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BLUE SKY, BRIGHT SUN, GRAP IV REVOKED

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday relaxed curbs in Delhi-NCR under the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) stage III and IV measures imposed in Delhi following the improved Air Quality Index (AQI). The SC advised the CAQM to also consider adding certain measures under GRAP-Stage III. If the AQI crosses 350, GRAP-III should be imposed and if it crosses 400, GRAP-IV must be imposed, the SC said. Following this, the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) revoked restrictions under Stage-III and Stage IV of GRAP in the entire NCR, with immediate effect. The restrictions have been reduced to Stage 2 of the GRAP which involves less stringent curbs such as a ban on the use of coal and firewood in industries and commercial establishments, including eateries. This means people using BS-3 petrol and BS-4 diesel vehicles can ply their on the road in the National Capital region. Under GRAP III and IV, diesel-powered medium and heavy goods vehicles (BS-IV or lower) are prohibited, except for essential services while non-essential light commercial vehicles from outside Delhi were also restricted under GRAP stages 3 and 4. All construction and demolition activities, including public infrastructure projects like highways, flyovers, and pipelines, were also banned. The Sub-Committee, accordingly, has decided to



Photo: Ranjan Dimri/The Pioneer

revoke Stage-IV and Stage-III of GRAP in the entire NCR, with immediate effect. GRAP Stages II and I, to however, remain in-force in the entire NCR," CAQM said in a post on X. The ban of BS-3 and BS-4 vehicles was implemented on November 15 when the CAQM decided to escalate GRAP measures to stage III. According to CAQM, the restrictions under stage II and I of GRAP will continue. "Actions under Stage-I & II of the GRAP shall however remain invoked and be implemented, monitored and reviewed by all the agencies concerned in the entire NCR to ensure that the AQI levels do not slip further. All implementing agencies shall keep strict vigil and especially intensify measures under

Stage-I & II of GRAP. Construction & Demolition project sites and industrial units which have been issued specific closure orders on account of violations/ non-compliances of various statutory directions, rules, guidelines etc. under no circumstances shall resume their operations without any specific order to this effect from the Commission". "The Sub-Committee, shall be keeping a close watch on the air quality scenario and review the situation from time to time for further appropriate decision depending upon the Air Quality in Delhi and forecast made by IMI/IITM," it said. The overall Air Quality Index (AQI) recorded in Delhi was 165, categorised as 'moderate', the cleanest air day of

December so far. The improvement began on Wednesday afternoon, with AQI levels falling from 211 in the morning to 178 by the evening. Of the 38 monitoring stations that recorded air quality data, only six stations reported levels in the poor category. It marks a significant improvement as on Tuesday, the AQI was recorded in the "poor" category with a reading of 268, compared to 280 on Monday and 285 on Sunday. For the month of December, the city has not seen such clean air since December 14, 2022, when the AQI was 163. Under GRAP-II, the restriction will continue which include ban on diesel generators across all sectors, including industrial,

commercial, and residential areas, increased mechanical or vacuum sweeping and water sprinkling on identified roads, especially in high-traffic areas and pollution hotspots, use of dust suppressants every alternate day during non-peak hours, along with proper disposal of collected dust, intensified inspections at construction and demolition sites to enforce dust control measures and specific actions to focus on pollution hotspots throughout the city. Earlier, a Bench of Justices Abhay S Oka and Augustine George Masih allowed the authorities to go down from Stage IV of Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) to Stage II. However, the Court also asked the CAQM to put in place additional measures from Stage III. "We have perused the figures of AQI from Nov 18- Dec 4. Up to Nov 30, it was consistently above 300 and it is only during last four days that the levels came down below 300. It is true that at some stage the court will have to leave to the Commission to decide about GRAP applicability. Considering the data placed before us, we do not think that it will be appropriate at this stage to allow the Commission to go below Stage-II," the SC said. The SC further clarified that when the Air Quality Index (AQI) goes above 350, Stage III will have to be immediately implemented as a precautionary measure. "If AQI crosses 400 on a given day, Stage 4 to be reintroduced," it ordered. Continued on page 8



Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Maharashtra Governor CP Radhakrishnan with the newly-sworn Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis and Deputy Chief Ministers Eknath Shinde and Ajit Pawar

Fadnavis Bhau-kaal returns to Maharashtra

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Twelve days after the MahaYuti returned to power in the state in a spectacular manner, Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) Devendra Fadnavis was sworn in as the 31st Chief Minister of Maharashtra at a grand ceremony held in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the historic Azad Maidan in south Mumbai on Thursday evening. Eknath Shinde of the Shiv Sena (ES) and Ajit Pawar of the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) were sworn into office as the Deputy CMs in the BJP-led MahaYuti government in the state, at a ceremony attended by Union Ministers, CMs of several states, corporate bigwigs, film and sports stars, and leading personalities from different walks of life. Maharashtra

Governor CP Radhakrishnan administered the oath of office and secrecy to CM Devendra Fadnavis, Dy. CMs Shinde and Ajit Pawar at the ceremony. A six-time MLA from Nagpur South-West constituency, 54-year-old Fadnavis has taken over as the CM for a third term. Shinde (60), a five-time MLA from Thanesh Kopri-Pachpakadi who has assumed charge as the deputy chief minister, was earlier the chief minister in the MahaYuti Government. In a record of sorts, Ajit Pawar (65), an eight-time MLA from Baramati, has become the Dy. CM for the sixth term. Given that the three constituents of the MahaYuti, BJP, Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena and Ajit Pawar-led NCP, have not yet formalised the nitty-gritties of the new government, the oath-taking

ceremony was restricted to the swearing-in of Fadnavis, Shinde and Pawar. Talking to media persons after taking over as the CM, Fadnavis said that he would expand the State Cabinet before the Winter Session of the Maharashtra Legislature scheduled to begin towards the end of this month. Continued on page 8

11 MLAs MINISTERS TAKE OATH IN JHARKHAND

Six new faces and two women are among 11 MLAs who took oath as ministers in the Hemant Soren government in Jharkhand on Thursday. Of the 11 legislators who were sworn in as ministers, six are from the JMM and four from the Congress. Governor Santosh Kumar Gangwar administered the oath to the ministers at Ashok Udyan of the Raj Bhavan.



Pricy tomatoes, add sharp bite to veg thali rates

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

A vegetarian thali's price increased seven per cent, to Rs 32.7, primarily due to a 35 per cent jump in tomato prices to Rs 53 per kg and 50 per cent increase in potato at Rs 37 per kg. A non-vegetarian thali cost inched up 2 per cent to Rs 61.5 in November due to a three per cent increase in the cost of broilers, which have a 50 per cent weightage in computation. A veg thali comprises roti, vegetables, onion, tomato and potato, along with rice, dal, curd and salad. A non-veg thali has the same elements except for dal, which is replaced by broiler chicken. According to a CRISIL Roti Rice Rate (RRR) report for November, the price of potato increased 50 per cent on-year on a low base to Rs 37 per kg from Rs 25 per kg in November 2023 due to a 20 per cent on-year decline in arrivals amid low yield following late blight infestation in Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat. Price of tomato increased 35 per cent on-year to Rs 53 per kg from Rs 40 per kg in November 2023. Additionally, prices of pulses rose 10 per cent, it said, adding that they will decline with fresh arrivals in December, while import duty hike led to a 13 per cent increase in vegetable oil prices. Prices are expected to dip once fresh arrivals begin in December. "Adding to the cost, vegetable oil prices rose 13 per cent on-year due to import duty hike, coupled with the festive and wedding season demand," Crisil stated. Continued on page 8

IndiGo Airlines crashlands as one of the worst ranked: report

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

India's largest air transporter, IndiGo Airlines, has fared poorly in an annual ranking of international airlines and airports released by AirHelp. As per the reports based on air users feedback, IndiGo has been ranked at 103rd out of 109 airlines, making it one of the worst performers. Sooner the rankings surfaced the airliner faced a heavy backlash on social media with netizens reminiscing about their experiences with many of them cast aspersions on behaviour of crew and ground staff as well questioning the quality of meals served on board. Tata's Air India fares slightly better, standing at 61st with a 4.1/10 score for claim handling. At the top of the list, Brussels Airlines has been named the best airline, followed by Qatar Airways. India's largest domestic carrier, rated 4.80/10. The low rating is attributed to underwhelming customer satisfaction and poor handling of flight disruption claims. The rankings for airlines are based on three criteria, on-time performance, customer opinion, and processing of compensation claims. According to AirHelp, the three criteria contribute to the airline's score in equal measure, or 33.33 per cent each. The analysis covers data from January to October, incorporating on-time performance, customer claims processing, and feedback from passengers across 54 countries on food, comfort, and service. The report analyses key performance indicators



including flight punctuality, customer service responsiveness, and claim resolution efficiency. Researchers collected data on how airlines handle flight disruptions, manage compensation claims, and deliver consistent service across international routes. The analysis considers not just operational efficiency, but also the human experience of air travel, including factors like crew service quality, meal offerings, and passenger comfort. Responding to the ranking, IndiGo criticised the methodology, saying the survey does not disclose the sample size from India, "casting doubt on the survey's credibility." In its statement, IndiGo pointed out that the survey did not disclose the sample size from India or consider the methodology and compensation guidelines followed by the global aviation industry, "casting a doubt on its credibility." The airline emphasised its strong track record, noting that it consistently scores high on punctuality and has the lowest customer complaint ratio among airlines of similar size and operational scale. Continued on page 8

People neither have respect nor fear of the law: Gadkari

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Union Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari on Thursday said despite the Government's continuous efforts to reduce deaths in road accidents, the casualties have been on the rise as people neither have respect nor fear of the law. Responding during Question Hour in the Lok Sabha, Gadkari said he himself has been a victim of a road accident and is sensitive about the issue. The minister said there are four factors which can help reduce road accidents, road engineering, automobile engineering, enforcement of law and education of people. "Biggest problem of the society is neither they have respect for the law, nor they have fear of law. There are problems like people don't stop on red signal, don't wear helmets... 30,000 people die only because they aren't wearing helmets. I have been a victim myself, my leg has been broken at four places in an accident when I was Leader of Opposition in Maharashtra and I am



Union Minister Nitin Gadkari speaks in the Rajya Sabha during the Winter session of Parliament

continuously sensitive about it. "I have no hesitation in accepting this but distressed that despite trying hard there have been 1.68 lakh road accident deaths this year. A large number of these deaths are because there has not been strict implementation of rule of roads... Without cooperation from public representatives, media or society, this is not possible. We have increased fines too but people don't follow rules," he said. Gadkari said a car jumped the traffic signal in front of him on Wednesday.

