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OIL, EXPORT OF FUELS

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## Opposition, Treasury benches agree to discuss Constitution



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Union Ministers Rajnath Singh, Amit Shah, Nitin Gadkari, JP Nadda, and others during the screening of the film 'The Sabarmati Report', at the Parliament in New Delhi

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA  
NEW DELHI

After a week of acrimony with no business or discussions held ever since the Winter Session of Parliament started last week, the Opposition and Treasury benches on Monday are believed to have resolved to break the deadlock, and "work for smooth functioning," until a fresh provocation is bulldozed from either side. On a day when a group of Parliamentarians, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, watched a special screening of the Bollywood movie 'The Sabarmati Report' in the Annexe, leaders from both the sides came close to breaking the impasse in Parliament with a discussion on the

Constitution to mark its 75th year of adoption. The breakthrough came at a meeting of Speaker Om Birla with floor leaders of different parties. The Opposition parties had demanded discussions in both Houses of Parliament to mark the 75th anniversary of the adoption of the Constitution by the Constituent Assembly. Several Opposition leaders, who attended the meeting, also echoed similar sentiments. The Congress said that the Modi Government has accepted its request for a special two-day discussion on the Constitution and hopefully now it will "allow both Houses to function". The party alleged the Government does not want Parliament to function as it is "running away" from a discussion on issues such as Adani indictment, Sambhal violence and Manipur unrest. Proceedings in both Houses were adjourned for yet another day on Monday amid protests by Opposition members over the Adani indictment row, recent violence in Uttar Pradesh's Sambhal and other issues.

Kazhagam's (DMK) TR Baalu and Trinamool Congress' (TMC) Kalyan Banerjee among others besides Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju and his deputy in the ministry Arjun Ram Meghwal. Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju expressed confidence that both Houses will function smoothly from Tuesday. Sources said the Lok Sabha will take up the discussion on the Constitution to mark its 75th year of adoption on December 13 and 14, and the Rajya Sabha on December 16 and 17. Asked about the Opposition raising other issues such as Sambhal violence and Manipur, Rijiju said a decision will be taken in accordance with the rules. Congress said the Modi Government has accepted its request for a special two-day discussion on the Constitution and hopefully now it will "allow both Houses to function". The party alleged the Government does not want Parliament to function as it is "running away" from a discussion on issues such as Adani indictment, Sambhal violence and Manipur unrest. Proceedings in both Houses were adjourned for yet another day on Monday amid protests by Opposition members over the Adani indictment row, recent violence in Uttar Pradesh's Sambhal and other issues.

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## NCR in GRAP IV grip till Dec 5

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

The ban on driving BS-3 petrol or a BS-4 diesel cars in Delhi will continue till Thursday, as the Supreme Court (SC) on Monday refused to relax restrictions under the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) amid high levels of air quality index levels. The SC observed that despite the alarming air quality levels, there has been a lack of serious enforcement of measures outlined under GRAP Stage IV, which is triggered when air quality deteriorates to hazardous levels, and it will take a call on a proposal for relaxation by the Commission for Air Quality Management on Thursday. The SC stressed on finding a permanent solution to the issue of air pollution in the National Capital Region (NCR), saying a similar situation arose every year between October and December. It further directed the Delhi police to provide armed protection to those Court Commissioners who

wish to continue monitoring implementation of GRAP IV measures in Delhi-NCR. Notably, there was a slight improvement in Delhi's air quality for the second consecutive day on Monday, even as it remained of "poor" quality with an Air Quality Index (AQI) of 280 in the morning. According to data provided by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), the National Capital recorded an AQI of 285 on Sunday, an improvement to the "poor" category, and a welcome relief following 32 consecutive days of "very poor" and "severe" air quality (AQI above 400). A Bench of Justices Abhay S Oka and Augustine George Masih further directed the chief secretaries of NCR states to appear before it through video-conferencing on December 5 to inform whether or not any subsistence allowance was paid to the construction workers who went without work owing to the restrictions.

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## All is well in Maharashtra: BJP

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

After days of uncertainty, in the wake of it leading the MahaYuti to a spectacular victory in the Maharashtra Assembly polls, the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) finally began to get its act together on Monday as it called its legislature party meeting on December 4 to elect its leader - ahead of the swearing-in ceremony scheduled to be held on the following day. Though the BJP has not yet formally announced its Chief Ministerial choice, party sources said that the party's central leadership has put a stamp of approval on the name of its senior leader and former CM Devendra Fadnis for the top post in the state. At a meeting to be held at 10 am on December 4 in the Central Hall of the Maharashtra Vidhan Bhavan, Fadnis will in all likelihood be elected as the BJP's Legislature Party (BJPLP) leader, paving the way for his being sworn in as the next CM of Maharashtra on December 5. The BJP's Parliamentary Board is sending former Gujarat CM and the party's in-charge for Punjab Vijay Rupani and Finance and Corporate Affairs Minister Nirmala Sitharaman as the central observers for the BJPLP meeting. After the BJPLP meeting, the leaders of the ruling MahaYuti, comprising the BJP, Shiv Sena (Eknath Shinde) and NCP (Ajit Pawar), will call Maharashtra Governor CP Radhakrishnan, and formally stake claim to form a new government in the state. While confirming that the



The BJP's Parliamentary Board is sending former Gujarat CM Vijay Rupani and Finance and Corporate Affairs Minister Nirmala Sitharaman as central observers

BJPLP leader would be elected on December 4, Maharashtra party president Chandrashekar Bawankule announced that Prime Minister Narendra Modi would be present at the swearing-in ceremony of the BJP-led MahaYuti government to be held at the historic Azad Maidan at 5 pm on December 5. The BJP is inviting prominent personalities from various walks of life for the swearing-in ceremony. Ahead of the swearing-in ceremony, Fadnis, Eknath Shinde of the Shiv Sena (ES) and Ajit Pawar (AP) are likely to meet in the afternoon of December 4 to discuss and formalise the nitty-gritties of the new government. While the CM and two Deputy CMs will take oath of office and secrecy at the swearing-in ceremony, it remains to be seen as to how many ministers from the BJP, Shiv Sena (ES) and NCP (AP) will be sworn into the office at the December 5 event. Given that there are issues relating to the Cabinet portfolio allocations that

need to be sorted out among the MahaYuti constituents, the three leaders are expected to meet immediately after the swearing-in ceremony and formalise the ministry allocations. Since the Maharashtra Assembly comprises 288 members, there can be a maximum of 43 ministers in the State Cabinet, a number that accounts for 15 percent of total members in the lower House of the State Legislature. A struggle to grab key portfolios has begun among the MahaYuti constituents. The ministries like Home, Finance & Planning, Revenue and Urban development are the key portfolios in the State Cabinet. Apart from these four major portfolios, there will be a lot of bargaining among the MahaYuti constituents over other important portfolios like Agriculture, Industries, Water Resources, Forests, Rural Development, Energy, Public Health and Family Welfare, Women and Child Development and Excise.

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## SC fumes after V Senthil Balaji returns to TN Cabinet



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday expressed concern over reinstatement of DMK leader V Senthil Balaji as a Cabinet minister in Tamil Nadu, just days after it granted bail in the money laundering case related to the cash-for-job scam, and agreed to examine a plea raising apprehensions on independence of witnesses in the case. "We granted you bail and days after you go and become minister. Anybody will be bound to be under the impression that now with your position as a senior Cabinet minister, witnesses will be under pressure. What is going on?" A Bench of Justices Abhay S Oka and Augustine George Masih asked senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, appearing for Balaji. The Bench, however, refused

to interfere with SC's September 26 order granting bail to Balaji on a plea filed by one of the complainants seeking its cancellation. The Bench made it clear it would not recall the order as the law laid down by the SC was benefitting several other persons. Justice Oka further said the court would not issue any notice in the matter but limit the scope of enquiry to whether the witnesses would be "under pressure" to depose in the case. "The apprehension is that considering the seriousness of allegations against the second respondent (Balaji) in the predicate offences, the witnesses may not be in the frame of mind to depose against the second respondent who is holding the position of Cabinet Minister. "This is the only aspect on which prima facie we are inclined to consider the application, and while making it clear that there is no reason to interfere with the judgement on merits and adjudication of the application remains confined to the aforesaid," the Bench wrote in its order. It then asked Balaji's counsel Ram Sankar to get instructions and posted the matter for further hearing on December 13.

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## Tragic end to a promising life

PNS ■ HASSAN (KARNATAKA)

A young Indian Police Service (IPS) officer died in an accident while he was on his way to take up his first posting in Hassan district, police said on Monday. Harsh Bardhan, (26), was a 2023-batch IPS officer of the Karnataka cadre and hailed from Madhya Pradesh, they said.



The accident took place on Sunday evening, when the tyre of the police vehicle he was travelling in allegedly burst near Kittane in Hassan taluk, following which the driver lost control and the vehicle hit a house and a tree on the roadside, police said. According to police, Bardhan was on his way to Hassan to report on duty as a probationary Assistant Superintendent of Police in Holenarasipur, police said.

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## Akal Takht declares Badal a 'tankhaiya'



Sukhbir Singh Badal and other leaders of the previous SAD government during the hearing of 'tankhaiya' (guilty of religious misconduct) case by the Akal Takht

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

The Sikh clergy at the Akal Takht on Monday pronounced 'tankhah' (religious punishment) for Sukhbir Singh Badal for the 'mistakes' committed by the Shiromani Akali Dal and its Government in Punjab from 2007 to 2017, directing him to perform 'sewa' and clean utensils and shoes at the Golden Temple in Amritsar. Pronouncing the order from the 'faseel' (podium) of the Akal Takht in Amritsar, Jathedar of the highest temporal seat of the Sikhs, Giani Raghbir Singh, also directed the working committee of the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) to accept the resignation of Sukhbir Badal as party chief, besides forming a committee to hold elections for the post of SAD president and office-bearers within six months. The Jathedar further announced to withdraw the title of 'Fakhr-e-Qaum' bestowed upon former Chief Minister late Parkash Singh Badal, father of Sukhbir Badal. The five Singh Sahibans (Sikh clergy) also pronounced religious punishment for other Sikh leaders who served as ministers in the Akali Cabinet during 2007 to 2017. Giani Raghbir Singh said Sukhbir Badal, who

was on a wheelchair because of a fractured leg, and rebel leader Sukhdev Singh Dhindsa has been asked to sit outside the Golden Temple dressed as 'sewadars' for one hour each for two days. They will also perform 'sewa' at Takht Keshgar Sahib, Takht Damdama Sahib, Darbar Sahib at Muktsar and Fatehgarh Sahib for two days each. Both Sukhbir Badal and Sukhdev Dhindsa were asked to clean utensils and shoes of devotees at the Golden Temple for one hour, besides listening to 'kirtan'. Before the pronouncement of the edict, Sukhbir Badal admitted his mistakes, including pardoning Dera Sacha Sauda chief Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh in a 2007 blasphemy case during the SAD regime. The punishment came nearly three months after Sukhbir Badal was declared 'tankhaiya' (guilty of religious misconduct) by the Akal Takht. The Jathedar also directed Akali leaders Sucha Singh Langah, Hira Singh Gabria, Balwinder Singh Bhandar, Daljit Singh Cheema and Gulzar Singh Ranike to clean washrooms for one hour at the Golden Temple, and then clean utensils at the community kitchen after taking a bath. They will also listen to 'kirtan' for one hour, the Jathedar said. Other Akali leaders, including Bibi Jagir Kaur, Prem Singh Chandumajra, Surjit Singh Rakhra, Bikram Singh Majithia, Mahesh Inder Singh Grewal, Charanjit Singh Atwal, and Adesh Partap Singh Kairon, were also told to clean washrooms at the Golden Temple for one hour. The Jathedar had summoned the entire Akali Cabinet from 2007 to 2017, the party's core committee, and the 2015 internal committee of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee. Badal was declared 'tankhaiya' after rebel party leaders, including Chandumajra, Kaur and others, appeared before the Akal Takht on July 1, and sought forgiveness for four "mistakes" during the SAD rule between 2007 and 2017, including failure to punish those responsible for the 2015 sacrilege incidents and pardoning Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh in a 2007 blasphemy case.

## China making Pak Navy stronger: Admiral Tripathi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Navy Chief Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi on Monday said here Indian Navy is aware of "surprising growth" of the Pakistan Navy, that aims to become a 50-ship Navy in the next decade with the help of China. He also said Pakistan has chosen weapons over the welfare of its people. Making this assertion here, the Naval Chief said given the state of its economy, Pakistan is strengthening its Navy. "They have chosen weapons over the welfare of their people," he said and quipped "good luck to them." "We are aware of the surprising growth of the Pakistan Navy which aims to become a 50-ship Navy," he said. On China helping Pakistan boost its maritime prowess, the Navy Chief said it showed Beijing's interest in making that country militarily stronger. "Many Pakistan Navy warships and submarines are being built with Chinese support showing that China is interested in making Pakistan's Navy stronger," he said. "Their eight new submarines will have significant combat potential for the Pakistan Navy but we



Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Dinesh K. Tripathi addresses a press conference, ahead of Navy Day

Ranjan Dimri/The Pioneer are fully aware of their capabilities. That is why we are tweaking our concepts to be able to tackle all threats from our neighbours," Admiral Tripathi added. On China's growing prowess, he said it has declared to have its rightful place and has resources to strive to become a world power. Once it does so, friction takes place with existing world powers and it is already being played out, the Navy Chief said, adding it will manifest in the Pacific region. As regards the Indian Ocean region, he said the Indian Navy is keeping a close watch.

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## Delhi airport gears up for foggy days ahead

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

In a preemptive move foreseeing the fog this winter, the Delhi airport, for the first time, has made elaborate arrangements for passengers, by making provisions for dedicated enclosures for their comfort in case the travellers' flight is delayed.

Delhi International Airport Limited (DIAL), which operates and manages the Indira Gandhi International (IGI) Airport with three (T1, T2, T3) terminals has set up special enclosures to accommodate passengers who shall be disembarked from flights delayed for over three hours to allow their faster return to board their

respective flights. According to DIAL, these enclosures will be located at the Bus Boarding Gates and certain aerobridges in Terminal 3, the transfer area in Terminal 2, and the bus boarding gate in Terminal 1. The facilities will serve both domestic and international passengers. The new plan will allow passengers to remain in a separate enclosure, saving time and reducing hassles for both flyers and airline staff. The government has relaxed the security protocols at airports to allow passengers of flights delayed by over three hours or canceled due to fog, weather or technical issues to disembark and return to the terminal. "Ranging from 250 to 450



square meters, these enclosures will be able to hold between 55 and 120 passengers at a time. They are intended to facilitate security screening, allowing passengers to smoothly re-enter the terminal's Security Hold Area (SHA). These enclosures will have essential amenities like toilets and vending machines wherever feasible. The enclosures would only be utilized as a security processing area after which the passengers would enter the SHA which would give the passengers access to

all the facilities available there. Only airline staff escorting passengers from stranded flights would be permitted to enter the enclosures for security reasons", DIAL said in a statement. To maintain safety and security, CISF personnel will be stationed in the enclosures to screen passengers returning from delayed or stranded flights before they are allowed to join other screened passengers in the SHA. Additionally, personnel from the Private Security Agency (PSA) will verify the documents of passengers affected by the fog/weather or technical issues.

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## Parking dispute fuels inferno

SAUMYA SHUKLA ■ NEW DELHI

A routine parking dispute in Southeast Delhi's Lajpat Nagar erupted into a shocking act of arson, as a man's car was set ablaze, allegedly by his not-so-friendly neighbor. Police tracked down the 28-year-old suspect in Amethi, Uttar Pradesh, over 600 kilometers away from the National Capital. According to the victim, this fiery attack was just the culmination of a string of threats, and he believes that if he had been at the scene, his life would have been endangered as well. According to the victim, 48-year-old Ranjeet Singh, an Urdu poet, winner of a peace award from Pakistan, and the founder of cultural



organisation 'Jashn-e-Adab', the accused has been harassing and threatening him for over two years. Despite multiple complaints to police, the authorities used to release the accused, identified as Rahul Bhasin, on bail, Singh said. The issue came to a boil reportedly after some residents of the locality were not happy with Singh for complaining to the police over

them drinking and loitering in the area at night. "I have been living in this locality for about two decades now and the accused moved here two years ago. His landlord and others instigated him against me. They asked him to park his car in front of mine. When I came on July 13, my car slightly touched his car in the parking lot. However, his brother quickly resolved the issue with me and I even agreed to pay for any damage," Singh said. However, events took a turn for the worse after that when Bhasin damaged two of Singh's parked cars with rods. An FIR was registered following which he was arrested on August 14 but released on bail in two hours, he said.

