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NO CONFIDENCE IN V-P DHANKAR: OPPOSITION



Photos: PTI

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI

In a first, Congress-led INDIA Bloc of Opposition parties on Tuesday submitted a notice to bring a motion in Rajya Sabha for the removal of Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar, accusing him of "partisan" conduct as the chairman of the Upper House. Dhankhar is Chairman of the Upper House. If the motion is moved, these parties need a simple majority to get it passed, but they do not have the requisite numbers in the 243-member House. Opposition members, however, insisted that it was a "strong message to fight for parliamentary democracy". Affairs minister Kiren Rijiju dubbed the move as "extremely regrettable" and said the government is very proud of Dhankhar.

On behalf of the Opposition, Congress leaders Jairam Ramesh and Naseer Hussain submitted the notice signed by 60 Opposition Members of Parliament, including from the Congress, Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), Trinamool Congress (TMC), Communist Party of India (CPI), Communist Party of India (Marxist) CPI-M, Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM), Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), Samajwadi Party (SP), to Rajya Sabha Secretary General PC Mody. The present move, spearheaded by the Congress, comes in the wake of verbal clashes between Opposition parties and the Rajya Sabha chairman. The Opposition has been upset with Dhankhar over multiple issues. The latest trigger was allowing Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) members to raise the allegations of links

between Congress leaders and organisations backed by billionaire investor George Soros which the ruling party claims are involved in "anti-India activities". The Opposition said his conduct of the House on December 9, 2024, was particularly one-sided and totally unfair, and said he was "encouraging and provoking" the Treasury Benches to make outrageous remarks. INDIA Bloc parties had in August this year also considered submitting a notice for moving a resolution to remove the vice president from his office. This is the first time that a notice for bringing a motion to remove the Vice President has been moved in the Rajya Sabha. A 14-day notice has to be given and it should be approved by the Deputy Chairman before the motion is taken up. **Continued on page 2**

Identify illegal Bangladeshi immigrants, orders LG

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Lieutenant Governor's secretariat has written to the Chief Secretary and Police Commissioner asking for initiating "strict action" against illegal Bangladeshi immigrants residing in the National Capital. According to Raj Niwas officials, the LG Secretariat has asked the Chief Secretary and the Police Commissioner to launch a special drive spanning over two months to identify illegal Bangladesh immigrants in Delhi and take strict action as per the extant rules in a time-bound manner.

The move comes in wake of the representation made by the delegation of Ulemas and Muslim leaders from Dargah Hazrat Nizamuddin and Basti Hazrat Nizamuddin to Delhi Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena on Saturday. They had expressed deep concern about the attacks being undertaken on the Hindu and other minority communities in Bangladesh and accordingly, demanded stringent action against Bangladeshi infiltrators residing in the National Capital. "Prominent Ulemas and Muslim residents have requested that Illegal Bangladeshi infiltrators should neither be given houses on rent nor should they be given employment by any establishment. Further, they have requested that their children should not be given admission in any government or private school. The Muslim leaders have also demanded removal of illegal



Social Organisations of Delhi organised a protest march on Bangladesh Embassy against the attacks on Hindus and human rights violations in Bangladesh at Teen Murti Chowk, in New Delhi on Tuesday. Photos: Ranjan Dimri/The Pioneer

infiltrators from roads, footpaths, parks and other government lands, over which they have forcefully encroached and any documents like Aadhar Card, Voter ID, or any other government document acquired illegally by Bangladeshi infiltrators be cancelled immediately. They have also demanded that a special drive, like in the past, should be launched to identify the illegal Bangladeshi immigrants in Delhi and they should be sent back immediately," the letter from the LG Secretariat read. Meanwhile, Chamber of Trade and Industry (CTI) chairman Brijesh Goyal has

urged business communities to reduce their business activities with Bangladesh. The CTI has warned that if the atrocities on Hindus in Bangladesh do not stop, then all the traders of Delhi and the country will end all trade with Bangladesh. "There is also resentment among the businessmen of Delhi against the Mohammad Yunus government of Bangladesh," he said. Security was stepped up outside the Bangladesh High Commission here on Tuesday, as hundreds of people from various organisations, including the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), held a protest

march at Chanakyapuri against alleged atrocities and human rights violations against Hindus and other minorities in Bangladesh. Police had put barricades on the Teen Murti Marg on both the carriageway outside the Chanakyapuri police station where hundreds of people from various organisations gathered. Traffic was regulated in the area with vehicles redirected to alternative routes. There have been allegations of over 200 attacks on Hindus in various districts of Bangladesh since the fall of the Sheikh Hasina-led Awami League government on August 5. **Continued on page 2**



People gather near the wreckage after a BEST undertaking's bus rammed into pedestrians as well as vehicles on a road at Kurla, in Mumbai. PTI

Seven dead in Mumbai bus accident

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI

The Government on Monday appointed Revenue Secretary Sanjay Malhotra as the 26th Governor of the Reserve Bank of India. Malhotra, a 1990 Batch Rajasthan Cadre IAS Officer, will replace Shaktikanta Das, whose tenure ends on Tuesday. The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet cleared Malhotra's name, who has been appointed as the RBI Governor for three years, starting Wednesday. Malhotra is an engineering graduate in computer science from the Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur, and has a Master's in Public Policy from Princeton University, US. In his career of over 33 years, he has worked in multifarious sectors, including power, finance and taxation, information technology, and mines, among others. Before becoming Revenue Secretary, Malhotra held the post of Secretary in the Department of Financial Services under the Ministry of Finance. **Continued on page 2**



NIA arrests main accused in Laos human trafficking, cyber slavery case

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Tuesday made a major breakthrough in the Laos human trafficking and cyber slavery case with the arrest of an absconding accused, who was nabbed with support of the Delhi Police's Special Cell. Kamran Haider's arrest marked a significant step towards dismantling the international human trafficking syndicate, the NIA said in a statement. Along with his co-accused, Haider was allegedly directly involved in arranging flight tickets and documents for the victims and facilitating their "illegal border crossings" with the help of contacts in the Golden Triangle region. The Golden Triangle refers to a large, mountainous region comprising parts of Myanmar, Thailand and Laos. **Continued on page 2**

SC seeks details from Allahabad HC on Justice Shekhar Kumar's speech

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI

Taking cognisance of news reports, the Supreme Court (SC) on Tuesday called for details from the Allahabad High Court on the controversial speech of Justice Shekhar Kumar Yadav, delivered at a Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP) Legal Cell function at Prayagraj. "The Supreme Court has taken note of the newspaper reports of a speech given by Mr Justice Shekhar Kumar Yadav, a sitting judge of the High Court of Judicature at Allahabad. The details and particulars have been called from the High Court and the matter is under consideration (sic)," the SC statement read. Sitting judge Justice Yadav made the controversial remarks on December 8 while addressing a convention of the legal cell of the Vishva Hindu Parishad in Allahabad. A day later, videos of the judge speaking on provocative issues, including the law working according to the majority, were circulated widely, triggering strong reactions from various opposition parties which questioned his reported statements and labelled it as hate speech. He urged for Uniform Civil Code, blaming practices such as Triple Talq,



Nikah Halala in the Muslim community. "I have no hesitation in stating that this is Hindustan, and this country will function according to the wishes of the majority living here. This is the law. It is not about speaking as a High Court Judge; rather, the law operates in accordance with the bahusanyak (majority). Consider this in the context of a family or society - only what ensures the welfare and happiness of the majority will be accepted," Justice Yadav said. The judge also used the term "kathmullah", a slur against Muslims. Referring to extremists as "kathmullah", he said that the country should be circumspect about them. "But these kathmullah... this

may not be the right word... but I won't hesitate to say it because they are harmful to the country...they are detrimental, against the nation, and people who incite the public. They are the kind of people who do not want the country to progress, and we need to be cautious of them," said Justice Yadav at VHP's legal cell function. Kapil Sibal, president of the Supreme Court Bar Association called for the impeachment of Justice Yadav. He also urged the Prime Minister, Home Minister and Members of Parliament from the ruling party to extend support for impeaching Justice Yadav. Meanwhile, Lok Sabha MPs Syed Ruhullah Mehdi, Asaduddin Owaisi initiated MPs' signatures in Parliament, seeking impeachment against Justice Yadav. Communist Party of India (Marxist) leader Brinda Karat, has written to the Chief Justice of India (CJI) Sanjiv Khanna, demanding action against the Judge. Campaign for Judicial Accountability and Reforms (CJAR) headed by Prashant Bhusal also urged the CJI to initiate action seeking In house Inquiry and suspension of the Judge for violating the code of conduct for Judges.

No mismatch in Maharashtra votes polled and VVPAT tally: ECI

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
MUMBAI

The Election Commission of India (ECI) on Tuesday said no mismatch was found between the votes polled and corresponding tally of Voter Verified Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) slips in random counting in the last month's Maharashtra Assembly elections. The mandatory counting of VVPAT slips from five randomly selected polling stations in each assembly constituency was completed successfully, the ECI said in a statement. Opposition parties in the state had questioned the integrity of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) after the ruling BJP-led Mahayuti coalition won a landslide victory in the November 20 elections. The counting of VVPAT slips aims to verify the tally of votes recorded EVMs against the corresponding VVPAT slips, the ECI said, adding that representatives of candidates were present throughout the process. **Continued on page 2**

SC upholds enhanced compensation for KMP expressway landowners

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday upheld an order which enhanced the compensation payable to some owners whose land in Haryana was acquired for Kundli-Manesar-Palwal expressway. A Bench of Justices BR Gavai and KV Viswanathan set aside a November 2021 verdict of the Punjab and Haryana High Court quashing an order of the district revenue officer-cum-land acquisition collector (LAC), Jhajjar enhancing the compensation. The LAC, in an order passed on September 15, 2020, enhanced the compensation to Rs 19,91,300 per acre along with statutory benefits as awarded earlier by the High Court to similarly-placed land owners. The Court delivered its verdict on an appeal filed by some land owners challenging the high court's November 2021 verdict. The Bench noted by a November 2004 notification under the Land Acquisition Act, 1894, the land of the appellants in Jhajjar district was acquired for the expressway and by an award in March, 2006, a compensation of Rs 12.50 lakh per acre was determined. It



noted that aggrieved by the award, some similarly-placed land owners preferred a reference for enhancement of compensation before the additional district judge, Jhajjar but the same was dismissed. The Bench further noted such land owners approached the high court, which in May, 2016, enhanced the compensation to Rs 19,91,300 per acre along with statutory benefits. The Bench said on June 30, 2016, the appellants filed an application under Section 28-A of the Act before the LAC, Jhajjar, which held that appellants were entitled to benefit of the high court's May, 2016 verdict and enhanced the compensation. Section 28-A of the Act pertains to re-determination of amount of compensation on the basis of award of the court. The matter again came up

before the high court which set aside the LAC's order. Referring to a previous verdict delivered by the court, the Bench noted it was held that statement of objects and reasons of Section 28-A would reveal that the object underlying the enactment of the provision was to remove inequality in payment of compensation for same or similar quality of land. The Court said it was not in dispute that the first appeal, which was allowed by the high court in May, 2016, was with respect to the land covered by the same notification under which the appellants' land was also covered. "We are, therefore, inclined to allow the appeal. The impugned judgment and order of the high court dated November 25, 2021 is quashed and set aside and the order of the LAC dated September 15, 2020 is upheld," the Bench said.

Patiala House Court summons actor Dharmendra

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi's Patiala House Court has summoned former Member of Parliament (MP) and veteran Bollywood actor Dharmendra, and two others in a cheating case related to the Garam Dharam Dhaba franchise. The summons were issued based on a complaint filed by Delhi businessman Sushil Kumar, who alleged that he was lured into investing in the franchise. The other two accused have also been summoned for the offence of criminal intimidation under section 506 of IPC. Judicial magistrate Yashdeep Chahal passed the order against the 89-year-old actor on a complaint filed by Delhi

businessman, Sushil Kumar, who alleged that he was lured into investing in the franchise, lawyer DD Pandey said. The judge said there was a prima facie case of cheating and criminal conspiracy against the actor and the co-accused persons, Deepak Bhardwaj and Umang Tiwari, and directed them to appear before the court on February 20, 2025. The judge noted in an order passed on December 5 that the documents on record prima facie pertained to "Garam Dharam Dhaba" and the letter of intent also bore the logo of the restaurant. "It is fairly apparent that the transaction between the parties pertain to Garam Dharam Dhaba and was being



pursued by accused number 2 (Bhardwaj) and 3 (Tiwari), on behalf of accused number 1 (Dharam Singh Deol). The evidence on record prima facie indicates that the accused persons induced the complainant in furtherance of their common intent and the ingredients of the offence of cheating are duly disclosed," the judge said. The court summoned Bhardwaj and Tiwari for allegedly criminally intimidating the complainant when he enquired about the project after the payment. It is fairly apparent that the transaction between the

parties pertains to Garam Dharam Dhaba and was being pursued by the co-accused on behalf of the actor, the court noted. According to the complaint, in April 2018, the co-accused approached him on behalf of Dharam Singh Deol (Dharmendra) with an offer to open a franchise of Garam Dharam Dhaba on NH-24/NH-9 in Uttar Pradesh. He claimed that he handed over a cheque for an amount of Rs 17.70 lakh in September, 2018. However, the accused stopped responding to him thereafter, the complainant alleged. A series of meetings and email exchanges reportedly followed, culminating in the execution of a letter of intent

on September 22, 2018. As part of this agreement, Kumar and his business associates were to invest Rs 63 lakh and provide suitable land for the franchise. Subsequently, Kumar alleged that he issued a cheque for Rs 17.70 lakh, which was encashed by the respondents. He also purchased land near Gajraula, District Amroha, Uttar Pradesh, on November 2, 2018, for the franchise. However, despite repeated requests for work to begin, the respondents neither inspected the site nor responded to Kumar's communications. Allegedly, they also threatened him with dire consequences if he attempted to contact them again. **Continued on page 2**

What's in a name? Communal harmony

BISWAJEET BANERJEE
JAUNPUR

In a rare socio-cultural shift, several Muslim families in Dehari village of Uttar Pradesh's Jaunpur district have started using Hindu surnames like Dubey and Tiwari, claiming Hindu ancestry. They have also embraced practices such as cow service, and traditional Hindu rituals to honor their lineage. Located about 45 km from Jaunpur's district headquarters, Dehari village has a predominantly Muslim population. The trend reportedly began two years ago when some villagers

traced their ancestry, sparking widespread curiosity and debate. After that around 30 to 35 Muslim families in the village have adopted surnames such as Dubey, Tiwari, Thakur, and Kayastha, claiming historical ties to these castes. The issue came into the limelight when Naushad Ahmed from Dehari printed his wedding invitation card with the name "Naushad Ahmed Dubey." When asked about the reason, Naushad explained, "Our ancestors were Hindus. I am reclaiming my ancestral gotra (clan) name." **Continued on page 2**

Only 32 per cent Indian districts manual scavenging free: Government

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Despite the ban on manual scavenging, which involves manually cleaning and disposing of human excreta, only 249 out of 766 districts in India have so far declared themselves "manual scavenger-free" and uploaded their certificates on the official portal.

This information was shared by the government in the Parliament on Tuesday.

According to the Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013 (MS Act), manual scavenging has been illegal since December 2013, following a Supreme Court ruling.



Union Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment, Ramdas Athawale, informed the Lok Sabha in response to a written question that in line with a Supreme Court order, 22 families of manual scavenging

death victims were provided Rs. 30 lakh in compensation last October. However, no incidents of disability due to manual scavenging have been reported. In compliance of the Supreme

Court order issued last year, in October, 22 families of death victims have been provided compensation of Rs. 30 lakhs, whereas, no incident of disability has been reported from the States/Union Territories.

As per the MS Act, 2013, no person or agency can engage or employ any person for manual scavenging from the above date. "Any person or agency who engages any person for manual scavenging in violation of the provisions of the MS Act, 2013 is punishable under Section 8 of the above Act, with imprisonment upto 2 years or fine upto Rs. one lakh or both," said the Union Minister. No death has been reported

due to manual scavenging which is lifting of human excreta from Insanitary latrines. Further, no report from States/UTs has been received about the inhuman practice of manual scavenging.

As directed by the Supreme Court, a fresh survey of manual scavengers as per the law, States/UTs were provided survey guidelines and requested to conduct surveys of manual scavengers after Constituting District Level Survey Committees and other Committees.

A mobile application and portal has also been developed to capture the data of Manual Scavengers and insanitary latrines in urban and rural areas, if any, said Athawale.



AAP leader Manish Sisodia offers prayers at the Angoori Devi Mandir.

Ranjan Dimri

Sisodia Kicks Off Campaign in Jangpura with Hanuman Chalisa

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

A day after leaving the Patparganj seat held by him since 2013, AAP leader Manish Sisodia on Tuesday launched his election campaign by attending a 'Hanuman Chalisa' recital with local residents in his new constituency Jangpura. The former deputy chief minister of Delhi has in the past claimed himself to be a devout "Hanuman bhakt". AAP has replaced Sisodia with coaching expert Avadh Ojha, who recently joined the party, from the Patparganj constituency. The elections for the 70-member Delhi Assembly are due in February next year. Incumbent AAP MLA from Jangpura, Praveen Kumar was also present during the visit.

Sisodia said he received a lot of love from the people as the

education minister and deputy chief minister. "It does not matter which constituency one contests from. Even as the MLA from Patparganj and deputy CM, I did a lot of work for Jangpura and personally kept watch on building schools here. If I am elected as the MLA from Jangpura now, I will work for the whole Delhi. It does not make any difference," he told reporters.

In a post on X, Sisodia said he started campaigning in Jangpura with the recital of 'Hanuman Chalisa', seeking blessings of the deity at a temple in the Kilkari area of the constituency. "O Lord Hanuman, I beseech you to shower your blessings on us for whatever we endeavour. The light of humanity always flickers in our hearts, wherever we are, whatever we do, we do it with remembering the god,"

Sisodia said in his post. The former deputy CM earlier explained that the reason behind leaving the Patparganj seat for Ojha was the latter's "vision and devotion" towards education. However, the BJP has accused him of leaving the seat for a "safer" Jangpura, accusing he did nothing in Patparganj during his tenure as its MLA. In 2020, Sisodia pitted against a fresh face from the BJP Ravi Negi in Patparganj, barely managed to win with a thin margin of just over 3,500 votes. Sisodia said the BJP people seeking votes were being "silenced" by the people, citing grand schools and hospitals built by AAP and the zero electricity bills. Instead, people are asking them about the "poor" condition of law and order in the city but they do not have any answers to such queries, he claimed.

Two members of Neeraj Bawana gang arrested

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police's Crime Branch arrested two gang members of Neeraj Bawana gang after a brief exchange of fire and recovered two pistols with 22 live cartridges and a police uniform, used for committing crimes.

According to the police on Tuesday, the accused have been identified as Rahul alias Nakta and Kamaljeet. They said that these individuals were wanted in two-armed robbery cases in Delhi's Rani Bagh area and Hari Nagar area. "Additionally, with their arrest, a blind daylight armed robbery of Rajasthan has also been solved. A substantial recovery, including firearms, ammunition, and a police uniform, was made from their possession. Preliminary investigation reveals that the accused had been plotting to commit crime," a senior police official said.

He added that on Monday, a police team was constituted to nab the criminals and according to information team conducted vehicle checks near Khatu Shyam Mandir in Delhi. "At around 11:00 AM, a suspicious grey Hyundai i20 approached the barricade. When signalled to stop, the driver attempted to speed away, tried to flee and collided with the barricade and a road divider," he said. "After the crash, accused Rahul tried to flee, firing at the police team when warned to surrender. In response, the police fired a warning shot in the air, enabling the team to overpower him. Simultaneously, the second accused Kamaljeet emerged from the car, also firing at the police," another officer added. Two policemen fired additional warning shots, compelling Kamaljeet to drop his weapon and surrender, and was overpowered. Upon interrogation, it was

Seven dead in Mumbai bus accident

From page 1

He has extensive experience in finance and taxation at the state as well as the central government levels. As a part of his present assignment, he plays an instrumental role in tax policy formulation in respect of direct and indirect taxes. Das was appointed as the 25th Governor of the RBI on December 12, 2018, after the abrupt exit of Urjit Patel. He was granted an extension after completing three-year terms in office. His extended tenure ends on Tuesday.

Garam Dharam asked to come to Patiala...

From page 1

The police inquiry confirmed the execution of the letter of intent but stated the case was a civil dispute related to a breach of contract. The police noted that Kumar no longer wanted the franchise and instead sought a refund of his investment. As no cognisable offence was found, the police concluded that no action was required.

TN's contribution to Indian economy better: CAG

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

With its per capita income far exceeding the national average, Tamil Nadu was faring better in its contribution to national economy and the state's industries and services sectors played a pivotal role in increasing the Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) by 14 per cent in 2022-2023 amounting to Rs 23,64,514 crore, Principal Accountant General (Audit-I), Tamil Nadu, D Jaishankar said on Tuesday.

As regards the resources of the state government, he said the revenue receipts increased by 17.47 per cent during 2022-2023 when compared to the previous year because of an increase in both tax revenue and non-tax

revenue. Briefing reporters on the State Finances Audit report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India for the year ended March 2023, tabled in the Assembly earlier in the day, he said the state GDP in 2022-2023 was Rs 23,64,514 crore, an increase by 14 per cent over the previous year. "Industries and services sectors were the main contributors and the per capita income of the state is nearly 56 per cent higher than the national average. TN's per capita income is Rs 3.08 lakh whereas the national average is Rs 1.96 lakh. We are doing a better contribution to the economy," he said. The increase in the state government's revenue by 17 per cent indicated that the collection mechanism was functioning better.

Iskon appeals to global orgs on Bangladesh violence

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The vice president of International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKON Kolkata Chapter) Radha Raman Das on Tuesday appealed to the international human rights organisations to save the lives of Hindus in Bangladesh complaining "unbridled attacks" on minorities in that country. Uploading a latest video of how the house of an ISKON supporter was being attacked by the fundamentalists with the security forces doing nothing, Das said, "Time has come for the human rights leaders worldwide to stand up for the minority Hindus of Bengal. There is no respite on the attacks on the minorities, Hindus and ISKON

supporters their religious leaders are now openly instigating the people to chop the Hindus publicly they are preaching genocide." Asking "when the world human rights organizations would wake up ... will they wake up after the genocide has started," Das said, "I appeal to all those world leaders of human rights and civilised people to kindly listen to our appeal at least on this International Human Rights Day so that the lives and properties of the minorities in Bangladesh is saved." His statements came when videos showing how the properties of the minorities were being torched and the healthy cows belonging to the ISKON were being clubbed to death by the fundamentalist marauders.

Odisha prepares for Pravasi Bharatiya Divas

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

As Odisha is gearing up to host the three-day Pravasi Bharatiya Divas from January 8 to be attended by around 7,000 NRIs, the state government is making homestay arrangements for the visitors apart from hotel accommodations. The homestay owners have been provided training in guest management and safety protocols.