The Minister urged the Speaker to keep a separate discussion on this issue and asserted that the government is committed to improving the situation. "The problem also is that there are some black spots and the government has already decided to spend 40,000 crores on blackspots. As per mistakes identified in the detailed project report, blackspots are there, and we are very much committed for that," he said. Replying to another question, the minister said four contractors have been held

responsible for deficiencies detected in the construction of the Delhi-Mumbai Expressway and strict action will be taken against them. After taking note of the matter, experts from IIT Kharagpur and Gandhinagar inspected the expressway and found deficiencies in its construction. "We have issued notices to four contractors and will blacklist them. Strict action will be taken. Action will also be taken against concerned officials," the transport minister said during Question Hour in the Lok Sabha. "After noting deficiencies, we had roped in experts from IIT Kharagpur and IIT Gandhinagar. Initial findings of the report show there are deficiencies in the construction," Gadkari said. He said the Delhi-Mumbai Expressway is the country's longest such road and was constructed in the shortest time. "The expressway was constructed at a cost of Rs 1 lakh crore. It has reduced the distance between Delhi and Mumbai by 200 km. The travel time between the two cities has now reduced to 12 hours," he said.

Chori chori chupke... cable theft delays Metro ops

SAUMYA SHUKLA ■ NEW DELHI

Thousands of Delhi Metro commuters were in for a rough ride on Thursday morning when services on the busy Blue Line came to a standstill, due to the theft of 150 metres of signalling cable between Moti Nagar and Kirti Nagar stations. For nearly six hours, the Blue Line, an arterial route that connects Dwarka to Vaishali and Noida City Centre, witnessed frustration, delays, and overcrowded platforms, throwing off schedules for office-goers and daily passengers alike. As commuters scrambled to adjust, the theft sparked a wave of reactions, including a sharp critique from former Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, who questioned the city's safety under the Union Home Ministry's watch. "Nothing is safe in the national capital. Amit Shah ji, what is happening in Delhi? The cable of the Delhi Metro has been stolen. Nothing is



safe," he said. At 8 am, the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) informed commuters about the incident and later updated that normal services had resumed from 1.38 pm. The line services key areas such as Rajiv Chowk, Yamuna Bank, Mayur Vihar Phase 1, Noida Sector 16, and Noida Sector 18, where many offices are located. With the delay coinciding with morning office hours, passengers faced inconvenience, particularly those commuting to work in areas served by the Blue Line. In a statement, the Delhi Metro said that 20 maintenance personnel restored the vital section of the Blue Line in a record time of 30 minutes. "A specialised team of 20 personnel was formed and deployed at the affected area at 1 pm to carry out the repair work. A total of 140 metres of cable had been damaged, and these personnel executed the restoration work in a record time of just over 30 minutes. Eventually, normal services

were restored on the Blue Line at 1.38 pm," DMRC's Principal Executive Director Anuj Dayal said. Initially, a decision had been made to carry out the repair work at night after the end of passenger services. However, considering the convenience of passengers, particularly during the evening peak hours, a quick decision was taken to attempt the restoration during the afternoon non-peak hours, Dayal said. While the repair work was being carried out on the up line (towards Dwarka), train services continued on the down line, ensuring both directions of travel were operational, he explained. Earlier, the DMRC had stated that train services on the Blue Line were regulated from the morning due to what appeared to be a case of theft and damage to the signalling cables by miscreants between Moti Nagar and Kirti Nagar stations. Continued on page 8

Doodh mein kitna paani: Court takes four years to deliver verdict

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ LUCKNOW

In a rare development, the Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate-I has delivered judgments in four-decade-old cases of food adulteration involving low-fat content in milk and substandard sugar. The verdicts, pronounced in the last week of November, imposed fines and symbolic imprisonment on the accused, marking the conclusion of cases filed under the Prevention of Food Adulteration Act, 1954 (PFA Act 1954). Moti Lal, a milk vendor from Allunagar Dguriya, was penalised 42 years after being found guilty of selling milk with fat content below the permissible standard. On October 24, 1982, the Food Safety and Drug Administration (FSDA) collected a sample of milk from him, which failed the fat



Representative photo

content test. The court fined him Rs 3,000 and sentenced him to remain in court custody until the court adjourned for the day. Similarly, Ram Lal, a milk vendor from Indiranagar, was found guilty of selling adulterated milk with 30% less fat. His sample was taken by the FSDA on June 22, 1988, at Wireless Square. The court imposed the same

punishment on him as Moti Lal. In a third case, Keshav, the owner of a dairy in Semrapreetpur, Gosainganj, was also convicted for milk adulteration. A sample collected from his dairy revealed 22% less fat than the prescribed standard. He was fined Rs 3,000 and given a similar symbolic sentence. Reacting to the verdict, an FSDA official said, "This judgment, though delayed, reiterates the importance of food safety laws. Adulteration in essential commodities like milk affects the health of countless individuals, especially children." The court also resolved a 21-year-old case involving adulterated sugar. On September 8, 2003, FSDA officials collected a sample from the shop of Suresh Chandra Gupta, a resident of Bakshi Ka Talab (BKT). Continued on page 8

Duped of ₹8 cr by company, investors left in the lurch

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A company has allegedly duped investors of Rs 7-8 crore under the pretext of high returns on their deposits. Left in the lurch, investors are now visiting local police stations in a desperate attempt to recover their hard-earned money. Complaints have been filed against the company in the Bakshi Ka Talaab and Nigohan police stations. The company operated by setting up an office in a village, where it lured people with the dream of becoming wealthy. Using actors to endorse the business, the company appointed agents in every village to convince people to invest large sums, often in the range of lakhs of rupees. Rajkaran Rawat, the former manager of the company, alleged, "I worked with the company for seven years. Initially, all transactions were processed smoothly. However, in December 2022, it became evident that the company was operating dishonestly. Depositors and agents were being defrauded. When I raised objections, I was removed from my position." The company, owned by one Sameer, had its head office in Navi Mumbai, but no FIR has been filed against him yet. Complaints have been lodged against the managers. The company promoted its fraudulent schemes by travelling with a mobile van through villages, making false promises of high returns. One major allegation is that the company fraudulently changed the ID details of Rajkaran and his wife. "Their employee codes were altered without our knowl-

Woman, son arrested for currency exchange fraud

Lucknow (PNS): A woman and her son were arrested for allegedly duping shopkeepers by luring them with foreign currency (Dirham) at discounted rates. The mother-son duo allegedly carried out their fraudulent operations while staying in a rented house in the city. DCP (Central) Raveena Tyagi stated that the suspects would deceive victims by promising to sell foreign currency at half its market price. They would then take money from shopkeepers and hand them bundles containing real dirhams on the top and bottom, with waste paper in the middle. The police are investigating the involvement of other gang members, if any. The DCP further revealed that Aslam (24) and his mother Farzana Begum aka Kajal Sheikh (44), originally from Bengal, were arrested by the Central Zone and Madheganj police teams. They were living in a rented house in Nishatganj, but had previously resided in East Delhi. In one incident on November 28, the duo took Rs 3 lakh from Abul Hasan, a businessman from Aliganj, in exchange for a bag that contained only 700 dirhams. On November 21, they also swindled Prem Prakash Saxena, a resident of Naubasta Khurd, out of Rs 30,000.

edge, and the new manager's mobile number was linked to the account, enabling them to siphon off the funds," Rajkaran explained. He added that over last 18 months, the company was taking Rs 40,000 to Rs 50,000 per month from his and his wife's account, in addition to branch commissions of Rs 60,000 to Rs 80,000. Many complaints about the new manager, Mahesh, have already been filed. Rajkaran accused several individuals within the company of being involved in the fraud, including manager Mahesh Prasad, cashier Maniram, operator Vipin Kumar Yadav, senior officer Santosh Kumar, cash management incharge Vinod Verma, and zonal head Uttam Singh Rajput. He stated that nearly Rs 50-60

lakh of depositors' matured funds have yet to be returned. "Despite my repeated requests over the last two months, Mahesh Prasad and Maniram have refused to provide any records or return the investors' money," he said. The total amount embezzled from investors in this branch is believed to be Rs 7-8 crore. The company, which has expanded its fraudulent operations across India, promised to double investors' money. It has since wound up its operations in various locations to avoid repaying its liabilities. The company used the influence of well-known actors to promote their schemes, luring unsuspecting people into investing. It formed a society, visible online, and opened offices in rural areas. By recruiting local influential fig-

ures as agents, the company would visit crowded areas, earn the trust of people, and then encourage them to invest. They initially provided returns for the first year, creating a false sense of security before turning them into agents who were tasked with recruiting more people for a commission. Rajkaran, who was initially an agent and later promoted to manager, shared his experience: "I was lured into the company nine years ago as an agent. Eventually, I was made a manager after being shown a vision of wealth. The company used to give commissions based on the money invested. However, in the past 1.5 years, not a single penny has been returned." He added that the company operated this scam in several states across India. The mastermind behind the fraud, according to Rajkaran, is Uttam Singh Rajput, a resident of Barabanki, who orchestrated the entire scheme. One victim, Ashish, explained how he got involved in the scam: "I was preparing for a government job when Rajkaran offered me a position as an agent. I invested all my savings, about Rs 5 lakh. Initially, I received small returns, but the payments stopped. Now, I am left with nothing." Another victim, Suraj Rawat, shared his experience: "I had a shoe shop when a member of the company came to me, driving a car and promising big returns. I joined the company and was asked to recruit others. After a year, I realised it was all a scam. I have lost everything." The victims are now united in their fight to recover their money, but it remains unclear whether they will ever see their investments again.