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# Congress workers clash with police

## Delegation prevented from going to Sambhal

PNS ■ LUCKNOW/ SAMBHAL

Scores of Congress workers jostled with police personnel and tried to scale barricades outside the party office in Lucknow on Monday as a party delegation led by its Uttar Pradesh unit chief Ajay Rai was prevented from leaving for Sambhal, which has been made out of bounds by administration after the November 24 violence.

Amid high drama, Rai, who took the driver's seat in his car with senior party leader PL Punia next to him, could not leave for the "fact-finding" visit even as scuffles broke out between the cops and the slogan-shouting party workers, who tried to clear the way for their leaders.

Rai drove the car to some distance inside the party office complex but it was stopped by the police at the gate. After this, he sat on a dharna outside the party office along with Congress workers, Punia said. A large police contingent had been deployed and barricades put up since Sunday night around the Congress office in Lucknow's Mall Avenue area to prevent Rai and others from leaving for Sambhal, which was hit by violence during protests against a court-ordered survey of a mosque.

The Congress hit out at the BJP government, saying it was trying to hide its failure with its "anti-democratic" actions. Rai, who had spent the night at the Congress office along with several party workers, later said the party delegation will visit Sambhal when prohibitory orders are lifted.

Speaking to reporters after

being stopped from going to Sambhal, Rai said, "The administration has told me that prohibitory orders are in place (in Sambhal) till December 10. I had told them that our party (delegation) will go there. The administration said that before December 10, they will let us know.

"And, the day the prohibitory orders are lifted, the Congress delegation will definitely go to Sambhal."

To a question, Rai said, "They may extend the prohibitory order after December 10, as they are feeling afraid. The government is perpetrating this atrocity and injustice to hide its failures. We will definitely go to Sambhal."

In a post of X in Hindi, the Congress said, "The Congress delegation led by UP Congress President @kashikirai ji has been stopped from reaching Sambhal. This dictatorship of the UP government was strongly opposed by Congress colleagues including Ajay Rai ji." "Our courage is not going to be broken by the arbitrariness of the government and the police. We will continue to try to establish peace in Sambhal and provide justice to the people. The struggle continues..."

Before leaving for Sambhal, Rai and Punia paid tributes at the statue of Mahatma Gandhi in the party office.

The UP Congress in a post on X said, "Though the BJP government, through conspiracy and misuse of power, has prevented the Congressmen under the leadership of State President Shri @kashikirai ji to go to Sambhal, we will continue to fight against the violence that took place there due to their conspiracy!"



UP Congress president Ajay Rai after police prevented the party delegation from going towards violence-hit Sambhal, outside party office in Lucknow on Monday

"The Congress Party will expose the conspiracy of the BJP behind the violence in Sambhal and bring out its true face before the public. This state cannot run at all with the slogan 'batenge to katenge' the UP Congress said. The party also said that the morale of its workers was intact even in the face of police action. "We are trying to reach Sambhal to establish peace. We are fighting! We will fight!" the UP Congress said. The Congress workers moving from Delhi towards Sambhal were also stopped at the UP border by the state police. Senior Congress leader Naseemuddin Siddiqui and former UP Congress chief Brijlal Khabri were among those who were turned back by the police.

The police had on Sunday night erected barricades outside the party's office in the state capital and the residences

of its several leaders who were to accompany Rai on the Congress' planned fact-finding visit to Sambhal. Tension has been brewing in Sambhal since November 19, when a Mughal-era mosque was surveyed on court orders following claims that a Harihar temple previously stood at the site. Violence erupted during a second survey on November 24 as protesters gathered near Shahi Jama Masjid and clashed with security personnel. Four people died and several others were injured in the violence that ensued. The Congress' Sambhal city president Tauqeer Ahmed told reporters on Monday that the delegation of the Uttar Pradesh Congress was to reach Sambhal under Rai's leadership to offer condolences to the grieving families, take stock of the situation and appeal for peace. "Earlier, the district officer had imposed a ban on entering Sambhal till November 30, before that we had announced the delegation's visit on December 2. But now, the police administration is stopping everyone from coming to Sambhal. This is against democracy," Ahmed said.

Leader of the Congress Legislature Party in the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly Aradhana Mishra said, "The incident in Sambhal is not just another ordinary incident. It is a big incident. The Congress delegation under Ajay Rai wanted to go there on a fact-finding mission. Since yesterday (Sunday) night, I have been placed under house arrest. Our party leaders are being stopped." "This is complete anarchy on the part of the government. The government is trying to hide its failure by citing the imposition of Section 163 (power to issue an order in

# CM orders third-party audit of 'Har Ghar Nal Yojana' projects

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has directed a third-party audit for the Har Ghar Nal Yojana under the Jal Jeevan Mission, emphasising quality and timely execution. While reviewing the programme's progress on Monday, the chief minister warned against compromising quality in public interest initiatives. He underscored the importance of restoring damaged roads promptly, urging necessary guidance from public representatives. He instructed appointing nodal officers for each project to ensure coordination with local public representatives and completion within the stipulated time.

He also highlighted that departmental officers' accountability would be assessed based on these standards. The chief minister reiterated the mission's core goal — delivering pure drinking water consistently to every household. He emphasised third-party verification and mandated nodal officers to oversee quality and timelines. The review covered Jal Jeevan Mission projects across Uttar Pradesh, including

in the Bundelkhand and Vindhya regions. During the review of community contributions under the Jal Jeevan Mission, the chief minister was informed that 40,951 projects have been approved with a total cost of Rs 1,52,521.82 crore. This includes Rs 71,714.68 crore each from Central and state contributions, with an additional Rs 9,092.42 crore from community contributions for village infrastructure. The solar-based nature of most projects has increased the overall cost by Rs 13,344 crore, but an additional Rs 6,338 crore will be received from the Central government. Notably, the state government is projected to save around Rs 1 lakh crore in maintenance and operations over the plan period. It was also reported that 33,229 schemes in Uttar Pradesh are powered by solar energy, with approximately 900 MW of solar panels installed. The Central government has recognised this initiative as a best practice. These solar projects are expected to reduce carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions by about 13 lakh metric tons annually.

# 13 IPS officers shifted

Lucknow (PNS): The Uttar Pradesh government transferred 13 IPS officers of ADG, IG and DIG level late on Sunday night. In this reshuffle, DGP's GSO Dr N Ravinder has been made ADG of Anti-Corruption Organisation, while Home Secretary ADG Dr Sanjeev Gupta has been given additional charge of DGP's GSO along with ADG of Establishment. IG, Meerut, Nachiketa Jha has been made Home Secretary. IG, Basti Range, RK Bhardwaj has been made IG, Bhawan Kalyan, while Lucknow's JCP (Crime) Akash Kulhari has been sent to the post of IG, Public Grievance. DIG of Public

Grievance Amit Pathak has been made DIG of Devi Patan Range, Gonda. DIG Amarendra Prasad Singh has been made DIG Intelligence, while Ghaziabad ACP Dinesh Kumar P has been made DIG of Basti. Noida's ACP (Headquarters) Bablu Kumar has been made JCP (Crime), Lucknow, while Agra's ACP Keshav Chaudhary has been made DIG, Jhansi. DIG, Intelligence, Sanjeev Tyagi has been made Agra ACP, while Jhansi DIG Kalanidhi Naitihani has been made Meerut DIG. Ajay Kumar, the commandant of 32nd Battalion PAC, Lucknow, has been made in-charge of Noida's ACP (Headquarters).

## MAHA KUMBH 2025

# Eco-friendly rides for devotees

PNS ■ PRAYAGRAJ

As part of its efforts to ensure smooth, safe and convenient travel for devotees attending the Maha Kumbh Mela 2025, the government will launch an online e-rickshaw and e-auto booking system, modeled after platforms like Ola and Uber, with a focus on promoting a Green Maha Kumbh. The initiative is supported by both government and private transport providers and aims to provide affordable, eco-friendly options for devotees. The e-vehicles, which will be available for online booking starting December 15, will feature fixed fares, ensuring no arbitrary charges.

All drivers will be thoroughly trained in good behaviour and customer service. Additionally, a 'Pink Taxi' service will be available, operated by female drivers to ensure the safety and comfort of women devotees. The government has made

extensive transportation arrangements. Over 7,000 roadway buses and 550 shuttle buses will operate, while the railways will run 3,000 trains, including about 1,000 additional ones. UP's start-up 'Comfy E Mobility' is spearheading this initiative, offering an online booking platform for e-rickshaws and e-autos. To further assist devotees, especially those facing language barriers, drivers will also be trained in Google Voice Assistance. The e-vehicles will be available at key locations such as the railway station, bus stand, airport, and hotels.

Comfy E Mobility founder and director Manu Gupta said that the goal of the initiative was to provide a convenient, safe and environment-friendly app-based e-rickshaw taxi service for devotees coming from across the country and abroad for the Maha Kumbh Mela. Starting with 300 e-rickshaws, the service will cover the entire Prayagraj and the Kumbh Mela

area. All vehicles will be GPS-tracked and fully enclosed for added safety. Comfy E Mobility CEO RK Chauhan shared that the company, recognised by Startup India, was committed to reducing air pollution and increasing employment opportunities by introducing eco-friendly electric vehicles as taxis. The company sees the Maha Kumbh Mela as a perfect opportunity to launch this initiative.

'GREEN MAHA KUMBH' Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has directed the development of a 'Green Maha Kumbh', aiming to spread the message of a plastic-free environment globally. To support this vision, the Prayagraj Municipal Corporation has launched an extensive city-wide campaign. Two dedicated teams, each with 12 members and six enforcement vehicles, are raising awareness and enforcing rules

against the use of plastic. The city is divided into three nodes and eight zones, with teams promoting alternatives like earthen cups (kulhads), leaf plates (dona and pattal), and cloth and jute bags. Strict measures are in place to discourage single-use plastics, including fines, seizures, and legal action against violators. Enforcement teams, equipped with trucks, a JCB, guards, and gangmen, are supported by police when needed. This initiative is aimed at ensuring that Maha Kumbh 2025 not only maintains its divine grandeur but also conveys a powerful message of sustainability and cleanliness to the world. "The Prayagraj Municipal Corporation is dedicated to turning CM Yogi's vision of a Clean and Green Maha Kumbh into a reality, setting a global example of environmental stewardship," Municipal Commissioner CM Garg said.

# Peru's CIP to set up its branch in Agra

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The International Potato Centre (CIP) in Lima, Peru, is set to establish a branch in Agra, with an investment of approximately Rs 120 crore on a 10-hectare site. The branch is being opened on the initiative of the Uttar Pradesh government, with support from the Central government. Notably, potatoes are part of the Central government's pilot project to export select vegetables and fruits via sea routes and its cultivation promises significant prosperity for farmers in the state's potato-producing regions. As Uttar Pradesh stands as the country's largest potato producer, with double-cropping practised in several districts like Kannauj and Farrukhabad, farmers in the state are poised to reap maximum benefits from this initiative. Potatoes are a staple in Indian cuisine, making them indispensable in any vegetable-based dish. While generally affordable year-round, their high demand sometimes leads to shortages that capture media attention. The introduction of cost-effective sea exports is expected to stabilise supply, reducing such shortages and related concerns. From the outset, the Yogi Adityanath government has demonstrated a strong commitment to addressing potato farm-

ers' challenges. During his first term, Chief Minister Yogi implemented the Market Intervention Scheme to support farmers facing economic downturns — a first in the state's history. Since then, the government has consistently taken steps to promote the welfare of potato producers, including providing high-quality seeds at fixed prices, tailored to the local agricultural climate. Additionally, at the start of his second term, the chief minister announced several initiatives, including plans to establish Centres of Excellence for Potatoes in Hapur and Kushinagar. Transparent licensing processes for cold storage facilities, as well as development of Mega Food Parks and processing clusters, are also underway, reflecting rapid progress in enhancing storage and value-added processing capabilities. These strategic efforts, supported by both the Central and state governments, are transforming the potato sector in Uttar Pradesh, ensuring sustainable growth and prosperity for farmers. The establishment of international and national-level centres will greatly benefit farmers in Uttar Pradesh, the country's leading potato-producing state. Neighbouring states like Bihar and West Bengal, as well as other South Asian potato-growing nations, will also reap significant advantages.

# 26 carved sculptures to be key attraction

PNS ■ PRAYAGRAJ

The Yogi Adityanath government in Uttar Pradesh has devised comprehensive plans to immerse devotees and tourists visiting the Maha Kumbh in the splendour of India's ancient cultural heritage. One of the initiatives includes installation of 26 carved sculptures of mythological and cultural significance at major intersections across the city. These statues, which include figures like Arjuna, Garuda, Nandi, Airavat and even Mother Ganga, will greet domestic and foreign visitors at 26 key intersections of Prayagraj and are expected to become a major attraction during the event. These iconic sculptures will welcome devotees arriving in the city by any mode of transport. The installation work is progressing swiftly, with six intersections already finished and the remaining 20 expected to be completed within a week. The installation of the statues is in line with Chief Minister Yogi's vision to beautify Prayagraj ahead of Maha Kumbh as well as to enhance visitors' experience of the event. At each intersection, a statue representing a mythological or cultur-

al figure will be showcased. For instance, a statue of Arjuna will be placed at the DPS intersection, while Nandi's statue will stand at the airport intersection. At the Harshvardhan intersection, devotees will witness Maa Ganga riding a boat while performing a aarti. Other notable attractions will include a statue of the great Emperor Samudragupta, the horse from the Samudra Manthan legend, and Shraavan Kumar. The statue of Major Dhyani Chand, Airavat, will further capture the attention of visitors. The government is also prioritising smart traffic management to accommodate the estimated 45 crore devotees expected at Maha Kumbh 2025. Most of the work on traffic management at the intersections is in its final stages to ensure that the influx of visitors is handled seamlessly. Along with the statue installations, efforts are being made to beautify the city, adding to the cultural and environmental appeal of Prayagraj. Green belts are being developed at various crossings to enhance the aesthetic appeal and highlight the city's rich horticultural diversity. The beautification drive is part of the larger plan to make the Maha Kumbh a grand and memorable event for all visitors.

# Tent city to offer top amenities to pilgrims

PNS ■ PRAYAGRAJ

To accommodate the millions of devotees expected for the Prayagraj Maha Kumbh 2025, the Yogi Adityanath government is setting up a luxury tent city with more than 2,000 Swiss cottage-style tents in Sector 20 (Araill) of the Maha Kumbh Mela area. The project is being carried out by the Uttar Pradesh State Tourism Development Corporation Limited (UPSTDC), in collaboration with six key partners: Agaman, Kumbh Camp India, Rishikul Kumbh Cottage, Kumbh Village, Kumbh Canvas and Era. These tents will be constructed to world-class standards, offering five-star hotel-like facilities. The tent city will offer accommodations in four categories: Villa, Maharaja, Swiss Cottage, and Dormitory with prices ranging from Rs 1,500 to Rs 35,000 per day. Additional charges of Rs 4,000 to Rs 8,000 will apply for extra guests (excluding dormitories). This ambitious project aims to cater to the expected 45 crore visitors from 75 countries. The tent city is being developed in line with the vision of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. These tents will be operational from January 1 to March 5, offering world-class accommodation facilities. Visitors can book accommodation via the UPSTDC website or the Maha Kumbh app. To ensure the comfort of guests, the tent city will feature Villa tents spanning 900 square feet, Super Deluxe tents ranging from 480 to 580 square feet, and Deluxe Blocks covering 250 to 400 square feet. These tents will be equipped with modern amenities such as air-conditioning, double beds, mattresses, sofa sets, customised interiors, writing desks, electric getys, fire extinguishers, quilts, blankets, mosquito nets, WiFi, dining areas and common sitting spaces, all with scenic views of the riverbank.

GOVERNMENT OF ORISSA  
DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES  
OFFICE OF THE ADDITIONAL CHIEF ENGINEER,  
BARIPADA, MINOR IRRIGATION CIRCLE, BARIPADA  
e-Mail: IDaemcicr@odisha.gov.in  
No 1961 Dated 29.11.2024  
BID IDENTIFICATION NO.- Addl. C.E. BMC No. - 02/BMIC/2024-25

The Additional Chief Engineer, Baripada Minor Irrigation Circle, Baripada on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites percentage rate bids in Double cover only in ONLINE mode for the Construction of works detailed in the table from "B" & "A" Class & above class Contractors registered with the State Government and contractors of equivalent Grade/ Class registered with Central Government/M.E.S./Railways for execution of civil works on production of definite proof from the appropriate authority. The bidders may submit bids for any or all of the following works.

