision-making from officials. "I thought it was harsh," Christie said. "I know his hand is high but he's so close to the ball. We didn't get one last week against Ipswich from a similar scenario. "It's a bit frustrating because we dominated. But it's good to get a point in the end." The comeback was another example of Bournemouth's late resilience. The south coast side has picked up nine points from losing positions this season, better than everyone bar Aston Villa and Manchester City. Bournemouth climbed into sixth place, just two points behind Manchester City, while West Ham was 14th.

A year of chaos and heartbreaks for Indian wrestling but not without hope for future

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
 In an ideal world, politics and sport are not meant to be mixed. But then the world of Indian wrestling was far from ideal in 2024 with Vinesh Phogat's Olympic dejection and the never-ending administrative chaos pulling down a once flourishing sport. From the time when Wrestling Federation of India elections were held, exactly a year back, to the recent National Championships in Bengaluru, Indian wrestling has seemed like a rudderless ship. Not too long ago, wrestling had developed into a sport that promised unprecedented Olympic success but cut to Paris 2024, Aman Sehrawat's bronze medal was what saved the delegation the blushes

after Phogat's seemingly destined gold slipped through her grasp due to a cruel twist of fate. She was, for better or for worse, the most intriguing story of Indian wrestling this year. She punished herself to fight in a lower weight category after her preferred class was already booked for the Olympics, downed the then unbeaten Japanese legend Yui Susaki in her opening round in Paris and then ended up National Championships in Bengaluru, Indian wrestling has seemed like a rudderless ship. A day later, she gave up on her sporting career, declaring that the fight had left her. She wasn't done though. Following an emotionally overwhelming homecoming which included a custom-made gold medal from

Haryana's khap panchayats, Phogat joined the Congress party, fought the state assembly elections and managed to become an MLA in her maiden electoral outing from Julana constituency. She wasn't the only one in her fraternity who decided on politics as future. Bajrang Punia too joined the Congress but he did not get the same returns as Phogat. His position was that of a Kisan morcha head and his wrestling career was left stalled after coping a four-year ban for failure to submit dope samples during training camps. This was after he failed to qualify for Paris, a new low in the career of the celebrated grappler, who fetched a bronze in the Tokyo Games. The two maintained all along that their fight against alleged



sexual harassment of women wrestlers by former WFI head Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh was an apolitical one. But their fellow protestor and Rio Olympics bronze-winner Sakshi Malik sought to dispute that soon after they joined congress. She went on to allege in her book that the duo's "greed" punctured their protest against Sharan Singh. Next generation affected by chaos The likes of Anshu Malik and Antim Panghal, who were touted as the next big thing in

Indian wrestling, cut a sorry figure in Paris but Aman carried forward the rich legacy of the Chhatrasal stadium by winning the men's freestyle 57kg bronze. It was a category which 2020 Tokyo Games silver-medallist Ravi Dahiya made his own. But Dahiya vanished from the scene due to spate of injuries that affected his form. The Tokyo campaign, which yielded two medals in wrestling, should have been the catalyst for better infrastructure and coaching for Indian wrestler. However, the developments in the last 24 months have prevented growth. The potential is still there and the biggest example was Indian U17 women team's world championship victory in Amman, Jordan in September.

The country had been aiming for a podium finish for long and the dream finally materialised this year. Out of 10 possible medals, India won eight medals, including five gold medal and one silver. Finishing ahead of powerhouse Japan and impressive Kazakhstan is no mean feat. However, the unending litigations have tied the hands of WFI which is now struggling to carry out day to day affairs of the body. The team led by Sanjay Singh, that won the elections, stands suspended by the Sports Ministry. The ground of suspension is announcing Nationals without following a 15-day notice period in December 2023. But the fact remains that if WFI had followed the notice period, wrestlers

would have lost a crucial year because by the time the 15-day period would have completed, year 2024 would have started. WFI was forced to withdraw the team from the senior World Championship owing to pending litigation by Sakshi and her wrestler husband Satyawart Kadian. Eventually after government's intervention a team was finally sent. No proper coaching camp has been organised in the last two years, the efforts to revive the Pro Wrestling League are on hold, grants and sponsorships have stopped, no foreign/personal coaches have been engaged and there is no planning to take the sport forward. If the situation could be summed up in a line, Indian wrestling is stagnant for now.