"It is a big opportunity for

the people of Odisha to host the NRIs. We will also make homestay arrangements for them apart from hotel accommodation," Deputy Chief Minister Pravati Parida said. Odisha's hospitality would be on the like of "Atithi Deva Bhabo" (Guest is God), she said. In order to facilitate the visitors to book their accommodation, Parida said the Odisha Tourism Department has blocked 200 hotels with more than 3,700 rooms in

Bhubaneswar, Cuttack and Puri. The families owning homestays, who would host the visiting NRIs, have been provided basic training in guest management and safety protocols, a senior official said. The aim is to provide the Indian diaspora with the experience of Odisha's atmosphere as well as the culture and tradition in Odia homes, the official said. This apart, in view of cyber frauds in hotel bookings, the state government has advised the

delegates to book their accommodation through a dedicated website 'pbndia.Gov.In.' The state tourism department has shared the names and other details of hotels with the Ministry of Home Affairs for the safety of delegates. The department has also identified as many as 30 tourist destinations in Bhubaneswar, Puri, Konark, Chilika-Satapada and Raghurajpur crafts village where the NRIs may pay visits, the official said.

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police's Crime Branch arrested two gang members of Neeraj Bawana gang after a brief exchange of fire and recovered two pistols with 22 live cartridges and a police uniform, used for committing crimes.

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He added that on Monday, a police team was constituted to nab the criminals and according to information team conducted vehicle checks near Khatu Shyam Mandir in Delhi. "At around 11:00 AM, a suspicious grey Hyundai i20 approached the barricade. When signalled to stop, the driver attempted to speed away, tried to flee and collided with the barricade and a road divider," he said. "After the crash, accused Rahul tried to flee, firing at the police team when warned to surrender. In response, the police fired a warning shot in the air, enabling the team to overpower him. Simultaneously, the second accused Kamaljeet emerged from the car, also firing at the police," another officer added. Two policemen fired additional warning shots, compelling Kamaljeet to drop his weapon and surrender, and was overpowered. Upon interrogation, it was

Officials flag 'delay' in postings of divisional heads, claim it impacts work

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

With postings and transfer of dozens of heads of various rail divisions pending for over two months, a section of officials have stressed the need for timely rotation as such an uncertainty hampers work efficiency including taking up of new initiatives. A divisional railway manager (DRM), appointed to look after the affairs of a rail division, has a two-year tenure after which the official gets transferred to an

equivalent or promotional post in zonal headquarters. The vacant posts are filled by fresh candidates who are selected based on well-laid-out guidelines. The Railway Board said that the postings and transfers of DRMs are under process and rejected suggestions that "delay" has anything to do with their work efficiency. "It is correct that we have a practice of transferring DRMs after two years of their services followed by fresh postings, however, it is not

sacrosanct," Dilip Kumar, Information and Publicity, Railway Board said. "Sometimes, it gets delayed as well because of various reasons. I believe a sincere officer is unaffected by such considerations. He or she continues to work with the same degree of professionalism," Kumar said. Sources, however, claimed the "delay" is due to the new guidelines, released by the Board in September, awaiting approval of the Department of Personnel and Training.

A section of DRMs as well as safety experts say that after completion of the two-year term, officers hesitate to take new initiatives and mentally go into a "relieving mode" due to "sense of uncertainty". "It is quite natural and normal for officers to slow down the pace of work or desist from taking any new initiatives when they near their two-year term because they start waiting for their new postings. A feeling of uncertainty grips them in the absence of a clear-cut posting

order," a DRM, who did not wish to be named, said. He added, "It impacts freight operations which give a huge revenue to the Railways." Another DRM requesting anonymity said that after Monsoon, a period during which freight operations suffer to some extent due to weather conditions, an aggressive approach is needed to recover the revenue loss and make the most of the good weather conditions till extreme winter sets in and fog starts playing a spoilsport.

No Confidence in Dhankar: Opposition

From page 1

Interestingly, Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge, Congress Parliamentary Party Chairperson Sonia Gandhi and the floor leaders of various Opposition parties are not among the signatories to the notice. Similar notices for removal of the Speaker of Lok Sabha have been submitted in the past, but none against the Vice President and Rajya Sabha Chairman. Three motions have come in the past against Lok Sabha Speakers, against GV Mavalankar on December 18, 1954, against Hukam Singh on November 24, 1966 and against Balram Jakhar on April 15, 1987. While the motions against Mavalankar and Jakhar were negative, that against Hukam Singh was rejected as less than 50 members rose in

the chair to take up the motion. Congress chief spokesman Jairam Ramesh said they were pained to move such a notice against the Chairman, but were "forced" to do so after he "crossed all limits" on Monday by allowing several members of the treasury benches to speak against top Congress leadership in the House. "All parties belonging to the INDIA group have had no option but to formally submit a no-confidence motion against the learned Hon'ble Chairman of the Rajya Sabha for the extremely partisan manner in which he has been conducting the proceedings of the Council of States. It has been a very painful decision for the INDIA parties to take, but in the interests of parliamentary democracy they have had to take this

step," Ramesh shared on social media. According to Article 67(b) of the Constitution: "Vice-President may be removed from his office by a resolution of the Council of States (Rajya Sabha) passed by a majority of all the then members of the Council and agreed to by the House of the People; but no resolution for the purpose of this clause shall be moved unless at least fourteen days' notice has been given of the intention to move the resolution." The motion submitted by Opposition MPs condemned the "partisan conduct" of the Rajya Sabha Chairman, and said it is "unbecoming of high-level Constitutional authorities that are expected to act in accordance with and in furtherance of the principles enshrined in the Constitution of India."

No mismatch in Maharashtra votes polled and VVPAT tally: ECI

From page 1

In Maharashtra's 288 Assembly constituencies, officials verified a total of 1,440 VVPAT machines. Representatives of candidates and EC observers randomly selected polling stations, the statement said.

"There was no discrepancy found between the candidate-wise vote counts recorded in EVMs and the corresponding counts from the VVPAT slips," the EC stated. Special enclosures were established at each counting centre, and the entire process

was recorded on CCTV, the footage of which has been preserved, it added. The counting of VVPAT slips from five polling stations in every constituency is mandatory under the Commission's guidelines. The counting process is considered

incomplete and no winner can be declared until this verification is concluded, the poll body said. The Bharatiya Janata Party-Shiv Sena-Nationalist Congress Party alliance won 230 out of 288 Assembly seats in the elections.

What's in a name? Communal harmony

From page 1

Naushad further shared that his ancestors were originally from Azamgarh and belonged to the Dubey clan. "Seven generations ago, one of our forefathers, Lal Bahadur Dubey, converted to Islam and took the name Lal Mohammad," he said. After learning about his family's Hindu lineage, Naushad connected with a Hindu organization and now

lives in a spirit of religious harmony. "I have been using the Dubey surname for two years. If people reconnect with their roots, half the hatred in society will vanish," Naushad said. "I oppose titles like Sheikh, Mirza, or Syed. I even discovered my gotra - it is Vats. Our ancestors were Dubey. I am not discussing religion but promoting harmony." However, Naushad clarified that no other

member of his immediate family has adopted the surname yet. The trend is not limited to Naushad. Sheikh Abdullah has also added "Dubey" to his name after tracing his Hindu Brahmin lineage. Other residents, including Syed Shandilya, Irshad Pandey, Thakur Gufran, and Israr Ahmed Dubey, echoed similar sentiments. "We urge everyone to reconnect with their roots," they said

collectively. Another resident, Ehtesham Ahmed, acknowledged his Hindu roots but said he found no reason to change his surname. The villagers denied any external pressure behind their decision, dismissing speculations of coercion. The phenomenon has sparked interest and debate, especially in the context of recent comments by Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat, who

has emphasised that Muslims in India are descendants of Hindus who converted to Islam generations ago. However, skeptics have raised questions about the timing of the ancestral search, noting that only one member from each family seems to have adopted a Hindu surname so far. Whether this is a personal journey or part of a broader socio-political narrative remains a topic of intense discussion in the region.

Under GRAP, 260 sites flagged, 35 issued closure orders

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A total of 260 sites were flagged for dust violations, 204 faced Environmental Clearance action, and 35 received closure orders under the Graded Response Action Plan to combat Delhi's hazardous air quality.

Authorities took action against 775 illegal dumping sites, sealed 259 diesel generators, and addressed more than 24,000 complaints during the peak implementation period, officials said. In their ongoing efforts to combat severe pollution levels, Delhi's environmental bodies have enforced

stringent measures under various stages of the GRAP. According to official data, in the construction and demolition (C&D) sector, 6,741 sites (=500 sqm) were inspected for compliance with dust mitigation norms, of which 260 were found non-compliant and flagged.

Environmental Clearance was imposed on 204 projects (=500 sqm), while 35 projects were issued closure orders, officials said. Additionally, 974 inspections were carried out to identify illegal dumping sites, resulting in 775 actions taken against illegal dumpers. Furthermore, 31

challans were issued for violations related to municipal solid waste burning, and 246 complaints of open burning were addressed, the data revealed, they said.

Delhi's air quality reached alarming levels on November 17, with the Air Quality Index (AQI) touching 450, entering the severe-plus category for the first time this year.

In response, the Commission for Air Quality Management in the National Capital Region (CAQM) imposed Stage IV restrictions -- the strictest level of action -- under the GRAP. These Stage IV restrictions came into effect on the morn-

ing of November 18, when AQI levels reached a hazardous 494, marking the city's second-worst air quality in six years. From October 16 to December 7, significant measures were taken under the Road Dust Management initiative. A total of 18,217 anti-smog guns were deployed to suppress dust particles, 13,163 water sprinklers were utilised to curb dust re-suspension on roads, and 4,416 mechanical road sweeping machines were operated extensively.

Additionally, 1,35,350 km of roads were mechanically swept to reduce particulate matter, the data revealed.

Saxena slams Delhi government, Atishi over bus marshal issue

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The controversy over re-employment of civil defence volunteers as bus marshals refused to end as the Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena on Tuesday hit out at the Delhi government saying the Kejriwal government has never ever come up with any scheme for "Bus Marshals".

In a note to Atishi, Saxena said the chief minister should direct the transport minister and Additional Chief Secretary (Transport) to formulate a comprehensive law-backed scheme with required budgetary support expeditiously and thereafter submit the matter for his consideration regarding civil defence volunteers as bus marshals. "They (AAP government) made a fool of people by simply orally announcing Civil Defence Volunteers (CDVs) as Bus Marshals," he said.

Earlier, Atishi wrote to Saxena seeking the re-appointment of bus marshals, adding that a proposal signed by all AAP ministers in this regard was sent to him on November 13.

In a detailed note, Saxena pointed out the necessity for a well-defined scheme backed by a rationale of requirement, deployment details, reservation provisions, and adequate budgetary allocation and the proposal to allow CDVs to act as bus marshals temporarily was submitted by the Chief Minister, along with a group of ministers, pending the finalization of a new scheme.

However, the Lieutenant Governor criticized this move, stressing that it was the responsibility of the government to create the scheme, ensuring it adhered to legal processes, budgetary allocations, and constitutional requirements.

Rejecting claims that the matter comes under him, he said, "It is an unacceptable proposi-



tion to suggest that a scheme for engaging bus marshals should be formulated by the constitutional head of government. By that absurd logic, I should also start exercising the powers of Council of Ministers on a whole range of transferred subjects. I feel disappointed that even though the Chief Minister has full knowledge of the facts of the case, she has chosen to send this flippant reference in the matter."

Saxena pointed out that the term "bus marshals" was misleading, as those previously designated as such were merely Civil Defence Volunteers, who had been removed last year following recommendations from then-Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal. The LG expressed disappointment that despite being fully aware of the situation, Chief Minister Atishi sent what he described as a "flippant reference" to him,

instead of addressing the core issues with the proper governmental processes.

The Lieutenant Governor further highlighted the constitutional responsibilities of the Delhi government in matters related to job creation, recruitment processes, and job reservations for SC/ST/OBC/EWS categories. Saxena also noted that the proposal for engaging bus marshals should have been a well-thought-out policy matter for the Delhi government, rather than a directive to the LG.

"The Transport Department should clearly spell out its policy framework and term and conditions before such deployment from then-Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal. The LG expressed disappointment that despite being fully aware of the situation, Chief Minister Atishi sent what he described as a

flippant reference" to him, rules framed by the department shall come up for my consideration," he said.

In his note, Saxena also referenced ongoing discussions about deploying Home Guards for security in buses, with a proposal already initiated by the Transport Department. He suggested that Delhi Police could assist in this matter, ensuring optimal use of resources.

He urged the Chief Minister to direct the Transport Department to create a comprehensive, lawful scheme, including budgetary provisions and post-creation processes, and submit it for his consideration once finalized. Saxena also reiterated his approval of temporary engagement of CDVs for air pollution mitigation activities until February 2025, but emphasized that a permanent solution for their employment must be found through legitimate means.

BJP targets Arvind Kejriwal with Sheesh Mahal video

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

As the AAP convener Arvind Kejriwal is trying hard to bring back auto rickshaws vote base once again, the Delhi BJP posted a video of "Sheesh Mahal" highlighting his lavish lifestyle at 7 Flag Staff Road bungalow during his tenure as chief minister. The video shared by Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva highlights the extravagant amenities in the house, including a gym, sauna, and Jacuzzi, what he referred to as Kejriwal's "glass palace of debauchery" and a "Sheesh Mahal" (palace of mirrors). Sachdeva claimed that the total cost for marble, granite, and lighting amounts to Rs 1.9 Crore, while installation and civil work cost Rs 1.5 Crore, and the gym and spa equipment and fittings are valued at Rs 35 Lakh.

According to Sachdeva, these features add up to Rs 3.75 Crore, which he claims was funded by taxpayers' money. He juxtaposed the finances of the common man. Sachdeva said that for the same amount of Rs 3.75 crore, a common man could buy 34 of DDA's EWS flats, 15 of their LIG flats, 150 CNG autos, or 326 e-rickshaws.

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP)

leaders strongly rebuffed allegations made by Delhi BJP chief Virendra Sachdeva regarding the former official residence of Arvind Kejriwal when he was the Chief Minister, terming them baseless propaganda by the BJP.

Responding to the claims by the Delhi BJP chief on the former official residence which has been dubbed 'Sheesh mahal' by the party, former Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia launched a scathing attack, saying, "The BJP has no achievements to showcase. Instead of answering critical questions about mismanagement of funds for schools, mid-day meals, and hospitals in states like Haryana and Uttar Pradesh, they focus on Kejriwal's former official residence. People ask about education and health reforms, they talk about a bungalow."

In the video, Sachdeva criticized Kejriwal for contradicting his earlier promises of living a simple life, stating that the former Chief Minister had previously sworn not to take government housing, vehicles, or security. Sachdeva added, "Those who swear on their children and falsely promise not to take government house, car, and security are now looting the money of Delhi's taxpayers.

Meanwhile, the common people of Delhi can only dream of owning a DDA EWS flat or an auto-rickshaw. The BJP also raised concerns over the fact that Kejriwal has yet to formally vacate the official bungalow at 6 Flagstaff Road.

Sachdeva said, "Corruption is the main issue of this election. We will keep saying again and again that Arvind Kejriwal has looted Delhi in 10 years. Today, we have shown you a video of the 'Sheesh Mahal'. Bathroom and gym, facilities like in a seven-star resort, have been built for Rs 4 crore. This was done by 'Aam Aadmi' (common man) like Arvind Kejriwal in his own house. Arvind Kejriwal has cheated Delhi. He has looted Delhi in the last ten years. Our fight against corruption will continue."

"The people of Delhi are aware. Delhi is the capital of the country. Everyone knows that Arvind Kejriwal, who used to say that I will live in a two-room flat and will not take a government house or bungalow, how did he arrange for things of luxury for himself. Where did he get the money from? This black money from liquor, which could have been spent on the development of Delhi, he has spent it on his luxury," said Sachdeva.

LG highlights DDA's contribution to Delhi

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Acknowledging the contribution of Delhi Development Authority (DDA) in the holistic development of the national capital, Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena on Tuesday advised the authority's staff to keep public interest at the forefront in discharging their official duties.

In his maiden visit to DDA HQ since taking charge as Lt Governor Delhi and Chairman DDA, he highlighted remarkable contributions of DDA in the recent past which has transformed its image. These include preparing Delhi to host global dignitaries during the G20 Summit, rejuvenating the Yamuna River, creating recreational green spaces like Baansera and Asita for public use, and restoring significant historical landmarks such as Vasudev Ghat, Mehrauli Archaeological Park, and St. James Church. The Lt Governor remotely inaugurated DDA's Housing kiosk at Rajiv Chowk metro station to provide all necessary help to home buyers. He also distributed certificates to officers who played a critical role in the successful execution of the G20 Summit.

SC seeks list of affluent who benefited from illegal tree felling in Delhi Ridge

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday asked for a list of affluent persons, who reportedly benefited from illegal tree felling in Delhi's Ridge area and sought to know the site plan for afforestation.

A bench of Justices Surya Kant and Ujjal Bhuyan was informed that several affluent persons benefited due to widening of road which entailed massive tree felling.

"We want the list of all those affluent persons, who benefited. We also want to know what is the site plan where afforestation can be done. Whatever damage has been done, needs to be restored. We want all these details," the bench told senior advocate Gopal Sankaranarayanan, representing the petitioner who alleged contempt on part of the officials.

The bench posted the hearing in January, 2025.

On November 7, the top court asked the DDA about the measures undertaken to restore the Delhi Ridge area.

Observing it would introduce a monitoring system to ensure planted trees were surviving, the top court wondered if any independent mechanism was in place to ascertain the number of trees planted.

The ridge is an extension of Aravalli Hill range in Delhi and



a rocky, hilly and forested area. It has been divided into four zones -- south, south-central, central and north -- for administrative reasons. These four zones make up a total of about 7,784 hectare.

The bench was dealing with a plea seeking action against erring officials for the alleged illegal tree felling in the area. Sankaranarayanan previously said that according to a report of the Forest Survey of India, a total of 1,670 trees were cut, but the DDA claimed it was only 642 trees.

The top court had issued a contempt notice to the DDA vice-chairman for felling of trees for construction of an approach road.

Tahir Hussain joins AIMIM, to contest polls

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Former AAP councillor Tahir Hussain, accused in the larger conspiracy case related to the 2020 Delhi riots, has joined Asaduddin Owaisi's All India Majlis-e-Ittehad-ul-Muslimeen (AIMIM). Hussain, who is facing charges linked to the communal violence, will be contesting the upcoming Delhi Assembly elections from the Mustafabad constituency.

Announcing this move, AIMIM President Asaduddin Owaisi in a post on X wrote: "MCD Councillor Tahir Hussain joined AIMIM and will be our candidate from Mustafabad Assembly Constituency in the upcoming Delhi Vidhan Sabha elections. His family members & supporters met with me today & joined the party." This comes a day after AAP announced their second list of 20 candidates and has fielded Adil Ahmed Khan as its candidate from the same constituency. Mustafabad is muslim dominated constituency in north east Delhi. It is too early to say that AIMIM will dent the AAP vote bank in minority dominated area.

Owaisi's move has sparked intense criticism from the BJP. The move has been strongly criticized by the saffron party. Delhi BJP leader Kapil Mishra said, "He is not just an accused in the riots; but bombs, numerous petrol bombs, and stones were also found in his house. All these weapons were collected by Tahir Hussain in a case related to Delhi".

He added, "IB's young officer Ankit Sharma was taken to his house, brutally stabbed 400 times, and then his body was dumped in a drain--this heinous crime was also committed by him." "By giving a ticket to such a murderer and rioter, Owaisi and so-called secular parties are challenging Delhi's Hindus. Owaisi's party is acting like the B team of the Aam Aadmi Party," said Mishra.

Addressing a press conference, Mishra and Praveen Shankar Kapoor showcased a video purportedly exposing how the Delhi government, led by the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), is allegedly aiding Rohingyas and Bangladeshis by providing them temporary shelters and other amenities. He claimed that Amanatullah Khan is distributing ₹10,000 per person along with free electricity, water, and rations to illegal immigrants. Mishra accused Kejriwal's party of creating an ecosystem to protect Rohingyas by facilitating the issuance of ration and voter cards.

Hussain was a councillor from Nehru Vihar and in the year 2020, AAP had expelled him from the party when his name surfaced in the Delhi riots. He has been lodged in jail since 2020 under UAPA and conspiracy to riot sections regarding north-east violence which left at least 53 people dead and around 700 injured. On December 5, the Delhi High Court quashed a First Information Report (FIR) against Tahir Hussain in a case related to the February 2020 violence.

Man stabbed to death over suspicions of affair with ex-neighbour

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A man allegedly stabbed his former neighbour to death in east Delhi's New Ashok Nagar after suspecting him of having an illicit relationship with his wife.

According to the police, the deceased has been identified as 33 year old Bachu Ram, a native of Sultanpur in Uttar Pradesh, who lost his life on Monday night. Deputy Commissioner of Police (East) Apoorva Gupta said, "A person was brought to Lal Bahadur Shastri (LBS) Hospital by his distant relative 29 years old Amit, who on examination was declared dead on arrival by the doctors."

She added that the deceased was working as peon in a company at Noida Sector 3 in Uttar Pradesh Ram's relative, Amit, told the police that he was attacked by his former neighbour with a knife.

"As per Amit, deceased was stabbed by his ex-neighbour S R/o Bihar, with stab injuries near the lower abdomen of the deceased," the DCP stated.

"It is alleged that the accused suspected Ram of having an affair with his wife. On Monday night, under the influence of alcohol, the accused attacked Ram with a knife," the officer added.

The victim's body has been sent to the mortuary at LBS Hospital for post mortem examination.

BJP issues chargesheets against 10 AAP MLAs



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP on Tuesday issued chargesheets against 10 AAP MLAs, accusing them of non-performance and claiming they face strong anti-incumbency in their respective constituencies.

Leader of Opposition in outgoing Assembly Vijender Gupta, who heads the BJP's chargesheet committee formed to bolster the party's campaign for the assembly polls, said the AAP dropped its 18 sitting MLAs in its second list of 20 candidates announced on Monday. The constituencies covered include Madipur, Burari, Model Town, Mundka, Kalkaji, Gokulpur, Malviya Nagar, RK Puram, Narela, and Moti Nagar.

Two other MLAs -- former deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia and Deputy Speaker of Assembly Rakhi Birla -- "deserted" their seats and chose "safer" options, he charged. "We will issue chargesheets on

failures and misdeeds of the AAP government and its MLAs. These chargesheets will be distributed among the people in their constituencies," Gupta told a press conference.

Based on these findings, charge sheets are being prepared for all 70 constituencies and will be released one by one to the public. Today's release includes the charge sheets for 10 constituencies. BJP leaders, including Ramesh Bidhuri, RP Singh, Kapil Mishra, Raja Iqbal Singh, Richa Pandey Mishra, Aarti Mehra, Gulshan Virmani, and Sunita Kangra, were also present.

He said the "chargesheets" were issued against the MLAs of Madipur, Burari, Model Town, Mundka, Kalkaji, Gokulpur, Malviya Nagar, R K Puram, Moti Nagar and Narela constituencies. The tagline of the chargesheets was "Delhi government hui kangaal, AAP MLA Malamaal, Sheesh Mahal mein Kejriwal" (which essentially

alleges AAP MLAs have gained wealth while the Delhi government has become penniless, and Kejriwal has built himself a palace.)

"The fact is that the AAP has to change its sitting MLAs because they cannot face the people of their constituencies due to their inaction and non-performance," he said. The "falsehoods" of the AAP and Sisodia, who claims to be "father of revolution in education", were exposed by the way he deserted Patparganj seat and shifted to Jangpura seat, Gupta said.