1	Name of the works	-> Repair & Improvement of MIPs under Improvement to Tanks & MIPs Scheme.
2	Total No. of works	-> 1 (One) no
3	Estimated Cost	-> Rs 128.68 Lakh Approximately (Detail list of work Annexed)
4	Class of Contractor	-> Class "B" & "A"
5	Period of completion	-> As Mentioned against Work.
6	Date & time of Availability of Bid Document in the portal for online bidding.	-> 03.12.2024 at 10:00 AM 17.12.2024 up to 5:00 P.M.
7	Last date/Time for receipt of Bid only in ONLINE.	-> 17.12.2024 up to 5:00 P.M.
8	Date/Time of Opening of Technical Bid.	-> 18.12.2024 at 11:00 A.M. at Office of the Addl. C.E. Baripada M.I. Circle, Baripada through Web-site
9	Date/Time of Opening of Financial Bid.	-> To be intimated online after offline evaluation of Technical Bids.
10	Date of Transparent Lottery (If cases arises)	-> At 11:00 A.M onwards of dated 27.12.2024
10	Name & Address of the Officer Inviting the Bid.	-> Additional Chief Engineer, Baripada M.I. Circle, Baripada At/Po-Baripada Dist. Mayurbhanj PIN-757001 E-Mail: aemcicr@odisha.gov.in
11	Mode of Payment of Bid Cost	-> Online
12	Further details can be seen from the "e" Procurement Portal	-> <a href="https://tendersodisha.gov.in">https://tendersodisha.gov.in</a> .

Additional Chief Engineer,  
Baripada M.I. Circle, Baripada

OIPR-32490/11/0005/2425

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Sale Notice For Immovable Property "APPENDIX-IV-A" [See Proviso to rule 6(2) & 8 (6)]  
E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 Read with Proviso to Rule 6(2) & Rule 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the secured creditor, possession of which has been taken by the authorised officer of Bank of Baroda as Secured Creditor, will be sold on "As is Where is," "As is What is," and "Whatever there is" basis for recovery of below mentioned account/s. The details of Borrower(s)/Guarantor(s)/Secured assets/dues/Reserve Price/e-Auction date and time, EMD and Bid increase are mentioned below.

Branch : Aantiya Talab, Jhansi

Date of e-Auction : 06-01-2025 Last Date of EMD Submission : 04-01-2025 upto 4.00 PM

Sl. No.	Name & Address of the Borrower / Guarantor	Description of Immovable Property with known encumbrances, if any	Total Dues	Date & Time of e-Auction	Reserve Price/EMD/ Bid increase Amount	Status of Possession (Constructive/ Physical)	Property Inspection Date & Time
1.	Borrower : Shri Kamta S/o Shri Girdhari, R/o : 1500, Nai Basti, In Front of Shankar Ji ka Temple, Aantiya Talab, Loha Mandi, Jhansi. Guarantor : Smt. Hemlata W/o Shri Kamta, R/o : 1500, Nai Basti, In Front of Shankar Ji ka Temple, Aantiya Talab, Loha Mandi, Jhansi.	Property : One House Sale Deed No. 405/P, Part of Arazi No. 2113, One Shop Area 153.66 Sq. Ft. and Backside House constructed area 194.40 Sq. Ft. Total Area 349.12 Sq. Ft. / 32.44 Sq. Mtr. Situated at Mauza Jhansi Khas Awadi Outside Datia Gate Jhansi in the name of Shri Kamta S/o Shri Girdhari. Bounded as per Sale Deed - North : House of Seller, South : House of Seller, East : Rasta 5.49 Mtr., West : House of Gauri Shankar Kushwaha.	Rs. 6,95,919.89 as on Dated 16-07-2024 +intt. and other charges	06-01-2025 between 2:00 pm to 6:00 pm	₹ 9,34,000/- (RP) ₹ 94,000/- (EMD) ₹ 10,000/- (Bid increase Amount)	Symbolic	15-12-2024 to 02-01-2025 between 10:00 am to 4:00 pm

For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer / visit to the website link <https://www.bankofbaroda.in/e-auction.htm> and Online Auction Portal <https://ebkraj.in> Also, prospective bidders may contact the authorised officer on Mobile No. 9151027189

Date : 30-11-2024 Place : Jhansi Authorised Officer, Bank of Baroda

# Minister calls upon saints to propagate Sanatan Dharma

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Uttar Pradesh Minister of State Social Welfare, Scheduled Caste and Tribal Welfare (Independent Charge) Asim Arun called upon the saints participating in the programme to propagate Sanatan Dharma in the country and abroad by connecting with the people. He was speaking at the concluding function of the two-day Sansang (convention) of 51 Shakti Peeths and 12 Jyotirlingas Rudraksha Convention Centre in Srigra here on Sunday.

He said that in the city of Kashi Vishwanath, the saints, acharyas and peethadheeshwars of the country and abroad got the opportunity to come together in the Samagam. He said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said that we will all celebrate the 150th birth anniversary of Bhagwan Birsa Munda throughout the year. "The tribal people and others should do the work of beautifying the environment by living on the banks of the rivers for centuries", he said, adding that there is a temple of Tripura Sundari in Tripura where the tribal people are associated while in Devipatan Temple also, people of Arjun tribe and Banvasi Jat worship the goddess as Kuldevi.

UP Minister of State for Education Rajni Tiwari said Kashi is the centre of the symbol of religion and faith. "In the country, temples are the ones that give wisdom to the religion and faith", she said, adding that Shakti Peeths are a symbol of religious, national unity and one soul. The minister said the 51 Shakti Peethas of Maa Sati Mahashakti are not only located in Akhand Bharat but also in other countries of the world and hence bind the entire world in the thread of Vasudev Kutumbakam. "All the holy Shakti Peethas are pilgrimage centres for us", she said.

Several mahants, acharyas and pujaris of 12 Jyotirlingas and 52 Shakti Peeths of India, including Nepal and Pakistan were felicitated. On the occasion of the conclusion of Maha Samagam, Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Nyasa Mandir's general secretary Champat Rai said now the time of Ram Rajya has come and by building Shri Ram temple in Ayodhya, Sanatanis have proved that the day is not far when Ram Rajya will be established in the country.

# Six-day pulse polio campaign in Varanasi from December 8

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The special pulse polio campaign will start in Varanasi from December 8. In the six-day campaign, 5,33,502 children of the district will be given polio dose. The importance of this campaign increases because 541 cases have been reported in neighboring country Pakistan and 106 cases in Afghanistan in this financial year. Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Dr Sandeep Chaudhary, appealed to public to make sure to give polio dose to their children up to five years of age and added being a pilgrimage site, there is more traffic in Kashi, so the risk of spread increases.

District Immunisation Officer (DIO) Dr AK Maurya said 5,33,502 children will take the medicine in this six-day long campaign which is starting with the booth day on December 8. In this, polio doses will be given at 1,813 booths in the district. A total of 1,225 teams have also been deployed for door-to-door visits and 30 transit teams have been formed. For children who are unable to reach the booth, polio doses will be given by going door-to-door from December 9. Even after this, if any child is deprived of taking the medicine, then he/she will be given polio doses on December 16. He stressed on remaining alert and making sure to give polio doses to children up to five years of age.

CONFERENCE: The annual conference of Indian Society of Gastroenterology (Uttar Pradesh Chapter) will be organised by Gastroenterology department, Institute of Medical Sciences, Banaras Hindu University (IMS-BHU) from December 4 to 7 at Deendayal Hasth Kala Sankul. About 2000 international and national faculties and delegates will participate in it. This conference will be inaugurated by the World Gastroenterology Organisation (WHO) president Dr Geoffrey Metz on December 4. Organising Committee Chairman Prof Ajay Khanna, secretary Prof VK Dixit and Chairman of the Programme (Reception Committee) Dr Devesh Prakash Yadav while addressing a press conference here on Monday said that it is a great

opportunity for budding gastroenterologists as well as physicians to learn from international and national stalwarts in their respective fields like liver transplantation, hepatology, IBD, endoscopy and pancreatic disease. According to them, this knowledge fest is aimed to enlighten participants on topics of day-to-day practice as well as recent advances in gastroenterology. Common problems like hiccups, IBS, fatty liver will be entertained as well as updated insights of endoscopy, treatment of hepatitis B and C, liver transplant will be served by various maestros. This 'Gyan - Ganga' is intended to brush up the clinical knowledge of participants and help them in contributing to a healthier society and nation.

# Fest to celebrate infinite wisdom of Kabir from Dec 13

Varanasi (PNS): Set against the historic ghats of Varanasi, the Mahindra Kabira Festival returns for its eighth edition from December 13 to 15. Like every year, the 2024 edition of the much-anticipated festival promises to be a magical celebration of music and heritage, bringing together an extraordinary lineup of artistes and performers from various corners of the country to celebrate the infinite wisdom of the 15th century mystic poet Kabir. Head (Cultural Outreach) of Mahindra Group Jay Shah said the growing appeal of this celebration in Varanasi is truly heartening to witness. "To revisit Sant Kabir's ideas in a variety of ways: through different genres of music, literature sessions and heritage walks

and to live and breathe in an ancient city where he himself lived is truly an experience of a lifetime", he said. The festival promises an unforgettable musical journey, complemented by Varanasi's mesmerising Ganga Aarti on the serene banks of the holy Ganga. The event will kick off with an opening reception, featuring a soul-stirring Carnatic Quartet, conceptualised and curated by Shreya Devnath which features four artistes playing instrumental music. They will perform a range of compositions from the Carnatic to the semi-classical repertoire, interpreted through their instruments, exploring themes of divinity, nature and their interconnectedness. Mehfil by Anadi Nagar will be another

highlight of the evening in which the musical set will perform a selection of folk and theatre songs by fusing modern and traditional Indian music. A dominant element in Mehfil's performances is their resonance with Kabir's Nirgunthara, an ode to the formless, unorthodox and the uncustomary. Each day of the festival will begin with a rejuvenating morning music programme. 'Man Lago Re' by Yusra Naqvi, a vocalist and instrumentalist, aims to create a moving and emotional experience for her listeners through her art. Sarvatura, a gifted ensemble of musicians, led by Himanshu Mishra and mentored by Guru Pt Mithilesh Kumar Jha, promotes the essence of music

across various genres, including semi-classical fusion, Sufi, indie folk fusion, classical and folk instrumental. Currently, they are working on 'Project Kahat Kabeer', which features their own compositions inspired by the verses of Kabir alongside other popular works. Deobrat Mishra, a sitarist, surbahar player and music composer, celebrated as an exponent of the Benares Gharana school and the son of Padma Shri Pandit Shivanth Mishra, combines Banarasi thumri on sitar with Dhrupad and Khayal singing. Mithaavin, a Mumbai-based fusion band, offers a captivating synthesis of Indian classical music and jazz, interwoven with unique rhythmic grooves. Mithaavin brings to life the mystical poetry of Kabir

through a blend of immersive compositions and an eclectic mix of instruments. This performance masterfully combines the recitation of Kabir's *dohas* with insightful explanations. The afternoon sessions will host Dr Archana Sharma, a distinguished scientist at CERN whose recent endeavour, along with co-authors Anil Sharma and Rajesh K Singh, is a visually appealing coffee table book, written in English, Hindi, and Sanskrit, paying homage to Varanasi. Purushottam Agrawal, former visiting professor at the Faculty of Oriental Studies, Cambridge University and acclaimed author of *Akath Kahani Prem Ki: Kabir ki Kavita aur Un ka Samay*, will talk about *Why Kabir?*. Dastaan-e-Kabir by Himanshu

Bajpai and Pragya Sharma is a dangstangi presentation that explores the life, philosophy and poetry of Kabir. Through folk anecdotes and his poetry, this dastan seeks to uncover Kabir's character, spirituality and critical insights on societal and religious issues. Aravani Art Project an Indian public art collective, run by trans and cis women, initiated by Poornima Sukumar, brings together people from the transgender community who paint murals, inspired by their lives and experiences, in and around public spaces in the city. The evening music programme will have varied voices from Kerala to Bengal. Advaita, an eclectic fusion band from Delhi will enthral audience with contemporary Indian sounds.

# Three faculty members of ISc-BHU selected for prestigious award

Varanasi (PNS): Three faculty members of the Institute of Science of Banaras Hindu University (ISc-BHU) have been selected for the prestigious Prof CNR Rao Education Foundation Award for Excellence in Research for the years 2022-23, 2023-24, and 2024-25. The award recognises scientists who have made significant contributions in the fields of pure and applied sciences, including Basic Sciences, Agriculture, Engineering and Technology. For the 2022-23 session, Prof Bhabani Prasad Mandal, senior professor in the Department of Physics, has been honoured with the award. For 2023-24, Prof Krishna Nand Singh, senior professor and Head of the Department of Chemistry, has

been selected. Prof Pratyosh Shukla, professor and Coordinator of the School of Biotechnology, has received the award for 2024-2025. The award carries a cash prize and citation. Prof Sanjay Kumar, Director, Institute of Science, has congratulated the faculty members. The Institute of Science fraternity has also extended its wishes to Prof Singh, Prof Mandal, and Prof Shukla. The award serves as a testament to the outstanding research achievements of the faculty members. The university had invited nominations for the award in July this year. The award is open to faculty members who are members of at least one of the National Science/Agricultural/Engineering Academy or winners of any Gazetted National Award.

# Couple killed in accident

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAVAGRAJ

A 65-year-old former pradhan and his wife were killed when their motorcycle was hit by an unidentified vehicle in the Chharibna Purva Khas village under Industrial Police Station area on Monday afternoon. The granddaughter, who was with them, was seriously injured and admitted to a hospital. On getting information the police reached the spot and sent the bodies for post-mortem. The police is searching for the vehicle that hit them. Former Pradhan of Purva Khas Raees Ahmed was going on a bike with his wife Anjuman (60) and granddaughter Ilma to attend a wedding in Sadwa village when the four wheeler hit their bike. Ultraon police station in-charge Pankaj Tripathi said that police is searching for the vehicle that hit them. In another incident two persons died in an accident which took place in an area under the Naini police station here on Monday.

Mithilesh alias Kallu Yadav (25) of Morhua village of Phaphamau area used to earn his living by selling eggs on a cart. The accident took place on Monday he was going with his friend Lalchand (30) of Gaddopur and a bus going towards the city hit the bike. Mithilesh Yadav died on the spot and seriously injured Lalchand was admitted to a private hospital in Phaphamau from where he was referred to Swaroop Rani Nehru (SRN) Hospital. However, he too breathed his last on the way to SRN Hospital. Naini police SHO Vaibhav Singh said the driver fled leaving the bus behind.

# Advancements in neurology research praised

Varanasi (PNS): A two-day 'Non-Invasive Neurostimulation Workshop' was organised by the Department of Neurology, Institute of Medical Sciences, Banaras Hindu University (IMS-BHU), concluded on Sunday. The programme aimed to raise awareness about various neurological disorders and provided information on advanced equipment like RTMS (Repetitive Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation) and TCD (Transcranial Doppler). This workshop was held in collaboration with ICMR (Indian Council of Medical Research) and BHU. The event was inaugurated by IMS-BHU Director Prof SN Sankhwar while the chief guest was Dr Geeta Jotwani, Head of HRD, ICMR, New Delhi. She praised the advancements in neurology research and encouraged more research initiatives. Dr Jotwani also explained how research grants can be obtained from ICMR by submitting project proposals as per their guidelines. Prof VN Mishra (Head, Neurology Department), Prof RN Chaurasia, Prof Abhishek Pathak, Dr Varun and Dr Anand shared insights on neurological disorders and treatments using these new technologies.