Rahul, Jadeja fifties help India avoid follow-on in Brisbane Test

PTI ■ BRISBANE
KL Rahul and Ravindra Jadeja were determination personified as their fighting fifties helped India avoid the follow-on on the fourth day of the weather-hit third Test against a menacing Australia that seems meandering towards a draw. Jadeja (77, 123b, 7x4, 1x6) and Rahul (84, 139, 8x4) were the heavy-lifters in India's 252 for nine when bad light forced an early close to the day. Jasprit Bumrah (10) and Akash Deep (27), who showed appreciable gumption, are holding the fort for India. The visitors trail Aussies by 193 runs. But they wouldn't mind that one bit as Australia will now have to bat again and forcing a result in three sessions looks an improbable target, considering the Brisbane weather pattern. The city is bracing up for rain and a thunderstorm or two on Wednesday. A quick word of appreciation is also required for No. 10 Bumrah

and No. 11 Akash Deep for knocking down the 33 runs required to go past the follow-on mark of 246. The much-awaited moment came when Akash crunched Pat Cummins over gully for a boundary. When these two joined forces, India were reeling at 213 for 9 after Jadeja was dismissed off a Cummins' snorter. But while resuming from a wafer-thin overnight score of 51 for four, India needed someone to offer fight, and Rahul, India's standout batter in this series so far, did precisely that. Rahul displayed admirable technical nous to withstand the stern test posed by the Australian bowlers to take the game deep into the day. A nine toes down Rahul and an equally feisty Jadeja added 67 runs for the sixth wicket, and it was the first sign of India's fight. There was a moment of massive fortune too for Rahul when Smith spilled a regulation catch at second slip off the first ball of the



day from Cummins. Rahul was on 33 then. A quick look upwards and a silent prayer showed how much he valued that

reprieve, which he exploited to the hilt, notching his 17th Test fifty. Once he woke up from a bit of morning haziness, Rahul looked a

class apart from the rest of his colleagues. The Aussies employed three slips and a gully, leaving the vast

expanse of the ground to play his favourite shot -- drive through the cover or in front of the point. It was a dangerous proposition as there was enough movement and bounce for the Aussie pacers. But Rahul was prudent enough to see through that ruse. He did not bring out that shot until the bowlers pitched the ball well up in his driving arc. The Bengaluru man's sagacity shone in how he defended too -- all soft hands and playing close to the body. Cummins tested him with that fifth stump line outside off, but Rahul either left the ball wisely or merely tucked his bat behind his pads. However, a remarkable redemption catch by Smith at slip off Nathan Lyon ended his stay. But Jadeja carried on and he added 53 runs for the seventh wicket with Nitish Reddy to keep India afloat. The 36-year-old scored a good chunk of runs either down the ground or square of the wicket, enabling him to collect runs



New Zealand beat England by 423 runs in the 3rd test

AP ■ HAMILTON
Captain Ben Stokes was unable to bat because of a hamstring injury on Tuesday as England slumped to a 423-run loss to New Zealand before tea on the fourth day of the third cricket Test. Stokes strained his left hamstring while bowling on the third day and could not take the field as England was bowled out for 234 as it chased an impossible target of 658 for victory. New Zealand's winning margin matched its largest test win by runs of a 423-run win over Sri Lanka in 2018 and prevented England from completing a series whitewash. England had an unassailable 2-0 lead in the series after winning the first test by eight wickets and the second by 323 runs. "You can't fault any of the energies or efforts we put into this game, particularly in the field," Stokes said. "It's obviously not ideal to end the tour on this note but we've come here against a New Zealand team which is very strong and full of confidence after beating India in India 3-0. So to come here and lift that trophy at the end proves we played some very good

cricket." England resumed its second innings Tuesday at 18-2 after losing the wickets of Ben Duckett and Zak Crawley late on day three after New Zealand, leading by 204 on the first innings, was dismissed for 453. Joe Root made 54 and Jacob Bethell 76 in a 104-run partnership for the third wicket which briefly fanned England's hopes that it might somehow endure for two full days to draw the match. But dogged perseverance is not a feature of England cricket in the "Bazball" quick-scoring era and instead it maintained a policy of all-out attack before the final wicket fell midway through the second session. After lunch Gus Atkinson blasted 43 from 41 balls with seven fours and a six and Ollie Pope made 17 but wickets fell steadily and the result became inevitable. "I think anytime you finish a series with a win when you've been behind is pleasing," New Zealand captain Tom Latham said. "We weren't at our best in those first two games but the way we came here on a wicket that was slightly different to the first couple and we adapted was very