Rejected by girl, youth sets fire to her house

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A youth allegedly set fire to a girl's home on Rae Bareilly Road, in the PGI police station area, on Wednesday evening after she rejected his marriage proposal. The fire, which spread to the bedroom, destroyed two motorcycles, a scooter, four bicycles, and several other household items. With the help of neighbours, the girl's family managed to bring the flames under control before filing a complaint at the PGI police station. According to the girl's father, the accused, a local resident, had been harassing his daughter for several days. Last week, the 20-year-old accused had allegedly caught the girl by her hand while she was walking on the street, but passersby intervened and forced him to let go. In retaliation for the rejection, the accused set fire to an outdoor cooler and a window, which caused the curtains in the house to burn, the girl's father alleged in the police complaint. The girl's family confronted the

accused's mother the next day. She apologised and assured them that her son would not repeat his actions. However, the harassment continued, with the accused stalking the teenager whenever she went outside and threatening to ruin her life if she refused his marriage proposal. On Wednesday, the situation escalated when the accused allegedly set fire to the family's vehicles parked outside and damaged the front door of their home. SHO, PGI police station, Ravi Shankar Tripathi confirmed that an FIR had been registered and an investigation had begun based on the complaint. The local outpost in-charge has been assigned to probe the matter further. Meanwhile, a probe was ordered into the death of a youth who allegedly hanged himself to death immediately after returning from a police station late on Tuesday night. His family members alleged that he felt humiliated after he was kept in the police station for two days in connection with

buying a stolen mobile and he took the drastic step as a result. As per reports, the victim identified as Ranjeet Kanaujia, a resident of Hari Nagar in Thakurganj, worked as a labourer. Ranjeet's brother alleged that the victim went to work on November 29 and returned on December 1. "He looked very upset after he returned home. But he did not share anything with us," he said, adding: "After a lot of pressure, Ranjeet told our mother that he had bought a mobile from a friend and it turned out to be a stolen one. As soon as the SIM was activated, the police caught him. He was kept at police station for two days and released after questioning," Ranjeet's brother claimed. On Tuesday night, his mother was cooking food at home and other family members had gone to a wedding ceremony. Ranjeet allegedly hanged himself in the meantime. He was rushed to hospital where he was pronounced dead. A police spokesman said that investigations into the case are ongoing.

Narrow escape for 3 schoolchildren in road mishap

Lucknow (PNS): Three schoolchildren sustained minor injuries in a road accident in Bhav Kheda village under Mohanlanjan police station on Thursday morning. The accident occurred when a speeding mini truck hit an autorickshaw, which rammed into a SUV parked ahead. The children, who were sitting in the auto, sustained minor injuries in the incident. Villagers caught the driver and alerted police. The police reached the scene, took the driver into custody, and seized the mini truck. The injured children—Deva, a Class XI student; Swami, a Class VIII student; and Mahima, a Class I student—were given first aid at a hospital. Auto driver Ashok Kumar claimed that the mini truck driver was drunk. The injured children were taken to St Anna Hospital, where doctors confirmed that they had sustained only minor injuries. After receiving first aid, they were discharged. According to the police, no formal complaint has been filed by any party yet. Once the complaint is received, the matter will be investigated and action will be taken, they added.

'Hypertension silent killer, early detection key'

Lucknow (PNS): The 76th Annual Conference of the Cardiological Society of India commenced at Indira Gandhi Pratishthan on Thursday, with senior cardiologists from India and abroad discussing heart diseases and delivering lectures. The first day began with discussions on high blood pressure. Dr Muruganathan, a senior cardiologist, emphasised that hypertension is a silent killer, making early detection critical. Dr MS Ravi presented updated guidelines for the treatment of hypertension.

Dr Christopher and Dr Naveen C Nanda from the USA highlighted the role of artificial intelligence (AI) in diagnosing and treating heart diseases. They discussed how AI can aid in timely and accurate diagnosis through tests like echocardiograms. During the Presidential Conclave, presidents of cardiological societies from the USA, Denmark, Switzerland, Australia, Italy, Kenya, Nepal, and India shared strategies to reduce heart disease prevalence by 2030, emphasising public awareness and education as key

prevention methods. Prof MK Das from Kolkata spoke on heart failure guidelines, noting that while treatment advancements have increased life expectancy, the incidence of heart failure has also risen. He emphasised the importance of proper treatment and technologies like CRT. Dr Roxy Senior from the UK discussed European guidelines for angina, and Dr Jagat Narula from the USA spoke on the harmful effects of cholesterol, advising a reduction in saturated fats.

Dr Shibba V and Dr Preeti focused on pregnancy's impact on heart health, including hypertension during pregnancy. Dr Tarun and Dr Kajal Ganguly addressed angina pain caused by heart artery blockages. Around 4,000 delegates attended the conference, with new heart disease medications and techniques showcased by the pharmaceutical industry. Medical students presented research papers, and Dr Satyendra Tiwari, the chief organiser, noted a day filled with valuable medical discussions.

CLASSIFIEDS

NOTICE

I, Army no 15678683P RANK HAV Suresh Kumar S/o Babu Shankar Unit South Western COMD SIG REGT inform that in my service record my mother's name Kamla Devi and date of birth 01.07.1957 is wrongly recorded. My mother's real and correct name is Kamala Devi and correct date of birth is 01.01.1963.

NOTICE

I Army No 15678683P RANK HAV Suresh Kumar S/o Babu Shankar Unit South Western COMD SIG REGT inform that in my service record my father's name Babu Shankar and date of birth 01.07.1952 is wrongly recorded. My father's real and correct name is Babu Shankar and correct date of birth is 01.01.1960.

NOTICE

I have changed my name MOHD SAMEER to ABDUL SAMEER S/O ABDUL RASHID for future purpose. Add- JAGJEEVANPUR SEMAURI POST ERAYAN DISTT. FATEHPUR.

NOTICE

I have changed my name SHAMEEM AHMAD to SHAMIM AHMAD KHAN S/O MAHMOOD KHAN for future purpose. Add- HASANPUR POST REWARI BUJURG FATEHPUR

NOTICE

I have changed my name RAJOO to MOHAMMAD RAJU S/O JAHAGEER for future purpose. Add- SONARAN TOLA KARARI KAUSHAMBI

NOTICE

I Rukshar Bano w/o Mohd. Javed R/o H.N.3 Word no.7 Agarwal Adhikansh Uttari Kishunpur Fatehpur UP 216558. Changed my daughter name from MAHENUR to MAHENOOR, for all future purpose.

NOTICE

This is inform that by mistake, my name SUBHASH CHAND YADAV has been registered in the school records of my son Harshit Yadav, which is wrong. My correct name is SUBASH CHAND YADAV. Subash Chand Yadav Address- Village Baramadpur PO. Mahul Distt. Azamgarh.

Information

It is to be informed that my son retired from the army 153415151A Sepoy TS Kulwant Singh (Bengal Engineers) my date of birth has been wrongly recorded in the service record as 01/07/1957. Whereas my actual date of birth is recorded as 10/07/1955 in my Aadhar card PAN card. My correct date of birth is 10/07/1955. Raj Singh Resident- Village- Kashi Kheda Post - Panai Buzurg Thana Bihar Tehsil - Bighapur, District Unnao, UP

WANTED

आवश्यकता है।
मदरसा इस्लामिया स्कूल,
मेला रायगंज, बाराबंकी
सहायक अध्यापक तहतानिया- 01 पद, आयु न्यूनतम 18 वर्ष, शैक्षिक योग्यता आलिम अथवा उर्दू से इम्प्टर। पुनरोक्षित वेतन मेट्रिक्स लेवल 6 में वेतन 35400-112400।
नोट- उपरोक्त पद हेतु आवेदन पत्र शिक्षापत्र के प्रकाशन तिथि के 21 दिवस के अंदर प्रबन्धक ड्रम एजुकेशनल सोसाइटी, सी-ब्लाक इन्दिरा नगर, लखनऊ-226016 को प्राप्त हो जाने चाहिए। अंतिम तिथि के बाद प्राप्त आवेदन पत्रों पर कोई विचार नहीं किया जाएगा। साक्षात्कार की तिथि सूचित कर दी जाएगी। इस हेतु कोई यात्रा भत्ता देय नहीं होगा। काबिलियत/अर्हता मदरसा बोर्ड एक्ट व नियमावली 22 जुलाई 2016 के मुताबिक होगी।
प्रबन्धक

NOTICE

It is informed that I am JC 482125 P Subedar Yogendra Singh who is serving in 2 Rajput. My son's name is recorded as SOREEYA in the Army record document, which is wrong. My son's actual name is Shaurya. Therefore, my son's correct name should be recorded as Shaurya in my service record document. Resident - H.N.23A Defense Enclave Boh Road Near Bakshi Cement Store Ambala Cantt Ambala Haryana. Pin Code-133005

LU study uncovers surging glacier in central Himalayas

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A study by Lucknow University has revealed the secrets of a surging glacier in the central Himalayas. While many glaciers around the world are retreating due to climate change, scientists have discovered a glacier in the central Himalayas that has surged. The study focuses on an area between latitude N 30.985 and longitude E 79.642, covering 48 sq km near the Line of Actual Control (LAC) between India and Tibet. The unnamed glacier, located about 1 km north of the Raykana Glacier in Niti Valley, Uttarakhand, is the subject of this discovery. The research, led by Dr Vinit Kumar, associate professor at the University of Lucknow's Department of Geology and Scientist-D at the Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology (WIHG) in Dehradun, also includes contributions from

Dr Manish Mehta, Dr Gautam Rawat, and PhD student Ajay Singh Rana. The findings, published in the renowned journal Environmental Science and Pollution Research by Springer Nature, reveal that this previously unknown glacier experienced a significant surge between 1993 and 2022. Researchers analysed satellite data to study the glacier's rapid advance and retreat, offering new insights into the dynamic nature of Himalayan glaciers and their potential impact on regional water resources. "This is the first study from the Indian Himalayas to report a glacier surge in the central region, traditionally observed in the Karakoram and Pamir ranges," Dr Kumar said. "This suggests that the glacier regime is complex and warrants further research into the effects of climate change and how glaciers respond to warming temperatures," he added.