# Man held for killing wife, mother-in-law

PTI/PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

A 41-year-old man was arrested here for allegedly killing his wife over suspected infidelity and his mother-in-law, who tried to intervene in the couple's fight, police said on Monday. The incident took place on Sunday night in Chakeri area's Friends colony when Joseph Peter alias Badal, hailing from Bulandshahr district, killed Kamini Singh (39) and her mother Pushpa (62), they said. The accused suspected that his wife, who worked at a private canteen, had an extra-marital affair with a man from Delhi, Additional Deputy Commissioner of Police (east) Rajesh Srivastava told PTI. Joseph had hired an auto to take Kamini for an outing on Sunday, but she refused, leading to a heated altercation between the couple, Srivastava said. In a fit of rage, Joseph hit Kamini on her neck with a sharp-edged weapon, resulting in her death, he said. He also killed his mother-in-law by striking her with an iron stick on the head, after she tried to intervene in the couple's dispute, the DCP said. Their neighbour called the police after hearing shrieks from Joseph's house, the DCP said, adding that police found Kamini and Pushpa lying dead in a pool of blood upon reach-

ing there. The bodies have been sent for post-mortem examination, police said. WOMAN FOUND HANGING: A woman was found hanging under mysterious circumstances in AB Nagar under Sadar Kotwali police area on Sunday night. Police sent the body for autopsy after investigation. According to a report received here, Krishna Mishra (30), wife of Vikas Mishra of House No.232, AB Nagar, after dinner, had gone to sleep in the room. Late at night when Vikas went to the room, he found her hanging. He took her to the emergency ward of the district hospital where Dr Manish Chaurasia declared the woman as brought dead. Police also rushed to the spot and carried out a probe. Kin could not divulge the cause of her death. In another incident a 19-year-old youth, Utkarsh, was found dead in the bathroom of his hostel in Navin Nagar under Kakadeo police area on Sunday evening. Utkarsh was taken to a nearby hospital where doctors declared him dead. Police apprehend that he died of a heart attack. After investigation by forensic team, the body had been sent for autopsy. The landlord informed the police following which ADCP (Central) Manoj Pandey rushed to the spot with force and carried out investigation.

# Main causes of disability highlighted

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

A lecture was organised on the eve of International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD) the Psychological Counseling cell of the Department of Psychology, Mahila Mahavidyalaya, Kidwai Nagar, on Monday. This programme was organised under the joint aegis of Sankalp Special School Kanpur, Khwahish Foundation and the Psychological Counseling Cell of the college. The programme began with garlanding of the idol of Lord Ganesha and Maa Saraswati and lighting of the lamp. Saplings were presented to welcome and honour the distinguished guest speakers and principal of the college. Principal Professor Anju Chaudhary in her welcome address appealed to the students to always remain sensitive and supportive towards the disabled persons as disability should not be considered as a curse. Through mutual cooperation, harmony and special training, they can also be inspired to live a normal life. In this way they can also be connected with the mainstream of the society. Professor Pratibha Srivastava, Head of the Department of Psychology, threw light on the main causes of disability and the remedial measures. The keynote speaker of the programme, Dr Deepti Tiwari, founder of Sankalp Special School, made the stu-



The MMV organised a lecture on the eve of IDPD on Monday.

dents aware of the major challenges in the lives of the persons with disabilities and inspired them by sharing some success stories of such persons. The special speaker of the programme Dr Alka Mishra, Secretary, Khwahish Foundation, in her address on the occasion advocated helping the disabled person become professionally competent and capable. She said that there are immense possibilities of creativity and innovation among the persons with disabilities. Through skilled guidance and training, they can also become an important unit of the society. Special speaker Nupur Singh, appealed to students to learn from her own example as she suffered from cerebral palsy

and overcome all her problems with expert guidance and counseling is a successful person today. She said in 2019 Nupur participated in KBC with full confidence and also won a huge amount. Her talk was very beneficial and inspiring for students. More than 100 students of the college attended the programme. The programme was conducted by Prof Neeta Mishra and Head of the Department Prof Pratibha Shrivastava proposed the vote of thanks. On the occasion Dr Shobhana Dwivedi, Dr Mamta Mishra (member of Psychological Counseling Cell) and lecturers of other departments of the college made the programme successful with their presence.

# GERICON-2024 concludes at IMS-BHU

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The three-day 21st annual conference of the Indian Academy of Geriatrics (GERICON-2024) concluded at National Centre of Ageing (NCA), Department of Geriatric Medicine in Institute of Medical Sciences, Banaras Hindu University (IMS-BHU) on Sunday. It showcased groundbreaking research and academic excellence in geriatric medicine. Under the guidance of head of department and nodal officer of NCA Prof Anup Singh, two students of department got awards. Dr Nishant Roy won the first prize and a gold medal in the oral presentation category and Dr Debabrata Brahma from the same department secured the second prize in the poster presentation category. Prof Singh said these achievements highlighted the department's dedication to advancing geriatric care and research. Earlier, a special session on falls and frailty was taken by emi-



nent international speakers. Prof Maw Pin Tan of Malaysia and Prof Kamiar Aminian of Switzerland spoke on falls and its prevention. The frailty session was conducted by Prof Shahrukh Kamaruzzaman from Malaysia and UK based Dr Prof Sanjay Suman and Dr Abhaya Gupta. A workshop on brain imaging in dementia was also conducted by Prof SS Chakrabarti and Dr Sumit on the second day. The inaugural

function was organised at KN Udupa Auditorium in which Prof Anup Singh welcomed the guests. Director of IMS-BHU Prof SN Sankhwar gave life time achievement award to Prof B Krishnaswamy. Dean Prof Ashok Kumar and MS of SSH Prof KK Gupta and co organising chairman Dr Prabhakar Shukla were also present on the occasion. Prof SS Chakrabarti proposed the vote of thanks.

# Diabetes mgmt in smaller cities presents several challenges: Singh

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Diabetes has emerged as one of the fastest-growing health challenges globally, and India, often referred to as the "diabetes capital of the world," is at the centre of this health crisis. According to the International Diabetes Federation, approximately 74 million people in India were living with diabetes in 2021, and this number is expected to continue rising. While larger cities like Mumbai, Delhi, and Bengaluru have relatively better healthcare infrastructure, much of the population lives in Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities, where access to healthcare remains limited. This growing gap is making it difficult to effectively manage diabetes in these areas. Several factors contribute to India's diabetes epidemic, including urbanisation, sedentary lifestyles, unhealthy diets and genetic predisposition. The rise of Type 2 diabetes is

not limited to urban or affluent populations; it is now widespread in smaller cities and rural areas. Unfortunately, these areas lack the resources necessary to tackle the growing number of diabetes cases. A significant challenge in managing diabetes in Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities is the shortage of specialised healthcare professionals. Although general physicians are widely available, there is a severe lack of endocrinologists who are trained to manage complex diabetes cases. In fact, there are fewer than 6,500 endocrinologists in India, with most of them concentrated in Tier 1 cities. This shortage means that patients in smaller cities struggle to access the expert care needed to manage complications related to diabetes, such as neuropathy, retinopathy and kidney damage. In addition to the lack of experts, there is also a shortage of diabetes educators and counsellors in these regions.

Diabetes management goes beyond medical treatment and requires patient education on self-monitoring, insulin administration, dietary changes and lifestyle modifications. Without trained diabetes educators, many patients in smaller cities do not receive the guidance they need to manage their condition effectively. This lack of education leads to poor adherence to treatment plans, increasing the risk of complications. Diagnostic services, such as blood glucose monitoring and HbA1c testing, are often limited or too expensive for patients in Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities. Without access to reliable diagnostic facilities, patients are often diagnosed too late, which leads to the progression of the disease and worsens health outcomes. To address these gaps, it is essential to improve both the accessibility and affordability of diagnostic services in

smaller cities. Dr Durga Prasad Singh, MD, Internal Medicine at Regency Health, emphasised, "The management of diabetes in smaller cities presents several challenges due to the limited availability of specialists and diabetes educators. Patients often face difficulties in accessing essential healthcare services, which exacerbates the issue. However, improving access to diagnostic services, offering better patient education and utilising technology for remote consultations can significantly improve the quality of diabetes care in these areas." The responsibility of managing diabetes often falls on general physicians who, while capable of providing basic care, lack the proficient training required to handle complex cases. Managing diabetes involves not only medication but also monitoring for complications such as heart disease and kidney damage.

General physicians, without the support of specialists, are unable to provide comprehensive care, which can lead to poor health outcomes for patients. Telemedicine has emerged as a valuable tool to bridge the gap in care, allowing patients in smaller towns to consult with experts remotely. However, digital solutions cannot replace in-person care, especially for patients with severe complications. To improve diabetes care in underserved areas, the government must incentivise healthcare professionals to work in these cities by offering financial incentives, expanding medical education, and strengthening public health initiatives. A comprehensive approach, including better access to quality care, patient education and enhanced diagnostic services, is essential to tackling the diabetes epidemic and improving health outcomes in Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities.

# SC seeks EC's response on PIL against decision to increase number of voters per polling station

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday sought the Election Commission's response on a PIL challenging its decision to increase the maximum number of voters from 1,200 to 1,500 at every polling station, saying no elector should be excluded.

While asking the poll panel to clarify its stand, a bench comprising Chief Justice Sanjay Khanna and Justice Sanjay Kumar said, "We are concerned. No voter should be excluded."

The bench therefore directed senior advocate Maninder Singh, representing the poll

panel, to file a short affidavit explaining the rationale behind the decision to increase the number of voters per polling station.

"Senior advocate Maninder Singh, appearing for the Election Commission, says on instruction that they will explain the position by way of a short affidavit. Let the affidavit be filed within a period of three weeks," said the bench.

Singh said the bench knew about the consistent allegations on EVMs, adding, "They will keep on coming. The polling has been happening like this since 2019 and political parties are being consulted before this in every con-



stituency." The senior lawyer said polling stations could have multiple polling booths and political parties were consulted in each constituency when the total number of voters was raised per EVM.

Singh further said voters were always permitted to cast their votes, even beyond the prescribed time. The bench, which will hear the matter on January 27, 2025, asked the EC to provide a copy of its affidavit to the petitioner before the next date of hearing.

The PIL, filed by Indu Prakash Singh, challenged two communications issued by the EC in August, increasing the number of voters per

polling station in each constituency across India.

The plea said the decision to increase the number of voters per polling booth was arbitrary and not based on any data. On October 24, the top court refused to issue any notice to the poll panel but allowed the petitioner to serve the copy to the standing counsel of the poll panel so that its stand on the issue is known.

Senior advocate Abhishek Singhvi, appearing for the petitioner, contended that increasing the number of voters from 1,200 to 1,500 would lead to the exclusion of underprivileged groups from the electoral process as an individual would take longer to

cast their franchise. He submitted longer queues and waiting time at the polling stations would dissuade voters from going to cast their votes.

The bench, however, said the poll panel wanted more participation and with the use of EVMs, it took a shorter time compared to ballot papers as the poll panel intended to considerably reduce the time taken to cast votes by increasing the number of EVMs at booths. The petitioner, however, said the poll panel's decision would impact voters during the assembly elections in Maharashtra and Jharkhand (since concluded) and Bihar and Delhi to be held in 2025.

## VHP holds protest against attack on Hindus in Bangladesh

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Vishva Hindu Parishad on Monday held a demonstration here against alleged attacks on Hindus in Bangladesh and demanded that the United Nations intervene to stop the atrocities.

The protest at Jantar Mantar witnessed the participation of several people, who raised slogans demanding the safety of Hindus in Bangladesh.

The Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP) also warned Bangladesh's interim government that if the atrocities against Hindus did not stop, the country could be divided into two.

VHP Delhi unit chief Kapil Khanna said the situation in Bangladesh was worrying. There is anger among the Hindus and they have come here to express their anger, he claimed.

"Atrocities are being committed against Hindus in Bangladesh and lakhs of Hindus have been displaced. Our sisters and daughters are being tortured," he said. Mahant Naval Kishore Das, who also joined the protest, said, "Our sisters and daughters are being tortured, reli-



gious places are being demolished, and saints are being put in jail."

"Our message to everyone that the Hindus will not accept this," Das said.

VHP state secretary Surendra Gupta demanded the United Nations and international human rights organisations intervene and stop the atrocities.

He warned the government of Bangladesh that if the atrocities did not stop, Bangladesh could be divided into two. The Hindus in Bangladesh constitute about eight per cent of the 170 million population.

There has been allegations of over 200 attacks on Hindus in 50-odd districts of Bangladesh since the fall of

Sheikh Hasina's Awami League government on August 5.

The ISKCON (International Society for Krishna Consciousness) also held protest 'kirtans' at its Albert Road centre in Kolkata on Thursday and Friday, demanding the release of jailed Hindu spiritual leader Chinmoy Krishna Das.

The religious body expressed concern over the plight of religious minorities in Bangladesh.

Das was arrested in a sedition case and was later denied bail by a court, triggering protests by community members in various locations, including the capital Dhaka and the port city of Chattogram.

## India set to experience milder winter with fewer coldwave days, says IMD



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India is set to experience a milder winter with fewer coldwave days, the weather office said on Monday and forecast above-normal minimum temperatures during the season.

The forecast of a relatively warmer winter came after the country experienced the second warmest November since 1901, with the average maximum temperature clocking 29.37 degrees Celsius -- 0.623 degree above the normal of 28.75 degrees for the season.

"During the upcoming winter season (December 2024 to February 2025), above-normal minimum temperatures

are likely over most parts of the country," Mrutyunjay Mohapatra, director general of the India Meteorological Department (IMD), told reporters here.

According to the forecast, the winter season was expected to witness fewer coldwave days than the normal of five to six. During the season, above-normal maximum temperatures are likely over most parts of the country, except most areas over south Peninsular India, where normal to below-normal maximum temperatures are likely, he said.

"Normally, we see five to six coldwave days during December to February over the cold core zone, which

includes the northwest, central, east and northeast India. This year, we can expect two to four fewer coldwave days compared to average," Mohapatra said.

According to the IMD, a cold wave is considered if the minimum temperature (T-min) is less than the 10th percentile of the daily climatological value and the climatological daily T-min is less than 15 degrees Celsius. These conditions should be observed for three consecutive days for it to qualify as one coldwave event.

Mohapatra said the absence of western disturbances was the reason for a warmer November.

## Over 88 lakh houses delivered under PMAY-U: Govt tells RS

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

More than 88 lakh houses have been delivered to the beneficiaries under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban), the Rajya Sabha was informed on Monday.

In a written reply to a question, Union Minister of State for Housing and Urban Affairs Tokhan Sahu said that over 1.18 crore houses have been sanctioned by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) till November 18.

The ministry has been supplementing the efforts of states and Union territories by providing central assistance under PMAY-U since June 25, 2015 to provide pucca houses in urban areas across the country, he said.

"Based on project proposals submitted by the State/UT Governments under PMAY-U, as on 18.11.2024, a total of 118.64 lakh houses have been sanctioned by the Ministry... and more than 88.02 lakh are completed/delivered to the beneficiaries."

"The remaining houses are at different stages of construction," the



minister said in the written reply.

He said that learning from the experiences of PMAY-U, MoHUA has launched PMAY-U 2.0 'Housing for All' Mission with effect from September 1, 2024 for implementation in urban areas across the country to construct, purchase and rent 10 million houses by eligible beneficiaries at affordable cost through four verticals of the scheme.

These four verticals are Beneficiary Led Construction (BLC), Affordable Housing in Partnership (AHP), Affordable Rental Housing (ARH) and Interest Subsidy Scheme (ISS). As on date, 29 states and UTs have signed Memorandum of Agreement to implement PMAY-U 2.0.

## CPA can turn lethal for one in three people with lung diseases: Study

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Chronic pulmonary Aspergilliosis (CPA) -- a common fungal infection that claims 340,000 lives every year worldwide, can turn lethal for about 1 in three people with lung diseases, according to a study by researchers including from the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Delhi.

CPA, caused by exposure to airborne spores of the mould Aspergillus, causes gradual scarring of the lungs for months and years. It is a debilitating condition that causes severe tiredness, weight loss, breathlessness, and coughing up blood. While exposure to



Aspergillus is harmless to most people, it may affect those with lung damage. The international study of CPA is led by Professor David Denning from the University of Manchester and

published in the leading journal Lancet Infectious Diseases showed that around 32 per cent of people who have had prior damage from lung diseases will die after five years if they also get

infected by CPA. Nearly 15 per cent of people with CPA will die in the first year following other lung diseases.

Co-authors Dr Abinav Sengupta and Dr Animesh Ray from Delhi-based AIIMS examined the death rates in 8,778 patients described in the literature from all continents except Antarctica. The international study including researchers from the University of Manchester, showed that CPA patients with prior tuberculosis (TB) had a lower overall 5-year mortality of 25 per cent.

However, they also found that patients with CPA end up being misdiagnosed as having TB, and then not treated with antifungal agents. Treatment with antifungal

drugs or surgery is key to improving symptoms and also reducing the risk of death, the researchers said. Though patients with TB tend to be younger, a multi-variable analysis showed prior TB was 24% less lethal than other lung conditions, even accounting for age, though the reason for the difference in outcome was not identified.

Being older than 60, having interstitial lung disease, current cancer and smoking-related lung disease carried worse outcomes, said the team.

Caused by exposure to airborne spores of the mould Aspergillus, it is harmless to most people, but not to those with lung damage, maintained the researchers.

## India's PRAGATI platform helped accelerate 340 infra projects across country, finds Oxford study



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A unique digital governance platform in India, PRAGATI, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has transformed the delivery of the country's infrastructure projects, a study by Saïd Business School, University of Oxford, and the Gates Foundation has found.