This is a manipulation to escape accountability towards people of his constituency, he charged. The AAP, which has so far announced 31 candidates out of the 70 seats, did not repeat even one MLA from their current seat which shows it has lost the confidence of people and is unable to answer the questions raised by the voters, he claimed.

Insurance, aid for daughters' wedding: Kejriwal's pitch to auto drivers

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In a bid to bolster grassroots support ahead of the Assembly polls, AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal on Tuesday announced five guarantees for the city's auto drivers, including a Rs 10 lakh life insurance scheme.

Kejriwal made the announcement after breaking bread with the family members of auto driver Navneet in the Kondli constituency. Emphasising the Aam Aadmi Party's (AAP) commitment to the welfare of auto-rickshaw drivers, he unveiled five guarantees that would be

implemented if the party is re-elected.

"I am announcing five guarantees for all auto-rickshaw drivers: Life insurance of up to Rs 10 lakh, accident insurance of up to Rs 5 lakh, Rs 1 lakh assistance for the wedding of a daughter, Rs 2,500 uniform allowance twice a year on Holi and Diwali, and free coaching for children to prepare for competitive exams. Additionally, the government will restart the 'Poocho' app," Kejriwal said.

Kejriwal said the city's auto drivers have always supported the AAP and expressed confidence that the community will play a



Arvind Kejriwal with his wife Sunita visits the residence of an autorickshaw driver in east Delhi.

key role in the victory of the party in the Assembly polls scheduled for February 2025.

The 'Poocho' app allows commuters to connect directly with registered auto drivers for easy bookings, a move aimed at improving last-mile connectivity in the city.

Kejriwal, the former Delhi chief minister, also reiterated his government's efforts to support the community and promised to strengthen them further.

Auto driver Navneet said, "Whatever he does is for the betterment of people. He listens to us like a family member and genuinely addresses our concerns."

The AAP's five guarantees come a day after Kejriwal met with auto drivers over tea at his residence on Monday, reflecting his consistent efforts to engage with this critical voter base, considered by many to be AAP's core voters since its inception. The total number of auto-rickshaws in the national capital is capped at one lakh, according to a 2011 order of the Supreme Court. However, because drivers work in shifts, there are more than 1.5 lakh of them overall.

The election to the 70-member Delhi Assembly is set to witness

a fierce contest between the AAP, the BJP, and the Congress. The AAP won the 2015 and 2020 Assembly polls and is seeking to retain power for the third consecutive time.

Taking a dig at Kejriwal, Delhi BJP President Virendra Sachdeva stated that AAP convener once again tried to sell dreams to Delhi's auto rickshaw drivers today with his announcements. Sachdeva remarked that for the past 12 years, Arvind Kejriwal has been deceiving auto drivers. While he calls them family, he has done nothing to improve their working conditions.

One nation, one subscription initiative to provide access to 1.8 Crore students

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

About 1.8 crore students from state-funded higher education institutions, including universities and IITs, will have access to research papers published in top journals across the world from January 1 as part of the government's 'One Nation, One Subscription' initiative.



management, social sciences and humanities would be made available to researchers under the 'One

Nation, One Subscription' (ONOS) initiative's first phase. Under the initiative, 451 state public universities,

4,864 colleges and 172 institutes of national importance will be among the 6,380 higher education and research institutes that will have access to top journals published by 30 publishers, including Elsevier, Springer Nature, and Wiley. "Earlier, the institutions such as IITs or central universities subscribed to a small set of journals related to specific disciplines but, under the ONOS, all institutions will have access to 13,400 research journals," said Department of Science and Technology Secretary Abhay Karadikar. He said the ONOS initiative would

be launched on January 1 and access to top journals available for the next three years. In the second phase, the government plans to extend the initiative to private academic institutions through a public-private partnership model. The third phase will grant universal access to international journals through designated access points at public libraries. ONOS will be coordinated by a central agency - the Information and Library Network (INFLIBNET), an autonomous inter-university centre of the University Grants Commission (UGC).

President Murmu highlights emerging threats to human rights, citing AI, cyber crimes and climate change

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI



President Droupadi Murmu on Tuesday said the human rights discourse so far has been centred on the "human agency" as the violator is assumed to be a human but with AI entering our lives, the "culprit could be a non-human" but an intelligent agent. In her address at an event hosted by the NHRC to mark the Human Rights Day, the President also underlined that cyber crimes and climate change are "new threats" to human rights. Human Rights Day is observed on December 10 every year to commemorate the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which was adopted and proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948. The UDHR serves as a

global benchmark for the protection and promotion of human rights. "As we progress into the future, we are confronted with emerging challenges. Cyber crimes and climate change are new threats to human rights," Murmu said. The digital era, while being transformative, had brought with it complex issues such as cyber bullying, deep fake, privacy concerns and spread of misinformation, she added.

"These challenges underscore the importance of fostering a safe, secure and equitable digital environment that protect the rights and dignity of every individual," the President said. In her address, she also touched upon the aspect of AI and its impact on human lives. "Artificial intelligence has now entered our day-to-day life, solving many problems, and creating several new ones too," Murmu said. The human rights discourse so far has been "centred on the human agency", that is the violator is assumed to be a human being, who would have a "range of human emotions such as compassion and guilt," she said. "With AI, however, the culprit could be a non-human but intelligent agent. I leave the matter for you to ponder over," the President said.

India issues 361 Ayush visas to foreigners for medicine treatment



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

As of December 4, 2024, a total of 123 regular Ayush Visas, 221 e-Ayush Visas, and 17 e-Ayush Attendant Visas have been issued under the Ayush Visa category introduced in July last year, specifically for foreigners seeking treatment under the Ayush system of medicine. These include Ayurveda, Yoga, Unani, Siddha, and Homeopathy. The Ayush Visa is granted to foreign nationals whose primary purpose is to seek therapeutic care or wellness treatment at hospitals or wellness centers accredited by government authorities, the National Accreditation Board for Hospitals & Healthcare Providers (NABH), the National Commission for Homoeopathy (NCH), or the National Commission for Indian System of Medicine (NCISM) said Union Minister

of State for Ayush, Prataprao Jadhav, in a written reply to a query in the Rajya Sabha. In addition, the Advantage Healthcare India portal, launched by the Union Health Ministry serves as India's official "one-stop" platform for facilitating Medical Value Travel (MVT). It provides essential information for international patients seeking medical treatment in India. Interested patients can access the portal at www.healinindia.gov.in, said the Minister. It was in 2022, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had announced creation of Ayush Visa, seeking to make it a part of India's roadmap for the Heal in India initiative of the government. To further promote India as a destination for medical tourism, the Government hosted the Ayush Medical Value Travel Summit 2024 in Mumbai on September 30, 2024. The summit, themed "Global Synergy in Ayush: Transforming Health and Wellness through Medical Value Travel", aimed to integrate traditional Indian medicine with modern healthcare and strengthen India's position in the global MVT sector, the Minister added.

India, EU to launch first-ever ministerial strategic foreign policy dialogue amid rising geo-political tensions

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI



India and the European Union on Tuesday agreed to hold the first-ever ministerial strategic foreign policy dialogue soon to jointly navigate an array of critical challenges including geo-political tensions and Chinese belligerence in the Indo-Pacific and beyond. The decision to institute the strategic dialogue was taken during a phone conversation between External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and his counterpart from the 27-nation bloc Kaja Kallas. In a post on 'X', Kallas, the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, said it was agreed to hold the first ministerial strategic foreign policy dialogue soon.

The move to hold the dialogue comes months before India and the EU hold summit-level talks in New Delhi that is expected to see significant outcomes in terms of deepening of cooperation in a range of areas such as security, digital public infrastructure and trade. It is expected that the dialogue at the level of foreign ministers of the two

sides will provide a platform to evolve joint strategies and forge deeper cooperation in confronting various geo-political challenges including from China, people familiar with the matter said. "It was great talking to @DrJaishankar of India this morning. Global security challenges are interconnected. We will focus together to make

progress on security, trade, digital and green transition," Kallas said. "We agreed to hold the first ministerial Strategic Foreign Policy Dialogue soon," she added. On his part, Jaishankar said: "Discussed developments in Europe, West Asia and Indo-Pacific. Look forward to an early meeting." On the Jaishankar-Kallas talks, EU Ambassador to India Herve Delphin said both sides committed to advance India-EU cooperation on a wide range of foreign policy and security issues of mutual interest. The decision to institute the strategic dialogue is seen as a major move after the launch of India-EU Trade and Technology Council (TTC) in February last year.

Subsequently, both sides established three working groups under the TTC. The first working group is on strategic technologies, digital governance and digital connectivity. The second one is on green and clean energy technologies and the third one is on trade, investment and resilient value chains. The TTC is facilitating exchange of critical technologies relating to an array of domains including artificial intelligence, quantum computing, semiconductors and cybersecurity. The TTC with India was the European Union's second such technology partnership after the first one with the United States that was formed up in June 2021. The formation of the TTC

followed the announcement on it by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen on April 25, 2022. India and the EU are also looking at forging deeper cooperation to ensure a free, open, inclusive and rules-based maritime order in the Indo-Pacific. In August last year, the EU Naval Force (EUNAVFOR) Atlanta flagship, ITS Durand De La Penne conducted a joint activity at sea with the Indian destroyer INS Visakhapatnam in the framework of the EU's strategy for cooperation in the Indo-Pacific. Operation Atlanta is a critical maritime security operation under the EU Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP).

Ecologist Madhav Gadgil receives UN's highest environmental honor for western ghats conservation



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The United Nations on Tuesday honored ecologist

Madhav Gadgil with the prestigious Champions of the Earth award, its highest environmental recognition, for his outstanding contributions to

the conservation of the Western Ghats, a critical biodiversity hotspot. Gadgil, the only Indian recipient this year, chaired the Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel, which studied the impact of population growth, climate change, and development on the region's fragile ecosystem. In 2011, the panel recommended declaring the entire Western Ghats an Ecologically Sensitive Area (ESA) and dividing it into

three Ecologically Sensitive Zones (ESZ 1, 2, and 3) based on environmental vulnerability. It also called for a ban on activities like mining, quarrying, and large-scale infrastructure projects in the most sensitive zones (ESZ 1). Despite strong opposition from state governments, industries, and local communities, Gadgil's recommendations laid the groundwork for future conservation efforts.

In 2012, UNESCO recognized the Western Ghats as a World Heritage Site, and the following year, the Government established a High-Level Working Group in 2013, led by K. Kasturirangan, to develop sustainable development and protection measures for the region. This group identified 37% of the Western Ghats, covering nearly 60,000 square kilometers, as ecologically sensitive.

PM Modi to interact with young innovators at Smart India Hackathon 2024



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will interact with young innovators at the grand finale of Smart India Hackathon - 2024 via videoconferencing on Wednesday, his office said. The seventh Smart India Hackathon will run concurrently at 51 centres nationwide, a statement issued by the Prime Minister's Office said. Modi will interact with the young innovators at the grand finale via videoconferencing around 4:30 pm on Wednesday. More than 1,300 student teams will participate in the grand finale and the prime minister will also address the gathering. The Software Edition will run nonstop for 36 hours while the Hardware Edition will run from Wednesday to Sunday. Like past editions, the student teams will work on either the problem statements given by ministries, departments or industries or submit their own ideas in the Student Innovation Category against any of the 17 themes linked to sectors of national importance. These sectors are -- healthcare, supply chain and logistics, smart technologies, heritage and culture, sustainability, education and skill development, water, agriculture and food, emerging technologies, and disaster management. Some of the interesting problem statements of this year's edition include "Enhancing Images of Darker Regions on the Moon" presented by ISRO; "Developing a Real-time Ganga Water Quality Monitoring System using AI, Satellite Data, IoT, and Dynamic Models" presented by the Union Jal Shakti ministry, and "Developing a Smart Yoga Mat Integrated with AI" presented by the AYUSH ministry. This year, more than 250 problem statements have been submitted by 54 ministries, departments, state governments, PSUs and industries.

Union Minister Manohar Lal Khattar announces 16-fold increase in urban sector investments since 2014

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Union Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Manohar Lal Khattar on Tuesday said there has been a substantial increase in investments in the urban sector since 2014 and emphasised the Centre's dedication to realising the vision of 'Viksit Bharat' by 2047. Addressing a press conference on achievements of his ministry, the Union Housing and Urban Affairs minister said investments have increased 16-fold, rising from approximately Rs 1,78,053 crore between 2004 and 2014 to Rs 28,52,527 crore since 2014. Urban development schemes have been expanded and implemented with greater speed and efficiency in the past six months, asserting that the rapid pace of urbanisation has made urban development a key pillar of India's growth



strategy, he said. The minister said that under the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) between 2004 and 2014, projects worth Rs 66,837 crore were sanctioned, but the Modi government has sanctioned projects worth Rs 2.73 lakh crore under the Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) since 2014. Talking about urban housing and PMAY 2.0, Khattar said a new rental housing vertical has been introduced under the second phase of the

Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban), benefiting the migrant population. Under this scheme, new initiatives such as provisional sanctions for around 7 per cent of the planned 1 crore urban houses based on the population of states signing MoUs, have been made and it will ensure timely allocation and expediting the process. To streamline operations, sanctions to states will be finalised based on the demand received by March 31, 2025, providing clarity on yearly house allocations, he said,

adding that 88.32 lakh houses have competed under the PMAY 2.0. Khattar said a revamped National Urban Livelihoods Mission (NULM) will soon be launched, informed by the results of a pilot project currently underway in 25 cities. Giving details about the PM Street Vendor's AtmaNirbhar Nidhi (PM SVANidhi), the union minister said loan amounts of 13,422 crore have been disbursed under the scheme so far. Under the Swachh Bharat Mission, since June 9, 2024, the government has released more than Rs 1,123 crore. Over the past six months since June 9, two major dumpsites in Ahmedabad and Hyderabad have been completely remediated, successfully addressing approximately 2.5 lakh metric tonnes of legacy waste, Khattar added.

'Hamara Shauchalay: Hamara Samman' campaign achieves milestone in sanitation drive

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Over 3.35 lakh new individual household latrines were sanctioned and assessment and functional improvement of over 1.54 lakh Community Sanitary Complexes (CSCs), covering more than 70 per cent of existing facilities, it said. Additionally, over 3.35 lakh new Individual Household Latrines (IHHLS) were sanctioned, addressing critical sanitation gaps and advancing the mission of complete sanitation coverage, the statement said. States across the country showcased innovative approaches during the campaign. In Jammu and Kashmir, mobile LED-equipped vehicles spread sanitation awareness across districts. Bihar involved Self-Help Groups to conduct surveys and promoted school-based activities for youth engagement. Uttar Pradesh's Bhadohi district

in a statement. The campaign achieved significant milestones, including the assessment and functional improvement of over 1.54 lakh Community Sanitary Complexes (CSCs), covering more than 70 per cent of existing facilities, it said. Additionally, over 3.35 lakh new Individual Household Latrines (IHHLS) were sanctioned, addressing critical sanitation gaps and advancing the mission of complete sanitation coverage, the statement said. States across the country showcased innovative approaches during the campaign. In Jammu and Kashmir, mobile LED-equipped vehicles spread sanitation awareness across districts. Bihar involved Self-Help Groups to conduct surveys and promoted school-based activities for youth engagement. Uttar Pradesh's Bhadohi district

utilised Google Maps to track CSCs, ensuring accessibility and proper maintenance. Rajasthan led efforts with the construction of over 750 pink toilets and the beautification of one lakh IHHLS. Gujarat introduced the "Our Toilet, Our Respect" initiative in schools, while West Bengal established model toilets in all gram panchayats. Karnataka and Tamil Nadu focused on beautifying CSCs and IHHLS, transforming sanitation facilities into community landmarks, the statement said. The campaign also included high-level involvement, with active participation from governors, Union ministers, Members of Parliament, state leaders, and panchayat members. Water and sanitation committees were activated at multiple levels to ensure accountability and long-term sustainability, the statement added.

Indian universities shine in QS sustainability rankings 2025: IISc, IITs make significant gains

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Indian universities have made significant strides in the latest QS World University Rankings: Sustainability 2025, with the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) Bengaluru securing a spot among the world's top 50 institutions for Environmental Education. Released by QS Quacquarelli Symonds, global higher education experts, the rankings evaluate universities based on sustainability efforts across environmental and social impact metrics. The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi leads the Indian list, achieving a remarkable improvement of 255 places to

secure 171st rank globally. It is followed by IIT Kharagpur (202nd) and IIT Bombay (234th), both of which have also climbed significantly in the rankings. University of Delhi is the only Indian varsity which has seen a decline in ranks this year, as it slipped from 220 last year to 299 rank this year, but has appeared sixth on the Indian list. A total of 78 Indian universities feature in the 2025 QS Sustainability rankings, with nine of the top 10 institutions in the country improving their ranking this year. A total of 21 varsities are new to the ranking this time. IIT-Delhi and IIT-Kanpur have been ranked among the world's top 100 for

environmental impact. IIT Delhi (IITD) is the top ranked Indian institution in the Social Impact (362) and the Environmental Impact (55) categories. It is also top in two lenses - Employability and Outcomes (116) and Environmental Research (256). Manipal Academy of Higher Education - Manipal University (MAHE) is the top ranked Indian university in the Governance category. It is also top in India for Equality, ranked at 390 globally. IIT Bombay is top in the Environmental Sustainability lens, placed at 38 globally. IIT Kharagpur is top in India for two lenses - Impact of Education (676) and Health and Wellbeing (391). Also,

DU is top in India for Knowledge Exchange, coming in at 121 globally. IISc is placed 32nd worldwide in the Environmental Education lens. Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru has been ranked among world's top 50 for environment education. "Of the 78 Indian universities that feature in the 2025 QS Sustainability rankings, 34 have improved on last year's placing and eight have maintained their positions. "This is an excellent achievement for the Indian higher education ecosystem and shows that Indian universities are forging ahead with their sustainability initiatives," said Ben Sowter,

Vice President of London-based QS. "Within the Social Impact category, Indian universities can look to improve their indicator scores in the Health and Wellbeing, Impact of Education and Equality lenses, where no institutions from the country feature in the top 350. Universities from India scored better in the Knowledge Exchange and Employability and Outcomes lenses," Sowter added. This time, seven African universities rank in the top 500. The University of Cape Town ranks 45th, the highest in the region. Cairo University is ranked 370th. Australia has 14 universities in the top 100, with the

University of Melbourne maintaining its position at ninth. QUT is the only Australian institution to climb the table. The 2025 rankings showcase over 1,740 universities from 107 countries and territories, reflecting significant growth from the previous edition, which included 1,397 institutions across 95 locations. The University of Toronto is the top ranked university this year, ahead of ETH Zurich which got second place, and Lund University in Sweden and University of California, Berkeley (UCB) in joint third. Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University (GGSIU) has made an

emphatic statement about its commitment to sustainability by ranking in the 951-960 bracket in the QS World Sustainability Rankings 2025. Rising to 35th place in India and 288th in Asia, the University has emerged as a frontrunner in integrating sustainable practices into education, research, and governance. The University excels in Governance, ranking 711 globally and 25th in India, showcasing its strong leadership and transparent practices. Its global rank of 773 in Knowledge Exchange highlights its pivotal role in fostering innovation and societal impact through collaborative efforts.

Akharas embrace digital tools for streamlined management, spiritual outreach

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ PRAAYAGRAJ

Inspired by the Digital Mahakumbh initiative, 13 prominent akharas of Sanatan Dharma are adopting digital tools to modernize their management while preserving their spiritual heritage. By creating comprehensive databases, they aim to ensure transparency, efficiency, and better organizational practices. The akharas are integrating technology for record-keeping and administrative tasks. Mahant Jamuna Puri, Secretary of Shri Panchayati Akhara Maha Nirvani, highlighted how computers and

traditional ledgers are now used side by side, simplifying audits and improving financial oversight. "The digital database helps maintain records needed for income tax filings, which are then shared with our chartered accountant," he explained. Someshwaranand Brahmachari, General Secretary of Shri Panchagni Akhara, elaborated on the operational benefits of the digital transition. "Earlier, during Mahakumbh audits, we compiled data manually from ledgers. Now, we can access information quickly using technology." He added that the akhara also manages



Sanskrit schools, using the database to monitor student enrollments and track school income and expenses. The akharas, known for promoting spirituality, devotion, and sadhana, are also leading global social initiatives. Acharya Mahamandaleswar Arun Giri Ji of Awahan Akhara emphasized that beyond spiritual efforts, saints are committed to humanitarian causes. One such project involves a worldwide tree-planting campaign aimed at environmental conservation. "We are developing a database to track tree plantation efforts, ensuring accountability and transparency," said Acharya Arun

Giri Ji. The database initiative is also intended to strengthen ties with tribal and marginalized communities. Maha Mandaleswar Swami Pranavanand Saraswati Ji of Shri Panchayati Akhara Maha Nirvani underscored the importance of digital tools for expanding spiritual outreach. Reflecting on his experiences during tribal development tours, Swami Pranavanand explained, "To reinforce Sanatan Dharma's roots among deprived societies, we must gather data about these communities. I am personally working toward this goal." While some akharas have made significant progress in

digital adoption, Vaishnav akharas face unique challenges. Shri Mahant Ram Ji Das of the All India Shri Panch Nirmohi Ani Akhara explained that, unlike the Sanyasi akharas, Vaishnav akharas do not operate their own trusts and are exempt from audits. However, he acknowledged the need to adapt. "In today's digital age, even Vaishnav akharas must develop databases for better management and to stay relevant," he stated. By embracing digital tools, the akharas are blending tradition with technology, ensuring efficient management while advancing their spiritual and humanitarian missions.

Accused held in connection with crude bomb blast outside Gurugram clubs

PNS ■ GURUGRAM

Police on Tuesday arrested an accused from outside a Gurugram club in connection with a crude bomb blast outside two clubs in Gurugram in the early hours of Tuesday, officials said. The accused was identified as Sachin a resident of District Meerut in Uttar Pradesh. The police have also recovered two crude bombs and weapons. According to the police the incident occurred around 5.15 am on Tuesday outside two clubs located in Sector-29 area of Gurugram. It is being said that this incident was committed to demand extortion. During preliminary investigation, it was found that at the time of the incident, the accused was in a state of intoxication and 02 cotton bombs had been thrown by him and 02 more bombs were to be thrown by him, but before he could throw more bombs,



Gurugram Police arrested the accused along with the bombs. However, no casualties were reported in the incident. Soon after the incident, Vikas Arora, Commissioner of Gurugram Police, visited the crime scene. The bomb disposal team of Gurugram Police was also called to the crime

scene and the 02 live bombs recovered from the possession of the accused were defused by the bomb disposal team. In the incident, a scooty and a board have suffered some damage, police said. "The accused is being thoroughly questioned by the Crime Branch and Special Task

Force (STF) team of the Haryana Police for further investigation," Sandeep Kumar, spokesperson of the Gurugram Police said. Gurugram Police appeals to the general public that if any suspicious person or suspicious object is seen anywhere in Gurugram, then immediately

inform Gurugram Police control room number 112, 0124-22216010 and 124-2316100, he said. Recently 5 hotels in Gurugram had also received bomb threats. The threat sent through email has created panic in all the hotels. It has been told that the hotels which have received the threat are located at five different locations of the city. Police had said that, threats were sent through an emails to 5 hotels located in different areas of Gurugram city. On receiving the information, Gurugram police reached the spot and conducted a search operation in all the hotels with the bomb squad. During the search operation, the police did not find any suspicious object from anywhere. After this, the police declared these threats as fake. Gurugram police is tracing the IP address of the person who sent the email. Further probe related to the matter is underway, police said.