pleasing." New Zealand's win owed a great deal to the contribution of Mitchell Santner in the first innings who made 76 batting at No. 8 and worked with Matt Henry, Tim Southee and Will O'Rourke to add 116 runs for New Zealand's three wickets. That allowed New Zealand to reach 347 after losing the toss and being sent in. Santner's last-wicket stand with O'Rourke which lasted 77 minutes at the end of the first day and the start of the second was a display of resilience which had been missing from New Zealand's performances in the first two tests. Santner then took 3-7 while New Zealand's presumptive new-ball pairing of Henry and O'Rourke shared seven wickets as England was bowled out for 143 in a session and a half in its first innings. Southee has been the spearhead of New Zealand's attack for many years, mostly in combination with Trent Boult. But this was his 107th and final test before his retirement from international cricket and Boult no longer is contracted by New Zealand Cricket.

Mandhana moves to top three in both ODI and T20I rankings

PTI ■ DUBAI
India's vice-captain Smriti Mandhana has surged three places to second in the latest ICC Women's ODI rankings while climbing one spot to third among T20I batters, following her stellar displays against Australia and the West Indies. The left-hander struck 105 in the final match of the series against Australia in Perth and 54 in the first game of the ongoing T20I rubber against the West Indies in Mumbai to headline the latest rankings update released here on Tuesday. Mandhana is the lone Indian batter in the top 10 as her skipper Harmanpreet Kaur moved down two spots to 13th while Jemimah Rodrigues climbed six places to 15th and Harleen Deol moved up nine rungs to 64th. Among bowlers, Deepti Sharma has slipped two spots



to five. India seam bowler Arundhati Reddy has shot up 48 places to 51st after a haul of four for 26 while Renuka Thakur has moved up from 28th to joint 26th. England opener Tammy Beaumont advanced two places to 11th after an unbeaten 65 helped clinch the South Africa series 2-1. Ashleigh Gardner has moved up one place to 16th with a 50 in Perth, Tahlia McGrath has progressed from 32nd to 24th

with an unbeaten 56, and Annabell Sutherland is up 15 places to 29th after a match-winning 110. Gardner is also up two places to a career-best-equaling third position in the bowling rankings with a haul of five for 30 and has moved up from fourth to second in the all-rounders' list. Sutherland is in the top 20 of the bowling rankings. Others to move up in this list include South Africa's

Vettori admits Indian tailenders partnership foils Australia's plans

PTI ■ BRISBANE
Australia assistant coach Daniel Vettori admitted that a resilient partnership between Indian tailenders Jasprit Bumrah and Akash Deep foiled their plans to enforce a follow-on, while also defending the decision not to declare the home team's first innings in the third Test which seems heading towards a draw. With the Indian batters, barring KL Rahul and Ravindra Jadeja, failing once again, it was the obstinate 39-run unbeaten partnership between Bumrah and Akash Deep that saved India the blushes as the tourists avoided a follow on a rain marred day four on Tuesday. "I think the only way to force the game was to force the follow-on," Vettori said at the post-day press conference. "There was a desperation to get that final wicket. We thought we had a really good chance when Jadeja was dismissed, but it was a real fighting partnership from Bumrah and Deep. "Unfortunately, just the amount of time that's been lost from the game has made it difficult," he added. Akash Deep, making his debut in Australia, walked in to bat at 213 for 9, with India still needing 33 runs to avoid the follow-on that could have cost them the game. Alongside pace spearhead Bumrah, he guided India to 252 for 9, frustrating the home team. Australia had ended day three on 405 for 7 but chose to bat, consuming a considerable amount of game time on a rain affected day four rather than declare their innings.

Josh Hazlewood likely to miss Test series against India due to calf injury

PTI ■ BRISBANE
Australia pacer Josh Hazlewood is likely to miss the remainder of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy against India due to a right calf strain that he sustained during the ongoing third Test at the Gabba, Cricket Australia said on Tuesday. The niggle has also ruled Hazlewood out of the Brisbane Test, weakening Australia's bowling attack. "Josh Hazlewood has sustained a right side calf strain which will prevent him from playing any further part in the Test match against India in Brisbane," Cricket



Australia said in an official statement. "He is likely to miss the remainder of the Test series." On Tuesday, the New South

Wales player bowled just one over before walking out of the field following a discussion with captain Pat Cummins, senior cricketer

Steven Smith and team physio Nick Jones. Hazlewood later underwent scans to ascertain the severity of the injury. The 33-year-old had nicked off star India batter Virat Kohli on Monday, the third day of the match, with a fine delivery outside the off-stump. Hazlewood made his return to the side for the third Test after missing the Pink Ball Test at Adelaide due to a side strain. He had replaced fellow pacer Scot Boland, who played in the day-night Adelaide Test, in the Australia eleven for the ongoing Brisbane Test.