The study also emphasises the importance of continuous monitoring of the glacier's behaviour, as well as the potential risks of hazardous ice-dammed lakes formed by surging glaciers. These findings are crucial for better development planning in the area as climate change continues to affect these fragile ecosystems. **MOU SIGNED**
A memorandum of understanding (MoU) has been signed between the University of Madeira, Portugal, and the University of Lucknow to promote collaboration in pharmaceutical research and development. The MoU was signed by LU Vice-Chancellor Prof Alok Kumar Rai, Rector of the University of Madeira Silvio Fernandes, Director of the Madeira Chemistry Research Centre Prof João Rodrigues, and Director of the Institute of Pharmaceutical Sciences, University of Lucknow, Prof

Pushendra Kumar Tripathi. This partnership will facilitate joint research projects, academic publications, books, and exchange programmes for students and faculty. The collaboration will focus on pharmaceutical sciences, with an emphasis on research, publications, and exchanges. Prof Rodrigues announced that students and teachers would be encouraged to engage in basic chemistry research, with short residential research training sessions lasting three to four months. Rector Fernandes expressed his excitement about the MoU and invited students to collaborate on science and art projects. Vice-Chancellor Rai urged faculty and students to fully utilise this opportunity. This MoU marks the start of a new era of collaboration between the two universities, fostering innovation and excellence in pharmaceutical research and education.

Nod to key LDA projects

Lucknow (PNS): Lucknow Divisional Commissioner Roshan Jacob presided over the 183rd board meeting of the Lucknow Development Authority on Wednesday. Jacob emphasised the importance of adopting the latest technology in designing and developing new structures to ensure they meet the expectations of homebuyers. She also stressed the need for high-quality building materials to ensure the stability and durability of the constructions. The revised layout plan for the Mohaan Road Hi-Tech Urban Township was approved, along with the proposal to construct low-cost housing on the premises of four closed factories in the Aishbagh area. These factory premises were transferred to LDA as they were built on nuzul land, and the companies were unable to renew their leases after being out of production for several years.

A proposal to install rooftop solar energy units on houses built on plots measuring 100 square metres was also approved, aimed at promoting solar energy and reducing reliance on conventional power. The meeting, also attended by LDA Vice-Chairman Prathmesh Kumar and Secretary Vivek Srivastava, discussed utilising unutilised land and properties across the city to address the housing shortage, particularly for the displaced persons from Akbarnagar, Bikhampur, and Butler Palace, who will be relocated to Basant Kunj. Additionally, it was decided that homebuyers who have completed all installments for residential plots in various sectors of Jankipuram Extension will be registered within two weeks. The board also passed a resolution to construct a nursing home on plots 32 and 33 in Sector-B of the Kanpur Road scheme.

In a first, RMLIMS performs urethral sphincter implant

PNS ■ LUCKNOW


In a first for Uttar Pradesh, Dr Ram Manohar Lohia Institute of Medical Sciences (RMLIMS) successfully performed the implantation of an artificial urethral sphincter (AMS 800) on a 69-year-old patient, Shyam Narayan, from Rasra, Ballia district. Narayan had been suffering from total urinary incontinence following a radical prostatectomy in 2019. The surgery, carried out by a team from the department of urology and renal transplant, was led by Dr Ishwar Ram Dhayal and included Dr Gautam Banga, Dr Alok Srivastava, Dr Shivani, Dr Nandan, and Dr Praveen. The anaesthesia team consisting of Dr PK Das and Dr Smarika played a crucial role in ensuring the success of the procedure. The artificial urethral sphincter implantation is a complex procedure designed to restore urinary control in patients with severe incontinence, offering new hope for those with limited treatment options. This milestone marks significant progress in urological care within the region. Dr Dhayal expressed pride in

performing this groundbreaking surgery, emphasising its importance in improving patients' quality of life. Dr Gautam Banga added that the surgery would open the door for more advanced medical treatments in the area. Director of RMLIMS Prof CM Singh highlighted the institution's commitment to bringing cutting-edge healthcare solutions to Uttar Pradesh, improving outcomes for patients in the state.

Liquor sellers meet principal secretary, press demands

Lucknow (PNS): Scores of liquor sellers met the principal secretary (excise) on Thursday with a memorandum outlining their demands. Office bearers of the Liquor Sellers Welfare Association (LSWA) had discussions with the official regarding several key issues. Devesh Jaiswal, media in-charge of the association, provided details of the meeting. LSWA state president Sardar SP Singh called for an increase in profit margins, citing a steady decline in margins over the past several years. Other office bearers, Neeraj

Jaiswal and Vikas Mohan Srivastava, requested simplification of the quota system for English liquor and beer. LSWA members Shivkumar Jaiswal and Jaiprakash Jaiswal raised concerns about the continuously increasing quotas. Additionally, Ramesh Jaiswal and Pankaj Jaiswal highlighted issues with the scanning machines used in the business. Devesh Jaiswal stated that the meeting with the principal secretary was productive, and the LSWA will continue to meet and voice their demands if necessary in the future.



THE PUNJAB STATE COOPERATIVE MILK PRODUCERS FEDERATION LTD.
SCO 153-155, SECTOR 34-A, CHANDIGARH-160022, EPABX NO. 9172-5041/512-55


Notice Inviting Tender www.verka.coop

e-Tenders are hereby invited for the purchase and supply of following items:-

Sr. No.	Name of Work/Item	Period/Tentative Qty
1.	For Verka Head Office, Chandigarh Various type of C.Boxes for different items. i. C.Boxes for Export Ghee Tins and Defence WMP Tins. ii. C.Boxes for Aseptic Packaging iii. C.Boxes for Different Milk Products.	Half Yearly/ 30K 14 Lac 92 Lac
2.	For Verka Hoshiarpur Dairy Rate contract of Advertisement material :- 1. Flex Board 2. Flex Banner 3. Star Flex Banner 4. Vinyl Board 5. Glow Sun Board 6. Gum Sheet Sticker 7. Pamphlets 8. Dangles 9. Sun Board 10. Wall Painting 11. Vehicle Painting 12. Stands 13. Canopies	Annual
3.	For Verka Patiala Dairy Printing, supplying & installing of advertisement material i.e. Flex Board, Banner, Glow Sign Board, Sun Board, Flanges, Stands, Vinyl Stickers, Coloured posters/Stickers, Pamphlets, Wall Painting etc.	Annual

NOTE:-
1. For complete details regarding above tender (NT), please visit our website i.e. www.verka.coop & e Tenders portal i.e. eproc.punjab.gov.in.
2. Contingendum, if any, will be uploaded on website only.

NA/12/28881/2023/39862 Dated CHD :- 12/5/2024
Dy. General Manager (Purchase)



OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PHYSICAL PLANTS
OUAT, BHUBANESWAR,
'e-Procurement Notice No. 05/2024-25

1.	Name of the work	Construction of Farm Road & Bore Well with Irrigation Pipe, Store-Cum-Nursery Mixture preparation shed, Vermi Compost Unit, Biological waste disposal unit and provision for DG set at College of Forestry, OUAT, Bhubaneswar. (Composite)
2.	Total no of Work	01 No
3.	Estimated cost	Rs. 11,53,39 lakh approximate (Excluding GST)
4.	Class of Contractor	As per DTGN
5.	Period of Completion	As per DTGN
6.	Type of tender	As per DTGN
7.	Date and Time of availability of Bid documents in the portal	From Dt. 07.12.2024 to 17.00 hrs of dt. 21.12.2024.
8.	Last date/Time for receipt of bids in the portal	Dt. 21.12.2024 upto 17.00 hrs
9.	Submission of Original documents (TP cost, EMD, Affidavit etc as per DTGN)	During office hours from dt. 23.12.2024 and dt. 24.12.2024 upto 17.00 hrs in the office of the undersigned.
10.	Date of opening of Bid (Cover-I) through online	Dt. 26.12.2024 at 11.30 hrs in the office of the undersigned.
11.	Name & address of the O.I.T (Officer Inviting tender)	Director of Physical Plants, OUAT, BBSR.

Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal <https://tenders.odisha.gov.in>.
N.B. Subsequent corrigendum/addendum if required shall be available in the website as indicated above.
OIPR-01554/11/0003/2425
Director of Physical Plants
OUAT, Bhubaneswar

Yogi: We must work for country and religion

PNS ■ AYODHYA

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, on Thursday, emphasised the importance of contributing to the nation and religion within one's capacity while fostering social unity.

"If there is a country, there is religion; if there is religion, we all stand united," he said. He urged people to focus on protecting Sanatan Dharma and steering India toward the pinnacle of development, cautioning against those who sow division based on caste.

The chief minister attended the Shri Ram-Janaki Vivah Utsav at Janaki Mahal on Thursday. He noted that a similarly grand celebration was taking place in Janakpur Dham on the same day.

Reflecting on past experiences, the chief minister said, "Six years ago, under a Government of India and Uttar Pradesh initiative, I had the privilege of visiting Janakpur Dham on Vivah Panchami and witnessing the grandeur of Maa Janaki's temple. Today, I am honoured to participate once again in the Vivah Panchami programme at Janaki Mahal."

Highlighting the historical significance of Janaki Mahal during the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi movement, Chief Minister Yogi recounted how it played a pivotal role. "My revered Gurudev, Mahant Avedyanath Ji Maharaj, often stayed at Janaki Mahal during key meetings or movements



Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath offers prayers at the Hanuman Garhi temple, in Ayodhya.

PTI

related to the Ram Janmabhoomi cause. This place has been a spiritual centre for many revered saints and significant events," he added. Reflecting on the current year's importance, Chief Minister Yogi spoke about the momentous event on January 22, 2024, when Prime Minister

Modi ceremoniously placed Maryada Purushottam Shri Ram in his grand temple in Ayodhya.

"This historic moment was shared not only by those present in India but also by Sanatan Dharma followers worldwide, many witnessing it through audio-visual media.