Gujarat Govt signs MoU to conserve, promote Buddhist heritage in State: Officials

PNS ■ AHMEDABAD

The Gujarat government on Tuesday signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with a Bihar-based institute to conserve and promote Buddhist heritage and places in the state, an official said. As per a release, the Tourism Corporation of Gujarat Ltd (TCGL) and BodhiGaya Vijjalaya 980 Institute signed the MoU in Gandhinagar in the presence of Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel and members of the 4th Mekong Ganga Dhamma Yatra delegation. The agreement has been signed for cooperation in the conservation and development of Buddhist tangible and intangible heritage in Gujarat and for global promotion of places of Buddhist circuit in the state, the release said. The 4th Mekong Ganga



Dhamma Yatra started in Bangkok, Thailand, and the delegation of this yatra is visiting different parts of India from December 2 to 10. Representatives of the yatra meeting Chief Minister Patel in Gandhinagar after visiting the remains of an ancient Buddhist monastery in Vadnagar, the hometown of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the release

said. The delegation also visited a Buddhist archaeological site at Dev Ni Mori in north Gujarat as part of their trip. During the meeting, the representatives of the yatra informed Patel that the aim of this historic journey from Thailand to India is to deepen the cultural and spiritual connections between the Mekong and Ganga civilisations, it said.

Rajasthan Government to launch woman-led patrolling units next week

PNS ■ JAIPUR

Rajasthan Police will launch specialised women-led patrolling units next week to enhance the safety of women and children in public spaces, officials said. The Kalika Patrolling Units will be distinctively identifiable by their blue uniforms with neon monograms, they said. Malini Agrawal, Additional Director General (Civil Rights), said the initiative will begin with 250 teams, each consisting of four female officers. The plan includes expanding the program to 500 teams, with Jaipur receiving 35 units initially, and each District Commissionerate receiving 10 units. The squads will operate under the supervision of senior female officers. Subsequently, 20 units will be deployed in Kota, 12 in Udaipur, 10 in Jodhpur and 10 each in Ajmer and Bhillwara. "The decision to form these patrolling units was driven by frequent complaints of eve-teasing and harassment in public spaces. Female constables and head constables will patrol these areas on scooters," Agrawal said. The teams will use black scooters and matching helmets, ensuring a uniform look that reinforces their authority and accessibility. A dedicated police



control room and helpline number will also be established to support their operations. The Kalika Patrolling Units will be deployed in schools, religious sites, colleges, markets, cinema halls, malls, parks, tourist destinations, and other sensitive areas. Their focus will be on preventing crimes such as eve-teasing of women and chain-snatching. The Kalika Patrolling Units were first announced in June as part of the Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma-led government's efforts to combat crimes against women and children. During the budget announcement, Finance Minister Diya Kumari highlighted that the initiative is aimed at curbing atrocities against vulnerable groups. The government also announced plans to strengthen the Nirbhaya women's squad and increase CCTV surveillance in public spaces and women's hostels.

Man held for sharing bogus bomb alert on IndiGo flight from Nagpur to Kolkata

PNS ■ RAIPUR

A man arrested for allegedly sharing a bogus bomb alert on an IndiGo flight from Nagpur to Kolkata last month has turned out to be an Intelligence Bureau (IB) officer. Police, however, justified his arrest claiming he provided false information that forced the flight with 187 passengers onboard to make an emergency landing. Animesh Mandal (44) is a deputy superintendent-rank IB official posted in Nagpur and he was innocent, his lawyer Faizal Rizvi told reporters here two days ago. On November 14, Mandal allegedly told the crew of the IndiGo flight after it took off that there was a bomb on the plane. The flight was diverted to Raipur, but after a thorough search upon landing, the information was found to be baseless. Mandal was arrested by Raipur Police under Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita section 351 (4) (criminal intimidation by anonymous communication) and provisions of the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against Safety of Civil Aviation Act, 1982. As per advocate Rizvi, after Mandal boarded the flight, he got information from his source about a bomb. Why



did the police not disclose immediately that he is an IB official, the lawyer asked, talking to reporters. Raipur Senior Superintendent of Police Santosh Singh said on Tuesday that police informed the IB immediately after he was detained, and he was arrested only after a joint team of local police and IB interrogated him and found the input shared by him to be fake. Mandal's act created panic, endangering the lives of passengers and crew members, he said. Advocate Rizvi, meanwhile, claimed that a person charged under the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against Safety of Civil Aviation Act can be tried only by a special court, and there is no such designated court in Chhattisgarh. His client will move the High Court which has inherent powers to hear such cases, and seek bail, the lawyer said.

BJP, JD(U) slam Lalu over his remarks on Nitish's proposed Mahila Samvad Yatra

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PATNA/NEW DELHI

The BJP and the JD(U) on Tuesday slammed RJD president Lalu Prasad for his remark about Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's proposed statewide tour - 'Mahila Samvad Yatra', claiming that the opposition leader insulted women of the state. Earlier in the day, Prasad had claimed that the chief minister would embark on the statewide tour to "ogle at women". Deputy Chief Minister and former state BJP president Samrat Choudhary said, "We knew Lalu ji is physically ill. But today he has shown that he has a sick mind." Echoing a similar view, Bihar BJP president Dilip Jaiswal said, "Lalu Ji has insulted women by making such a remark against our chief minister. This shows his mindset. We don't give importance to what Lalu Ji claimed." "Aankh Sekne Jaa Rahe Hain Apna" was Prasad's quizzical reply, which used to be a Bihar slang, to berate Kumar when asked about the chief minister's plans to embark on the 'Mahila Samvad Yatra'. Union Minister and senior BJP leader Giriraj Singh, who had formerly served in



Kumar's cabinet, voiced disgust over the remark of the RJD supremo, exclaiming "Chhi! Chhi! Chhi! (shame)" Talking to reporters in Delhi, Singh said, "Only Lalu Prasad can say such bad things about Nitish Kumar. Lalu is a selfish man whose whole life has been tainted." JD (U) leader Neeraj Kumar reacted strongly to Lalu's remark and said, "Lalu ji you should show your eyes to the Congress. How dare you to speak about Nitish Kumar. The truth is that when you were in jail, your body was imprisoned in Hotwar jail and your mind was imprisoned in Charwaha Vidyalaya (school for cattle grazers). Bihar CM is all set to embark on a statewide journey, 'Mahila Samvad Yatra' from December 15 to review the progress of the government's 7-Resolves programme and feel the pulse of the people through interaction with women.

Kashmiri vendor manhandled by group of men during International Gita Festival

PNS ■ KURUKSHETRA

A Kashmiri vendor was allegedly manhandled by a group of men during the ongoing International Gita Festival here, prompting police to register an FIR in the matter, officials said on Monday. The incident took place on Saturday when the vendor from Srinagar was allegedly manhandled by a group of men who were holding saffron flags in their hands and walking past various stalls, they said. Several craftsmen drawn from around the country have put up their stalls at the Craft Mela of International Gita Jayanti Mahotsav-2024 which have been allotted by the authorities here. The Craft Mela is being organised on the periphery of holy Brahmasarovar here. The incident went viral on social media, in which it can be seen how a group of men holding saffron flags and chanting slogans enter the stall and one of them manhandles the vendor and others start throwing the items away. A few locals came to the rescue of the stall owner immediately to help him arrange the items and to condemn the act. The police on Tuesday said an FIR under relevant



provisions of the law including rioting and criminal intimidation has been registered in connection with the incident. In his police complaint, the vendor said, "On Saturday, a group of 30 to 40 men came and started shouting slogans and called me a Bangladeshi." "They started shouting slogans to remove shops of Muslims, while throwing our items. They also thrashed me with sticks... They also made announcements not to buy products from Muslims," the vendor alleged. Kurukshetra SHO Dinesh Singh on Tuesday said that an investigation into the matter is going on and police will go through the CCTV footage of the area. He said that of the total of over 600 stalls the security has been enhanced at over 50 stalls of the vendors from minority communities to avoid any such happening again.

TMC's Humayun plans new 'Babri Masjid' in Bengal

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Meet Humayun Kabir the Bengal Trinamool Congress MLA and former Minister who has proposed to construct a brand new Babri Masjid at Beldanga block of Murshidabad district. Kabir who had a few months ago courted controversy and escaped sans penalty for threatening to cut and throw a section of the population in the Bhagirathi river has said that he had made up plans to construct the Babri Masjid in his home town Beldanga. It is the same Beldanga that recently witnessed communal riots during Kartik Puja forcing the Government to suspend internet services and impose prohibitory orders. "I will get constructed a new Babri Masjid in Murshidabad where 70 percent of the population is Muslim... the mosque will come up at Beldanga block

near my home where Muslims enjoy an 80 percent majority," Kabir a former Minister who was recently reprimanded by his party leadership for speaking out of turn to project Abhishek Banerjee as Deputy Chief Minister "so as to ease pressure on Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee," said. Kabir's statement seems to be conspicuous by its timing even as it comes amid Bangladesh crisis when there was considerable heat on both sides of the international border. The foundation stone of the proposed mosque will be laid on December 6, 2025 barely a few months before ahead of the Bengal Assembly elections in 2026. When asked as to whether December 6 fixed as the foundation laying day by him was coincidental or it bore a cloaked implication, he said things had been decided by a committee. The TMC MLA said that the mosque would be



constructed to cater to the sentiments of the 30 percent Muslim population of Bengal. The place would stand as a "symbol of pride" for the Muslim people of Bengal, he said. Incidentally the Babri Mosque at Ayodhya was demolished by the Kar Sevaks on December 6, 1992 leading to a political turmoil. A decades' old title suit was subsequently settled by the Supreme Court following which a Ram Temple was constructed at the site and a separate Mosque was directed to be

built a few miles away. On resources Kabir said that he would personally donate Rs one crore towards the making of the mosque adding there would be no shortage of funds. "It will be constructed on a 2 acre land and a 100-member trust comprising Muslim religious leaders would be created for the purpose," he said adding the people would be asked to donate money for the purpose. When asked whether the Chief Minister had been intimidated about his designs he said, "Mamata Banerjee is our supreme leader and the Trinamool Congress is a secular political party of which I am a member... though the construction of the mosque is a purely religious affair we will definitely invite the Chief Minister to the programme." Kabir is the same TMC MLA who had before the 2024 general elections had reminded the

BJP that the Muslims constituted 70 percent of the population of Murshidabad and had said that "if they continue to show aggression then they would be cut and throw into the River Bhagirathi." While none of the TMC leaders would react to Kabir's plans one of them saying, "the TMC does not interfere into anyone's personal religion," Bengal Opposition Leader Suwendu Adhikari slammed the Chief Minister for allowing the State to go into the hands of the "reactionary elements." He said, "a few days ago her Cabinet colleague Siddiqullah Chowdhury had the audacity to praise Md Yunus of Bangladesh and attack Prime Minister Narendra Modi... and now this man is raising religious issue... it is a clear plan to make a Bangladesh in India which should be stopped immediately at any cost."

Former Karnataka CM SM Krishna passes away

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ BENGALURU

Former Karnataka Chief Minister SM Krishna died at his residence early Tuesday morning. The 92-year-old veteran politician was ailing for quite some time. His last rites will be performed with full State honours at his native in Mandya district on Wednesday. The three-day state mourning is from December 10 to 12, official notification said. Somanahalli Mallaiah Krishna is survived by wife Prema and two daughters. Born in Somanahalli in Karnataka's Mandya district on May 1, 1932, Somanahalli Mallaiah Krishna began his career in electoral politics in 1962 by winning the Maddur assembly seat as an inde-



pendent. He was then associated with the Praja Socialist Party before joining the Congress. Later, he joined the BJP in March 2017, ending his nearly 50-year-long association with the Congress. In January last year, Krishna announced that he was retiring from active politics, citing his age as the reason. He was the 16th Chief Minister of Karnataka from October 11, 1999, to

May 28, 2004, (from Congress). He also served as the Governor of Maharashtra and was the External Affairs Minister during the Manmohan Singh-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government from 2009 to 2012. A law graduate, Krishna studied in the US. He graduated from the Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas, and The George Washington University Law School in Washington DC, where he was a Fulbright Scholar. Krishna served as the Speaker of the Karnataka Legislative Assembly from December 1989 to January 1993. He was also a member of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha several times between 1971 and 2014.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

It is getting hot!

Global warming is becoming reality as 2024 set to be the hottest year on record

As global temperatures soar to unprecedented levels, 2024 is shaping up to be the hottest year on record, a grim milestone that underscores the accelerating crisis of climate change. European Union scientists have confirmed that the first eleven months of 2024 have set a new high, making this year the warmest since records began. This will be the first year where the global average temperature surpasses 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, a threshold that world leaders have long warned could trigger catastrophic climate impacts. With this alarming reality, the world faces a rapidly intensifying climate emergency, one that requires immediate and drastic action. The impacts of global warming are already being felt around the world. In 2024, extreme weather events have ravaged communities, causing widespread devastation. Severe droughts have gripped Italy and South America, while fatal floods in Nepal, Sudan and Europe have displaced thousands. Heatwaves in regions like Mexico, Saudi Arabia and Mali have killed thousands of people, while cyclones have torn through the United States and the Philippines. These events are not just random occurrences; scientific studies confirm that they bear the unmistakable fingerprint of human-caused climate change.



The overwhelming cause of global warming is carbon dioxide emissions from burning fossil fuels. These emissions trap heat in the atmosphere, causing global temperatures to rise at an alarming rate. The most effective way to curb this warming is by reducing emissions to net-zero levels, a goal that many nations have pledged to achieve in the coming decades. However, despite these green pledges, global CO2 emissions are on track to hit record highs this year. This contradictory trend highlights the gap between political promises and the real, tangible actions needed to mitigate climate change. This year's UN climate talks produced a \$300-billion deal aimed at addressing the global climate crisis. However, poorer countries have criticised this deal, arguing that it is insufficient to cover the soaring costs of climate-related disasters. While this deal may have made some progress, it is clear that the global response is not yet enough to prevent further warming. The rise of climate change deniers, particularly within the political sphere, has made it even harder to combat this crisis. US President-elect Donald Trump, in particular, has consistently downplayed the severity of global warming and rolled back numerous environmental regulations during his previous term. Under Trump's leadership, the US withdrew from the Paris Agreement, a global pact aimed at reducing emissions and limiting global temperature rise. Such actions would undoubtedly exacerbate the climate crisis, making it even harder to reduce emissions and avoid the most catastrophic effects of global warming. The time to act is now, and the window for meaningful change is rapidly closing.

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PICTALK



Badrinath Dham receives the first snowfall of the season, in Chamoli

Philippines confronts Chinese assertiveness



ASHOK K MEHTA

The South China Sea remains a flashpoint of escalating tensions as China intensifies its aggressive maritime activities, targeting nations like the Philippines

NS Admiral Dinesh Tripathi during his customary briefing of media before Navy Day last week expressed concern about Chinese maritime activities in the South China Sea, all of which China claims. Two countries it especially targets in SCS are Taiwan and the Philippines in whose waters it has indulged in offensive naval actions. It signed a defence agreement with the US in 1951; last month it signed an intelligence and technology agreement facilitating satellite intelligence and access to high-grade US weaponry following President Marcos promulgating Maritime Zone Act and Archipelago Sea Lanes Act that China denounced and summoned its envoy. US Defence Secretary Llyod Austin told his counterpart Gilberto Teodoro: We are more than allies; we're family.



The week-long ASEAN summit in Vientiane, Laos from 6 to 12 October witnessed stern exchanges between China, the US and the Philippines especially over the South China Sea at a time when the West is seized with Ukraine and West Asia crises, even as President-elect Trump is issuing multiple threats. While Chinese Premier Li Qiang blamed 'external forces' for interfering in regional affairs, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said the US is concerned about increasingly dangerous and unlawful activities of China in disputed SCS. Marcos complained to ASEAN leaders that his country continues to be subjected to Chinese bullying and intimidation. Earlier that week PM Narendra Modi attended the 19th India-ASEAN meeting and made a powerful presentation of Delhi's Act East policy and criticised China for its expansionist policy in SCS. The Chinese have been testing the waters in the Philippines EEZ in SCS Filipinos call the West Philippines Sea with several forays against Filipino boats to check how far the US will go in its support. Filipino vessels in their EEZ have faced intimidation and bullying by Chinese coast guard ships over the dispute Thomas Shoal 2

where Sierra Madera a Philippine vessel has been grounded since 1999 to assert its sovereignty. The Chinese are equally active and defiant against Japan in the East China Sea and recently crossed the First Island chain for the first time with an aircraft carrier and two warships. Taiwan continues to face periodic challenges as China relentlessly violates the 2016 UNCLOS ruling that the Philippines secured over China's illegal claim to the South China Sea under its 9-dash line. During my interaction with Philippines security experts in Manila in June, clashes over the resupply of a marooned vessel in Thomas Shoal 2 had reached the climax; and some suggested it could be a feint for Taiwan. The incident had ruffled feathers in Manila with calls for invoking the US Mutual Defence Agreement which gets triggered only during armed external attack. Clashes have occurred between the two sides and despite talks and a hotline, no compromise was reached. On September 28 Chinese Navy missile boat fired laser beams at a Philippines Cessna Patrol aircraft while Filipino coast guard vessels continued to be chased. Chinese insisted resupply of the marooned ship would happen under their supervision and in a mid-August clash, several Chinese



EARLIER THAT WEEK PM MODI ATTENDED THE 19TH INDIA-ASEAN MEETING AND MADE A POWERFUL PRESENTATION OF DELHI'S ACT EAST POLICY AND CRITICISED CHINA FOR ITS EXPANSIONIST POLICY IN SCS

ships blocked passage of Filipino supplies for the stranded ship. The Chinese have said that the Philippines ship is illegally stranded/marooned at the disputed Thomas Shoal atoll which it owns as part of its claim to SCS. China calls it Xianbin Reef which is 150 km west of the Philippines island of Palawan. As before, it had repeatedly said it would promulgate its maritime laws including the use of firearms and arrest offenders in defence of its sovereignty and national interest. Teodoro said at the end of August that Thomas Shoal is a sovereignty issue of the Philippines. According to South China Morning Post (September 16), Admiral Samuel Paparo, US Indo-Pacific Command accompanied by Gen Romero Brawner, Chief of Philippines armed forces, said there is a range of options as countermeasures for the Chinese grey zone tactics adding the US is ready to escort Philippines ships in SCS in event of a spike in hostilities. Brawner said they would seek help if the Chinese blocked food supplies and soldiers were dying of hunger. In Manila, I was asked whether re-supply by other means like helicopters was feasible and had suggested discussing it with their US allies. Meanwhile, Paparo said a video call with Gen Wu Yanan, PLA Southern Theatre Commander responsible for SCS and Taiwan. Wu attended an International conference at the Indo-Pacific command in Hawaii in September even as Teodoro took the contingency of escalation to the next level, of the Chinese towing away the grounded Sierra Madera which would constitute an act of war; invoking a defence pact with the US. A code of conduct for ASEAN in SCS has been in the works for two decades but is far from fruition. It is akin to India's LAC/border with China that Beijing has refused to resolve as it would put a stop to grey zone tactics and salami slicing. India has voiced clear support for the Philippines during the June 17 clash with the Chinese coast guard and Foreign Minister Jaishankar has been on a goodwill visit. Delhi has sold Brahmos anti-ship missiles to Manila, the first country to buy them. Former Defence Secretary, Giridhar Aramane was in Manila recently for the fifth Joint defence cooperation dialogue. While Taiwan may not be on the cards, Thomas Shoal 2 could end up in Chinese possession as Mischief Reef 24 km north of it did in 2012. (The writer, a retired Major General, was Commander, IPKF South, Sri Lanka, and founder member of the Defence Planning Staff, currently the Integrated Defence Staff. The views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

CONTROVERSY AT IIT KHARAGPUR

Madam —I have never heard of any controversy in the teaching campus of IIT Kharagpur. But now it is happening. For the last six months, open differences have started coming to the fore between the director and the teaching staff. The Indian Institute of Technology has issued show-cause notices to 90 faculty members in response to allegations against its director V K Tiwari of bias, "retaliation in faculty selection," and failure to set up the promised hospital on campus. In addition, three department heads have also been replaced. The controversy began in September when the IIT Teachers' Association wrote a letter to Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan accusing Tiwari of arbitrary recruitment processes and other irregularities. About 100 faculty members have protested by wearing black bands and participating in silent marches on campus. The faculty is reportedly now considering legal action. On December 2, the administration replaced the heads of the departments of mathematics, artificial intelligence, and biosciences and biotechnology. I want to say that when the education minister was informed about the arbitrary behaviour of director VK Tiwari five months ago, why did he not take any action? Why was the director not removed from his post with immediate effect? This means that the environment of this great educational institution is being deliberately spoiled so that this institution can be defamed. IIT Kharagpur is the first IIT to be established by the Government of India. The institute was formally inaugurated on 18 August 1951 by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. IIT was established to provide trained technical personnel for India. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru took the initiative to establish IIT, he believed that science and technology are important for the modernisation of India. Jang Bahadur Singh | Jamshedpur

Sanjay Malhotra as new RBI Governor



The union governments have appointed Revenue Secretary Sanjay Malhotra as the 26th Governor of the Reserve Bank of India, before the six-year term completion of Shaktikanta Das at the post of Governor of RBI. Throughout his career spanning more than 33 years, Sanjay Malhotra has served across

diverse sectors, including power, finance, taxation, information technology, and mines. Currently he has been serving as secretary (revenue) in the ministry of finance, he previously held the position of secretary in the department of financial services under the ministry of finance, Government of India. The governor heads the RBI and plays a central role in formulating, implementing and monitoring the monetary policy and banking regulations of India. Every note ever printed carries the signature of the RBI governor. The RBI Governor also monitors and facilitates the flow of credit to rural, agricultural and various MSME sectors. As the newly appointed governor holds good ties with the finance minister, he probably works in the betterment of the country's economy, inflation rate, CRR, SLR, GDP, etc. Dimple Wadhawan | Kanpur Nagar

END OF ASSAD RULE

Madam—The turn of political events in Syria raises fears of a new wave of regional instability, following the ouster of Bashar al-Assad by the militant group Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), ending his family's despotic rule for over 13 years. It marks a turning point for Syria, shattered by years of civil war that has turned cities into rubble, killed hundreds of thousands of people, and forced millions to go abroad as refugees. Western governments, which have shunned the Assad-led state for years, must decide how to deal with a new administration in Syria in which HTS looks set to have greater influence. HTS, which spearheaded the rebel advances across western Syria, was formerly an al-Qaeda affiliate. The Syrians, therefore, will obviously remain fearful as this militant group will impose draconian Islamist rule or instigate reprisals. As Syria will go to polls, it would require a smooth transition in a country with complex competing interests. Ranganathan Sivakumar | Chennai

TIKTOK'S NEGATIVE EFFECTS

Madam — Tensions have been escalating in the US over the impact of TikTok. The US Court of Appeals has also cited a notice to China-based ByteDance to sell the social media app by January 19 or face an effective ban in the US. Banning TikTok is not the ultimate solution, as it will hit hard many businessmen for whom TikTok is a source of income generation. They use social media for promotion of their products or of their business, but we cannot forget its negative impact on the minds of children. There is a need to adopt such a solution that will be beneficial for both businessmen and society. Businessmen should create accounts in the name of their business, and e-verification of those accounts should also be done to maintain their originality, and accounts registered under the age of 16 should be banned so the app will be less harmful. Shreyanshi Jain | Ujjain

Childhood Wounds: The hidden force behind life's struggles

Whether it's self-doubt at work or struggles in relationships, the roots often trace back to unresolved childhood wounds

Have you ever wondered why life keeps pulling you back, no matter how hard you try to move forward? Maybe you find yourself repeating the same mistakes in relationships, doubting your abilities at work, or battling the constant ache of "not being enough."