Pro-Active Governance and Timely Implementation (PRAGATI) has driven accountability at the most senior level, and supported unprecedented federal and regional collaboration, accelerating 340 projects worth USD 205 billion across the country and cutting through decades of delays, the study noted. The findings were released on Monday at a symposium hosted by the Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Bengaluru, which brought together leaders from academia and the public and private sectors to discuss how digital governance can transform infrastructure development.

Titled 'From Gridlock to Growth: How Leadership Enables India's PRAGATI Ecosystem to Power Progress', the case study noted that many of the 340 projects were anywhere from three to 20 years overdue. This new model not only does away with layers of obfuscation, but introduces

an element of "naming and shaming" that compels officials to be directly answerable, the study has found.

"PRAGATI shows us it is essential for nations to cultivate an environment where top leadership is using technology to drive cross-collaboration and regular accountability reviews. This is particularly valuable for countries aiming to make infrastructure development a pillar of economic growth," said Soumitra Dutta, Peter Moores Dean and Professor of Management at University of Oxford.

"The transition towards such systems may require initial investment and cultural shifts, but the long-term benefits of more reliable infrastructure and public trust are immeasurable, delivering a ripple effect of efficiency and success in their development agenda," he added.

The case study has found that the ministries and departments are now more responsive to citizen grievances, knowing that their performance will be reviewed at the highest level and subjected to a data-driven analysis. "In India's complex federal structure, fostering cooperation between the central government and states -- regardless of which political party is in power at the Centre or the states -- is crucial for effective governance. The relationship

between the central government and states has historically been marked by political tensions and competing priorities," the study noted. "Different political parties often control different states, and partisan differences can easily derail important initiatives. Yet PRAGATI has emerged as a powerful demonstration of cooperative federalism in action -- showing how central and state governments can work together effectively regardless of political affiliations when focused on shared development goals," it added. The case study has recommended that potential exists to further enhance the Team India approach through PRAGATI.

"This could be done by incorporating more state-specific issues in PRAGATI reviews, facilitating direct state-to-state cooperation through the platform, and leveraging data analytics to identify and promote successful state-level governance models nationally," it said.

"Additionally, it will be critical to ensure that state officials have the skills and resources they need to advance their infrastructure and social development goals. Ensuring equitable participation of all states, regardless of political affiliations, will also be an important focus," the study noted.

## Coupling happens without human intervention in more advanced LHB coaches: Vaishnav to RS

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnav has informed the Rajya Sabha that more advanced LHB coaches, introduced by the railways in 1999-2000, are provided with centre buffer couplers in which coupling takes place without any manual intervention. He said this while providing information about various safety measures taken to prevent untoward incidents during coupling and decoupling of trains coaches.

Vaishnav responded to questions raised by MPs Priyanka Chaturvedi and Derek O'Brien regarding a recent case in which a railway employee lost his life after getting sandwiched between an engine and a coach while decoupling them.

They wanted to know if the government maintains any state-wise data of accidents and deaths caused during manual coupling of train coaches since 2019 and the measures taken by the government to prevent such acci-



dents. "ICF coaches, designed and developed during the 1960s, were provided with screw coupling and side buffers, which require manual coupling of coaches. More advanced LHB coaches were introduced by Indian Railways (IR) in 1999-2000," Vaishnav said. He added, "These LHB coaches are provided with Centre buffer couplers in which coupling takes place without any manual intervention. IR (Indian Railways) have taken up the replacement of ICF coaches by LHB coaches in a phased manner." According to Vaishnav, from

2014 to 2024, 36,933 LHB coaches were manufactured as compared to 2337 from 2004 to 2014.

He further informed that advanced semi-automatic couplers have also been developed for use in Amrit Bharat and Vande Bharat trains. "These couplers also enable automatic coupling between coaches without any mutual intervention. Induction training and refresher training at regular intervals is imparted to concerned field staff to avoid the possibility of any unfortunate incidences during coupling/decoupling/shunting etc," he said.

## CPI submits breach of privilege motion against Vaishnav to Rajya Sabha

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

CPI floor leader in Rajya Sabha P Sandosh Kumar on Monday submitted a breach of privilege motion against Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnav, accusing him of misleading the House by providing figures contradictory to the ministry's own data submitted earlier to the House.

According to a statement issued by the CPI, the ministry, in response to a question raised by CPI MP P P Suneer on safety of railway workers, provided the number of 65 deaths and 569 injuries from 2014-15 to 2023-24, a period of 10 years. However, in an earlier reply in Rajya Sabha on December 8, 2023, the ministry said that 361 railway workers died due to train accidents during maintenance work on rail tracks in the last five years (from 2019-20 to 27.11.2023), the statement said. The CPI said the ministry's reply on Monday sharply contradict the figures

provided by it earlier in the Rajya Sabha.

The party said in a sub-question of the raised question, Suneer had asked for the zone-wise details of the "number of deaths and injuries involving railway personnel, including regular employees, contractual workers and outsourced workforce, during construction, maintenance, inspection or coupling of trains in the last three years."

"The ministry's reply of 65 deaths is in sharp contradiction to their own admission in the Rajya Sabha made in December 2023," the CPI said. It said according to the railway ministry's own data provided in the Rajya Sabha in response to unstarred question number 764 by A A Rahim, answered on December 8, 2023, the ministry gave the number of railway workers who died due to train accidents during maintenance work on railway tracks in the last five years (from 2019-20 to 27.11.2023) as 361.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

## Musical chairs

While the BJP-led Mahayuti emerged victorious in Maharashtra, the post-election scenario has been anything but smooth

The Maharashtra Assembly elections have delivered a decisive yet politically tumultuous mandate. The BJP-led Mahayuti alliance scripted a powerful comeback in state Assembly elections by winning 230 seats in the 288-member House. Shinde's Shiv Sena and Ajit Pawar's NCP also performed well. Sena won 57 while NCP won 41 seats. It was indeed a big disappointment for Congress-led Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA). The grand old party registered one of its worst performances in the state Assembly polls after it won only 16 seats. Sharad Pawar's NCP (SP) won just 10 seats, whereas Uddhav Thackeray's (UBT) won 20 seats. Despite this success, the post-election landscape has been anything but smooth, as a fierce tussle erupted between the two allies over the chief ministerial position. The post-election scenario has turned into a high-stakes political drama. Devendra Fadnavis, the BJP's chief minister candidate finally got the post as Eknath Shinde stepped



aside and his son is likely to be deputy chief minister; allegedly on the pressure of the BJP central command. His leadership has been credited with delivering key infrastructure projects and steering the state through various challenges such as agrarian distress and urban expansion.

As the BJP's top leader in Maharashtra, Fadnavis was widely expected to retain the chief ministerial post. The Shiv Sena made significant contribution to the alliance's victory and wanted to retain the CM post for Eknath Shinde. But after days of negotiations he finally agreed to give way to Fadnavis while maintaining that his tenure saw exponential development in the state and he made it number one. The party has pointed out that its cadre worked tirelessly to mobilise grassroots support, especially in rural and semi-urban areas where the BJP's influence has traditionally been weaker. It is also understandable that the BJP should lead the government, citing the party's larger mandate but it will still need NCP and Shiv Sena support to remain in power. The impasse between the BJP and Shiv Sena created an air of uncertainty in Maharashtra's politics. As of now, Devendra Fadnavis appears poised to be the chief minister, backed by the BJP's central leadership. Though, for now the BJP has prevailed and got the plumb post for its man, make no mistake. Shinde's Shiv Sena is not very happy about it and knows once they are marginalised in the game the chances of their party splitting and merging with the BJP are rather high. It has happened in the past and could well be repeated in Maharashtra as well. It would be interesting to watch how Maharashtra politics shapes up. The decisions taken now, the composition of the cabinet and indeed the say Shinde has in the administration would not only shape Maharashtra's governance for the next five years but also redefine the dynamics of India's financial hub.

For them, the commitment is too little and too late. Against the estimated cost of about USD 7 trillion required to implement current Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC), developing countries demand more than USD 1 trillion per year of public finance from developed countries. By 2035 the ambition of NDCs is likely to be revised upward twice and total implementation costs would increase substantially. In this context, the Presidency's proposal shatters any hopes of raising ambition consistent with the goal agreed at the Paris Agreement. The current policy commitments are likely to lead to a temperature rise of a minimum of 2.7 degrees Celsius compared to the aspiration target of 1.5 degrees Celsius. In a surprising departure, the proposed target of mobilising USD 1.3 trillion is to be achieved by 'all actors' instead of 'all Parties' to the UNFCCC. Since a COP decision cannot be binding on 'all actors', the target holds little value beyond a half-hearted appeal. The G77 and China rejected the Presidency proposal followed by a strong letter from the civil society organisations supporting the rejection. The COP29 may still deliver a decision keeping the negotiation process alive as the negotiations are in extended hours searching

# COP29: Stalemate on climate finance

The 29th annual Climate Summit in Azerbaijan reached an impasse as developed and developing nations remained divided over climate finance commitments

The negotiation process at the 29th annual Climate Summit (COP29) in Baku, Azerbaijan came to a halt as both developed and developing countries did not agree with the proposed quantum of climate finance, and its mobilisation approach. The COP29 Presidency had two quantitative targets before the negotiating countries. A USD 1.3 trillion of total annual climate investments in developing countries by 2035 and USD 250 billion of annual climate finance from developed to developing countries by 2035. These targets are to be met through a variety of sources and actors. While it is learnt informally that developed countries, after initial rejection, are willing to commit to USD 300 billion per year by 2035, developing countries rejected the Presidency proposal.

For them, the commitment is too little and too late. Against the estimated cost of about USD 7 trillion required to implement current Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC), developing countries demand more than USD 1 trillion per year of public finance from developed countries. By 2035 the ambition of NDCs is likely to be revised upward twice and total implementation costs would increase substantially. In this context, the Presidency's proposal shatters any hopes of raising ambition consistent with the goal agreed at the Paris Agreement. The current policy commitments are likely to lead to a temperature rise of a minimum of 2.7 degrees Celsius compared to the aspiration target of 1.5 degrees Celsius. In a surprising departure, the proposed target of mobilising USD 1.3 trillion is to be achieved by 'all actors' instead of 'all Parties' to the UNFCCC. Since a COP decision cannot be binding on 'all actors', the target holds little value beyond a half-hearted appeal. The G77 and China rejected the Presidency proposal followed by a strong letter from the civil society organisations supporting the rejection. The COP29 may still deliver a decision keeping the negotiation process alive as the negotiations are in extended hours searching

for a political compromise. Yet, the position taken by the developed countries during COP29 is a concern for developing countries in the next rounds of negotiations. Outsourcing Responsibility The reluctance of developed countries to commit to new, additional and predictable climate finance is not new. At COP29, this reluctance turned into an aggressive posture, shifting the responsibility to mobilise commensurate finance primarily onto emerging economies and other actors. Throughout COP29, developed countries left no stone unturned to shift responsibility onto emerging economies, including China, India, Brazil, and South Africa. They pressed for emerging economies to be considered ineligible for receiving climate finance, except in the form of debt. Additionally, they suggested including emerging economies' domestic investments and climate-friendly South-South cooperation in accounting for climate finance, urging them to voluntarily contribute. Outside the negotiation process, a group of developed countries, including the UK and Australia, signed a pledge to have "no new unabated" coal-based power plants. This may



be a response to the ongoing energy crisis in some developed countries, indirectly pledging to continue using coal with expensive carbon capture and storage technologies, expecting emerging economies to do the same. Adaptation Marginalised The Second Needs Determination Report (NDR) by the UNFCCC Standing Committee on Finance (SCF) estimates that more than USD 200 billion per year of adaptation finance is needed till 2030. So far, adaptation has received little finance from non-public sources. Even if the developed countries agree to USD 300 billion per year by 2035 as some reports suggest, it will categorically leave the adaptation needs on the margins of global climate governance. On a parallel negotiation track on the Adaptation Fund, the USA and EU sparred with the Arab Group on the need to scale up mobilisation beyond USD 300 million. While the financial commitments to developing countries are likely to remain meagrely, the Global Goal on Adaptation negotiations expect the developing countries to develop, implement, track, and report their National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) commensurate with the projected tempera-



ture rise. Equity Under Siege The principle of equity and common but differentiated responsibility and respective capability (CBDR&RC) is the soul of global climate governance through the UNFCCC. The primary responsibility of creating enabling conditions for an equitable transition to a climate-resilient and low-carbon world, including through means of implementation, rests with the developed countries. By trying to shift the burden on emerging economies and keeping the interests and needs of the vulnerable populations on margin, developed countries have aggressively pushed to open the negotiations on equity principles at COP29. Irrespective of the number finally agreed at the COP29, the intent made abundantly clear by developed countries is alarming. It can potentially make any discussion on the quantum of finance irrelevant. It will certainly leave the vast vulnerable population unprotected-a marker of an unequal world. (The writer is a Senior Fellow and Associate Director, Earth Science and Climate Change Division, The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI); views are personal)

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## PICTALK



Artistes perform during the 35th Konark Dance Festival 2024, in Puri

PTI

## The power of touch: A sense that defines us

Touch is the first sense we develop and one that shapes our lives in profound ways. It connects us to each other, fostering love, compassion and resilience

We have read the story of five blind men and the elephant. Each man touched a part and described the animal differently. They would have correctly visualised the pachyderm if they also had sight. There is no denying that all five senses combined define how we live from birth to death. The absence of any will make us feel incomplete. Touch is probably foremost. Scientists say touch is the first of the senses we develop. It is not a single feeling. It consists of several distinct sensations communicated to the brain through neurons in the skin. Touch plays an important role in shaping us. It also conveys compassion from one human to another.



joy and pain alike will forever remain with me. I also recall the happy gurgling sounds of my younger cousins as I patted or tickled them.

The feeling I had as I held my fiancé's hand while putting the engagement ring on her finger was different. It gave me a sense of love and belonging to someone for the rest of my life. We got married and in time had children. Touch was important to nurture and cherish our love for each other and the children. As we held our children close, I could visualise the bliss that my parents might have felt when they held me or my younger siblings. Touch plays an equally important role in grief due to

loss. We are so conditioned to the societal norms of engaging the bereaved in an almost endless conversation, that we often forget their need to sit quietly with their thoughts to contemplate the life lived together and mourn the loss. A warm hug is all that the grieving person needs at that moment. I also visit the temple, not often, but occasionally. A sense of peace pervades me when the priest touches my forehead in blessing. We have heard about the power of healing only through the touch of a saint or even the statue of a revered person. It is the faith people have in the power of touch. It is not unusual to see people across the globe reaching out to their leaders or stars to touch them and shake hands with them. Leaders and stars also feel connected when they are physically close to people. Leaders from different countries, separated by geographies and language, are also seen hugging each other, indicating friendship and camaraderie. We see sports persons hugging each other after an achieve-

ment. It motivates them to perform better. COVID left us feeling bereft of several human emotions. Many lost their lives away from their loved ones. Both, the dead and those who survived missed the familiar touch. There were unanswered questions in everyone's mind. We were afraid of the unknown future. We did not know if touch, the most elementary of our senses that defines our personality, would be a thing of the past for future generations. We faced the unthinkable feeling of living and dying in the sterile 'Don't Touch Me' environment of social distancing. Touch keeps us alive. It imparts within us the ability to love and be loved. Emily Dickinson wrote in one of her poems, almost two centuries earlier. "He touched me, so I live to know... And now, I'm different than before."

(The writer is an author, speaker, coach, arbitrator and strategy consultant. He conducts workshops on creative writing for young adults and corporate executives; views are personal)



SANJAY CHANDRA

## TRUMP'S THREAT IS FOR REAL

Madam — This refers to the editorial, 'Trump's tariff threat'. Trump is an emotional activist. He decides his course based on his momentous decisions and emotions. Most of his decisions do not carry convincing logic or rationality. His earlier tenure had seen several such decisions, but none could help the people in terms of employment or faster economic recovery. Trump's challenges to finish the domination of China and the quixotic actions he took could not make anything tangible in the status. The Indian situation is vulnerable, with its export value being \$73 billion versus imports to the tune of \$119 billion. Any hostile imposition of tariffs will have serious adverse impacts on the balance of trade, which is already tilting against India's favour.