After 500 years of struggle, we were fortunate to see Shri Ram seated in a grand temple once again. On that day, every Sanatan Dharma follower felt immense excitement and deep gratitude toward our ancestors," he concluded. Chief Minister Yogi recalled that before 2017, Ayodhya

faced significant challenges, receiving only four to five hours of electricity daily. He said, "There was no proper sanitation system, and the water at Ram Ki Paidi was stagnant, making it unsuitable for bathing. Additionally, connectivity - whether by road, rail or air - was poor."

The chief minister continued, "Today, Ayodhya boasts robust connectivity not just by road, but also by rail and air. Work is even underway to develop waterway transport, which could facilitate global trade and commerce. Narrow streets are being widened, and Ram Ki Paidi is now clean. Development projects are steadily advancing at every level."

He reflected on Lord Ram's commitment to duty and righteousness, recounting how Lord Ram told Maharaja Dashrath, 'Your word is my vow'. Lord Ram's actions were always guided by the greater good of Sanatan Dharma and the nation. Accepting 14 years of exile, he connected with various communities, including Nishadraj, Kol, Vanvasis and Girivasis in Chitrakoot. Representing India's rich heritage, Lord Ram protected sages and saints, making Dandakaranya demon-free and establishing the Jyotirlinga at Rameshwar. To this day, pilgrims visit Rameshwaram, honouring his legacy. He also built the Setubandh, liberating the land from demonic forces. Chief Minister Yogi recounted the story of Lord Ram's return to Ayodhya. Before his homecoming, he sent Hanuman to assess whether Bharat had grown attached to ruling the kingdom. Hanuman found Bharat living as an ascetic, eagerly awaiting Ram's return. This loyalty moved Lord Ram, who then returned to Ayodhya.

Winter session of UP Assembly from Dec 16

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The winter session of Uttar Pradesh Assembly will commence here from December 16. This will be the third session of the Uttar Pradesh Assembly in 2024.

The notification for the winter session was issued by the Uttar Pradesh Assembly secretariat here on Thursday.

The session is likely to be brief and have four or five sittings. The session is likely to be stormy as the opposition is likely to corner the Yogi Adityanath government, particularly on the Sambhal issue where the violence broke out on November 24 over a court mandated survey of a mosque.

A formal programme of the session is yet to be announced. The agenda and number of sittings of the House will be finalised by the Business Advisory Committee of the assembly. The committee will meet a day ahead of the commencement of the session on December 16. Official sources, however, said the government was likely to table a supplementary budget for the current fiscal 2024-25. The government had sought supplementary grants of Rs 12,909 crore during the second

session of the assembly in July earlier this year. The possibility of yet another supplementary budget comes amid indications that the state government may make an additional budgetary provision for the upcoming Maha Kumbh in Prayagraj.

The Yogi Adityanath government also seeks to give additional push to its developmental programmes after Bharatiya Janata Party's recent win in the high stakes bypolls in which the saffron outfit won seven out of nine Assembly seats.

Besides the bill for replacing an ordinance promulgated when the Assembly was not in session, the government is also likely to introduce the Uttar Pradesh Nazul Land (Amendment) Bill during the winter session. The bill was introduced and passed by the Assembly in August last. The bill was passed despite the protest by the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party MLAs.

The government, however, developed second thoughts and the bill was tabled in the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Council and referred to the select committee of the House. Official sources, however, indicated that the report on the bill is yet to be finalised by the committee.

'Nature of Ayodhya, Sambhal & Bangladesh events same'

PNS ■ AYODHYA

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Thursday accused the opposition of trying to create divide in society, saying the actions of Mughal-era ruler Babur's commander in Ayodhya and Sambhal 500 years ago, and the events happening in Bangladesh today, share the same nature and intent. The opposition shot back alleging Yogi Adityanath was indulging in "divisive politics" and peddling "false narratives".

The chief minister, who was in the temple town for the inauguration of the 43rd Ramayan Mela, said Lord Ram had united the whole society and cautioned people against dismissing these issues as distant or irrelevant. "Had we given importance to unity and not let the strategy of nation's enemies succeed in creating social animosity, this country would have never become a slave. Our pilgrimages would not have been desecrated. A handful of invaders

would not have dared to invade us and would be crushed by India's brave soldiers," Yogi Adityanath said. "But those creating obstacles within the society were able to succeed. Their genes remain the same even today. Those who indulge in caste-based politics to shatter the social fabric are still active," the chief minister said.

"Look at the kind of acts our enemies in neighbouring countries are committing. Remember this, if anyone is under any illusion. Five hundred years ago, a general of Babur committed certain deeds in Ayodhya, similar acts in Sambhal, and what is happening today in Bangladesh -- the nature and DNA of all three are the same," he added. Asked to comment on Yogi Adityanath's remarks, Congress MP Tariq Anwar said his language doesn't befit a chief minister.

"It is surprising and saddening that being a big leader of the BJP and the chief minister of a large state like Uttar Pradesh, he uses such language which

is aimed at dividing people," Anwar said. Another Congress MP, Mohammad Javed, expressed sadness over the developments in Bangladesh and also in Uttar Pradesh's Sambhal.

"Innocent people are facing difficulties. Five people have been killed and the leader of the opposition is being stopped from visiting Sambhal. We will demand justice from the government," he said. Yogi Adityanath said if someone believes that what is happening in India was dissimilar to what happened in Bangladesh then they are mistaken. "Divisive elements are there already, tearing apart the social fabric, breaking social unity, and making full arrangements 'aapko kaatne aur katwane ka,' he said.

"These divisive forces include many who have purchased properties in countries around the world. When a crisis strikes here, they will flee to those places, leaving the people here to suffer and die. This is what they do," he added.

First get your DNA checked: Akhilesh to Yogi Adityanath

Kanpur (PTI): Yogi Adityanath should first get his DNA checked, Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav said on Thursday after the Uttar Pradesh chief minister's remark that the nature and the DNA of what happened in Ayodhya during Babur's era and now in Sambhal and Bangladesh are the same.

Talking to reporters in Kanpur, Yadav said, "I don't know how much science the chief minister knows and how much biology he has studied... But I want to request him that he should not talk about DNA... Through you (media), and I am saying this with full responsibility, that he should not talk about DNA... and if he talks about DNA then we all want to get our DNA checked. The chief minister should also get his DNA checked... I want to get my DNA checked and the chief minister should also," the SP chief said. "This talk of DNA does not suit him. Being a saint, a yogi in saffron robes, this language should not be used and this talk about DNA should not be done," he said. Yadav was in Kanpur to attend a private function.

Security beefed in Sambhal ahead of December 6

Sambhal (PTI): Sambhal administration said it will put up posters of those involved in the November 24 violence, while police beefed up security in the district on Thursday, a day before December 6 - the day Babri mosque in Ayodhya was demolished by the Hindu right in 1992.

Police also estimated the arson and vandalism damage in the Sambhal violence to be worth more than Rs 1 crore.

"We will put up posters of those involved in Sambhal violence ... in all likelihood today," District Magistrate Rajender Pensiya told PTI. He said the authorities have identified more than 400 people in connection with the violence that broke out last month over a local mosque survey. "There is a peace committee meeting at 3 pm and we will discuss the situation with everyone," he said.

"We are currently designing it (poster). It will be finalised today. 400 people have been identified. Posters will be put up after excluding those who have been arrested," he said. Superintendent of Police (SP) Krishna Kumar Bishnoi said efforts are on to nab the remaining accused.

"So far, 34 people have been arrested, and efforts to apprehend others are ongoing. Names of 83 individuals have emerged, and 400 photographs have been collected. A unique identification process is being carried out," he said. On the damages, Bishnoi said, "Damages exceeding Rs 1 crore have been reported so far. This includes burnt transformers, broken cameras, and vehicles set on fire. Recovery will be made from the rioters once they are identified, and chargesheets will be filed against them."

Yogi congratulates Fadnavis on becoming Maha CM

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, on Thursday, attended the swearing-in ceremony of the new Maharashtra government.

He congratulated Devendra Fadnavis on taking oath as chief minister and Eknath Shinde and Ajit Pawar on their appointments as deputy chief ministers.

In a post on the social media platform 'X', Chief Minister Yogi expressed his heartfelt congratulations to Fadnavis, stating, "Under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and your able guidance, Maharashtra will achieve the goals of 'Viksit Maharashtra - Surakshit Maharashtra' and set new benchmarks in governance and prosperity."

Yogi Adityanath also extended his best wishes to Eknath Shinde and Ajit Pawar, wishing them a successful tenure.



From left, Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami, Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel and others during the swearing-in ceremony of Maharashtra Chief Minister and Deputy Chief Ministers, in Mumbai, Thursday.

PTI

During the Maharashtra elections, Chief Minister Yogi had campaigned extensively under the leadership of Prime Minister Modi, holding rallies across the state. During his

HC rejects anticipatory bail plea of teacher who asked students to slap Muslim boy

Muzaffarnagar (PTI): The Allahabad High Court has rejected the anticipatory bail plea of a school teacher who asked class 2 students to slap their Muslim friend, a lawyer said on Thursday about the incident that sparked widespread outrage last year. A bench comprising Justice Deepak Verma refused to grant the relief and directed the applicant to surrender before the court concerned within two weeks from the date of the order and apply for regular bail, the plaintiff's lawyer said. "The lower court had already rejected the anticipatory bail plea on October 16. Now,

the high court has upheld that decision, rejecting the teacher's plea on November 23," Kamran Zaidi, the lawyer representing the victim, said. According to the prosecution, police filed a charge sheet against Tripti Tyagi under several sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), including Section 323 (voluntarily causing hurt), Section 504 (intentional insult with intent to provoke breach of peace), and Section 295A (deliberate and malicious acts intended to outrage religious feelings). Additionally, charges under Section 75 of the Juvenile Justice Act have been invoked, the

lawyer said. The case drew widespread attention and condemnation after a video surfaced in August 2023, showing Tyagi instructing her students of Class 2 to slap a Muslim classmate while making a communal remark in Khubbapur village. Muzaffarnagar police had registered a case against the teacher over the incident, while the school was also served a notice by the state's education department. On November 10, 2023, the Supreme Court had castigated the state government for not complying with its order to depute an agency for counselling the victim child.