It's easy to blame bad luck or personal failure. But often, these struggles run deeper—in unresolved childhood wounds. Childhood is when we learn how to love, trust and value ourselves. But not all childhoods are built on safety and support. Even seemingly small moments can leave deep scars. A parent saying, "Stop crying, you're embarrassing me," or a teacher comparing you to someone else may seem insignificant at the time but can shape how we see ourselves for years to come. Take Radhika, for example. At 35, she thrived in her career but couldn't maintain a relationship. Every time someone got close, she would pull away, convinced they would leave her eventually. Therapy

revealed that her fear of abandonment stemmed from her father leaving when she was six. Her emotional walls weren't about keeping others out; they were about protecting herself from feeling that pain again. Then there's Arjun, 28, who struggled to hold a job. His pattern was predictable: procrastinate, miss deadlines and eventually lose the role. He believed he lacked discipline, but therapy uncovered a deeper truth. He had grown up under relentless criticism—nothing he did was ever good enough. That

internalised voice followed him into adulthood, leading him to self-sabotage before anyone else could judge him. These aren't isolated stories. Many of us carry invisible wounds from our childhood. A parent's absence, constant comparisons, or even a single harsh word can create emotional patterns—fear of intimacy, perfectionism, or shrinking ourselves to avoid rejection. Over time, these patterns create setbacks that seem external but are deeply internal. Therapy is where this cycle ends. It's not about

blaming our parents or reliving the past. It's about understanding why we feel stuck and learning how to let go of the pain. Imagine carrying a heavy bag for years, thinking it's just part of life—then discovering you can put it down. That's what healing feels like. One client described the process beautifully: "For the first time, I understand myself. I'm not broken. I've just been carrying pain I didn't know was there." Your setbacks aren't failures; they're signals that something inside you needs attention. Healing childhood wounds allows you to stop reacting from a place of fear and start living from a place of freedom. It's not an easy journey, but it's one worth taking. The truth is, you deserved love and safety as a child, and you still do now. Healing isn't about erasing the past—it's about reclaiming your future. If this resonates, consider giving yourself the gift of therapy. You're not broken—you're healing. (The writer is a Life Coach; views are personal)



KAVITA KABIRA



FIRST COLUMN TRANSFORMING ORGANISATIONAL BEHAVIOR

As technology reshapes the world at breakneck speed, organisations must evolve to stay relevant



RAVI VALLURI

It would be worthwhile to examine how organisations are structured and articulated. In the long haul organisations blessed with individuals willing to experiment, innovate and embrace technology will be the ones that survive. At the pace that technology with its variants is fashioning itself, numerous applications are unravelling virtually by the minute, and the level of obsolescence and attrition of equipment is becoming extraordinarily high. In such a scenario, humans and organisations will be subsumed by various products and their variants. The human mind can no longer remain in the typewriter mode. The garden of Organisational Theory and Behaviour is dotted with eminent scholars. Three pioneers, Adam Smith, Charles Babbage and Robert Owen provided the ballast and the basic groundwork. Adam Smith advanced the argument that countries and organisations would profit by adopting the tenets of division of labour, what is now termed as specialisation. Charles Babbage in his seminal work postulated: Through the division of labour, the time required for learning a job or skill gets drastically reduced. Right at the stage of infancy wastage of material gets minimised and diminishes. The mind is propelled to take up serious tasks upon attaining superior skills. Way back in 1789, Robert Owen at 18 went on to acquire a factory. He was a utopian, way ahead of his times. In 1825, he promulgated regulated working



hours, child labour laws, public education and business involvement in various community projects – a precursor to CSR. In today's wired world, individuals work from their dwellings. Places with the latest technology and gizmos at their disposal. Over the last decade, the entire paradigm of organisational behaviour has metamorphosed. Technology stares at organisations with peering eyes, the complexity and dynamics of structures having undergone a complete metamorphosis. Let us look at the Indian Railways. There was a time when the operating and manufacturing departments held sway in the decision-making process. Today, it is the technical departments that are the game changers. The concept of fixed work hours is history.

The workforce must be alert 24x7. Thus, employees need to brush up on their skill sets to brace for the challenges of the virtual world. Let us examine the model of direct teaching through online classes – one-on-one, between the teacher and the tutee. The very paradigm may affect teaching techniques in schools and universities. Similarly, qualified doctors instruct their colleagues through Skype or other means during complex surgeries. Be it surgical strikes or wars, instructions are being disseminated to the foot soldiers through the latest technology, like the usage of GPS coordinates and Real-Time Imagery.

In such a scenario, scores of organisational structures, government or those in the private sector must adapt radically in order to survive. The workforce must continuously upgrade their skill set or face extinction. Perhaps emotions of warmth may be lost in the maze of technological evolution. The philosophy of an organisation, its goals and objectives and the behavioural pattern between the structure and the workforce have been stranded in a traffic jam of the kind one encounters in major cities of India like Gurugram. Stephen Hawking has in a rather depressing prognosis, predicted that life would be extinct on this planet on four grounds – nukes, global warming, man-made viruses or robots. Thus, the human mind should reinvent itself and current organisational behaviour and theories or prepare a blueprint to discover a sister planet to inhabit. Aristotle wrote, "We are what we repeatedly do." This paradigm will have to change for organisations to survive.

(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)

A roadmap for modernising India's security framework



SUDHIR HINDWAN

A comprehensive approach to urban mobility, affordability and infrastructure is the need of the hour to reclaim Delhi's air and ensure a healthier, sustainable future



The recent 2 days 59th All India Conference of Director Generals of Police in Bhubaneswar augurs very well for drawing a future roadmap of policing in India. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's call for a SMART way of policing has once again brought forward the need for modernisation of Indian Police and Security Agencies which can help India move on the path of high-powered police technology with the most efficient and latest technologies. Recent challenges to the security of India bring to light an important fact that India needs to diversify its strategies to counter the challenges it faces lately from digital frauds, artificial intelligence misuse and cyber crimes. Prime Minister emphasised the need to come together and closely cooperate in fighting the latest threats by developing strategies for the establishment of an extremely capable intelligence system to ensure such threats can be encountered at early stages. SMART POLICING appears to be the only solution for protection against the multiple threats from diverse and very intense new waves of terror, cyber criminals, drug traffickers, economic offenders, smugglers, criminals, naxals, arms dealers and insurgents. It would provide a platform for multi-layered security cooperation that would deal with various issues related to terrorism – right from the funding of terrorist activities, policing cooperation, dealing with cyber threats, secrecy through enhancing technological innovations and tightening the border to maritime security information-gathering exercise.

Cooperation and coordination in communication capabilities and management of security arrangements to deal with any kind of threat are the main objectives of his call. Besides, a modernisation of the Police is also imperative given the possible threats from religiously motivated bands of distraught minds. The Prime Minister has called for a smart way of policing and usage of interoperable and transferable technologies such as drones that would open a new gateway to meet complex security chal-



THE POLICE NEED TO DIVERSIFY ITS ACTIVITIES BY BRINGING TOGETHER TECHNICAL AND PROFESSIONAL EXPERTISE BASED ON MANY DECADES OF EXPERIENCE IN MAINTAINING INTERNAL SECURITY. IT IS HIGH TIME WE REALISED THAT POLICE ALONE CANNOT STOP THE CRIME, THE ENTIRE SOCIETY SHOULD MAKE SUBSTANTIAL EFFORTS

enges. Over the years a great deal of literature has appeared on India's police and the need for reforms. Policies are being made to enable the force to adapt to the challenging environment and efficiently implement recommendations suggested by the panels on reforms. As the threats today are more severe and enemies more organised than ever before, new concepts of safety and security need to be followed. Whereas globalisation has provided a concept of a global village deeply interwoven in a comprehensive view of society, market, freedom, choice, empowerment, peace, opportunities, linkages and politics, its impact has created a socio-political quagmire, particularly in developing societies. In this context, there is a growing global consensus on addressing critical issues in policing by focusing on the following key areas:

Bridging Theory and Practice: Linking traditional policing theories to the evolving challenges faced by law enforcement today.

Analyzing Pressures: Developing fresh insights into the various areas of concern and the mounting pressures on police forces.

Role of Police in Market Dynamics: Defining the role of police in navigating market forces while maintaining impartiality and fairness.

Implementing Reforms: Demonstrating how the reform models proposed by various commissions can be effectively applied in real-world scenarios, in alignment with democratic principles, environmental considerations, globalization, and governance.

Driving Change: Exploring innovative policing methods to foster change and build public trust and confidence.

Global Knowledge Integration: Leveraging the latest global research and advancements in the field of policing to modernise and upgrade

law enforcement practices. Police being a State subject under Article 246, at times the force becomes a matter of battle of wits. Apart from undertaking counter-terrorist operations, police also have to play a crucial role as protector of the day-to-day law and order.

This has increased pressure on them to get quick results. Besides, the prevailing level of dissatisfaction among the subordinate level, police officers have adversely affected the attitude of police towards problems. Police are often asked to fight a low-cost war where the enemy is their countrymen. Calling the police to put down civil disturbances is a tedious job. Many scientific methods and modern changes have been introduced in policing in India ever since the police commission report was drafted many years ago. Police are an extremely vital source of security for the community.

But this alone will not benefit unless people are sensitised about the achievements of positive policing. Some experts on policing are of the view that the values, attitudes, methods, aspirations commitment, etc, of these services need overhauling. Some are of the view that the quality and efficiency of the security forces largely depend on their service conditions, cooperation, training, practice, level of interaction with the general masses and strict methods of appointment. It is, therefore, in the interest of the Government to recruit and attract personnel of high integrity and great calibre.

For successful training of personnel of paramilitary and police forces, certain parameters of pre-recruitment education, experience, proportion of insiders and outsiders, methods of recruitment, postings, and length of service must be reviewed. There is also a need for more productive relation-

ships among paramilitary forces, Intelligence agencies, local police, the Army, and the local population. The Government has made all efforts towards sensitisation of police by inculcating a humane approach in policing and introducing the study of human rights legislation in training. Certain suggestions can go a long way in driving better results for policing: (a) There should be initiative in implementing development plans in consultation with experts from various other branches; (b) Development of capability to anticipate foreboding and security needs; (c) This is possible by conducting specialised courses for monitoring security situations. Globalisation and its negative implications are putting forward a challenging environment for policing.

Therefore, the police need to diversify its activities by bringing together technical and professional expertise based on many decades of experience in maintaining internal security. It is high time we realised that police alone cannot stop the crime, the entire society should make substantial efforts towards ensuring the safety and security of fellow citizens.

The police also need to play an important role as crime preventers and in this regard, developing qualities such as a high level of diligence, intelligence, dedication, determination and the ability to grasp complex situations is a must. It is high time we realised that the police alone cannot stop crime; the entire society should make substantial efforts towards it. The SMART Police and modernised ways of policing hold the key to the future of the security and safety of every individual.

(The writer is recipient of the Bharat Gaurav Award, Professor, Head of Department and Expert on Strategic Affairs; views are personal)

India's sovereignty in the crosshairs: Navigating global challenges

Modi's administration combines diplomacy with strength to safeguard national independence and challenge Western-centric ideologies

As India rises as a global power, it faces a barrage of challenges and accusations of foreign interference, echoing the complexities of a world where sovereignty is contested. The ruling BJP has identified actors like the "American deep state," billionaire George Soros, and organisations such as the Rockefeller Foundation as orchestrators of campaigns aimed at destabilising Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government.

These claims highlight a critical tension between India's assertion of its independence and the entrenched interests of global powers accustomed to shaping narratives. Prime Minister Modi's administration epitomises Teddy Roosevelt's principle: "Speak softly and carry a big stick."



SANTHOSH MATHEW

Modi's approach combines diplomacy with firm resolve to safeguard India's sovereignty, particularly against those attempting to influence domestic politics. The BJP asserts that international network works target India for challenging the dominance of Western-centric ideologies

through policies like Atmanirbhar Bharat and calls for a multipolar world. The "American deep state," a nexus of the Pentagon, CIA, and corporate elites, according to the BJP, exemplifies hidden forces working to maintain global hegemony.

Allegations against prominent business figures and reports from groups like the OCCRP are seen as attempts to tarnish Modi's image and weaken India's leadership. Critics of these claims argue that they serve as distractions from domestic challenges, but the BJP cites historical precedents of covert interventions by such networks to justify its position. George Soros, often labelled a "dangerous" figure by Indian External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, symbolises an ide-

ological assault on national sovereignty. His public criticism of Modi's policies and financial involvement in liberal causes worldwide add fuel to the BJP's assertion that foreign-funded campaigns aim to destabilise India's democratic fabric.

Similarly, the Rockefeller Foundation is accused of furthering a neoliberal agenda at odds with India's self-reliance and policy independence. This dynamic reflects the larger struggle of emerging powers like India to navigate a world influenced by philanthropic and corporate entities wielding soft power. Modi's resistance to their influence positions his administration as a bulwark against globalist impositions, a stance that resonates with his nationalist electorate.



The return of Donald Trump to the US presidency adds another layer to India's geopolitical calculations. While Trump's "America First" policies and transactional diplomacy brought moments like "Howdy Modi" and "Namaste Trump," his administration's alignment with corporate

interests and erratic decision-making created tensions. Described by Noam Chomsky as "the most dangerous man in the world,"

Yet, his strategic deals, such as his outreach to India, underscored his unconventional but calculated foreign policy. Trump's presidency also invoked the Bush Doctrine's rhetoric of "You are either with us or against us," highlighting the stark divisions in global alliances. While Modi's government has maintained a deft balance, the BJP sees this dichotomy as emblematic of the pressures India faces from global powers demanding allegiance to specific blocs.

India's geopolitical strategy involves rejecting the narrative of dependency that organisations like the Rockefeller

Foundation propagate. Blood may be thicker than water, but India's external relationships prioritise sovereignty over sentimentality. The BJP's framing of its sovereignty struggle as a broader battle for multipolarity reflects a vision of India not just as a rising power but as a protector of global balance. While domestic critics downplay the likelihood of coordinated foreign efforts against India, the BJP argues that history tells a different story.

Examples abound of covert interventions justified under the banner of democracy or human rights.

Modi's government, embodies the Rooseveltian ethos of combining tact with strength, ensuring that India's voice remains firm in the shifting

balance of global power. The allegations against figures like Soros, the American deep state, and philanthropic organisations symbolise the challenges India faces as it redefines its place on the world stage.

Whether these claims represent genuine threats or political posturing, they underscore the complexities of a world where the boundaries of influence, power, and sovereignty remain contested. India's ascent highlights a fundamental truth: the struggle for sovereignty in a globalised world demands not only resilience but also an unwavering belief in one's capacity to walk softly while wielding the proverbial big stick.

(The writer is an associate professor; views are personal)

President Xi rebuffs Trump's threat of tariffs

PTI ■ BEIJING

Gearing up for Trump 2.0 era, Chinese President Xi Jinping on Tuesday cautioned there will be no winner in a tariff or tech wars between China and the US and vowed that Beijing would firmly safeguard its interests.

"Tariff wars, trade wars and technology wars run counter to historical trends and economic laws, and there will be no winners," Xi said while meeting the heads of 10 major international organisations, including the World Bank (WB), International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Trade Organisation (WTO) here. During the meeting, Xi stressed on China's principles for engaging with the US.

"China will always insist on focusing on its own affairs and resolutely safeguard its sovereignty, security and development interests. Meanwhile, China's determination to promote high-level opening up will not change," he said, according to the official media reports here.

Xi's comments came in the backdrop of US President-elect Donald Trump's remarks in an NBC interview that he "got along very well" with Chinese President Xi Jinping and that the two leaders had "communication as recently as this week."

China did not confirm the conversations between Xi and Trump, who is set to take over power on January 20. During his election campaign, Trump had

threatened to impose 60 per cent on Chinese exports to the US and also warned of imposing 10 per cent more tariffs if Beijing fails to curb fentanyl, the drug 50 times more potent than heroin and regarded as the root cause for addiction in the US. On Monday, China announced an investigation into US chipmaker Nvidia over suspected violations of the country's anti-monopoly law. The investigation is widely seen as retaliation for Washington's later curbs on the Chinese chip sector.

On China's economy which is facing headwinds of slowdown, Xi told the heads of major international economic organisations that he has full confidence to achieve this year's economic growth target of around five per cent and Beijing will continue to play its role as the biggest engine of world economic growth.

Xi said economies of all countries face their own difficulties. All countries should work together to build an open world economy, be innovation-driven, seize important opportunities such as the digital economy, artificial intelligence and low-carbon technologies, create new sources of economic growth and support cross-border flows of knowledge, technology and human resources.

He said after more than 40 years of sustained and rapid development, China's economy has entered a stage of high-quality development and contributed about 30 per cent to world economic growth.

Prioritise national security in border areas, Xi tells officials

PTI ■ BEIJING

Chinese President Xi Jinping has directed officials to enhance the governance and high-quality development in the country's border areas prioritising national security and social stability. It is essential to prioritise national security and social stability as the bottom-line requirement for governance in border areas, Xi said while presiding over a group study session of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China on Monday.

He said it is essential to uphold the party's overall leadership in all aspects and throughout the entire governance process in border areas.

"No border area shall be left behind in advancing Chinese modernisation," he was quoted as saying by the state-run Xinhua news agency Tuesday.

In recent years, China has been focussing on the development of

border areas in Tibet along India and Bhutan borders by establishing hundreds of well-developed villages.

Tibet had built more than 600 well-off, high-standard border villages, with accessible roads, according to recent official media reports.

The main power grid is extended to all border towns as well as postal services, mobile communication networks, and safe drinking water. At Monday's meeting, Xi also highlighted the necessity of comprehensively promoting standard spoken and written Chinese and the use of unified state-compiled textbooks.

He also called for accelerating the development of an independent Chinese knowledge system for borderland studies, and deepening research into major theoretical and practical issues related to governance in border areas, the Xinhua reported.

Americans realising Trump's tariffs on Canada make life expensive: Trudeau

AP ■ TORONTO

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said on Monday that Americans "are beginning to wake up to the real reality that tariffs on everything from Canada would make life a lot more expensive" and said he will retaliate if Donald Trump goes ahead with them.

Speaking at an event put on by the Halifax Chamber of Commerce, Trudeau also said dealing with Trudeau will be "a little more challenging" than the last time because Trump's team is coming in with a much clearer set of ideas of what they want to do right away than after his first election win in 2016.

The US president-elect has threatened to impose a 25 per cent tax on all products entering the US from Canada and Mexico unless they stem the flow of migrants and drugs.

"Trump got elected on a commitment to make life better and more affordable for Americans, and I think people south of the border are beginning to wake up to the real reality that tariffs on everything from Canada would make life a lot more expensive," Trudeau said.

On the weekend, Trump appeared in an interview with NBC's "Meet the Press", where the president-elect said he can't guarantee that his promised tariffs on key US foreign trade partners won't raise prices for American consumers.

"Let's not kid ourselves in any way, shape or form, 25 per cent tariffs on everything going to the United States would be devastating for the Canadian economy," Trudeau said.

"It would also, however, mean real hardship for Americans as well. Americans import 65 per cent of their crude oil from Canada, significant amounts of electricity. Just about all the natural gas exported from Canada goes to the United States. They rely on us from steel and aluminum. They rely on us for a range of agriculture imports.

All of those things would get more expensive."

If Trump makes good on his threat to slap 25 per cent tariffs on everything imported from Mexico and Canada, the price increases that could follow will collide with his campaign promise to give American families a break from inflation.

Economists say companies would have little choice but to pass along the added costs, dramatically raising prices for food, clothing, automobiles, alcohol and other goods.

The Produce Distributors Association, a Washington trade group, has said tariffs will raise prices for fresh fruit and vegetables and hurt US farmers when the countries retaliate. "We will of course, as we did eight years ago, respond to unfair tariffs," Trudeau said.

Trudeau said his government is still mulling over "the right ways" to respond, referencing when Canada put billions of new duties in 2018 against the US in a tit-for-tat response to new taxes on Canadian steel and aluminum.

Many of the US products were chosen for their political rather than economic impact. For example, Canada imports just USD 3 million worth of yogurt from the US annually and most of it comes from one plant in Wisconsin, the home state of then-Republican House Speaker Paul Ryan. That product was hit with a 10 per cent duty. "It was the fact that we put tariffs on bourbon and Harley-Davidsons and playing cards and Heinz ketchup and cherries and a number of other things that were very carefully targeted because they were politically impactful to the president's party and colleagues," Trudeau said.

Trudeau said when Trump says things he means them but they also know Trump is trying to insert uncertainty and "a bit of chaos" into democracies. "One of the most important things for us to do is not freak

out, not to panic," Trudeau said.

"Knowing these would be absolutely devastating means we have to take them seriously but it does mean we have to be thoughtful and strategic and not going around making our opponents arguments for him but making our arguments in a significant and united way."

Canadian officials have said it is unfair to lump Canada in with Mexico.

US customs agents seized 43 pounds of fentanyl at the Canadian border last fiscal year, compared with 21,100 pounds at the Mexican border.

Most of the fentanyl reaching the US — where it causes about 70,000 overdose deaths annually — is made by Mexican drug cartels using precursor chemicals smuggled from Asia.

On immigration, the US Border Patrol reported 1.53 million encounters with irregular migrants at the southwest border with Mexico between October 2023 and September 2024. That compares to 23,721 encounters at the Canadian border during that time.

Trump has also claimed the US is "subsidising Canada to the tune of over USD 100 billion a year". On America's trade deficit Canada's ambassador to Washington, Kirsten Hillman, told the AP US had a USD 75 billion trade deficit with Canada last year but noted a third of what Canada sells into the US are energy exports and prices have been high.

About 60 per cent of US crude oil imports are from Canada, and 85 per cent of US electricity imports as well.

Canada is also the largest foreign supplier of steel, aluminum and uranium to the US and has 34 critical minerals and metals that the Pentagon is eager for and investing for national security. Nearly USD 3.6 billion Canadian (USD 2.7 billion) worth of goods and services cross the border each day. Canada is the top export destination for 36 US states.

CEO's killing: Suspect faces weapons, forgery, other charges

AP ■ ALTOONA (US)

Authorities arrested a suspect and charged him with murder Monday in the brazen Manhattan killing of UnitedHealthcare's CEO after a quick-thinking McDonald's customer in Pennsylvania spotted a man who officers found with a gun, mask and writings linking him to the ambush.

The chance sighting at the restaurant in Altoona led to a dramatic break in a challenging but fast-moving investigation that captivated the public in the five days since the shooting that shook the business world.

Luigi Nicholas Mangione, a 26-year-old Ivy League graduate from a prominent Maryland real estate family, had a gun believed to be the one used in last Wednesday's shooting of Brian Thompson, as well as writings suggesting anger with corporate America, police said.