Can 'Guru' Gambhir and Nayar offer cogent solutions to technical flaws in batters?

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli are rapping maximum criticism for being walking wickets during the ongoing Test series against Australia but even Shubman Gill, Yashasvi Jaiswal and Rishabh Pant haven't shown the patience needed to survive Down Under, indicating a larger problem. Patience is a virtue that one develops over time and Kohli had once showed how it's done during his golden phase between 2014 and 2019. KL Rahul, blessed with sound technique, has displayed that during the current series with scores of 77 and 84 in Perth and Brisbane. In case of Jaiswal, save his second innings knock of 161 at Perth, a shuffle across the crease is making him a candidate for leg-before. Gill loves to play on the rise outside the off-stump and away from his body and could be impatient when one bowls the stump and even for Pant, a compulsive stroke player, the ball that leaves him from five metre length with adequate bounce, is creating issues. So, will head coach Gautam Gambhir and his deputy Abhishek Nayar, who is highly regarded in Mumbai cricket circuit for being a

"Mind Coach and Life Coach rolled into one", do anything about it? A former India great, who didn't wish to be named, offered his perspective. "Not all great players or players of repute happen to be great coaches. They might have done some incredible things as players and knew what to do and how to react during a particular situation," the veteran of 100-plus Tests said. "But coaching is science and not many can tell why certain things need to be done. Even Gautam used to play with hard hands and dab towards slips in Australia and England. "You can still work with younger guys but difficult to mould the older ones who don't get enough time to work on their game in a packed calendar," he added. Watching the dismissals of especially Kohli in Australia, which seemed like a replay of previous ones, has led to growing concerns. Everyone understands the technical flaw, but can anyone provide the corrective measures to break the rut? Rohit, barring the England tour in 2021, he does not really have a track record in SENA countries in Tests. But with Kohli, the problem of reaching for deliveries on and



outside the off-stump has resurfaced once again and has been a persistent issue for quite some time. Sanjay Manjrekar's tweet is worth taking note of. "I guess the time has come to

scrutinise the role of a batting coach in the Indian team. Why major technical issues have remained unresolved for so long with certain Indian batters?" he asked. Manjrekar's view raises questions on the role of Sanjay Bangar, Vikram Rathour, and now Nayar. Their official designation might be assistant coach, but they essentially are batting coaches. Devang Gandhi, who was a touring selector between 2016-17 to 2020-

21, had a more nuanced take compared to the veteran India star. "It would be very easy to target Nayar as a low hanging fruit or for that matter Gautam," Gandhi, who has coached the Delhi Ranji team and Bengal U-19, told PTI during a conversation. "But they have just come into system. To discuss or nudge a player, first you need to be around for some time and once there is some kind of mutual trust between the two, you can offer him solutions. But at this level, it is more about the experienced player's own mental make-up." So what is Kohli's problem? Gandhi, a former Test opener and an NCA Level-2 coach, believes it's all about his mental approach. "If you watch his training videos that are available for public, I find him doing all the right things. During training he is playing close to his body. But the moment it is the match situation, the hands are moving towards those channel deliveries like conditioned reflex or muscle memory," he explained. Gandhi then blamed it on the rising T20 engagements. "The moment his bat is away from the body, the bat-face will open up towards cover. Now this is a white ball problem of hitting through the

line. In India the ball will hit the bottom of the bat but in Australia, it will towards the upper part. "What solution can Gambhir or Nayar possibly give, apart from telling him to not play those deliveries? "After 30 Test hundreds, Virat doesn't need to be told that but at 36, does he have that patience to accept that now if he scores a hundred, it will be off 200 balls and not 140 like earlier times? Can he bid those extra 60 balls?" Gandhi questioned. Sachin Tendulkar's epic 241 in the 2004 New Year's Test in Sydney is often cited as a prime example of patience. He didn't hit a single cover drive until he scored his double hundred. "It's about controlling the mind. You can be a sounding board for players like Tendulkar and Kohli but at this stage, you can't coach them. Coaching happens at junior level," Gandhi added. But can a Gambhir or Nayar help Kohli find a solution? "Of course, at some point, honest conversations are necessary. But first, they should ask him what his corrective options are and then offer their own if they have something different to contribute," Gandhi concluded.