Protests in Moradabad over sale of house to Muslim man

PNS ■ MORADABAD

Protests broke out in the posh TDI society here allegedly over a house being sold to a Muslim doctor by a resident. Slogans were raised by the members of the housing society after they came to know that one Dr Ashok Bajaj had sold his house to Dr Ikra Chaudhary.

Residents mounted a demonstration at the colony gate holding banners 'Dr Ashok Bajaj Apna Makaan Wapas lo' (take your house back). Both, the buyer and the seller, were not available for comments.

"This is a Hindu society, where over 400 Hindu families live. We don't want anyone from the other communities to reside here," a protester said, adding that the house is near a temple. TDI City Society chairman Amit Verma also joined the protesters. One of the residents feared the ownership may change the nature of the colony. "We fear that there will be a disturbance in the demographic structure of the society and unwanted changes might occur if other communities start to settle there and Hindus start to leave," the person said. District Magistrate Anuj Kumar Singh said the society members have filed a complaint, raising objection over selling of the house. "We are talking to concerned parties and trying for a unanimous, amicable solution to it," he added.

बैंक ऑफ बड़ोदा Bank of Baroda Regional Office, Kanpur Metro Region: 118/330, 1st Floor, Gumti No. 5, Kaushalpuri, Kanpur-12

DEMAND NOTICE Branch : Barra City, Kanpur

Here by this is to inform that under named borrower has not repaid principal and interest thereon of the loan. Therefore the loan become NPA on below Dated . A notice under section 13(2) of the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002 was issued at last known address, which was returned undelivered. Therefore we again inform to under named borrower/ Guarantor by this public notice to repay the loan amount due including interest and other expenses as mentioned in this notice within 60 days from the date of publication of this notice otherwise bank will take action u/section 13(4) of the SARFAESI Act 2002.

The borrower's attention is invited to provision of sub-section (8) of 13 of the act, in respect of time available to redeem the secured assets, that after publication of public auction/inwriting quotation/tender/ private treaty your right to redeem the secured assets will not be available.

Name and Address of Borrower / Guarantor and Security agreement with brief description of securities/N.P.A. Date & Outstanding Amount as per Demand Notice		
Borrower : Shri Phool Chandra S/o Shri Jethu Ram and Smt. Vidhya Devi W/o Shri Phool Chandra, Both R/o : House No. 38, Block EWS, Bargadiya Purwa, Panki, Kanpur Nagar.	N.P.A. Date : 08-11-2024	Demand Notice Date : 27-11-2024
Property : Land & Building Built over Residential Plot No. E-38, EWS, Bargadiya Purwa, Panki, Kanpur Nagar in the name of Shri Phool Chandra S/o Shri Jethu Ram and Smt. Vidhya Devi W/o Shri Phool Chandra, Area : 32.51 Sq. Mtr. Bounded-North : 4.57 Mtr. Road, South : Plot No. E-69, East : Plot No. E-39, West : Plot No. E-37		
O/s Amount as per Demand Notice as on Dated 23-11-2024: Rs. 9,68,551.41 + Intt. + Others Charges		
Date : 06-12-2024	Place : Kanpur	Authorised Officer

IDFC FIRST Bank Limited (erstwhile Capital First Limited, amalgamated with IDFC Bank Limited and presently known as IDFC FIRST Bank Limited) IDFC FIRST Bank

CIN : L65110TN2014PLC097792 Registered Office: - KRM Towers, 8th Floor, Harrington Road, Chelpet, Chennai- 600031. Tel : +91 44 4564 4000 | Fax: +91 44 4564 4022

Notice under Section 13 (2) of the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002

The following borrowers and co-borrowers availed the below mentioned secured loans from IDFC FIRST Bank Limited (erstwhile Capital First Limited, amalgamated with IDFC Bank Limited and presently known as IDFC FIRST Bank Limited) The loans of the below-mentioned borrowers and co-borrowers have been secured by the mortgage of their respective properties. As they have failed to adhere to the terms and conditions of the respective loan agreements and had become irregular, their loan were classified as NPA as per the RBI guidelines. Amounts due by them to IDFC FIRST Bank Limited (erstwhile Capital First Limited, amalgamated with IDFC Bank Limited and presently known as IDFC FIRST Bank Limited) are mentioned as per respective notices issued more particularly described in the following table and further interest on the said amounts shall also be applicable and the same will be charged as per contractual rate with effect from their respective dates.

Sr No.	Loan Account No.	Type of Loan	Name of borrowers and co-borrowers	Section 13 (2) Notice Date	Outstanding amount as per Section 13 (2) Notice
1	138197682	HOME LOAN	1. MADHURI DEVI (IN THE CAPACITY OF AVAILABLE LEGAL HEIR OF LATESHIVA RASTOGI) 2. MADHURI DEVI	16.10.2024	5,50,899.15/-

PROPERTY ADDRESS : ALL THAT PIECE AND PARCEL OF PLOT NO.42, AREA 1500 SQ. FT. I.E., 139.405 SQ. METER, PART OF LAND GATA NO.1045, SITUATED AT MOHALLA-SATISH NAGAR COLONY, NEAR VILLAGE-MEERPUR TEHSIL LAKHIMPUR PARGANA & DISTRICT-KHERI. UTTAR PRADESH 262701 AND, BOUNDED AS: EAST: RASTA 6 MTR. WEST: PLOT OF SELLER, NORTH: PLOT NO. 41 SHOBHA DEVI, SOUTH: PLOT NO.43 SELLER

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Authorized Officer

Date : 06.12.2024
Place : KHERI

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Complete ongoing works by December 31: DC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

A meeting was held here on Thursday under the chairmanship of Divisional Commissioner (DC) Kaushal Raj Sharma regarding the preparations for the Maha Kumbh to be held in Prayagraj from January 13 in which he directed all the departments concerned to speed up their pace of work and complete the works by December 31 at any cost, otherwise, action will be taken by fixing responsibility. The DC said after bathing in Kumbh, a large number of people are expected to come to Varanasi and visit Ayodhya, for which we have to keep our preparations at all levels. "Banaras has its own three Akharas in Kumbh, in which people will participate on a large scale and keeping this in mind, all preparations will have to be made", he said, adding that in the coming month of February itself, Kashi-Tamil Sangamam will also be organised at Namo Ghat, in which a large number of people are expected to come. He directed the officers of the Public Works Department (PWD) to complete the work of all its six roads in progress in the city by December 31 at any cost. With the cooperation of the Transport department,

all the identified black spots have been directed to be removed, he asked the PWD, instructing the department officers to make all roads pothole free, do white strip marking, instal direction indicators outside and inside the city along with Mohansarai and Ring Road. "If the roads are not completed by December 31, action will be taken against the concerned nodal officers, contractors and officers by fixing responsibility", Sharma warned. He instructed the Setu Nigam (UP Bridge Corporation) officers to open one lane of Kajjakkura flyover by December 31 at any cost, otherwise, the responsibility of Railways and Setu Nigam will be fixed. The Varanasi Development Authority (VDA) and Varanasi Municipal Corporation (VMC) were instructed to repair their boards, pillars and poles, clean them and paint them, paint dividers on the road etc so that along with cleanliness of the entire city, a colour can be followed so that the city can be brightened. The DC directed the officers of the Transport department to check the fitness of all government, private, school-college buses, auto rickshaws, e-rickshaws etc in collaboration with



In view of the Maha Kumbh in Prayagraj Divisional Commissioner KR Sharma reviewing preparations at a meeting held in Varanasi on Thursday

the Traffic department, put reflectors on them in view of fog, correct black spots, ensure that no passenger sits on tractors, identify all drivers, get them verified in view of safety, issue them a mark, fix their dress code, get their eyes tested and make proper arrangements for crowd management etc. It was asked to make temporary bus stands by identifying places according to convenience at Harhua, Jagatpur, Lahartara etc so that unnecessary traffic jams do not occur. He said that the VMC should fix the fares of auto rickshaws and e-rickshaws at all places in collaboration with the Traffic Police and display them on flex and through newspapers so that no outsider charges unnecessary fare from the devotees, which spoils the image of Varanasi. The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Kashi Vishwanath Temple has been asked to make preparations in the temple premises like in the

month of Shraavan and to get the barricading done inside to control the crowd. In view of security, it was asked to organise mock drills of fire, NDRF, PAC and electrical safety. The Tourism department has been asked to expedite the construction work, hold meetings with the dignitaries of the city for the organisation and procession of Kumbh and take their suggestions, set up help desks at major intersections in view of Kumbh and distribute pamphlets, leaflets etc. The Commercial Tax Department has been asked to hold a meeting with the Vyapar Mandals and to expect their cooperation in treating the visiting devotees and pilgrims well and helping in making Kashi plastic free. The National Highway Authority of India (NHAI) has been asked to repair all the highways and especially the roads of Varanasi - Prayagraj - Lucknow - Ayodhya, complete the work of underpasses, dividers etc. The Irrigation department has been asked to clean the Ganga and Varuna rivers, correct the interceptor drains etc. All the works have been asked to be done as per the instructions and standards of NGT. The DC asked the Jal Nigam to run the sewage treatment plant

at full MLD and complete the remaining works by December. The Jalkal Department should ensure that there is no sewerage flow anywhere on ghats, lanes etc. which may cause problems to any devotee. The VMC and Cantonment Board have been asked to remove potholes on roads, paint dividers, instal signboards, ensure no dirt in lanes, remove garbage dumped in empty plots, check vehicle factories operating illegally in empty plots, remove them and clean them, otherwise responsibility will be fixed. The Food Safety department has been asked to do thorough checking of food items operated at hotels, shops, carts etc, ensure quality, remove any deficiency if it is found and maintain hygiene so that religious sentiments of any devotee are not hurt. The Health department has been directed to make proper arrangements in all community health centres (CHCs), primary health centres (PHCs), district hospitals and to keep emergency medical ready with full preparation. Under disaster management, it has been asked to make proper arrangements for the crowd, ensure security, food packets, proper accommodation along with availability of blankets in sufficient quantity.