Late Monday, Manhattan prosecutors filed murder and other charges against Mangione, according to an online court docket. He remained jailed in Pennsylvania, where he was charged with possession of an unlicensed firearm, forgery and providing false identification to police.

Mangione was sitting in the rear of the McDonald's wearing a blue medical mask and looking at a laptop computer, court documents said. A customer saw him and an employee called 911, said Kaz Daughtry, an NYPD deputy commissioner.

Altoona Police Officer Tyler Frye said he and his partner recognized the suspect immediately when he pulled down his mask. "We just didn't think twice about it. We knew that was our guy," he said.

When one of the officers asked if he'd been to New York recently, he "became quiet and started to shake," according to a

criminal complaint based on their accounts of the arrest.

In his backpack, police found a black, 3D-printed pistol and a 3D-printed black silencer, the complaint said. The pistol had a metal slide and plastic handle with a metal threaded barrel. He was taken into custody at about 9:15 a.m., police said.

Mangione had clothing and a mask similar to those worn by the shooter and a fraudulent New Jersey ID matching one the suspect used to check into a New York City hostel before the shooting, NYPD Commissioner Jessica Tisch said.

NYPD Chief of Detectives Joseph Kenny said Mangione was born and raised in Maryland, has ties to San Francisco and a last known address in Honolulu.

"Our family is shocked and devastated by Luigi's arrest," Mangione's family said in a statement posted on social media late Monday by his cousin, Maryland lawmaker Nino Mangione. "We offer our prayers to the family of Brian Thompson and we ask people to pray for all involved."

Mangione was arraigned and ordered held without bail during a brief court hearing. Asked if he needed a public defender, he asked if he could "answer that at a future date." He eventually will be extradited to New York to face charges in connection with Thompson's death, Kenny said.

Police found a three-page document with writings suggesting that Mangione had "ill will toward corporate America," Kenny said. The handwritten document "speaks to both his motivation and mindset," Tisch said.

Altoona Deputy Chief of Police Derek Swope would not characterize the writings except to say they were voluminous. "They were very detailed, and everything we have is going to



This booking photo released Monday, by the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections shows Luigi Mangione, a suspect in the fatal shooting of UnitedHealthcare CEO Brian Thompson.

be turned over to NYPD," he told The Associated Press.

Mangione had a ghost gun, a type of weapon that can be assembled at home from parts without a serial number, making them difficult to trace, investigators said.

He also had a passport and \$10,000 in cash — \$2,000 of it in foreign currency, the local prosecutor said. Mangione, who said Hawaii was his most recent address, disputed the amount. Thompson, 50, was killed last Wednesday as he walked alone to a hotel, where UnitedHealthcare's parent company, UnitedHealth Group, was holding its annual investor conference, police said.

UnitedHealth Group thanked law enforcement in a statement. "Our hope is that today's apprehension brings some relief to Brian's family, friends, colleagues and the many others affected by this unspeakable tragedy," a company spokesperson said.

The shooting shook US businesses and the health insurance industry in particular, causing

companies to rethink security plans and delete photos of executives from their websites.

The shooter appeared to be "lying in wait for several minutes" before approaching the executive from behind and opening fire, police said.

Mangione attended an elite Baltimore prep school, graduating as valedictorian in 2016, according to the school's website. He went on to earn undergraduate and graduate degrees in computer science in 2020 from the University of Pennsylvania, a school spokesperson said.

One of his cousins is a Maryland state legislator and his family bought a country club north of Baltimore in the 1980s. On Monday, police blocked off an entrance to the property, which public records link to the suspect's parents. A swarm of reporters and photographers gathered outside.

Mangione went from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh after the shooting, and likely "was in a variety of locations across the state," said Lt. Col. George

Bivens of the Pennsylvania State Police said.

"Based on everything we have seen, he was very careful with trying to stay low profile, avoid cameras — not all that successfully in some cases, but that was certainly the effort he was making," Bivens said.

In the days since the shooting, police turned to the public for help by releasing a collection of nine photos and video — including footage of the attack, as well as images of the suspect at a Starbucks beforehand.

Photos taken in the lobby of a hostel on Manhattan's Upper West Side showed the suspect grinning after removing his mask, police said.

On Monday, police credited news outlets for disseminating the images and the tipster for recognising the suspect and calling authorities.

Investigators earlier suggested the gunman may have been a disgruntled employee or client of the insurer. Ammunition found near Thompson's body bore the words "delay," "deny" and "depose," mimicking a phrase used by insurance industry critics.

The gunman concealed his identity with a mask during the shooting yet left a trail of evidence, including a backpack he ditched in Central Park, a cellphone found in a pedestrian plaza and a water bottle and protein bar wrapper that police say he bought at Starbucks minutes before the attack.

On Friday, police said the killer had left the city soon after the shooting. Retracing the gunman's steps using surveillance video, investigators say the shooter rode into Central Park on a bicycle and emerged from the park without his backpack. He made his way to a bus station that offers commuter service to New Jersey and routes to the East Coast, police said.

Netanyahu takes to witness stand for first time in his trial for alleged corruption

AP ■ TEL AVIV



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Tuesday took the stand for the first time in his trial for alleged corruption, setting off what will be weeks of testimony.

Netanyahu said "hello" to the judges. One judge told him he had the same privileges as other witnesses and could sit or stand as he chose.

Netanyahu will answer during his appearances to charges of fraud, breach of trust and accepting bribes in three separate cases. He is accused of promoting advantageous regulation for media moguls in exchange for favourable coverage of himself and his family. He is also accused of accepting tens of thousands of dollars' worth of cigars and cham-

pagne from a billionaire Hollywood producer in exchange for assisting him with personal and business interests. He denies wrongdoing, saying the charges are a witch hunt orchestrated by a hostile media and a biased legal system that is out to topple his lengthy rule.

The trial will be an inconvenient legal spectacle for the Israeli leader at a time that he is still fighting a war in Gaza with no end in sight and as he

faces with an international arrest warrant over Israel's conduct during that conflict.

It is the first time an Israeli prime minister will take the stand as a criminal defendant, an embarrassing milestone for a leader who has tried to cultivate an image as a sophisticated and respected statesman.

Netanyahu arrived at the packed courtroom ahead of his testimony, appearing at ease and shaking hands with members of his Likud party who were in attendance. Before taking the stand, Netanyahu's lawyer laid out the defense's case, and attempted to poke holes in the indictment.

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Ethnic armed group claims capture of strategic Myanmar town, control of border with B'desh

AP ■ BANGKOK

One of the most powerful ethnic minority armed groups battling Myanmar's army has claimed the capture of the last army outpost in the strategic western town of Maungdaw, gaining full control of the 271-kilometer (168-mile) -long border with Bangladesh.

The capture by the Arakan Army makes the group's control of the northern part of Rakhine state complete, and marks another advance in its bid for self-rule there.

Rakhine has become a focal point for Myanmar's nationwide civil war, in which pro-democracy guerrillas and ethnic minority armed forces seeking autonomy battle the country's military rulers, who took power in 2021 after the army ousted the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi.

Khaing Thukha, a spokesperson for the Arakan Army, told The Associated Press by text message from an undisclosed location late Monday that his group had seized the last remaining military outpost in Maungdaw on Sunday.

Outpost commander Brig. Gen. Thurein Tun, was captured while attempting to flee the battle, Khaing Thukha said.

The situation in Maungdaw could not be independently confirmed, with access to the internet and mobile phone services in the area mostly cut off.

Myanmar's military government did not immediately comment.

Maungdaw, about 400 kilometers (250 miles) southwest of Mandalay, Myanmar's second-largest city, has been the target of an Arakan Army offensive since June. The group captured Paletwa and Buthidaung, two other towns on the border with Bangladesh, earlier this year.

Since November 2023, the Arakan Army has gained control of 11 of Rakhine's 17 townships, along with one in neighboring Chin state.

Ann, a town in Rakhine that hosts the strategically important military headquarters overseeing the western part of the country, appears to be on the verge of falling entirely to the Arakan Army.

The group posted on the Telegram messaging app late

Friday that it had taken more than 30 military outposts, except the army's western command, which controls Rakhine and the southern part of neighboring Chin state, as well as the country's territorial waters in the Bay of Bengal.

Recent fighting in Rakhine has raised fears of a revival of organised violence against members of the Muslim Rohingya minority, similar to that which drove at least 740,000 members of their community in 2017 to flee to neighbouring Bangladesh for safety.

The Arakan Army, which is the military wing of the Buddhist Rakhine ethnic group in Rakhine state, where they are the majority and seek autonomy from Myanmar's central government, denies the allegations, though witnesses have described the group's actions to the AP and other media.

Rohingya have lived in Myanmar for generations, but they are widely regarded by many in the country's Buddhist majority, including members of the Rakhine minority, as having illegally

migrated from Bangladesh.

The Rohingyas face a great amount of prejudice and are generally denied citizenship and other basic rights.

The border between Myanmar and Bangladesh extends from land to the Naf River and offshore in the Bay of Bengal.

The Arakan Army said Sunday it had ordered the suspension of transport across the Naf River because police and local Muslims affiliated with the army were attempting to escape by boat to Bangladesh.

The rebel group has been accused of major human rights violations, particularly involving its capture of the town of Buthidaung in mid-May, when it was accused of forcing an estimated 200,000 residents, largely Rohingyas, to leave, and then setting fire to most of the buildings. It was accused of attacking Rohingya civilians fleeing fighting in Maungdaw in August.

The Arakan Army is also part of an armed ethnic alliance that launched an offensive in northeastern Myanmar last year and gained strategic territory along the border with China.

South Korean prosecutors seek to arrest ex-defence minister over martial law

AP ■ SEOUL

South Korean prosecutors Sare seeking to formally arrest the former defence minister alleged to have colluded with President Yoon Suk Yeol in imposing martial law last week, as both men are being investigated on rebellion and other charges.

Martial law lasted only about six hours but was the first of its kind in more than 40 years and has caused a domestic firestorm and large street protests.

Yoon and his associates face criminal investigations and impeachment attempts. The Justice Ministry has banned Yoon and eight others from leaving the country as authorities see them as key suspects in the martial law case.

It's the first time that a sitting president in South Korea has received such a travel ban.

The Seoul Central District Court said Tuesday it'll review prosecutors' request for a warrant to arrest former Defense Minister Kim Yong Hyun, who has been accused of recommending martial law to Yoon and sending troops to the National Assembly to block lawmakers from voting on it.

Enough lawmakers eventually managed to enter a parliament chamber to unanimously reject Yoon's decree, forcing the Cabinet to lift it before day-break Dec. 4.

Kim released a statement through his law firm, saying that he "deeply apologizes for causing significant anxiety and inconvenience." He said that all responsibility over the martial law enforcement rests solely with him and pleaded for leniency for soldiers deployed to enforce martial law, saying they were only following orders.

If the arrest warrant is issued, Kim would be the first person arrested over the martial law case. Prosecutors would have up to 20 days to investigate Kim and determine whether to indict him. A conviction on the charge of rebellion would carry up to the death penalty.

Prosecutors reportedly accuse Kim of working with Yoon and other military and police officers of staging a riot to disrupt the constitution. Prosecutors' offices in Seoul couldn't immediately confirm the reports.

During a parliamentary hearing Tuesday, Kwak Jong-keun, commander of the Army Special Warfare Command

whose troops were sent to parliament, testified that he received direct instructions from Kim Yong Hyun, to obstruct lawmakers from entering the National Assembly's main chamber.

Kwak said the purpose of Kim's instructions was to prevent the assembly from gathering the required 150 votes necessary to overturn Yoon's martial law order.

Kwak is among those who face opposition-raised rebellion charges along with Yoon and Kim, and the Defense Ministry suspended him last week.

Opposition parties and many experts say the martial law decree was unconstitutional. They say a president is by law allowed to declare martial law only during "wartime, war-like situations or other comparable national emergency states" but South Korea wasn't in such a situation. They argue that deploying troops to seal the National Assembly to suspend its political activities amounted to rebellion because the South Korean constitution doesn't allow a president to use the military to suspend parliament in any situation.

In his martial law announcement, the conservative Yoon stressed the need to rebuild the

country by eliminating "shameless North Korea followers and anti-state forces" in a reference to his liberal rival who control parliament.

Since taking office in 2022, Yoon has been on a near-constant collision course with the main liberal opposition Democratic Party, which has introduced motions seeking to impeach some of his top officials and launched a fierce political offensive against Yoon over a spate of scandals involving him and his wife. The focus of attention is how authorities could investigate Yoon and whether they can detain him.

South Korean law gives a president immunity from prosecution while in office, except for allegations of rebellion or treason. This means that Yoon can be questioned and detained by investigative agencies over his martial law decree, but many observers doubt that authorities will forcefully detain him because of the potential for clashes with his presidential security service.

They also say the security service won't likely permit searches of Yoon's office, citing a law that prohibits searches on sites with state secrets without approval from those in charge of those areas.

Philippine villages evacuated after major volcanic eruption

AP ■ MANILA About 87,000 people were being evacuated in a central Philippine region Tuesday a day after a volcano briefly erupted with a towering ash plume and superhot streams of gas and debris hurtling down its western slopes.

Occidental where nearly 47,000 people have to be evacuated out of a 6-kilometer (3.7-mile) danger zone, the Office of Civil Defense said. More than 6,000 have moved to evacuation centres aside from those who have temporarily transferred to the homes of relatives in La Castellana by Tuesday morning.

kilometer danger zone," Marcos told reporters. Government scientists were monitoring the air quality due to the risk of contamination from toxic volcanic gases that may require more people to be evacuated from areas affected by Monday's eruption.

At least six domestic flights and a flight bound for Singapore were cancelled and two local flights were diverted in the region Monday and Tuesday due to Kanlaon's eruption, according to the Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines.

Volcanic ash fell on a wide area, including Antique province, more than 200 kilometers (124 miles) across seawater west of the volcano, obscuring visibility and posing health risks, Philippine chief volcanologist Teresito Bacolcol and other officials said by telephone.

Disaster-response contingents were rapidly establishing evacuation centres and seeking supplies of face masks, food and hygiene packs ahead of the Christmas season, traditionally a peak time for holiday travel and family celebrations in the largely Roman Catholic nation.

My client Musarat Begum W/O Sh. Abbas R/o Plot No. A-186, 2nd Floor, Gali No.9, Village Wazirabad, Jagatpur North Delhi-110084 have severed her all relations with his son Riham by debarred him from all movable & immovable properties due to his misconduct and misbehavior, violence, cruel nature, bad acts, out of control, rugged & indulge in wrong Activities etc.

Public Notice I Raj Kumari wife of late Shri Arun Pram Nagar R/o V-58, Prem Nagar-2, Kirari Suleman Nagar, PO Sultanpuri C Block, Distt North West Delhi 110086, declared that in my daughter (Navya Pandey) school record my name mentioned as Dimpal Pandey, whereas my correct name is Raj Kumari.

Public Notice My clients Mrs. Dayawati Sharma W/o Late Ram Kishan Sharma, R/o F-403, Rabeja Athava, Sector 109, Gurgaon, Haryana 122017, declare that my client's husband Late Ram Kishan Sharma S/o Late, Kail Chetan Sharma had died on 31.07.2023 and he has left behind the below legal heirs :- 1) Dayawati Sharma (Wife), 2) Anita Sharma (Daughter), 3) Sunita Sharma (Daughter), 4) Aruna Sharma (Daughter), 5) Mukesh Kumar Vashisth (Son) & other legal heirs as per Succession Certificate of Late Ram Kishan Sharma in writing.

Public Notice I, Col. Sunil Kumar Sharma Husband of Late Mrs. Samita Sharma Resident of A-204, Shanti Vihar, Sector-95, Gurgaon, Haryana (107), Haryana-122055, Do hereby solemnly affirm and declare before the Hon'ble Magistrate, Noida, that my wife Late Mrs. Samita Sharma passed away on 2nd July 2014 at Home 295/2, New Pachim Vihar main road Meerut Cantt. That above deceased late Mrs. Samita Sharma has left behind legal heir after her death Col. S.K Sharma (Husband) Age 66, Shanti Sharma (Son) Age 36, Sneha Sharma (Daughter) Age 33. There are no other heirs except the above mentioned if anyone having any objection regarding this he/she can raise objection within 30 days of the publication in the office of Tehsildar, Harsaru, Gurugram.

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Public Notice Notice is hereby given to the General Public that of Mrs. Sheela Gupta W/o Mr. Ram Chander Gupta is the owner of BUILDUP 2ND FLOOR WITHOUT ROOF RIGHTS'S RIGHT ON PROPERTY BEARING NO. 1442/81, PLOT NO. 3, 6, ARUNA PARK, WINDY, YE-75, 25 MISSRS., OUT OF KHARSA NO. 1423922-233, SITUATED AT VILLAGE SHARADA, IN THE ABSENCE OF EAST ROHTAS NAGAR, SHAHARADA DELHI-32, by virtue of Registered G.P. dated 10.08.2020, as Doc. No. 501, ATS & Will, executed by Mrs. Neetu Nagaria (Niece) and to be jointly by SMF India Credit Company Limited (Formerly Fullerton India Credit Company Limited). Generally public hereby informed that if anybody has any charge/interference in the said property or any kind of dispute/claim, he/she is hereby notified in writing on the below mentioned address within 07 days of the present.

Public Notice I, Priyanka Thakur D/o Partap Chand W/o Salmaan, Permanent Address-WZ-555, 1Ind Floor, Sri Nagar, Shakur Basti, Saraswati Vihar, North West Delhi-110034, Presently Residing At, A-14/110, BlockA, DDAFlats, Inner Lck, Near Choti Masjid, Onkar Nagar, North West Delhi - 110035 do hereby by solemnly affirm and declare that I have Embraced Islam religion and renounced Hindu religion with effect from 15/07/2020

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MAHARAJA RANJIT SINGH PUNJAB TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY. E-TENDER NOTICE No. E-TENDER/MRSPTU/DP/PR/PURCHASE/2024/544 Dated: 03-12-2024

Baba Farid University of Health Sciences Sadiq Road, Faridkot -151203 Ph. 01639-256232, 256236 E-TENDER NOTICE E-tender is invited for the Supply, installation, Testing and commissioning of 3x250 TR HVAC services for 5 floors of Super speciality Block in GGS Medical College, Faridkot upto 26-12-2024

PUBLIC NOTICE IN THE COURT OF MS. RICHU GUSAIN SOLANKI, DISTRICT JUDGE-02, R/O. B-6, 5th FLOOR, DWARKA COURTS COMPLEX, DELHI

PUBLIC NOTICE It is publicly notified that Flat No G-86, Jalvay Vihar, Phase-I Sector-25, Noida has been allotted in the name of Capt. Gurbaan Singh Kanwal S/O Narayan Singh R/o Plot No. 10, Kanarwan Nagar, Gop Sone Gaon Police Station, Warha Road, Nagpur at present residing at G-86, Sector-25, Noida, and the GPA executed at Seelampur Delhi Vide Doc No IV Volume No 8672 on pages 137-139 at Document No 50320

COURT NOTICE IN THE COURT OF MS. RICHU GUSAIN SOLANKI, DISTRICT JUDGE-02, R/O. B-6, 5th FLOOR, DWARKA COURTS COMPLEX, DELHI

PUBLIC NOTICE Reg. Built-up Second Floor, with roof terrace rights (i.e. the said floor), in portion of Property No. WZ-97-C, address number 54-33 Sq. Yds., out of Kharsa No. 78/12/2, situated in the area of Village Hastals, Delhi State Delhi, Colony known as On Vihar Phase-II, Utam Nagar, New Delhi-110059. (Hereinafter referred to as the "Said Property").

E-AUCTION FOR PAY & USE TOILET E-Auction catalogue for Pay & Use Toilet. Details are as under. Auction Catalogue No.: C-AP-PANDU-12, Auction Start Date & Time (All Lots): 10:00 hrs. on 20-12-2024; Auction Close Date & Time: 10:50 hrs. on 20-12-2024; Rate Unit: Annual Licensing Fee; Trips/Days: AA/1 and AA/2: 1095; AB/1: 1826

E-AUCTION CATALOGUE OF CATERING (GMU) AND (SMU) OVER KATIAR DIVISION E-Auction is invited for Allotment of catering stall through GMU & SMU over Katihar Division. Auction Catalogue No.: C-Catg-DEF-24, Lot Auction Start (All Lots): 11:00 hrs. on 20-12-2024; Rate Unit: Annual Licensing Fee; Days: 1826;

PUBLIC NOTICE Notice is hereby given to the General Public that of Mrs. Sheela Gupta W/o Mr. Ram Chander Gupta is the owner of BUILDUP 2ND FLOOR WITHOUT ROOF RIGHTS'S RIGHT ON PROPERTY BEARING NO. 1442/81, PLOT NO. 3, 6, ARUNA PARK, WINDY, YE-75, 25 MISSRS., OUT OF KHARSA NO. 1423922-233, SITUATED AT VILLAGE SHARADA, IN THE ABSENCE OF EAST ROHTAS NAGAR, SHAHARADA DELHI-32, by virtue of Registered G.P. dated 10.08.2020, as Doc. No. 501, ATS & Will, executed by Mrs. Neetu Nagaria (Niece) and to be jointly by SMF India Credit Company Limited (Formerly Fullerton India Credit Company Limited). Generally public hereby informed that if anybody has any charge/interference in the said property or any kind of dispute/claim, he/she is hereby notified in writing on the below mentioned address within 07 days of the present.

U GRO U GRO Capital Limited 4th Floor, Tower 3, Equinox Business Park, LBS Road, Kuria, Mumbai 400070 SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES E-AUCTION SALE NOTICE OF 30 DAYS FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE ASSETS ("SECURED ASSETS") UNDER THE SECURITIZATION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF FINANCIAL ASSETS AND ENFORCEMENT OF SECURITY INTEREST ACT, 2002 READ WITH PROVISO TO RULE 8 AND 9 OF THE SECURITY INTEREST (ENFORCEMENT) RULES, 2002.

Details of Borrower(s) / Guarantor(s) Details of Demand Notice Details of Auction

STORES E-PROCUREMENT E-procurement Tender Notice No. S/28/2024-25 Dated: 06-12-2024. E-tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following works.

Brief Description: Manufacture and Supply for Nylon reinforced Grooved Rubber Sole Plates 6 mm thick for 1 in 12 turnouts on 60 kg PSC sleepers to RDSO Gr. No. T-4218, conforming to IRS specification for Rail pads for placing beneath Rail. Sl. T-55-2023. [Warranty Period: 30 Months after the date of delivery]. [Inspection Agency: TPI, Stage Insp.: No, Stages: 0] Qty- 605 Set for SSE/P.WAY/TD/Bongaigaon, NFR (Assam), P.L. No- 602590692190.