Moreover, India needs political will and moral courage to face such a situation of Trump imposing tariff hurdles. As of now the leadership does not have such a shield. During the pandemic period, the US had placed orders for hydroxychloroquine with Indian manufacturers. But the Prime Minister banned the export of this medicine as it was recommended as one of the drugs to treat Covid. Having learnt this, Trump reacted sharply and said if India does not honour orders placed for this drug, the country will have to face the wrath. Immediately, without wasting any time, our Prime Minister revoked the ban and attended to the order. As known to all, the Republican Party is a party of the affluent in the US, Trump, being a Republican leader, would not have any sentiments in safeguarding the interests of the rich in America. He will go all out to re-establish the supremacy of America in terms of international affairs or the power of the US dollar. But he should realise that the world order is changing fast and undergoing sweeping changes in many respects.

A G Rajmohan | Anantapur

## FADNAVIS WINS THE RACE

Madam — The selection of the Chief Minister of Maharashtra appears to be

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Taj Mahal bears the brunt of pollution



The Taj Mahal, which is known for its stunning beauty, has suffered dramatically from the effects of air pollution over the years. Once a shimmering white monument, it now bears the marks of environmental degradation. This decline is primarily due to pollution from industrial activities and the increasing vehicle emissions in Agra, as well as the pollution of the Yamuna River, which runs behind this UNESCO World

Heritage site. Importantly, the toxic gas emanating from the Yamuna has been doing greater harm, and it is said to be the main culprit behind the discolouration of the Taj's glorious white marbles. For over two decades, various Indian research institutes have explored restoration methods to reverse the discolouration of the Taj and revive the monument to its past glory, but all their efforts proved unsuccessful. The 17th-century Mughal architecture, which is a symbol of India's rich history, needs swift and decisive action to get back its legendary lustre. Involving national and international experts can provide comprehensive solutions to safeguard this magnificent monument for future generations.

Ranganathan Sivakumar | Urpakkam

tougher than winning elections for the Bharatiya Janata Party while going by the race between Devendra Fadnavis and Eknath Shinde to occupy the CM's chair. The hunger for power by the BJP keeps Eknath Shinde in the second line over Fadnavis.

The swearing-in ceremony of the new government is likely to take place on December 5, though there's not yet an official report from Raj Bhavan on this issue. Meantime, Eknath Shinde had headed for his hometown after his meeting with the Home Minister Amit Shah with the Mahayuti members. The disappointment of Shinde is wide open and he is in consultation with the NCP leadership and likely to put forth his demands for a cream of portfolios. The BJP is learnt to have offered a Union Cabinet to Shinde if he is unwilling to be a deputy CM also, the speculation is doing the rounds. Whatever may be the reasons, the delay in forming the government for their own benefits shouldn't cost the man-hours. The welfare of the people is more important than witnessing warfare between the elected alliance part-

ners, which doesn't augur well for the centre to justify their action.

A P Thiruvadi | Chennai

### PROTECT SEWER WORKERS

Madam — In India, the poor sewer system has dried the citizens' lives with spreading disease, stinks and even taking lives in the cleaning process. Over the last 15 years, across India, 1,288 sewer deaths have been recorded by the National Commission for Safai Karmacharis. Only in the capital city, Delhi, 95 deaths recorded so far. The desperate issue is yet not to halt; on the contrary, it is increasing dreadfully. In the era of access to technology and digital India, the government's failing to launch any well-designed resource to facilitate the way of cleaning is concerning; maybe, due to particular caste, the government is still giving the cold shoulder. It's not tolerable, at any cost. The authorities must address it and ensure the safety of citizens and cleaners.

Jakir Hussain | Kanpur

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## FIRST COLUMN

## WORKPLACE GOSSIP: A DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD

It thrives in organisational environments as a form of informal communication



SAKSHI SETHI

Workplace gossip is an enduring phenomenon in organisational environments, involving informal communication with others, often without their knowledge. While it is frequently dismissed as harmless chatter, workplace gossip can have profound implications for individuals, teams and organisational culture. It is a double-edged sword. On one hand, it can serve as a bonding tool and provide informal channels of communication while on the other hand, it can breed mistrust, damage reputations and create a toxic work environment. Determining whether workplace gossip is harmless, or harmful depends on the nature, intent and consequences of the gossip.

The term stems from various psychological and organisational factors. Human curiosity and the desire for social connection often drive employees to share information, even if it is speculative. In many cases, gossip becomes a way to establish or strengthen bonds within a team. Another cause is ambiguity or lack of transparency in communication. Employees feel uncertain about organisational changes, leadership decisions, or colleagues' actions, and may resort to gossip to fill information gaps.

Moreover, competitive workplaces can foster gossip to gain leverage or influence perceptions. Though often vilified, gossip is not inherently negative. Looking at the positive perspective, it can foster social cohesion by creating shared narratives and providing an outlet for



employees to express concerns informally. It can also act as an informal feedback loop, alerting leadership to potential issues like toxic behaviours or dissatisfaction that may remain hidden. However, the negative consequences of workplace gossip often outweigh the positives. Gossip can damage reputations, lower morale and lead to feelings of mistrust and resentment.

Employees who are the targets of gossip may experience stress, anxiety and a decline in productivity. Additionally, pervasive gossip can erode an organisation's culture creating a hostile work environment where collaboration and trust are undermined. It is very often that stressful work environments, complaining about coworkers, personality clashes, or misunderstandings stem from unmet expectations and a lack of effective communication channels. It can exacerbate the urge to vent frustrations informally.

While airing grievances may feel like a release or an attempt to bond with others, it rarely resolves underlying issues. Instead, it creates a cycle of negativity. Organisations and leaders can adopt proactive strategies such as promoting open communication, fostering a positive work culture, leading by example and moreover empowering employees can be a few steps to mitigate the harmful effects of gossiping. Today the term gossiping isn't limited to celebrities and family reunions. When discussing the workplace, it has become a way not to take responsibility for any actions or reactions they create. By focusing on someone else, an individual can shift the focus from the circumstances. Complaining about colleagues behind their backs is a detrimental habit that harms relationships, morale, and workplace culture. By choosing direct, empathetic communication and focusing on solutions, employees can foster a more positive and productive environment. Eliminating backdoor complaints is not just about professionalism rather it is about creating a culture of mutual respect where everyone feels valued and heard.

(The writer is an educator; views are personal)

## Reimagining governance in Punjab



A S MITTAL

Punjab must address longstanding bottlenecks and embrace digital transformation and foster public-private partnerships to create a model of excellence for the nation

In a rapidly evolving world, governance demands agility, transparency, and citizen-centric solutions. Governments worldwide face the complex challenge of balancing bureaucratic structures with the need for efficiency and innovation. A case in point is the ambitious Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) in the United States, a high-profile initiative spearheaded by incoming President Donald Trump and the project led by entrepreneur leaders Elon Musk and Vivek Ramaswamy. This bold move aims to revolutionise public administration through structural reforms and entrepreneurial strategies to enhance government efficacy and improve the delivery of citizen services. With its rich legacy and robust potential, Punjab stands at a similar crossroads, where embracing transformative models could redefine governance.

The Governance Landscape: Punjab, with its educated workforce, vibrant agricultural economy, and dynamic MSMEs, has made commendable strides in governance reforms. However, bottlenecks in service delivery, resource misallocation, and policy execution often impede progress. Despite notable efforts, the state lags in efficiency metrics compared to leaders like Kerala, which excels in health, education, and welfare schemes, and Tamil Nadu, which is highly efficient in infrastructure, industry, and public welfare, as highlighted by the NITI Aayog's Good Governance Index 2024. Punjab's governance challenges are compounded by the sheer scale of its administrative machinery—50 parent departments, 163 affiliated organisations, and over 75 administrative secretaries.

This labyrinthine structure creates hurdles for citizens seeking essential services. Introducing the Punjab Efficiency Commission (PEC); Punjab can adopt a model akin to DOGE by establishing a Punjab Efficiency Commission (PEC) to address these challenges. Headed by an apex officer, ideally, of Chief Secretary rank, the PEC would operate as a centralised authority reporting directly to the Chief Minister. Its mandate would be to synchronise key departmental goals, oversee human resource operations, ensure seamless policy execution, and implement data-driven governance frameworks. This institution would embody accountability, transparency, and innovation—hallmarks of good governance. Key Pillars of Reform:

**Accountability and Transparency:** In the US, agencies like the Government Accountability Office (GAO) ensure effective resource utilisation and transparency. Punjab could establish its own state-level accountability office under the PEC. This body would audit departmental performance, monitor public expenditure, and publish actionable reports to foster trust and combat inefficiency.

**Digital Transformation:** Punjab has made progress in digital governance, but much more can be achieved by studying global benchmarks. For instance, USA.gov serves as a one-stop portal for citizens that revolutionises



THE JOURNEY TOWARDS GOOD GOVERNANCE ISN'T MERELY ABOUT ADDRESSING INEFFICIENCIES—IT'S ABOUT SETTING BENCHMARKS FOR OTHERS TO FOLLOW. WITH BOLD REFORMS, PUNJAB HAS THE POTENTIAL TO TRANSITION FROM A RESOURCE-RICH STATE TO A GOVERNANCE POWERHOUSE

how people interact with their government, showcasing the vast potential of technology to improve efficiency. Punjab could develop a unified digital platform for licensing, tax filing, and grievance redressal services. A dedicated state-run mobile application could provide real-time updates on service requests, enhance accessibility, reduce delays, and track the progress of their cases in real time.

**Performance Metrics and Dashboards:** An essential aspect of U.S. government efficiency is using performance metrics to inform decision-making. For instance, The Obama-era Performance.gov tracked federal projects and outcomes, creating a culture of accountability. Punjab could develop a similar dashboard to monitor critical sectors like healthcare, education, agriculture, industry and infrastructure. By leveraging big data and analytics, policy decisions can be based on measurable outcomes, driving impactful governance rather than guesswork.

**Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs):** PPPs have proven transformative in infrastructure and service delivery. These partnerships, from highways to healthcare and education, allow the government to use private sector expertise and funding to improve services and reduce costs. A case study from the USA illustrates the success in Tennessee. The government implemented a data-driven budgeting model, saving millions of taxpayer dollars while improving service quality in education and healthcare.

Similarly, New York City's innovation office streamlined procurement processes, cutting costs by 30 per cent. However,

Punjab has over 147 PPP projects worth Rs 60,000 crore in critical sectors like healthcare, education and infrastructure, leveraging private expertise for better resource management and infrastructure, accelerating projects through collaborative funding models. This model could be the key to unlocking sustained growth in the agriculture sector, partnering with tech companies for innovative farming solutions to monitor soil health, weather patterns, and crop performance can promote more sustainable practices and increase productivity.

**Investing in Human Capital:** A critical factor in the success of any government's efficiency efforts is its investment in human capital. Punjab must recognise that an empowered civil service is essential for good governance. The state can cultivate a workforce skilled in the latest management techniques, data analysis, and digital tools by establishing training academies or partnering with top institutions. This approach will enable the government to respond to the evolving challenges of governance and ensure that its public servants are accountable and well-equipped with the knowledge needed to drive meaningful change to perform their responsibilities effectively.

**Citizen Participation:** Finally, the US model of citizen participation in governance through public hearings and feedback mechanisms can be a valuable tool for Punjab. US citizens are encouraged to engage with the government, provide policy input, and hold officials accountable.

This fosters a sense of ownership and civic responsibility. However, the Punjab government has ini-

tiated 'Sarkar Tuhade Dwar' and 'Sarkar Vyapar Milni'. It must create more avenues for regular engagement with citizens to understand pain points and incorporate real-world insights into governance reforms. Punjab can bridge the gap between policymakers and citizens by making governance more inclusive and participatory, ensuring reforms resonate with public aspirations.

The way forward for a resurgent Punjab: Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann's vision for a dynamic Punjab can materialise by embracing these transformative practices.

The Punjab Efficiency Commission, supported by robust technology, accountability frameworks, and participatory governance, can usher in a new era of efficiency and transparency. The journey towards good governance isn't merely about addressing inefficiencies—it's about setting benchmarks for others to follow. With bold reforms, Punjab has the potential to transition from a resource-rich state to a governance powerhouse, leading India's states in delivering citizen-centric solutions. The time to act is now. Punjab's future lies in its ability to reimagine governance, ensuring every citizen experiences the transformative power of efficient and inclusive administration.

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

## Breaking the stigma: Prioritising mental health for a happier, resilient future

Depression, anxiety and other mental health challenges must be taken seriously. They affect one in five people worldwide

Depression in mental health is a feeling of low, sad and unhappy. Which can lead to loss of appetite, loss of sleep, loss of interest, and negative thoughts. Mental health is about how we think, feel and cope with life's challenges. Just like we take care of our physical health, looking after our mental health is equally important. Parents play a key role in creating a happy, supportive, and understanding environment at home.

Mental health issues such as anxiety, fear and depression are common, and they can arise due to bullying, family conflicts, changes in school or life, academic stress, or even harsh punishments. These challenges can make children feel isolated, angry, or lose



RESHMA A SANGODKAR

focus on their studies. It's crucial to understand that seeking help from counsellors, therapists, or trusted adults like parents or teachers is a sign of strength, not weakness. Today, one in five people faces mental health challenges. Professional support, such as therapy, can significantly improve emotional wellbeing. Activities like yoga, sports,

and meditation are also effective for calming the mind and reducing stress. Additionally, practising mindfulness—focusing on the present moment—can help children feel more peaceful and focused. Good habits, such as getting enough sleep, eating healthy food, and staying hydrated, support both mental and physical health. Engaging in enjoyable hobbies can boost happiness and reduce stress.

Schools and families need to work together to provide children with positive environments, where they feel safe and supported. In our society, mental health issues are often overlooked, and stigma prevents many from seeking help. Depression in mental health is a feeling of low, sad and

unhappy. Which can lead to loss of appetite, loss of sleep, loss of interest and negative thoughts. World Mental Health Day is celebrated on October 10 every year. Many people are affected by depression in the world. Very common in today's world. Campaigns like World Mental Health Day aim to break these barriers and encourage open conversations. And encourages those affected to seek help from a Psychiatrist.

Teachers should be trained to identify early signs of mental health problems in children and provide guidance. Parenting is also a key factor in shaping a child's mental health. Parents should avoid unhealthy comparisons and ensure their children feel emotionally secure. Building a



strong, friendly relationship with children helps them share their feelings without fear. Simple practices like mindful-

ness, meditation and breathing exercises can also help children and adults stay calm and focused. As Lord Buddha said,

"Do not dwell in the past, do not dream of the future, concentrate the mind on the present moment."

This profound phrase highlights the essence of mindfulness—focusing fully on the present and giving your complete attention to whatever you are doing. Mindfulness means being fully present in the moment, whether eating, studying, or walking. Meditation, on the other hand, is about dedicating time to relax the mind and focus on breathing. Both practices help reduce stress and improve sleep, allowing children to perform better in school and other activities. Engaging in activities like participating in marathons, running 5 kilometres, or setting personal fitness goals can help reduce depres-

sion and improve mental wellbeing. Yogic exercises like Surya namaskars help in boosting our prana level to stave off depression.

Welcoming an idol of Lord Buddha into your home or workplace, reading positive affirmations each morning, and offering gratitude to those around you and God are wonderful practices to keep the mind happy and at peace.

By creating supportive environments and normalising mental health discussions, we can ensure that children grow up to be emotionally strong, happy, and resilient individuals. The key is to break the stigma and make mental health a priority for everyone.

(The writer is an author and freelance writer; views are personal)

# Get UN forces, save 'our people': Didi to PM Modi

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■  
KOLKATA

Concerned at the deteriorating situation in Bangladesh Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has appealed to the Centre to move the United Nations seeking deployment of UN Peace Keeping force so as to save the lives and properties of the Hindu and other minorities including the tribal people. Apart from seeking deployment of UN peacekeeping mission Banerjee also demanded a statement from Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the issue. The Chief Minister while delivering a speech in state Assembly on Monday said that she did not have the brief to speak on international affairs, which was why her government had said that it would accept whatever decision the Centre would take vis a vis Bangladesh. However, "The Government of India is totally keeping mum on the issue. We respect the Indian government's stance, but atrocities on religious grounds are unacceptable. Considering the deteriorating situation in that country and attack on the minorities I request the PM to



intervene and if he cannot do that for other preoccupations at least the External Affairs Minister should give a statement on the issue in Parliament, which is in session." Expressing solidarity with the affected people Banerjee said, "we have families, properties, and loved ones in Bangladesh. They are in trouble we don't want our people to be harassed and tortured like this," adding, "The Centre should appeal to the UN to send peacekeeping mission in Bangladesh." The CM, who has always been under attack from the Opposition BJP for her policy of minority appeasement in Bengal would however not dwell on who she meant by the term, "our people" across the border.