For community policing, emphasis was also laid on calling people from Civil Defence, Red Cross etc to the police station and holding meetings with them, training them so that their help can be taken in case of any emergency. The VMC and Water Police were directed to hold meetings with the boatmen, ensure their good behaviour, fix fares, fix their ghats and volunteers, hold meetings with the Panda community at the ghats, ensure availability of safety jackets on boats, make the ghats completely free from plastic and polythene. The Electricity department was directed to complete all pole shifting works by December 31 at any cost. The Bhashini app was asked to be circulated among the maximum number of people. On the occasion Sharma said that Maha Kumbh is being organised as a world class Kumbh which has been made completely plastic free, ODF free. All the people going to Maha Kumbh should carry their own 'plate bag'. District Magistrate S Rajalingam, Additional Commissioner of Police (Varanasi Commissionerate) S Chinnappa and officials of various departments were present in the meeting.

People apprise minister of their problems



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Uttar Pradesh Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Stamp and Court Fee and Registration Ravindra Jaiswal on Thursday held a public hearing at the Prime Minister's Parliamentary Office located at Ravindrapuri Jawahar Nagar and got acquainted with the problems of the people. He resolved many problems on the spot. In the public hearing, people from different areas appraised the minister of their problems and in many cases, Jaiswal directly talked to the departmental officers concerned through mobile and directed for early disposal of problems. The businessmen who came from Sonbhadra said that their trucks are being challaned wrongly, on which Jaiswal had a telephonic conversation with the district magistrate of Sonbhadra and directed him to conduct an impartial inquiry into the matter and inform him.

Two killed as car rams into divider

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Two youths died and five others were seriously injured when their speeding car ramed into the divider on a culvert near Sugira village on Jhansi-Mirzapur highway in Mahoba on Wednesday night. The injured were admitted to the district hospital. According to a report, the marriage party of Rajesh Sahu, son of Pannalal Sahu of Power House Colony, Mauranipur, Jhansi, was coming to Kulpahar, Mahoba. Rajesh's friends were coming on a car to attend the marriage function. Suddenly their speeding car ramed into a divider and got badly damaged. The other baratis and local residents rescued the youths badly trapped in the car. On getting information about the incident sub-divisional magistrate (SDM), circle officer (CO) and Kotwali police also rushed to the spot and rescued the injured baratis. In the incident groom's friends — Ansh Patel (20) of Mauranipur and Manish Patel (28) of Gutai village were killed while Pradip Patel (21), Mukesh Patel (18), Vipin Patel, Yogendra (22) of Kotra and Prince Patel (19) of Samara Bangra were injured and admitted to the district hospital. Due to his serious condition, Vipin Patel was referred to the Jhansi hospital. The incident suddenly turned a festive event into a scene of mourning. In another incident a scooter-borne youth was fatally knocked down by a speeding tractor-trolley while his colleague injured in the Vidhnu police area on Thursday. Police sent the injured to the Vidhnu

CHC from where after first aid he was discharged. Police have started probe in the matter. Sunil Kumar Tewari (38) of Avas Vikas, Hanspuram, Naubasta, was employed as a collection manager and his family comprised wife and two children. On Thursday, Sunil along with collection executive Piyush Tewari (23) of Gangapur Colony was going towards Ghatampur on scooter. After he reached near Madhavbagh Bazar in Vidhnu police area on the Kanpur-Sagar highway, the speeding tractor-trolley laden with cemented bricks hit them which led to the killing of Sunil on the spot. However, Piyush sustained minor injury. On the information of passers-by, police rushed to spot and sent the injured to Vidhnu CHC. After the first aid, Piyush was sent to home. SO Jitendra Pratap Singh said the body had been sent for autopsy. On the basis of complaint, further action would be initiated in the matter, he said. Meanwhile as many as 16 people were injured when their bus suddenly overturned near New Transport Nagar Maurang Mandi in Panki police station area late on Wednesday night. The passengers were returning after attending a marriage function. On hearing about the incident, police rushed to the spot and sent all the injured to hospital. SUICIDE: A woman allegedly committed suicide by hanging herself in Kohna police station area. Her kin alleged that some goons had been threatening her on phone and on the way to pressurise her to withdraw a case lodged against them with the police.

Seminar held on harm caused by plastic & its ban in Maha Kumbh



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAWAGRAJ

With the efforts of Regional Office Pollution Control Board, Prayagraj, and sponsorship of IFFCO Pulpur Unit, a seminar was organised in the Municipal Corporation auditorium here on the harm caused by plastic and its ban in the upcoming Maha Kumbh. Apart from this, a rally was also organised to create awareness among the public in which everyone took a pledge not to use plastic. The chief guest at the programme was Chairman Pollution Control Board, Lucknow Headquarters, Ravindra Kumar Singh, and the special guest was Uttar Pradesh Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Forest and Environment, Zoological Garden, Climate Change Dr Arun Kumar Saxena. The IFFCO Pulpur unit also participated in the programme. Senior Manager, Engineering Procurement and Construction (EPC) Umesh Kumar Shukla, and Manager, EPC, Manoj Kumar, were present. CICT 2024: The three-day eighth IEEE Conference on Information Communication

Technology (CICT 2024) will commence from December 6 at Indian Institute of Information Technology, Allahabad (IIIT-A). The event will feature the presentation of 130 meticulously selected research papers across 25 technical sessions. These sessions will span a wide array of cutting-edge topics, offering participants a platform to share their groundbreaking findings and engage in insightful discussions. With representation from countries such as the USA, Slovakia, Sri Lanka, Iran, India, and Bangladesh, CICT 2024 reflects a truly global perspective, enhancing its role as a nexus for international collaboration. A major highlight of CICT 2024 will be the keynote addresses to be delivered by six luminaries in their respective fields. The lineup includes Prof HM Gupta, ex-professor from IIT Delhi, Prof Juraz Guzda from Slovakia, Prof Kim from Kent University, USA, Prof Bharat Panchal, an industry leader in cybersecurity, Prof Manas Mandal from IIT Kharagpur and Prof Anish Arora from Ohio State University. These distinguished

speakers are expected to inspire and educate attendees with their profound expertise and vision for the future of ICT. Three focused tutorial sessions will delve into emerging and transformative topics: 6G technologies, Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning (AI/ML), and advances in Microwave Engineering. These sessions aim to equip participants with a thorough understanding of groundbreaking technologies and their practical applications. Additionally, two dynamic panel discussions will stimulate discourse on critical topics: Reorientation of IT and Digital India: Goals and Challenges for a Developed Bharat. These panels promise to bring forth diverse perspectives from experts, addressing pressing challenges and envisioning future opportunities. General Chair Dr Vijay Chaurasia said the conference will provide a platform for young researchers to shine. Dedicated symposiums for MTech and PhD scholars will enable them to present their innovative work to a distinguished audience. Meanwhile, B'Tech students will showcase their creativity and technical prowess through poster presentations, encouraging the next generation of thinkers and innovators to engage in meaningful research. The conference will also witness the participation of renowned experts and speakers, along with the directors of all Centrally Funded Technical Institutions (CFTIs) IIIT's. Their presence underscores the event's significance in fostering dialogue across academe,

industry and policy-making, adding unparalleled value to the proceedings. Organising secretary Dr Suneel Yadav said the essence of CICT 2024 is to highlight the transformative potential of ICT in addressing global challenges and driving societal progress. As anticipation builds, CICT 2024 stands ready to leave a profound and lasting impact, embodying the spirit of "ICT for Everything" and underscoring the power of collaboration, innovation and vision. Held under the visionary theme "ICT for Everything", this prestigious event promises to unite researchers, academicians and industry experts from around the world, fostering collaboration and driving innovation in the field of ICT. LABOURER DIES: A 45-year-old labourer died on the spot after being hit by a truck on Mohiddinpur National Highway in Utraon police station area on Thursday. He was identified as Ranjeet Singh Rajput, a resident of Bhopal. The incident occurred near Mohiuddinpur Raj Dhaba. On getting information about the incident the police reached the spot, took the body in their possession and sent it for post-mortem. Utraon Station House Officer (SHO) Pankaj Tripathi said the family members of the deceased have been informed about it. Meanwhile cyber fraudsters defrauded a doctor of ₹50 lakh here. The criminals sent an APK file to him on his WhatsApp number and siphoned off the money from his account. Cyber Cell in charge R Tiwari said a complaint has been received and investigation is underway.

National School Volleyball mascot, trophy unveiled



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Divisional Commissioner (DC) Kaushal Raj Sharma on Thursday unveiled the mascot and trophy of the 68th National School Volleyball (Under-14, Boys and Girls Category) Competition 2024-25 scheduled to be organised in Varanasi. He expressed gratitude to the designer for choosing the inaugurated mascot in accordance with the culture here. While congratulating everyone, the DC said Varanasi has been selected for the competition of the whole country. "It is our collective responsibility to dis-

play the hospitality of Kashi and also introduce the visiting players and team members to the culture here", he said. While instilling enthusiasm in the players, he said that playing at the national level is a matter of pride in itself, which will help the players to get additional weightage during studies and jobs in future. He also encouraged the students of NSS, NCC, Scout Guide. It is worth noting that the competition will be organised at the Amphitheatre Ground of BHU from December 10 to 14, in which a total of 1,080 players from 45 teams will participate.

Lecture delivered on application of remote sensing in soil mapping

Varanasi (PNS): As a part of the 10th World Soil Day celebrations, the Department of Soil Science & Agricultural Chemistry, Institute of Agricultural Sciences, Banaras Hindu University (IAS-BHU) in association with ISSS - Varanasi Chapter organised a special lecture by Principal Scientist, ICAR-NBSSLU, Dr J Prasad. Dr Prasad delivered a thought-provoking lecture on applica-

tion of remote sensing in soil mapping. He said soil salinisation is one of the most common land degradation processes, especially in arid and semi-arid regions, where precipitation exceeds evaporation and soil salinity is a major global issue due to its adverse impact on the environment, agro-ecosystems, agricultural productivity and sustainability. HoD Prof J Yadav welcomed the guests.