Brief Description: (1) Cost of Double Girder type Gantry crane 20 Tn capacity as per Schedule -1 of bid document part-II [Warranty Period: 24 Months after the date of delivery] [Inspection Agency: TPI, Stage Insp.: No, Stages: 0] Qty- 1 Nos. for SSE/WS/Tindharia, NFR (West Bengal), P.L. No- 909002830024. 2) DSL required as per type and length of DSL as specified in Schedule-I [Warranty Period: 24 Months after the date of delivery] [Inspection Agency: TPI, Stage Insp.: No, Stages: 0] Qty-1 Nos for SSE/WS/Tindharia, NFR (West Bengal), P.L. No- 90900283. 3) All additional spares and items viz. Slings/lifting tackles/wire ropes/chain etc. As specified in Schedule-1, SN 20.1 (S.No. 1,2,3,4 & 5) [Warranty Period: 24 Months after the date of delivery] [Inspection Agency: TPI, Stage Insp.: No, Stages: 0] Qty- 1 Nos. for SSE/WS/Tindharia, NFR (West Bengal), P.L. No- 90900286. 4) Cost of all maintenance spares as per schedule-IV (One set of all the spares mentioned in SCHEDULE-IV are required except item number 3,4,5,6 as its a VWF drive crane.) [Warranty Period: 24 Months after the date of delivery] [Inspection Agency: TPI, Stage Insp.: No, Stages: 0] Qty- 1 Nos. for SSE/WS/Tindharia, NFR (West Bengal), P.L. No- 90900284. 5) Cost of maintenance tools as per schedule-V [Warranty Period: 24 Months after the date of delivery] [Inspection Agency: TPI, Stage Insp.: No, Stages: 0] Qty-1 Nos for SSE/WS/Tindharia, NFR (West Bengal), P.L. No- 90900285. 6) Cost of installation and commissioning of crane [Clause 12 of section V of bid document part-II] [Inspection Agency: CONSG, Stage Insp.: NA, Stages: 0] Qty- 1 Nos for SSE/WS/Tindharia, NFR (West Bengal) P.L. No-90900287. 7) Total cost of comprehensive annual maintenance contract for five years after expiry of warranty period of two years as per clause 17, Section V of bid document part-II [Inspection Agency: CONSG, Stage Insp.: NA, Stages: 0] Qty- 1 Nos for SSE/WS/Tindharia, NFR (West Bengal), P.L. No- 90900288. 8) Cost of preventive maintenance during 1st & 2nd year of Warranty period. [Inspection Agency: CONSG, Stage Insp.: NA, Stages: 0] Qty- 1 Nos. for SSE/WS/Tindharia, NFR (West Bengal), P.L. No- 90900289.

Brief Description: Low Maintenance load acid battery 500 AH, 4 cells 8 Volts conforming to DLW specification NO-DEL/SPN/193-Rev-03, July 98 [Warranty Period: 30 Months after the date of delivery] [Inspection Agency: TPI, Stage Insp.: No, Stages: 0] Qty- 200 Nos for New Guwahati/DEPOT, NFR (Assam), ii) Qty- 200 Nos for Siliguri Jn./DIESEL, NFR (West Bengal), P.L. No- 126460026.

Brief Description: "Top Side Bearer Liner" Drawing No: WD-85079-S-1, alt-14, Item-12, Material Spec: As Per Drawing. [Warranty Period: 30 Months after the date of delivery] [Inspection Agency: TPI, Stage Insp.: No, Stages: 0] Qty- 1008 Nos. for Pandu/GSD, NFR (Assam), ii) Qty- 7052 Nos. for New Bongaigaon/WORKSHOP/DEPOT, NFR (Assam), iii) Qty- 2100 Nos. for New Jalpaiguri GSD, NFR (West Bengal), P.L. No- 38125584.

Brief Description: Electronic LC gate Telephone system (Slave) as per RDSO Spec.No. RDSO/SPN/TC/51/2021 (Rev.1.0) [Warranty Period: 30 Months after the date of delivery] [Inspection Agency: TPI, Stage Insp.: No, Stages: 0] Qty- 180 Nos. for New Jalpaiguri/GSD, NFR (West Bengal), ii) 90 Nos. for Dibrugarh Town/WORKSHOP/DEPOT, NFR (Assam), iii) Qty- 80 Nos. for Katihar/GSD, NFR (Bihar), iv) Qty- 250 Nos. for Pandu/GSD, NFR (Assam), P.L. No-

Equity MFs inflow drops 14% in Nov; SIP figure remains flat at Rs 25,320-cr

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
Equity mutual funds witnessed an inflow of Rs 35,943 crore in November, marking a drop of 14 per cent on a month-on-month basis, amid heightened volatility in stock markets driven by various macroeconomic factors, geopolitical events and US election results. Despite this, it marked the 45th consecutive month of net inflows into equity-oriented funds, reflecting the growing popularity of mutual funds among investors, according to data from the Association of Mutual Funds in India (AMFI) released on Tuesday. Moreover, monthly contributions from the Systematic Investment Plan (SIP) remained flat at Rs 25,320 crore last month against Rs 25,323 crore in October. "There was heightened volatility due to various macroeconomic factors, geopolitical events and the US election results. This resulted in investors opting for a wait & watch approach while allo-

cating larger amounts and thus decline in lumpsum flows including flattish SIP numbers for November 2024," Akhil Chaturvedi, CBO, Motilal Oswal AMC, said. Overall, the mutual fund industry experienced an inflow of Rs 60,295 crore in the month under review, which was way lower than Rs 2.4 lakh crore in October. This could be due to a huge decline in inflows in debt funds to Rs 12,915 crore in November from Rs 1.57 lakh crore in the preceding month. Despite the decline, the industry's net assets under management rose to Rs 68.08 lakh crore last month from Rs 67.25 lakh crore in October. "Defying a tumultuous month in the equity market, the mutual fund industry's assets reached a new pinnacle of Rs 68.08 lakh crore, driven primarily by robust inflows into growth-/equity-oriented schemes. The unwavering monthly SIP inflows remained above Rs 25,000 crore in November, showcasing the investors' long-term vision and commitment to



their financial goals, despite the short-term market fluctuations," Venkat Chalasani, Chief Executive, AMFI, said. As per the data, equity-oriented schemes witnessed an inflow of Rs 35,943 crore in November as compared to record inflow of Rs 41,887 crore in October. "Weak global cues, China's recent economic stimulus, and escalating tensions between Ukraine and Russia impacted Indian equity markets in November 2024, which witnessed relentless selling by foreign portfolio investors. The impact of this was seen on the Indian mutual fund industry as well, which witnessed 14.19 per cent drop in equity inflows in November on a month-on-month basis," Ashwini Kumar, Senior Vice President and Head Market Data, ICRA Analytics, said. Within the equity schemes, sectoral or thematic category attracted investors with the

highest net inflow of Rs 7,658 crore during the month under review. However, flow in the segment was less compared to Rs 12,279 crore in October and Rs 13,255 crore in September. This was followed by flexi cap funds which saw inflow of Rs 5,084 crore last month. Inflows into large-cap funds declined 26 per cent to Rs 2,548 crore in November from Rs 3,452 crore in the preceding month, while mid and small cap funds registered month-on-month growth of 4.3 per cent to Rs 4,883 crore and 9 per cent to Rs 4,112 crore, respectively. The month saw 18 new fund offerings (NFOs) collecting Rs 4,052 crore while October saw 29 NFOs garnering Rs 6,078 crore. Of this, new index funds launched in November were 10 as compared to 17 launched in October, Mayukh Datta, Chief Business Officer, ITI Mutual Fund, said. There has been a shift from low-risk categories like large-cap and hybrid funds to higher-risk options like small-cap

funds, while NFO activity slowed down last month. With regards to debt-oriented funds, Deepak Ramaraju, Senior Fund Manager, Shriram AMC, said that the category saw a 92 per cent month-on-month plunge in inflow to Rs 12,916 crore in November on the back of withdrawal from liquid funds due to tighter liquidity conditions and possible tax payments. Overall, 9 out of 16 debt mutual fund categories recorded net inflows in November. Liquid funds experienced the highest outflows, amounting to Rs 1,779 crore. "Meanwhile, investors showed a strong preference for categories like low-duration funds, ultra-short-duration funds, money market funds, corporate bond funds, and overnight funds. Together, these categories accounted for about 85 per cent of the inflows across nine categories that recorded positive figures, highlighting a strong preference for low-risk, highly liquid investment options," Nehal Meshram,

Senior Analyst - Manager Research, Morningstar Investment Research India, said. Further, investor interest in active duration strategies, such as Gilt Funds, led to inflow of Rs 1,803 crore. This can be attributed to rising expectations of interest rate cuts in the near future, she added. Gold continues to glitter with investors showing their affinity towards yellow metal in November as well. Gold ETF category witnessed a net inflow of Rs 1,257 crore in November, which was lower than Rs 1,961 crore seen in the preceding month. "While the fund mobilized was less compared to October, the redemption number was higher. This signifies that investors would have chosen to book profits with gold trading at elevated levels and impending marriage season, where the demand for physical gold is high," Himanshu Srivastava - Associate Director- Manager Research, Morningstar Investment Research India, said.

Sensex, Nifty end on flat note amid volatile trade

PTI ■ MUMBAI
Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty closed on a flat note on Tuesday amid a lacklustre trade, as investors preferred to stay on the sidelines in the absence of any fresh trigger. Besides, a weak trend in European markets also impacted investors' sentiment, according to traders. The 30-share BSE Sensex rises 1.59 points to close flat at 81,510.05. During the day, it climbed 217.88 points or 0.27 per cent to hit an intraday high of 81,726.34. The NSE Nifty fell 8.95 points or 0.04 per cent to settle at 24,510.65. "The domestic market concluded on a flat note, a rebound from the lows suggests buy-on-dip strategy... The broader market outperformed, maintaining its positive trend led by mid & small-caps. The IT index reached new highs in anticipation of improvement in US IT spending. "Upcoming inflation data from the US and India are critical for insights into potential future rate cuts.



India's CPI will serve as a key indicator of underlying earnings growth, which has been downgraded in H1FY25," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services, said. From the 30-share pack, Bajaj Finserv, HCL Technologies, Infosys, State Bank of India, Bajaj Finance, ICICI Bank, Mahindra & Mahindra, Kotak Mahindra Bank and Titan were among the gainers. Bharti Airtel, Adani Ports, Tech Mahindra, Reliance Industries, Axis Bank, Larsen & Toubro were the laggards. In Asian markets, Tokyo, Shanghai, and Seoul settled higher, while Hong Kong

Bihar Ambassadors' meet strengthens global investment ties

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
Ahead of the second edition of the Bihar Business Connect 2024 summit, the Department of Industries of the Bihar government showcased the state's strategic initiatives, reforms and investment opportunities to select diplomats. The Bihar Business Connect 2024 - Ambassadors' Meet presented the policies and initiatives of the state government to the global audience as a precursor to the Summit scheduled for December 19-20, 2024, in Patna, according to an official statement. The event had Bihar Deputy Chief Minister and Finance Minister Samrat Chaudhary, Industry and Tourism Minister Nitish Mishra, State Chief Secretary Amrit Lal Meena, and Bandana Preyashi, Secretary of the Industries Department. The roadshow saw diplomats from around 30 foreign missions in India as also international trade associations and trade promotion bodies participate. Foreign guests present at the event included Nguyen Thanh Hai, Ambassador, Embassy of Vietnam; Mariano Agustin Caucino, Ambassador, Embassy of the Argentine Republic; and Josel Francisco Ignacio, Ambassador, Embassy



of the Philippines. David Pasquini, Commercial Officer of the US Embassy, alongside prominent trade bodies such as the Indo-German Chamber of Commerce, TPCL, FIEO, AEPC, US-India Business Council, and UK-India Business Council. Speaking at the event, Chaudhary highlighted Bihar's rapid strides in industrial development and sustainability and said, "Policy, population, and water make Bihar special. Here we are working on policies which are sector-specific like leather, IT, start-up, etc. Our demographic dividend is our strength. This not only makes Bihar a big market but also an epicentre for human resources. "Abundance of water makes the land of Bihar superior in terms of production. In the coming

days, more positive changes will be seen in Bihar, which will definitely make the state more favourable for investment." Industry and Tourism Minister Nitish Mishra emphasised the state's untapped potential, saying, "All the facilities required for investment anywhere are present on a large scale in Bihar. Here land, infrastructure, connectivity, electricity, water, human resources and market are all available, which makes Bihar investment-friendly. Today, as we are working to achieve the goal of Viksit Bharat in 2047, it becomes necessary that we take advantage of the immense opportunities available in Bihar." Meena emphasised the statistics that define Bihar as the hub of investors and said, "Bihar is a complete turnaround story. The ease of doing business is

the focal point of Bihar. There is massive focus on agriculture where production has gone up exponentially. "Our CAGR of per capita power consumption is 16 per cent, which is the highest in the country, and now there's complete focus on renewable energy. Data consumption has gone up by 2000 per cent, which talks about the growing economy. With aspiring youth, Bihar is clearly the future." Reaffirming Bihar as a premier global investment destination, Preyashi said, "Bihar is fast emerging as an industrial land, where both small and big investors are investing. Almost 100 per cent electricity, huge market, abundant water, friendly policies and better infrastructure are some of the aspects that make Bihar investment-friendly and attract investors. "We are continuously working to improvise and bring sector-specific policies. We are also making the path easier for investors by providing various types of incentives, such as capital investment subsidy, export subsidy, and interest subvention." Highlighting the strategic investment opportunities in Bihar in his opening remarks, Jaideep Ahuja, Chairman, CII Delhi Chapter, stated, "We stand on the threshold of tremendous opportunity, a vision to foster partnerships and open new doors for investments in the vibrant dynamic state of Bihar. Bihar growth story is one of resilience, transformation and promise. The state has established itself as a promising hub for investments and industries, and I am delighted to witness the momentum that is building in the collaborative spirit that defines today's economic environment." Rajneet Kohli, CEO, Britannia Industries, which has two manufacturing plants in Bihar, said, "Bihar, with its growing population of 140 million, offers a captive market for our products. The state's robust GDP growth, the second-highest in the nation, further fuels our expansion. We've created over 3,000 jobs and reached 7,500 villages, establishing 1,000+ rural outlets and 55,000 urban outlets." Kamal Oswal, Managing Director, Nahar Group, mentioned while addressing the other dignitaries, "We're starting our new Logistics Park in Bihar, a massive 1 million square foot facility. This USD 15 million investment will generate 4,000 jobs, making it one of India's largest logistics hubs. Our experience in Bihar has been exceptional, with all approvals processed swiftly and efficiently, unlike any other state we've invested in."

Rupee settles on a flat note near all-time low at 84.85 against US dollar

PTI ■ MUMBAI
The rupee settled for the day on a flat note higher by just 1 paisa at 84.85 (provisional) against the US dollar on Tuesday, a tad above its all-time low level, as change of guard at the Reserve Bank of India raised expectations of a shift in the central bank's monetary policy. The government on Monday appointed Revenue Secretary Sanjay Malhotra as the 26th Governor of the Reserve Bank of India. Forex traders said markets now expect a rate cut in the

upcoming monetary policy in February. While a weak tone in the domestic markets and a surge in the US dollar index further pressurised the rupee. At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 84.80 and touched the lowest level of 84.86 against the greenback during intra-day trade. The unit ended the session at 84.85 (provisional) against the dollar, higher by just 1 paisa from its previous close. On Monday, the rupee saw its steepest fall in over a month and plunged 20 paise to settle at lowest-ever level of



84.86 against the US dollar. "We expect the rupee to trade with a negative bias on strength in the US dollar and overnight gains in crude oil prices. However, recent FII inflows may support the rupee at lower levels," said Anuj Choudhary - Research Analyst at Mirae Asset Sharekhan. Choudhary further said that any intervention by the RBI may also support the rupee. "Investors may remain cautious ahead of US inflation data on Wednesday. Inflation is expected to be higher than the previous month. USD-

INR spot price is expected to trade in a range of 84.65 to 85.10," he said. Shaktikanta Das, who will demit office as the Governor of the Reserve Bank of India on Tuesday, was the key man behind the planning and execution of the demonetisation drive and roll-out of the landmark goods and services tax (GST). At the RBI, he steered India's monetary policy response during the challenging period of the pandemic. The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six

currencies, was trading higher by 0.13 per cent at 106.28. Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, fell 0.36 per cent to USD 71.88 per barrel in futures trade. On the domestic equity market front, the 30-share benchmark index Sensex closed on a flat note at 81,510.05, higher by just 1.59 points. The Nifty fell 8.95 points, or 0.04 per cent, to 24,510.65 points. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) were net buyers in the capital markets on Monday, as they purchased shares worth Rs 724.27 crore, according to exchange data.

IGL announces 1:1 bonus share issue

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
Indraprastha Gas Ltd on Tuesday announced a 1:1 bonus share - one free share for every share held by shareholders as India's biggest city gas retailer looks to increase retail investor participation and reward shareholders. This is IGL's maiden bonus issue. The Board of Directors of IGL in a meeting on Tuesday approved "issuance of bonus shares to the shareholders of the company in the ratio of 1:1, i.e. 1 (one) bonus equity Shares of face value of Rs 2 each fully paid up for every 1 (one) existing equity shares of face value of Rs 2 each fully paid up, to the eligible shareholders of the company as on the record date," the firm said in a stock exchange filing. The share capital of the company will increase from Rs 140 crore to Rs 280 crore post-bonus issue. Rs 140 crore



would be capitalized from free reserves to implement the bonus issue. "The company has a total balance of Rs 8,411.74 crore as free reserves for capitalization," IGL said. The bonus share is likely to be credited within two months. IGL retailers CNG to automobiles and pipes natural gas to household kitchens and industries Delhi and its adjoining cities of Noida, Greater Noida, Ghaziabad and Gurugram. It also retails in few

growth trajectory," IGL later said in a statement. "The record date for determining eligible shareholders will be decided later. "This announcement aligns with IGL's enduring philosophy of rewarding its shareholders, underpinned by strong financial fundamentals and consistent growth," the firm said. The bonus issuance not only reflects the company's healthy reserves but also its optimism in sustaining its leadership position in India's clean energy ecosystem, IGL said. Commenting on the issue, Kamal Kishore Chatiwal, Managing Director, IGL, said, "The bonus share issue is a testament to our continued focus on creating long-term shareholder value. I reinforce our confidence in the company's potential to scale new heights while rewarding our investors for their unwavering trust and support."

IoT, AI, and Blockchain to Transform Indian Farming

PNS ■ NEW DELHI
The 2nd edition of the Agriculture and Rural Communication Summit 2024, held at Pride Plaza Hotel, New Delhi, spotlighted transformative strategies for advancing Indian agriculture. Organized by Snail Integral Pvt. Ltd, the summit unveiled key insights into technology-driven solutions that promise to boost crop yields by up to 20% while empowering farmers. During the event, a knowledge paper titled "Rural Communication and Agriculture in India: Pathways to a Viksit Bharat 2047" was released by Synergy Technofin and SnailIntegral. The report emphasized the role of cutting-edge technologies like IoT, AI, and Blockchain in revolutionizing agriculture. These tools are set to provide precise insights into crop health, optimize irrigation, and enable



data-driven farming, stated Sunil Sihag, MD, Synergy Technofin. Dr. P.K. Singh, Agriculture Commissioner, highlighted the government's focus on sustainability through Integrated Pest Management and innovative seed varieties. Panel discussions explored themes such as sustainability, communication strategies, and technology adoption. The summit underscored the critical need for digital literacy, strategic partnerships, and inclusive communication to transform rural India and achieve the goal of a Viksit Bharat by 2047.

ALUCAST® 2024 Attracts 8,000 Visitors, 200 Exhibitors

PNS ■ NEW DELHI
The 10th edition of ALU-CAST® EXPO, India's premier biennial international conference and exhibition on die casting technology, commenced on December 5, 2024, at Yashobhoomi, India International Convention & Expo Center, Dwarka, Delhi. Spanning three days, the event hosted over 200 exhibitors and 300+ brands from nations such as Germany, the USA, Japan, and Spain, drawing more than 8,000 visitors from 20+ countries. Organized by the Aluminium Casters' Association (ALU-CAST®) and NürnbergMesse India, the event highlighted India's emerging leadership in aluminum die casting. Keynote speeches by industry leaders, including Mr. Prasan Firodia, President of



ALUCAST, showcased India's advanced manufacturing capabilities, such as its 4,400-ton aluminum die-casting machine. Ms. Sonia Prashar, Managing Director of NürnbergMesse India, emphasized the sector's growth beyond automotive applications to include aerospace, consumer electronics, and electrical equipment. The conference featured over 2.5 days of technical sessions on innovations like semi-solid casting, AI integration, and workforce reskilling.

World Chess Championship: Nerves to play crucial role as Gukesh, Liren head for close finish

PTI ■ SINGAPORE
A handy lead has slipped through his grip but Indian Grandmaster D Gukesh will rely on his steely resolve to bounce back when he takes on enigmatic defending champion Ding Liren in the 13th game of the World Chess Championship that has been quite a roller-coaster ride for the players. The 18-year-old Gukesh, who is the youngest challenger to the title, and the 32-year-old defending champion from China have been locked in an intriguing battle in which both have held leads for not too long. They will resume on Wednesday after a day of rest. The scores are currently tied at 6-6 with the first to reach 7.5 assured of the coveted crown. After squandering away a full point lead with just three games to go, the 12th round loss was heartbreaking for the young Indian and many experts believe that he will go for an aggressive approach in his last game with white pieces under Classical time control. It won't be off the mark to say that nerves are likely to play a crucial role in the final stretch. The scores were tied 5-5 after game



10 but the last two decisive games thereafter have breathed new life into an otherwise well-contested match in which both players have had their chances. After what he described as a see-saw victory in the 11th game, Gukesh was simply not himself in the 12th game and his idea to play a new position for the first time backfired spectacularly. If the scores are still tied in the USD 2.5 million championship, tie-break games of shorter duration will be played to determine the winner. Generally a smooth operator, Liren looked a pale shadow of himself after the 11th game and the case was no different for Gukesh when he was completely outplayed for the first time here on Monday. To regain composure is the name of the game here and Gukesh has shown resolve in the past. Liren, on the other hand, was in a similar situation in the last world championships match against Ian Nepomniachtchi that he won,

rallying as many as three times before eventually clinching the tiebreaker. Liren's precision was simply immaculate in the 12th game. Gukesh did not look the same player and the Chinese took advantage of the situation right from the word go to earn high praise from many in the elite chess circles. Five-time world champion across formats, Viswanathan Anand, called it a "very impressive game" while Liren himself said, "it was the best game that I have played in recent times." While the mind games will go on in the last two games and a potential tiebreaker, American Hikaru Nakamura and world number one Magnus Carlsen feel that the balance had tilted slightly in Liren's favour. "Ding did not have to calculate a single line in this whole game, he is being able to play the game based on positional understanding where he is very good," said Carlsen on his new youtube channel. It might be a tightrope walk for Gukesh but the young Indian is likely to go out there and give his best in the penultimate game. In case of another draw, there is a decent chance that the chess buffs will get to see the tie-break games.