The situation in Bangladesh -- that had gone haywire following a "student-led" uprising backed by the fundamentalist forces that saw the exit of democratically elected PM Sk Hasina --- had assumed volcanic proportions with the Hindu and other minorities including the tribal people being attacked with systematic regularity. Things reached an alarming pass when the security forces in Bangladesh arrested a senior monk of International Society of Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) Chinmoy Krishna Das Prabhu along with three other sadhus. Demanding deployment of UN peace keeping forces the Chief Minister said, "We want our people to be rescued first. If they cannot live there we will open our doors for them. We can feed them easily but for that the Centre has to take a policy decision and give us permission. We are getting information of atrocities from the relatives of those who are returning to India. I had also a talk with the ISKON chief. I was so concerned that I had to make my statement on the issue on the floor of the House."

## NDMC unveils water infrastructure for Lutyens' Delhi

STAFF REPORTER ■  
NEW DELHI

New Delhi Municipal Corporation (NDMC) Vice Chairman Kuljeet Singh Chahal on Monday unveiled key water infrastructure projects aimed at enhancing the quality and round-the-clock availability of water supply for Lutyens' Delhi residents. An official statement said that these initiatives are aligned with the Jal Jeevan Mission and Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT 2.0) of the Central government, marking a significant step to ensure safe drinking water for every household. "The NDMC has launched the first phase of its 24x7 water supply initiative in the Vinay Marg area, intending to provide round-the-clock filtered water," Chahal said. Key upgrades include replacing and installing pipes, adding pumps and panels, and integrating advanced systems like Water GEM Software for water balancing, he added.

## MEA expresses regret over breach at Bangladesh High Commission

STAFF REPORTER ■  
NEW DELHI

The Ministry Of External Affairs (MEA) on Monday said the breach of premises at the Bangladesh Assistant High Commission in Agartala is "deeply regrettable." The incident took place as scores of people took out a massive rally in the Tripura capital to protest the arrest of International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) leader Chinmoy Krishna Das, demanding his immediate release, and the stopping of attacks on Hindus in Bangladesh. Issuing a statement on this, the MEA said, "Diplomatic and consular properties should not be targeted under any circumstances." "The government is taking action to step up security arrangements for the Bangladesh High Commission in New Delhi and their Deputy and Assistant High Commission in the country," it added. The rally near the Bangladesh Assistant High Commissioner's office in Agartala was taken out from the Hindu Sangharsh Samity's banner, which is an affiliate of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP).

VHP's Tripura secretary Sankar Roy told reporters, "Since the fall of the Sheikh Hasina government, attacks are being carried out on Hindu temples and Hindu houses and businesses are being looted in Bangladesh." "Recently, ISKCON's Chinmoy Prabhu raised voice against the atrocities on Hindus in Bangladesh and was arrested and sent to prison on false charges. We want his unconditional release," Roy added. He said they want the MEA to take up Chinmoy's arrest on false charges and the attacks on Hindus with the Bangladesh government immediately. A memorandum on this issue was also submitted to Arif Mohammad, the Assistant High Commissioner of Bangladesh in Agartala. Tensions in Bangladesh have been escalating over the alleged attacks on Hindus and other religious minorities in the country, with additional protests being triggered by the arrest of Hindu priests in Dhaka. Protests have been taking place across Bangladesh as well as India, demanding release of former ISKCON leader Chinmoy Krishna Das.

## Man arrested for murder of delivery boy in West Delhi

STAFF REPORTER ■  
NEW DELHI

A 27-year-old man was arrested from Punjab, two years after he allegedly killed a Zomato delivery boy over an issue of smoking in west Delhi. According to police on Monday, the accused, who has been identified as Surjeet Singh, disguised his identity as Nihang and associated with local religious groups to avoid recognition and evade arrest. "Singh had been declared a Proclaimed Offender by a court here and was apprehended after a week-long operation in Punjab," DCP(crime) Satish Kumar said.

## Tragic end to a promising life

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Bardhan sustained severe head injuries and died in the hospital during the course of treatment, while the driver, Manjogowda, suffered minor injuries, a senior police officer said. The IPS officer had recently completed his four-week training at the Karnataka Police Academy in Mysuru, police said, adding his father is a sub-divisional magistrate. Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah offered condolences to the officer's family. "Saddened to hear about the death of probationary IPS officer Harsh Bardhan in a horrific accident near Kittane border of Hassan-Mysuru Highway. It is very sad that such an accident happened while he was on his way to take charge as an IPS officer. This should not have happened when years of hard work were paying off," he said in a social media post. "I pray to God that Harsh Bardhan's soul rests in peace. My condolences to the family of the deceased," he added.

## Parking dispute fuels inferno

From page 1

Just two days after he was released on bail, Bhasin came to the area and abused and threatened Singh. "We complained to the police. However, he fled from the place for about a month. Upon returning, he surrendered to the police. He was arrested but was given bail again," Singh said. On October 20, Bhasin, allegedly came to the locality in an intoxicated state, brandishing a gun. "He kept his gun inside after he realised there was CCTV surveillance. However, he urinated in front of my house and hurled abuses at me at midnight," Singh said, adding that when the police arrived he ran away from the place. On November 5, Bhasin was arrested by the police but eventually given bail. On

November 29, Singh lodged a complaint against Bhasin for allegedly damaging his Maruti Suzuki Ciaz parked outside his house, a senior officer said. Upon checking the CCTV footage, Bhasin was seen twisting the rear view mirror of the Ciaz, and parking his own Mahindra Thar in the middle of the road and leaving, the officer said. Acting on the complaint, police seized the Thar and a probe was initiated. "On the intervening night of November 30 and December 1, the accused brought paint thinner and set the bonnet of Singh's car on fire," the officer added. The act was captured in the CCTV camera, and a team was formed to track and nab Bhasin. The police tracked him down in Amethi on Sunday. The accused had fled to Amethi in his Honda Amaze car. He has been brought

back to Delhi and is being interrogated, the officer said. Further investigation in the matter is underway, the police said. However, Singh says he fears for his life, "If I was present that day, he would have burnt me too. This is happening after I have informed the SHO multiple times about him and he was given bail in some hours. What if he kills me after he is released this time?" Although, the matter that escalated from a petty parking issue is not a case of Lajpat Nagar alone. In an incident that went viral over social media, a woman and her husband were assaulted by their neighbours in south Delhi's Amar colony over a quarrel related to a parking spot. The viral video showed the accused Daljeet Singh and four of his family members, thrashing the couple with a wooden log and hurling abuses at them.

## All is well in Maharashtra: BJP

From page 1

On his part, Shinde has been demanding the crucial state Home ministry, a portfolio, a portfolio for Fadnavis held when he was Deputy CM in the previous Eknath Shinde-led government. However, Fadnavis is reluctant to part with the Home portfolio, even after becoming the CM. However, Shinde has reportedly made the Home portfolio as a pre-condition for his accepting the deputy chief minister's post under Fadnavis as the CM. Ajit Pawar, who has held the Finance & Planning

portfolio for a very long time, has been insisting that he be given the Finance & Planning ministry. The BJP, which heads the MahaYuti, will have no other choice but to allocate Home and Finance & Planning portfolios to Shinde and Ajit Pawar respectively. As part of the coalition mantra, the BJP will try to keep its allies in good humour in matters relating to the portfolio allocations. While the BJP will keep the crucial post of Speaker in the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly, it may hand over the post of the Chairperson of Maharashtra

Legislative Council to either the Shinde Sena or the Ajit Pawar-led NCP. Given that the successive governments have long used the chairman posts of various state-run boards as carrot to keep the disgruntled MLAs under control, it remains to be seen if the new MahaYuti government will appoint the heads of the various State-run boards immediately after the formation of the government or the chief minister will use these appointments as lever to manage the ruling alliance legislators as done by his predecessors.

## Opposition, Treasury benches agree to discuss...

From page 1

While Congress led Opposition sought for an official announcement of dates for the desired discussion including that on the Constitution before agreeing to the resumption of regular parliamentary proceedings, Samajwadi Party has asked to raise the Sambhal issue and the TMC will raise the Bangladesh crisis in the

Lok Sabha. However, sources in the Government said that the Congress will not be allowed for specific discussion on the Adani controversy but they shall not object if the Opposition members may indicate about it in the midst of any debates. Congress has been persistent in raising the issue of the indictment of US prosecutors of Adani Group chairperson Gautam Adani and other company officials

on bribery and fraud charges. The BJP on the other hand has projected the main Opposition party as the principal violator of constitutional norms and spirit when it was in power, asserting that the Modi Government has strengthened constitutional practices and principles during its over 10-year tenure. Congress general secretary in-charge communications

Jairam Ramesh recalled that Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi had written to Speaker Om Birla on November 26, requesting a special two-day discussion on the Constitution and the leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha had also written a similar letter to the chairman the same day. "Hopefully now the Modi Government will allow both Houses to function from tomorrow," he said.

## SC fumes after V Senthil Balaji returns to TN Cabinet

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The Bench noted that the current plea, filed by one of the complainants K Vidhya Kumar, was based on the apprehension that immediately after the grant of bail Balaji was appointed a cabinet minister. On October 25, the SC in another matter related to Balaji was informed that a petition seeking review of an order of bail to the DMK leader in the case had been filed. The SC granted bail to Balaji after he was in jail over 15 months, noting there was no possibility of the completion

of trial in the near future. On September 30, the SC directed the Madras High Court chief justice to appoint another judge for the trial against Balaji. Balaji, 48, was sworn in as a minister by Tamil Nadu Governor R N Ravi on September 29 and was assigned the same key portfolios, electricity, non-conventional energy development, prohibition and excise, he held previously in the Stalin Cabinet. The Enforcement Directorate (ED) arrested Balaji, representing Karur assembly constituency, on June 14,

2023 in the case when he was the transport minister during the previous AIADMK regime between 2011 and 2015. On February 13, the TN Governor accepted Balaji's resignation from the council of ministers. The top court's reprieve on September 26 ended Balaji's 471-day incarceration. The ED had filed a case of money laundering in July 2021 to probe the allegations after three FIRs were registered by the Tamil Nadu police in 2018 and on the basis of complaints by those aggrieved in the alleged scam.

The agency's chargesheet claimed the entire recruitment process in the Tamil Nadu transport department during the tenure of Balaji as minister was turned into a "corrupt chieftain", and the scam was executed under his authority. Being a public servant, Balaji "misused" his official capacity as the then transport minister and obtained pecuniary benefits by corrupt and illegal means and directly acquired the proceeds of crime, generated out of a criminal activity related to a scheduled offence, the agency alleged.

## China making Pak Navy stronger: Admiral Tripathi

From page 1

Making these assertions in an annual conference ahead of Navy Day on December four, Admiral Tripathi said activities of the navies of China and Pakistan are being closely monitored. He said a Chinese submarine visited Karachi last year and returned and India had tracked it. Moreover, the Indian Navy is well aware of all activities of Chinese warships and research vessels in the strategically important Indian Ocean Region (IOR). "We are keeping a watch on extra-regional forces, including the PLA Navy, their warships and their research

vessels, and know what they are doing and where they are," Admiral Tripathi said. Elaborating upon the ongoing modernisation, he said India is expected to seal separate contracts for the procurement of 26 naval variant Rafale fighter jets and three additional Scorpene submarines next month. At a media briefing ahead of Navy Day on December 4, Admiral Tripathi also said the government has accorded approval for building two SSNs (nuclear-powered submarines) and that the plan is to have a total of six such boats. The Navy Chief said the first SSN should be ready by 2036-37 and the second

one in 2038-39. "Rafale Marine is at an advanced stage of negotiations and it is only one level short of taking it to the Cabinet Committee on Security. Since it is a government-to-government deal, it should not take much time," he said. In July last year, the defence ministry approved the purchase of the Rafale-M jets from France, primarily for deployment on board the indigenously built aircraft carrier INS Vikrant. "We expect that if not this month, then next month hopefully, both these (Scorpene submarine) and Rafale-M (project) should be signed,"

he said. The Navy Chief also said 62 ships and one submarine are currently under construction within the country as part of efforts to boost its naval power. On the modernisation of the Indian Navy, Admiral Tripathi said a large number of platforms are waiting for induction in the next one year and at least one ship will be inducted into the Navy. "We have redoubled efforts to include niche technologies into the force," he added. The Indian Navy hopes to induct nearly 96 warships and submarines in the next ten years, the Navy Chief said.

## Delhi airport gears up for foggy days...

From page 1

"This arrangement would save passengers from having to undergo the security check through the normal process, wherein in such cases after disembarking, passengers are taken to arrivals and processed through Domestic or International transfer areas as the case may be before being brought back to the Security Hold Area. Bringing such passengers directly to the reverse entry point

significantly reduces the time taken in the de-boarding and boarding from approximately 2.30 hours to just a few minutes. The proposed changes to the security-checking rules aim to optimise flight slots and reduce passenger inconvenience," it said. The annual winter fog crisis in Delhi, particularly during December and January, causes significant inconvenience for passengers and wastes critical flight

operation hours. In December last year, adverse weather in India led to flight cancellations impacting over 35,000 passengers, while 3.64 lakh people faced delays. These disruptions underscore the challenges airports face during this season. Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport ranks among the top 10 busiest airports in the world. In 2023, it hosted approximately 72.2 million passengers and had an annual passenger handling capacity

of 100 million across its three terminals. Commenting on the initiative, CEO-DIAL, Videh Kumar Jaipuria, CEO-DIAL, said, "DIAL has been working to enhance passengers' experience at Delhi Airport. By implementing this new initiative, DIAL aims to significantly reduce the time taken for the de-boarding and boarding process for passengers of flights affected by fog/weather or technical issues."

# NCR IN GRAP IV GRIP TILL THURSDAY

From page 1

The Bench took a serious view of the failure of States in the National Capital Region (NCR) to compensate construction workers whose livelihood has been affected by the halt of construction activities amid the air pollution crisis in the National Capital. Observing that Delhi-NCR faced a similar situation every year between October and December, the Bench proposed to go into all aspects that cause air pollution and find a permanent solution. Referring to the lack of coordination among the stakeholders, the Bench highlighted the "complete

lack of coordination" among stakeholders including the Delhi government, Delhi police, Municipal Corporation of Delhi and pollution control committee in implementing the restrictions and decided to wait till Thursday before taking a call on relaxing restrictions to ensure there is indeed a steady downward trend in air pollution levels. "What we propose is, we will look into your suggestions, but today we will not permit relaxations unless you show us a clear downward trend," said the Bench. The Bench during the hearing noted the revelation of "very shocking things" from the reports filed by advocates

appointed as court commissioners to conduct inspection at entry points. The reports indicated to the Bench that the court commissioners risked their lives besides facing threats in order to discharge their duties. Referring to one such court commissioner's predicament, the Bench asked the police to file a report detailing the action taken. "We cannot allow the members of the Bar to get subjected to risk as the report indicates that some of them have been subjected to threats," it said. The Bench enquired if the court commissioners wanted to continue with the work and asked those desiring to

continue to send emails to the nodal officer appointed by the Delhi Police. Police personnel, including armed guards, must be given to court commissioners while discharging their duties, directed the SC. "We make it clear that it is the responsibility of Delhi police to ensure that members of the Bar who are acting as court commissioners are adequately protected," it said. Court commissioners Jatin Kumar and Savi Nagpal reported a violation at Jharoda toll, where a BS-IV diesel truck carrying construction and demolition (C&D) materials entered Delhi without valid documentation. Another court commissioner in their

report, detailing an incident on November 29, 2024, at Asiad Village, Khelgaon, New Delhi, observed a construction cutting machine operating at a property with a "BHEL" nameplate. Upon attempting to take photographs, he encountered workers fleeing inside the house. Meanwhile, the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) in Delhi and adjoining areas submitted a report to the court seeking that emergency measures be scaled down from Grap-4 to Grap-II as the AQI on December 1 was 285 (poor) after being in the severe (400+) or very poor (300+) zones for 32 days. "There is

hardly any implementation of stage 4 of GRAP to deal with air pollution in the National Capital," remarked the bench, questioning the Delhi government on the number of officers deployed by it to implement the restrictions, especially banning trucks from entering the national capital. The Delhi government, represented by senior advocate Shadan Farasat, said it would look into allegations of non-compliance of the GRAP restrictions. The Bench directed the CAQM to take steps for communicating the mitigating measures, which it decided to implement, to all authorities concerned and

coordinate to ensure the implementation. The Bench said it was the responsibility of CAQM to coordinate the activities of all these entities with a view to ensure that the GRAP 4 measures were implemented. "As far as entry points are concerned, needless to add that all entry points must be manned," it said while underlining it was for the Delhi police to decide and ensure the deployment of personnel at the entry points. The Bench while referring to its earlier statement, said, "The commission will have to coordinate efforts of all agencies and ensure that adequate manpower is deputed at the entry points."