Chennaiyin, Hyderabad desperate for a win revive campaign

PTI ■ CHENNAI
Struggling at the bottom-half of the table both Chennaiyin FC and Hyderabad FC will look to revive their campaign when they clash in the Indian Super League here on Wednesday. The two teams are in an urgent need for a shift in momentum, with two-time former champions Chennaiyin FC dropping to ninth in the standings following one draw and three defeats on the trot. A win can take them to the seventh spot. Hyderabad FC have also suffered three losses in a row to be one place ahead of the laggards Mohammedan Sporting with seven points from 10 games. The Owen Coyle-coached Marina Machans have endured a challenging run, going three games without a goal, a streak they'll aim to break in front of their home crowd. Despite scoring 16 goals in 11 matches this season, Chennaiyin's attack has faltered recently, and they have failed to score in their last two meetings with Hyderabad. Head coach Owen Coyle, on the verge of completing 50 ISL matches in charge, will be eager to mark the milestone with a victory. Connor Shields will have to play a key role in the midfield as his delivery from the flanks will be crucial in supplying chances to forwards like Daniel Chima Chukwu, who has a strong record against Hyderabad, including five goals in previous encounters. Hyderabad FC has also struggled for consistency, conceding 11 first-half goals this season -- more than any other team. Their defensive frailty often force them into catch-up mode, disrupting their rhythm. On the attacking front, Hyderabad have failed to score in four of their last six games. Their only wins in this stretch came when they found the net, underscoring the importance of converting chances. Their English-born Japanese midfielder Cy Goddard has been the bright spot, contributing a goal and an assist this season while creating 15 goal-scoring opportunities. Hyderabad will count on his ability to unlock Chennaiyin's defense and deliver in the final third. "Hyderabad FC have some very good players and some talented Indian players. A lot of them have done well. We are very respectful of the game tomorrow night. We will be very positive and try to win the game from the very first minute," Coyle said. Hyderabad FC assistant coach Shameel Chembakath hoped that his team will be storming back into form, mentioning that they are working well on the areas that need improvement. "When the results are disappointing, we are fully aware of the areas we need to improve upon. Football is a game of ups and downs. Training is going well. We are taking this challenge positively and we will be bouncing back," Chembakath said.

Afghanistan extend Trott's contract by one year ahead of Champions Trophy

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
Jonathan Trott will continue as Afghanistan's head coach for another year after the country's cricket board extended his contract through 2025. The announcement comes a few months ahead of next year's Champions Trophy, where Afghanistan will make their maiden appearance. The 43-year-old former England batter has been Afghanistan's head coach since July 2022, and under his guidance, the team has made impressive strides in international cricket. "The Afghanistan Cricket Board wishes Trott the best of luck for his next year's stint with Afghan Atalan as he strives to elevate Afghanistan cricket further on the global stage," the Afghanistan Cricket Board (ACB) said in a statement. Under Trott, the team has achieved significant milestones, including reaching their first-ever T20 World Cup semi-final this year with stunning victories over Australia and New Zealand. Afghanistan also enjoyed a memorable ODI World Cup last year in India, where they stunned England, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka, finishing among the top eight teams to secure their maiden appearance in the Champions Trophy. Additionally, Afghanistan recently triumphed in bilateral ODI series against South Africa and Bangladesh in Sharjah, winning both by 2-1 margins.

West Ham show support for injured teammate Antonio

AP ■ LONDON
West Ham players showed their support for seriously injured teammate Michael Antonio before and during their Premier League home win against Wolverhampton, two days after his car crash. The players warmed up in "Antonio 9" jerseys and walked on to the field in tops adorned with his name. The club will put the walk-out tops up for auction along with every match jersey worn against Wolves, with the proceeds going to medical charities and matched by the club's board. West Ham fans stood in London Stadium and applauded for Antonio in the ninth, and when captain Jarrod Bowen scored the 2-1 winner in the second half, he



approached supporters behind the goal carrying an Antonio jersey. "To share that moment, he's not here with us but I'm sure (Antonio) was watching and the fans, you heard them," Bowen told broadcaster Sky Sports. "An emotional couple of days." Before the game, Bowen said, "Everyone loves Mic, he is a big character. He is not just a teammate, he is a friend and has been for many years. A dad as well to those things where life is bigger than football. The main thing is Mic is safe and well and here to tell the story. Saturday was a really difficult time. He is a warrior and a fighter, he always has been, and I know he will be back stronger for this." Antonio, a 34-year-old Jamaica international, was recovering in hospital after undergoing surgery on what West Ham described as a "lower limb fracture." He was involved in a one-car accident outside London on Saturday, after which he was hospitalized and kept under close supervision. He wished the team well by video before the match. Antonio has made more than 300 appearances for West Ham since joining the club from Nottingham Forest in 2015, and played in all 14 games this season before the incident.

Record number of participants to turn up for National Shooting Championship Competition

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
A record 13,522 shooters are set to participate in the 67th National Shooting Championship Competition (NSCC), starting here on Thursday with the shotgun events. While the shotgun (December 11, 2024-January 19, 2025) and pistol (December 13, 2024-January 5, 2025) competitions will be held at the Dr Karni Singh Shooting Range here, Bhopal's MP State Shooting Academy ranges will hold the rifle nationals from December 15 to 31. The official pre-event training for skeet shooters belonging to Group 2 and Group 3 will be held on Wednesday, with the



qualification rounds beginning on Thursday. Group 1 shooters take to the ranges from December 21. Both defending champions Anant Jeet Singh Naruka, in men's skeet, and Ganemat Sekhon, in the women's skeet, will compete. A total of 837 shotgun shooters across skeet, trap and double trap events will be competing in five classifications which include master, senior master and super master, besides the

senior and junior. Rifle competition has seen the maximum entries with 7013 participants across classifications while the pistol nationals will have 5672 competitors vying for the honours. A total of 40 teams will be represented at the nationals. These include almost all states and union territories as well as those representing the armed forces of the country and public institutions like the ONGC and the Railways. "All top shooters of the country will be participating in the nationals, whose scores will be counted when the Indian team for the 2025 international season is declared," the National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) said in a release.

It is important sports be part of education as it teaches value of losing: Andre Agassi

PTI ■ BENGALURU
Tennis legend Andre Agassi on Tuesday emphasised the importance of keeping sports as a part of education, stating that sports teach children the value of losing. Agassi was discussing the future of sports and education as a foundation for excellence at the TIE Global Summit 2024 in Bengaluru. "Even when you have a failure, you have to get up and play again the next day. So, what sports is teaching you is that focusing on winning and losing is really a distraction from what we need to be thinking about. We need to be thinking about how to get better," he said. Agassi, who has been investing in education for the "disadvantaged" since 2001, shared that he has helped build 130 schools for about 80,000 kids in the United States, a feat he attributes to pushing himself to stay ahead of challenges. He credited his ability to stay on



course—and course-correct when needed—to his gruelling tennis career. "Sports is all about problem-solving. Tennis taught me how to navigate a very intense environment and maintain my objectivity and problem-solving abilities. It forces me to be present, but also to understand the context of what I'm doing," Agassi said.

Speaking about his rebellious phase, Agassi said it was something he had to go through to reach where he is today. "Vulnerability is essential for growth, and I think vulnerability eventually leads to humility," he added. The session, called Marathon Mindset, also featured Akash Chaudhry, Co-Founder and Chief Mentor of Aakash Educational Services Limited (AESL), who discussed the future of EdTech in India. Agassi agreed that technology in education will play a significant role in filling the huge gap in personalised learning that every child deserves. He said this belief is part of the reason why he invested in the Indian EdTech firm, Square Panda. "I think technology can play an essential role, not just in scalability, but also in optimising personalised learning. That's why I got involved with Square Panda. We are here because of the sheer scale of impact the technology will bring to education," he said.

World Cup hosting decisions set to kick off a decade of scrutiny on Saudi Arabia and FIFA

AP ■ GENEVA
The inevitable result has been clear since last year: Saudi Arabia will be confirmed by FIFA as the 2034 World Cup host on Wednesday. The 2030 World Cup also will be awarded to a six-nation, three-continent project led by co-hosts Spain, Portugal Morocco. It gives a single game each at South American neighbors Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay, the first host in 1930. Two men's World Cups, one candidate for each, both a shoo-in to win. The outcome will be as FIFA and its president Gianni Infantino intended in October last year. Then, on the same day, the 2030 race was effectively decided and the 2034 one surprisingly opened. FIFA is sending one of the biggest prizes in world sports toward the state modernizing project of Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. A decade of global scrutiny will follow. **WHAT WILL HAPPEN ON WEDNESDAY?** FIFA hosts a special congress in Zurich from 3 p.m. Local time (1300 GMT) and its 211 member federations will attend remotely online. The closed-doors meeting at FIFA headquarters should be streamed live on its website. The 37-member FIFA council, including Saudi federation president Yasser al Muehahal, meets on Tuesday and should advise to approve both bids. Confirming the 2030 and 2034 hosts should be done in a combined decision by acclamation rather than a registered vote. FIFA published each member's choice in June 2018 in Moscow when the United States, Canada and Mexico won the 2026 World Cup hosting vote 134-65 against Morocco. The Saudi bid team said in a statement "as a nation that loves



football it is expected that fans across the entire kingdom will naturally take to the streets and celebrate this historic moment if their country is confirmed as hosts." **WHAT WAS THE FIFA PROCESS TO BID AND WIN?** These World Cup hosting contests happened gradually and then suddenly. In June 2018, days after losing to the financially strong North American bid, Morocco King Mohammed VI announced his nation would seek the 2030 World Cup. Most expected it would be Europe's turn.

Soon, Spain's government invited Morocco — separated by about 14 kilometers (10 miles) of sea — into its expected bid with Portugal. The project has survived a brief flirtation in 2022 with war-torn Ukraine. Saudi Arabia worked in 2022, with what seemed to be Infantino's diplomatic help, on an unlikely 2030 co-hosting bid with Egypt and Greece or Italy that was unacceptable to European soccer body UEFA. When FIFA's council eventually met to discuss World Cup bidding, the Spain-led bid now had South American partners. The bigger picture deal was letting Infantino open a 2034 contest only Asia and Oceania members could enter within four weeks. The Asian soccer body quickly backed Saudi Arabia, and Australia's interest was soon quashed. **HOW HAVE THE PROJECTS BEEN EXPLAINED?**

Hardly at all, apart from mandatory documents published by FIFA and basic campaign websites. There was no launch event in Zurich. No project exhibitions at the FIFA congress in May in Thailand. Bid plans were handed to FIFA behind closed doors in Paris during the Olympics. FIFA's Infantino has held no press conference and taken no questions during the 15-month process. UEFA president Aleksander Ceferin also has not spoken publicly about the double-award agreement. An era of blockbuster bid contests, globe-trotting campaigns and dramatic votes to host a World Cup or Olympics has ended. **WHAT DOES THE 2030 BID PROPOSE?** The world's biggest soccer venue — the planned 115,000-seat King Hassan II Stadium in Casablanca — is among 24 stadiums offered including 11 in Spain, three in

Portugal and six in Morocco. Morocco wants to host the July 21 final. Spain offers the home stadiums of Barcelona and Real Madrid. The longest World Cup should start with the three games in South America on June 8-9. The tournament would resume on June 13. **WHAT DOES THE 2034 BID PROPOSE?** Saudi Arabia offers 15 stadiums — eight still on paper — in five cities: Eight venues in Jeddah, four in Riyadh, plus Abha, Al Khobar and Neom, the planned futuristic mega-project. The opening game and final are set for a 92,000-seat venue planned in Riyadh. Saudi Arabia aims to host all 104 games, though it could yet become a World Cup for the Middle East region. The diplomatic coup for FIFA and Saudi Arabia would be involving Israel one day.

Indian batters start preparations for Brisbane Test

PTI ■ ADELAIDE

Reeling from their humiliating 10-wicket defeat in the pink-ball Test, the under-fire Indian batters, led by Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli, turned their attention to red-ball preparations with an intensive net session here on Tuesday, aiming to bounce back in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy.

While Australia moved to Brisbane for the third Test from Saturday, the Indian team chose to stay back, focusing on honing their red-ball skills, particularly their defensive techniques and judgment in leaving deliveries.

"It's time to look ahead. Preparations for the Brisbane Test starts right here in Adelaide," the BCCI posted on X, sharing a video of Team India's practice.

Struggling with poor form, having scored just 142 runs with only one fifty (52) in his last 12 innings, the Indian skipper, who rejoined the team after the birth of his son, aimed to quickly regain



his rhythm as he faced both Indian spinners and pacers. Dropped himself to No 6, Rohit capped scores of three and six in Adelaide; first, he

was adjudged LBW to a fuller delivery that nipped back, while in the second essay he was cleaned up by a length ball from his Aussie counterpart Pat Cummins that held its line and clipped the off stump.

Kohli, who ended his 16-month century drought with a hundred in Perth, fell victim to edging two deliveries – first to second slip and then to wicketkeeper in the pink ball

Test.

The star Indian batter looked full of intent as he had a watchful start to his net session before slowly finding his flow.

KL Rahul looked more subdued, focusing more on his defence, while Rishabh Pant played a few pick up shots.

Young opener Yashasvi Jaiswal, who starred with a 161 in India's massive 295-run win in the opening Test, was the aggressor among the all, displaying his cheeky shots and even stepped out to the Indian bowlers.

The bowling unit consisted the likes of Harshit Rana, Akash Deep, Yash Dayal and the spin trio of Ravindra Jadeja, Ravichandran Ashwin and Washington Sundar, while there were a few throwdown specialists as well.

The key Indian pace duo of Jasprit Bumrah and Mohammed Siraj along with seam-bowling allrounder Nitish Kumar Reddy looked to have a lean day. India are scheduled to reach Brisbane on Wednesday.



Mark Taylor urges senior India teammates to address Siraj's premature celebrations

PTI ■ ADELAIDE

Former Australian captain Mark Taylor believes Mohammed Siraj has a tendency of celebrating wickets prematurely without waiting for the umpire's decision and his senior India teammates should have a word with the pacer to address this as it is giving him a "bad look".

Taylor said Siraj charges down the wicket towards his teammates, without checking the umpire's decision when he thinks that he has got a batter out.

"I think with Mohammed Siraj, I'd like to see some of the Indian players have a chat with him, not so much what happened with Travis Head but how when he thinks he's got a batter out he doesn't turn around and actually acknowledge the umpire whether he's given it out or not," Taylor told Nine News. "I think that's the bad look for him and the game."

"I love his exuberance, I love his competitive nature, I love the fact we've got a really good series going on but there is also the respect of the game that needs to be upheld. I think a little word from one of the senior players would go a long way," Siraj has become a topic of discussion after his brief showdown with Travis Head on day two of the Adelaide Test, which Australia won by 10 wickets to level the series 1-1.

Head had struck a splendid 141-ball knock of 140 before being castled by Siraj, who went on to give him an aggressive send-off following an exchange of words. The Indian endured boos from the Adelaide crowd following the confrontation.

Both players were handed one demerit point each on their disciplinary records with Siraj also receiving a fine of 20 per cent of his match fee. "I love the combative nature of Head and Siraj, but it has to be kept in check because the last thing we want to see in this game is that developing into a batsman maybe whacking a bowler."

"They get close together in that sort of situation and you don't want to see that. So the administrators need to keep a check on that, and so do the two captains," Taylor added. Former Australia batter Simon Katich felt Siraj had a "brain fade" moment, which the Indian regretted later.

"It's a shame that Siraj had a bit of a brain fade... There's no need for that in the game," Katich said SEN Radio. "He would regret that Siraj... It was all spur of the moment and when he got Mitchell Starc out not long after that he was pretty sheepish. "You don't know what head space some of the players are in at times... he was probably disappointed with his performance and something like this can happen," he added.



Sunny Dhillon banned by ICC for 'attempt' to fix matches

PTI ■ DUBAI

Sunny Dhillon, a former assistant coach of an Abu Dhabi T10 League franchise, was on Tuesday banned from all forms of cricket for six years by the sport's governing body for "attempting" to fix matches.

Dhillon was charged last year. The ban has been back dated to September 13, 2023, the date Dhillon was provisionally suspended.

"Sunny Dhillon has been found to have breached the Emirates Cricket Board (ECB) Anti-Corruption Code and has been banned from all cricket for a period of six years," said the ICC in a statement.

Dhillon, a former assistant coach of a franchise team, was one of eight individuals charged last year for breaching the Anti-Corruption Code. The charges are related to the 2021 Abu Dhabi T10 Cricket League and alleged attempts to influence the outcome of matches during the tournament.

"These efforts were disrupted by the ICC and the Designated Anti-Corruption Official (DACO)

for the purposes of the ECB's Code for the tournament," the ICC said.

Two other individuals Parag Sanghvi and Krishan Kumar Chaudhary were among the eight individuals charged by the ICC on different counts of corruption during the 2021 edition of Emirates T10 League.

After a full hearing and presentation of written as well as oral argument, the Tribunal found Dhillon guilty.

Dhillon was banned under the following provisions: "Article 2.1.1 – Being party to an attempt to fix, contrive or influence improperly matches or aspects of matches in the Abu Dhabi T10 2021.

"Article 2.4.4 - Failing to disclose to the DACO full details of any approaches or invitations received to engage in Corrupt Conduct under the Code.

"Article 2.4.6 - Failing or refusing, without compelling justification, to cooperate with any investigation carried out by the DACO in relation to possible Corrupt Conduct under the Code," the statement added.

Gilchrist says Australia were 'stung' by criticism post Perth loss, praises 'aggressive' Cummins

PTI ■ ADELAIDE

Legendary wicketkeeper-batter Adam Gilchrist believes Australia were "stung" by the criticism following their loss in Perth, but has returned to their best, driven by captain Pat Cummins' controlled aggression.

Australia, who had drawn a lot of flak for the 295-run loss in the opening Perth Test, bounced back by registering an emphatic 10-wicket win in the second game to level the five match series 1-1.

"You could see just through his (Cummins) celebrations that... every wicket that he took he was more aggressive in his celebration," Gilchrist said on Fox Cricket. "Not in that lose control



extent but you could just see that clearly they'd been stung by a bit of criticism around after their performance (in Perth) and they internally would have been so disappointed with the way they played in Perth.

"So it (Adelaide celebrations) showed you what it meant to them and they knew that they were back at the level they want to play their cricket," Gilchrist added. The former wicketkeeper-batter said it felt the captain

had "a grease and oil change" after the lacklustre performance at Perth.

"Cummins was outstanding, he looked like if there needed a bit of a grease and oil change after Perth and a tune up, he was purring by the end of it, so that was terrific to watch."

In the pink ball Test, the pace trioka of Cummins, Mitchell Starc and Scott Boland took all 20 Indian wickets with spinner Nathan Lyon bowling just one over.

"They were just a unit, the three bowlers, Nathan Lyon only had one over (in the match) and Mitch Marsh four, but other than that the big three, Starc, Boland, Cummins hunted as a pack and bowled as a unit and that was really fun to watch," Gilchrist added.

Tickets for day one of Boxing Day Test between India and Australia sold out

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Tickets for the opening day of the fourth Test of the between India and Australia at the iconic Melbourne Cricket Ground have sold out, highlighting the public's strong interest in the prestigious Border-Gavaskar Trophy.

The strong demand for tickets comes a couple of days after hosts Australia made a stunning comeback, handing India a 10-wicket defeat in Adelaide to level the five-match series 1-1. The two rivals will head to the MCG for the Boxing Day Test, starting December 26 after the third Test in Brisbane starting Saturday.

"All available public tickets for Day 1 of the NRMA Insurance Boxing Day Test have been sold," Cricket Australia posted on their 'X' account on Tuesday.

"There will be a possible final release of a small number of public tickets on December 24 for non-members to get their seats," CA added. The pink ball Test in Adelaide drew a crowd of 135,012 across three days, setting a record turnout during a five-day game featuring the two sides.

As many as 36,225 fans went to the Adelaide Oval on the first day of the second India-



Australia Test, exceeding the previous record of 113,009 for a Test against India, which was set over five days in 2014-15.

The single-day attendance record for a Test against India in Adelaide was also shattered on the opening two days with over 50,000 fans attending the game.

Fans had also turned up in record numbers at the Optus Stadium in Perth for the first Test, which the visitors won by 295 runs for their biggest victory on Australian soil.

Voll added to Australia squad for New Zealand series

PTI ■ BRISBANE

Fresh from a splendid start to her career, 21-year-old Georgia Voll was on Tuesday selected in the Australia women's squad for their upcoming

The top-order batter made her debut in the ongoing ODI series against India with a 46 not out in the first match.

She went on to score century (101) in her second appearance, helping Australia take an unassailable 2-0 lead in three-match ODI series with a massive 122-run win.

Cricket Australia also confirmed Gavan Twining, the current head coach of the New South Wales Breakers, as the full-time assistant coach for fielding and



wicketkeeping with the women's team for the next two years, in a newly created role.

Twining joins fellow assistant coaches Scott Prestwidge and Dan Marsh. The third and final ODI of

the series is slated at the WACA here on Wednesday. Australia and New Zealand will battle it out for the coveted Rose Bowl Trophy, with Australia looking to retain the trophy they held since 2000.

India aim to avoid clean sweep against Australia ahead of World Cup at home

PTI ■ PERTH

A battered and bruised India will look to avoid a clean sweep and address some glaring issues ahead of next year's 50-over World Cup at home when they face Australia in the third and final women's ODI here on Wednesday.

The three-match series against the seven-time defending world champions has served as a harsh reality check for India, who have faltered in batting, bowling and fielding, with each area contributing to their struggles.

A record 122-run defeat in the second ODI highlighted India's vulnerability. Even though the batters shone in patches, they never truly looked to chase down Australia's 371/8.

In batting, the biggest

disappointment has come from India's two big stars – skipper Harmanpreet Kaur and her deputy Smriti Mandhana.

Mandhana has capped scores of 8 and 9 in Australia following her century in India's 2-1 home series win over New Zealand in October.

The flamboyant opener had been in fine form earlier this year, scoring 450-plus runs at a 70-plus average and she would look to regain her form.

Harmanpreet, on the other hand, failed to convert her starts with 57 runs from two matches as her captaincy and batting both have come under scrutiny following India's early exit from the T20 World Cup earlier this year.

In absence of out-of-form opener Shafali Verma, India tried out some different combination and



the bright spot has been the promising return of Richa Ghosh, who slammed a spirited fifty at the top in the last ODI.

Richa's 54 has been the highest score by an Indian batter in the series, in stark contrast to the two centuries and two fifties scored by Australian batters, highlighting the Amol Muzumdar-coached side's batting struggles.

In the opening ODI, only four Indian batters could reach double digits.

The bowlers have also been off the mark, conceding eight runs in wides in the second ODI. The Indians were also guilty of dropping several crucial catches, allowing Australia to amass their third-highest ODI total of all time.

"We need to bat a bit longer and bat a full 50 overs moving

forward. In bowling, we need to go back and think about plans," Harmanpreet said after the last game.

Australia's next generation has stepped up in style in the series, with the Tahliha McGrath-led side delivering a dominant performance despite missing regular skipper Alyssa Healy.

Uncapped 21-year-old Georgia Voll, handed the opener's role in Healy's absence, has been a revelation.

On her debut in the first ODI, she displayed remarkable composure, anchoring a modest 101-run chase with an unbeaten 46.

Voll followed it up with a stunning maiden century, forming a formidable partnership with veteran Ellyse Perry as the duo dismantled India's struggling bowling attack.

For India, rookie leg-spinner Priya Mishra has been a bright spot in an otherwise challenging series. The 20-year-old has shown promise, picking up two wickets while defending a small total.

Squads
India: Harmanpreet Kaur (c), Smriti Mandhana (vc), Priya Punia, Jemimah Rodrigues, Harleen Deol, Uma Chetry, Richa Ghosh (wk), Tejal Hasabnis, Deepti Sharma, Minnu Mani, Priya Mishra, Radha Yadav, Titus Sadhu, Arundhati Reddy, Renuka Singh Thakur and Saima Thakor.
Australia: Tahliha McGrath (c), Ashleigh Gardner (vc), Darcie Brown, Kim Garth, Alana King, Phoebe Litchfield, Sophie Molineux, Beth Mooney, Ellyse Perry, Megan Schutt, Annabel Sutherland, Georgia Voll and Georgia Wareham.