Regarding the aspect of pollution and finding a permanent solution, the Bench asked the amicus curiae to prepare a note within two weeks for the court to assign dates to consider these issues. According to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), the AQI recorded at Anand Vihar at 6 am on Monday was 303, Ashok Vihar at 284, Bawana at 298, Chandni Chowk at 188, IGI Airport at 270, Dwarka at 307, Jahangirpuri at 310, Mundka at 297, Narela at 266, Nehru Nagar at 334, Patparganj at 285, Punjabi Bagh at 278, Pusa at 249, Rohini at 299, and Wazirpur at 281.







# Max Verstappen wins Qatar Grand Prix

AP ■ LUSAIL

From a smashed mirror and crashes to unusually severe penalties, there were plenty of hazards at the Qatar Grand Prix. Max Verstappen steered clear of them all to follow up his Formula 1 drivers' title with his ninth win of the year on Sunday.

Lando Norris, Verstappen's closest title rival until he secured the championship last week in Las Vegas, was trying to overtake the Dutch driver for the lead until he was dropped to the back of the field by a penalty for failing to slow for yellow warning flags.

Verstappen, who secured his fourth consecutive title in Las Vegas last week, has won two of the last three races but hadn't won in dry conditions since June.

"It was a lot of fun out there," Verstappen said.

"Very happy. It's been a while in the dry to be this competitive. Very proud of everyone within the team."

Verstappen disposed of another

rival off the line, beating George Russell into the first corner. The Mercedes driver had been elevated to pole position in Verstappen's place after a contentious dispute in qualifying that got Verstappen a one-place penalty for driving too slowly.

Charles Leclerc finished second for Ferrari and Norris' McLaren teammate Oscar Piastri was third.

Penalties spark debate

In a season of controversy over the rules and upheaval at the governing body, the stewards again played a crucial role. Norris had been chasing down Verstappen for the lead before his penalty. McLaren team principal Andrea Stella said Norris hadn't slowed down but argued the penalty was disproportionately harsh.

"It's definitely material that the FIA should consider very seriously if we want fairness to be part of going racing in Formula 1," Stella said.

"To me, it looks like somewhere there must be a book with a lot of



dust on the cover that was taken out. Let me see what it says, I apply this.' Seems a little too simplistic.' The stewards were busy, issuing a

wide range of penalties for offenses like causing collisions, but also two for Lewis Hamilton for a false start and pit-lane speeding,

and one for Russell, who was judged to have dropped too far back in a safety car period. Russell said later he didn't know "when or

how or why" he'd been penalized. The safety car came out three times, first for crashes at the back of the pack on the opening lap, then for debris from a smashed mirror, and again when Nico Hulkenberg's Haas ended up in the gravel.

Constructors' title fight

At one stage, it looked like McLaren could seal its first constructors' title since 1998 in Qatar as Norris and Piastri both eyed podium places.

After Norris' penalty, Ferrari cut McLaren's lead from 30 points to 21 with Leclerc's second place and a solid sixth for Carlos Sainz Jr. After a puncture seemed to have wrecked his race. The constructors' title will now be decided at the final race of the season in Abu Dhabi next week.

That's a boost to Ferrari's morale.

"We knew it was going to be a very difficult weekend compared to the McLaren but we even managed to take some points away from them, so the fight will be all the way to the last race in Abu Dhabi next

week," Leclerc said.

"It's going to be an exciting end to the year. Hopefully we can be strong but it's going to take everything we've got to seal the deal," Piastri said.

Russell was fourth, ahead of Pierre Gasly continuing Alpine's recent good form, with Sainz sixth and Aston Martin's Fernando Alonso seventh.

Zhou Guanyu picked up his and Sauber's first points in eighth, ahead of Kevin Magnussen for Haas in ninth and Norris 10th after having been dropped to 15th by the penalty.

Hamilton and Sainz both picked up punctures shortly after a discarded wing mirror on the track was shattered by Valtteri Bottas' Sauber. Carbon fiber and glass were spread across the circuit, bringing out the safety car again, though it wasn't immediately clear if that or tire failure caused the punctures. It was a long, hard race for seven-time champion Hamilton, who finished 12th.



## Mbappé and Bellingham respond to unhappy fans with goals in Real Madrid's 2-0 win over Getafe

AP ■ MADRID

Kylian Mbappé made some peace with Real Madrid's fans.

Mbappé scored in Madrid's 2-0 win over Getafe in the Spanish league on Sunday to help ease the pressure on the France star.

Mbappé, who has been criticized by some supporters because of his disappointing performances since joining the Spanish powerhouse this season, found the net in the 38th minute to seal Madrid's victory at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium.

Mbappé was coming off a lackluster outing — which included a missed penalty kick — against Liverpool in the Champions League on Wednesday.

Jude Bellingham, also the target of some fans' criticism for recent poor play, had put Madrid ahead at the Bernabeu by converting a 30th-minute penalty. He also assisted in Mbappé's goal — a well-placed low shot from outside the area.

Mbappé had scored only once in the team's last six matches across all competitions, and twice in the last nine games.

"He played very well, was active and was as dangerous as always," Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti said.

"He scored and created opportunities. He was very active, it's what we want from him."

Mbappé was still far from his best, and he did not take the penalty kick which was converted by Bellingham.

Another penalty — which was also set to be taken by Rodrygo.

"The order for the penalties is Mbappé and Vinicius Júnior, but without Vinicius, it was up to Bellingham and Mbappé to choose," Ancelotti said.

The win moved Madrid within a point of league leader Barcelona, which lost 2-1 to Las Palmas on Saturday. Madrid, the defending champion, has a game in hand.

Madrid was one point ahead of city rival Atletico Madrid, which won 5-0 at Valladolid on Saturday.

Madrid has lost three of its five Champions League matches but has won three straight in the league to cut into Barcelona's lead. The Catalan club is winless in three consecutive league games.

"Things have been going well in La Liga since the last defeat, but we can't get sidetracked because this is what Real Madrid demands," Madrid defender Antonio Rüdiger said.

"We must continue and do better in the Champions League."

Also Sunday, Villarreal drew 2-2 with visiting Girona after leading 2-0 and eventually conceding an equalizer seven minutes into stoppage time.

Athletic Bilbao rallied to win 2-1 at Rayo Vallecano with a pair of second-half goals by Oihan Sancet, while Athletic's Basque rival Real Sociedad defeated Real Betis 2-0 at home.

## Edoardo Bove in medically induced coma after collapsing in Italian soccer game

AP ■ FLORENCE

Fiorentina midfielder Edoardo Bove is in a medically induced coma after collapsing on the field during his team's Serie A match at home to Inter Milan, with the game abandoned shortly afterward.

Bove's teammates immediately called for medical help and both sets of players surrounded the 22-year-old while he was being stretchered off to an ambulance near the pitch and taken to Careggi Hospital in Florence on Sunday.

"Fiorentina and the Careggi University Hospital announce that the footballer Edoardo Bove ... is currently under pharmacological sedation and hospitalized in intensive care," Fiorentina said in a statement.

"The first cardiological and neurological tests performed have ruled out acute damage to the central nervous system and the cardio-respiratory system. Edoardo Bove will be re-evaluated in the next 24 hours."



Sky Italia reported that the player regained consciousness while he was in the ambulance and was managing to breathe on his own.

Bove's parents and his girlfriend have arrived at the hospital along with Fiorentina coach Raffaele Palladino and most of his teammates, as well as club directors and the city's mayor.

Fiorentina fans have also gathered outside the hospital and displayed a banner with the words: "Forza Edoardo, Firenze is with you."

Fiorentina president Rocco

Comisso echoed that sentiment and the club said he and his family are in constant contact from the United States to support Bove and his family.

"Forza Edoardo, we're with you," Comisso said.

"You're a strong boy with a great character."

More messages of support flooded in on social media from players and clubs. Inter midfielder Federico Dimarco, who was on the field at the time, wrote "Forza Edo, we are all with you and your family."

The incident happened in the

16th minute of the match, with play stopped following a VAR check. Bove apparently bent down to tie the laces on his boot before he suddenly dropped to the ground.

Fiorentina players were distraught on the field and were comforted by staff members as well as Inter players. Several were openly sobbing before the teams filed off the field.

The Italian league match was immediately halted, before being abandoned. The score at the time of Bove's collapse was 0-0.

Many at Fiorentina — as well as the fans — remember former captain Davide Astori, who was found dead in his hotel room in March 2018 before a match in Udine.

It is the second incident this year of a player collapsing during a Serie A match. It happened to Roma defender Evan Ndicka during his team's match at Udinese in April.

Bove is a product of the Roma youth academy and joined Fiorentina on loan in the offseason with the option to make the move permanent.



## World Chess Championship: Gukesh, Liren eye breakthrough after hat-trick of draws

PTI ■ SINGAPORE

Indian Grandmaster Ding Liren will be aiming to break the deadlock after three consecutive draws when they square off in the seventh round of the World Chess Championship here on Tuesday, having stayed on equal footing for most part of the interesting showdown.

Hailed as the favourite to win by many chess pundits, the 18-year-old Gukesh, who is the youngest ever challenger to the title, has not been able to really show his class and has often depended on the Chinese to play safe or make mistakes in decent positions. The two are currently locked at three points each.

If game one was a wake up call for Gukesh after a loss with white pieces, the second game was a confidence-booster for the Indian as Liren barely did anything and allowed an easy draw.

Gukesh won the third game but only after Liren miscalculated from what may have been a promising position.

In the fourth game Gukesh played solidly again when Liren gave nothing away out of an irregular opening and it was again a draw.

At this point, it was clear that Liren was banking on Gukesh to make mistakes.

Game five saw Gukesh fighting for the initiative yet again and went too far as he came under threat in the resulting endgame. Liren yet again failed to spot them and it was another draw.

The sixth game of many world championship matches have massive history and this time too, it was not disappointing for the fans.

In the last World championship, Liren had beaten Ian Nepomniachtchi of Russia in the sixth game and back in 1972, Bobby Fischer had beaten Boris Spassky in what is a favourite of many chess fans across the world even today.

Gukesh turned down an early draw wide repetition and was worse.

However, the nature of the position remained complicated and Liren did not risk things in the queen and rook endgame that was the fourth draw of the match out of six games.

As far as the openings go, Liren has chosen three different moves with his white pieces to start the game while Gukesh has stuck to a Classical approach using only King and Queen's pawn in the beginning.

"I think so far it has been good. I still can improve my play, there are lot more games, considering I was trailing after the first game I am happy to be here, it is too early," Gukesh remarked when asked if he was satisfied with his play thus far at the end of the sixth game.

On Tuesday, the Indian will play with white.

Going by the proceedings so far, things are not particularly clear and as of now, there are no favourites.

Gukesh has been his general ambitious self while Liren has shown aggression only when necessary, often missing out on key moments.

The next three games wherein Gukesh will play with two whites and a solo black is perhaps the best opportunity for the Indian to go ahead in the match and put pressure.

Liren, so far, has been better in defending the opening positions and might like the trend to continue.

## Guardiola hits 'reset' with Manchester City floundering in Premier League

Manchester (England), Dec 2 (AP)

For Pep Guardiola, the season starts now. Chastened. Relieved. Defiant.

The Manchester City manager displayed a whole range of emotions after his latest ordeal at Anfield that plunged the out-of-sorts English champions to an unlikely low.

Make that seven matches without a win for a team which, not so long ago, never lost. That's all in the past for Guardiola, though.

"Reset," he said after a 2-0 loss to Liverpool in the Premier League on Sunday. "There's a feeling we start from here this season."

How he intends to move on from the worst run of results in his managerial career remains to be seen. But, it all starts Wednesday with a home game against Nottingham Forest.

"We are not used to this," Guardiola said. "Many, many things are happening. The teams are good and we can't handle it right now. I have to find the solution to be stable and solid."



"These players gave me a chance to lead maybe the best years of my life. All I can do is find a solution — in the right moment, the club will make the decision what is needed for this club to continue to be there."

Was he referring to making signings in the January transfer window? City's fatigued and injury-ravaged squad sure needs some, especially in midfield.

Or was he referring to his future? It's not the first time in recent days that Guardiola brought up how fragile his position could quickly become if City

keeps losing.

Moments before walking down the tunnel after the final whistle at Anfield, Guardiola held up an outstretched hand and an extra finger as a retort to taunts for Liverpool fans. It was a nod to six Premier League titles he has won in eight full seasons at City.

No. 7 doesn't look likely this season. Not with City already 11 points behind Liverpool.

"Call me delusional or something like that," Guardiola said, "but I have the feeling we will try to build back our confidence to win games."

Indeed, Guardiola said he was taking some belief from recent training sessions. From the return to fitness of some players, such as Ruben Dias, Nathan Ake, Jack Grealish and Jeremy Doku.

Maybe, from a second-half display against Liverpool that, while hardly vintage City, at least showed some spirit and resolve, even if Liverpool appeared happy to play on the break and never looked troubled.

## Greenwood's late penalty helps Marseille beat Monaco 2-1 and move into second place

AP ■ PARIS

Mason Greenwood's late penalty gave Marseille a 2-1 home win over Monaco and lifted the team over its rival into second place in the French league.

Greenwood placed the ball into the bottom left corner in the 89th minute for his ninth league goal of the season on Sunday — level with Lille's Jonathan David and one behind Paris Saint-Germain's Bradley Barcola in the scoring charts.

Marseille moved above Monaco on goal difference, with both sides seven points behind leader PSG.

Monaco's defeat exposed shortcomings in coach Adi Hütter's young and talented yet error-prone team.

Monaco lost 3-2 at home to Benfica in the Champions League

on Wednesday after leading that game 2-1 before conceding twice in the last six minutes.

After going unbeaten in its first 11 games in all competitions this season, Hütter's erratic side had four defeats in the past seven matches — including at home to strugglers Angers and away to Nice after again taking the lead.

This time, Monaco scored first at Stade Velodrome when midfielder Aleksandr Golovin beat Gerónimo Rulli in the 41st minute with a slightly deflected strike after being set up by midfielder Denis Zakaria.

Brazilian winger Luis Henrique equalized for Marseille in the 53rd with a header from forward Neal Maupay's cross.

Earlier Sunday, Arnaud Nordin grabbed the equalizer in the fifth minute of second-half stoppage time as rock-bottom Montpellier



earned a 2-2 home draw with Lille in an ill-tempered contest.

Moments after Nordin's goal, a player from each side was sent off. The incident happened when

Montpellier forward Tanguy Coulibaly kicked the ball against Lille coach Bruno Genesio when it had already gone out for a throw in, prompting pushing and

shoving from both sides. Coulibaly and Lille defender Mitch Bakker were red carded.

Montpellier coach Jean-Louis Gasset had been sent off near the end of the second half and former Montpellier player Rémy Cabella — who plays for Lille — was involved in heated incidents.

Canada striker Jonathan David scored a penalty in each half for Lille, which is unbeaten in 13 games in all competitions and remained in fourth place.

David's second penalty in the 54th minute was awarded following a long video replay after Cabella tumbled.

David slotted it into the top right corner to move to nine league goals and 99 in 205 matches overall since joining Lille four years ago.

While the penalty review was taking place, Cabella argued with

Montpellier midfielder Téji Savanier and TV images showed Cabella shoving his forearm into Savanier's face. Both players received a yellow card.

A clumsy challenge from Jordan Ferri on Matias Fernandez-Pardo led to the first penalty, and David tucked it calmly into the left corner.

Savanier's well-flighted corner from the right allowed defender Issiaga Sylla the chance to head the equalizer in the second minute of first-half stoppage time.

Cabella argued with some home fans after being substituted midway through the second half and was asked to stop remonstrating by the fourth official.

LACAZETTE HAT TRICK

Veteran striker Alexandre Lacazette scored a hat trick as Lyon beat Nice 4-1 to move into

fifth place.

Lacazette gave Lyon the lead and restored it later in the first half after midfielder Sofiane Diop had equalized for sixth-place Nice.

Midfielder Jordan Veretout put Lyon 3-1 up before the break and Lacazette's penalty in the 70th put Lyon in total control.

The 33-year-old Lacazette is in his second spell with Lyon, having spent five seasons in the Premier League with Arsenal, and now totals 190 goals for the club.

Norway striker Joshua King and Vincent Siero scored in midtable Toulouse's 2-0 home win against Auxerre, and midfielder Himad Abdelli netted as Angers won 1-0 at Le Havre to move out of the relegation zone.

PSG followed up its defeat against Bayern Munich with a tame 1-1 draw at home to struggling Nantes on Saturday.