Women demand ban on alcohol

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Under the aegis of Lok Samiti Mahila Samuh, women from many villages took to the streets in Benipur village on Thursday, demanding a complete ban on alcohol in Uttar Pradesh. Hundreds of women from villages like Nagepur, Ganeshpur, Kallipur, Mubarakpur, Kundariya, Sabalpur etc took out a rally in Benipur market against the sale of alcohol. Carrying placards and banners, women raised slogans like stop drinking alcohol, stop selling alcohol, drive away alcohol, save the state etc. The rally reached the village panchayat via Mubarakpur, Ganeshpur and Benipur market. The participants demonstrated in front of the Panchayat Bhawan and raised anti-alcohol slogans. The villagers demanded that the PM and CM should impose a complete ban on alcohol in UP. The artistes of Prerna Kala Manch made people aware about drug addiction through street plays. On the occasion of Nirbhaya Day, on December 16, a padyatra will be taken out from Nagepur to Tehsil Rajatalab against alcohol and domestic violence against women and a demonstration will be held at Tehsil Rajatalab. Convenor of Lok Samiti Nandlal Master has said that a campaign will be run against alcohol in every village under the leadership of women to demand a complete ban on alcohol in Uttar Pradesh. The programme was conducted by Asha Rai, chaired by Anita and led by Soni. CONFERENCE BEGINS: The four-day annual conference of Indian Society of Gastroenterology (UP Chapter) started by lighting a lamp at Deendayal Hastkala Sankul (TFC) here on Wednesday. In the inauguration programme, Dr Jafri Metz (President of World Gastroenterology Organisation), Prof SN Shankwar (Director IMS-BHU), Prof VK Dixit (Secretary, ISGCON), Dr DN Reddy (Hyderabad), Dr Mathew Philip (Kochi), Dr Govind Makharia (AIIMS, New Delhi) were jointly present.

Kashi is heritage of India: Prof Lal

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The annual function of the Institute of Medical Sciences, Banaras Hindu University (IMS-BHU) concluded here on Wednesday evening. The chief guest and Director, PGI Chandigarh Prof Vivek Lal said that our aim was also to study in this great university because Kashi is the heritage of India and Kashi is also the heritage of medical science. "The great surgeon here was Acharya Sushruta who has done neuro surgery and endoscopic level surgery, while Acharya Charak from Kashmir played an important role in the medical field. In Australia and New Zealand, the FRCS degree is taken in front of Sushruta", he said. He further said, "Swami Vivekananda has said that we should be proud of our heritage. Doctors should live with their heads held high but should treat their patients with their heads bowed down. Strong willpower is more important than the machine. There is an extreme need for the students to be determined and consider the treatment of the patient as Ganga, Yamuna, Saraswati and Kashi". He said when the government is spending so much money in making doctors, then we also need to keep our intentions clean. "This work can be possible only when every student is mentally strong spiritually", he said, adding that there is a need to make continuous efforts to advance research in the interest of the government and society. The guest of honour and Director of All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Bhopal, Prof Ajay Singh said that

the observer of every activity is our student, so all of us medical teachers should be punctual so that the public can get the facility easily, along with this, everyone needs to pay attention to mental health today. "The Prime Minister has two basic objectives in which we should cooperate in making India TB and anaemia free. All AIIMS people should focus on the exchange of knowledge among themselves, along with this, all the students should guide the patients in this direction that prevention is better than treatment", he said. BHU Rector Prof Sanjay Kumar said that the objective of Foundation Day is that we should work on the standards set by the people, along with this we should publish impact factor based papers. "It is a matter of pride for the university that IMS got the status of AIIMS, but our responsibility towards the society and patients increases further", he said. IMS-BHU Prof SN Shankwar presented the annual report in which the achievements of the institute were informed. Along with this, the outline of the development of the institute in future was also outlined by mentioning the MoUs made at national and international level this year, he added. The guests were welcomed by the Dean Prof Ashok Chaudhary. On this occasion, the coordinator of the programme Prof TP Chaturvedi informed about the health fair and the outline of the programme. The list of retired teachers and non-teaching staff was presented by Dr Rashi Sharma, and they were honoured in the presence of all

the guests. At the end of the annual function, the deans of all the faculties, department heads, doctors, dignitaries and all other employees were present. Earlier, a two-day health fair was organised in the New Lecture Theatre Complex of IMS-BHU Campus as part of the annual festival. In the health fair, the public took advantage of the services available at the Faculty of Ayurveda, Faculty of Dental Sciences, Faculty of Modern Medical Sciences and Nursing College. In the health fair, awareness programmes were organised on the screen for the prevention and protection of the public from diseases. The public was made aware through drama about good touch, bad touch, breastfeeding etc. The people got free checkup and information related to prevention of various diseases, treatment of various diseases, diabetes, blood pressure, heart disease, kidney, liver, teeth, eye, respiratory disease, bone test, blood group test, BP sugar, thyroid, panchkarma therapy, marma therapy, gynaecology, etc and about 5,000 people took advantage of the related services. In the closing session of the health fair, the chief guest was Prof Ajay Singh (Director, AIIMS Bhopal and Executive Director, AIIMS Gorakhpur) and Prof SN Shankwar presided over the same. Earlier, the health fair was formally inaugurated by Vice-Chancellor (V-C) Devraj Urs Academy of Higher Education and Research, Kolar, Prof B Vaigamma by cutting the ribbon. IMS-BHU Director Prof SN Shankwar, Prof Ashok Kumar (Dean, Faculty of Modern Medicine) and others were present.

DC directs officials to remove encroachment

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

In a bid to resolve various issues being faced by the city entrepreneurs with different departments, Divisional Commissioner Amit Gupta chaired a meeting with them on Wednesday. In this Divisional Udyog Bandhu meeting, the issue relating to the activation of the common effluent treatment plant (CETP) installed at Jainpur Growth Centre was raised. For this, it was decided to form a SPV for implementing the minutes of National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG). The commissioner directed the deputy general manager of UPSIDA and the deputy commissioner of industries, Kanpur Dehat, to soon hold a meeting with the entrepreneurs to complete the formation of SPV. Expressing concern over laying of a sewer line in Panki industrial area, the DC directed the deputy general manager of UPSIDA to identify land within two weeks and inform the Uttar Pradesh Jal Nigam for the construction of inlet pumping station (IPS) and sewage treatment plant (STP). The chief engineer of Dakshinanchal Viduyt Vitran Nigam Limited informed that the land had been acquired for setting up of an electrical feeder in Bhaunti-Bhimens area and the sub-

station will be completed within the next six months. The DC directed the Irrigation department officials to immediately remove encroachment on the roads on both sides of the canal as an alternative route for the movement of entrepreneurs and employees in the Dada Nagar and the Panki Industrial areas. It was informed that the boundary wall constructed by the municipal corporation in the green belt along the road from LML intersection to Bhaunti bypass was getting damaged due to parking. The DC directed the municipal corporation ensure repair of the damaged boundary wall immediately to prevent illegal parking in the green belt. Entrepreneurs also informed that the battery waste (separator) collected and burnt along the canal in the industrial areas was causing severe air pollution and health issues. On this, the regional officer of the Pollution Control Board informed the divisional commissioner that such waste was being disposed of by Ramky Infrastructure. The DC directed him to conduct a survey of the area, identify such industrial units and coordinate with the Ramky Infrastructure to ensure proper waste disposal.

Putin hails PM Modi's revolutionary vision

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Russian President Vladimir Putin has hailed 'Make in India' initiative and the Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government's stable policies, saying this would encourage Russian companies to set up manufacturing bases here. He praised Prime Minister Modi's "India-First" Policy and "Make in India" Initiative at VTB Russia Calling Investment Forum in Moscow, a ministry of commerce and industry statement said here on Thursday. The 'Make in India' initiative, aimed at boosting manufacturing and attracting foreign investment, has played a key role in strengthening India's position in the global economy, Putin has said at a Russia's investment forum in Moscow.

He said India has created stable conditions for small and medium-sized enterprises. Putin has expressed Russia's willingness to establish manufacturing operations in India as investments in India are profitable. "We are also ready to set up our manufacturing operations in India. The Indian government, under the prime minister's leadership, has been creating stable conditions, driven by a policy of putting India first," he has said, adding Russian company Rosneft has invested USD 20 billion in the country recently. The president also urged for greater cooperation among BRICS nations to support the growth of SMEs and encouraged member countries to identify key areas for collaboration at the upcoming summit in Brazil next year.



The statement said President Putin acknowledged India's efforts to foster a stable environment for growth, emphasising how these policies have contributed to India's development. President Putin's remarks underscored India's economic progress under Prime Minister Modi's leadership. He lauded the Indian government and its efforts in creating "stable conditions" for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), particularly highlighting the economic initiatives spearheaded by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, with a special focus on the "Make in India" program. President Putin drew parallels between Russia's import substitution program and India's "Make in India" initiative, expressing Russia's willingness to establish manufactur-

ing operations in India. Investments in India are profitable, he added. He also emphasised that India's leadership has focused on prioritising its national interests. "Prime Minister Modi has a similar program called Make in India. We are also ready to set up our manufacturing operations in India. The Indian government, under the Prime Minister's leadership, has been creating stable conditions, driven by a policy of putting India first. We believe that investing in India is profitable," stated the Russian President. He also said that Russian company Rosneft invested \$20 bn in the country recently. President Putin also highlighted the significance of Russia's import substitution program in the context of BRICS's evolution, focusing

on the growth of SMEs and the necessity for a rapid dispute resolution mechanism to facilitate smooth business transactions for SMEs in BRICS+ countries. He pointed out the rise of new Russian brands that are replacing Western brands that have exited the market, noting the success of local Russian manufacturers in sectors such as consumer goods, IT, high-tech, and agriculture. "For us, this is particularly important as part of our import substitution program. The emergence of new Russian brands is helping replace those of Western companies that have voluntarily left our market. Our local manufacturers have achieved significant success, not only in consumer goods but also in IT and high-tech industries," he said.

Countries must observe humanitarian laws: Jaishankar

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Countries have right to respond to situations but they should be mindful of civilian casualties and must observe humanitarian laws, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said in the Rajya Sabha on Thursday. Responding to supplementaries during the Question Hour regarding India's position on the ongoing conflict between Israel and Palestine, he said, "We condemn terrorism, we condemn hostage-taking. We do believe countries have the right to respond to the situation but countries should be mindful of civilian casualties. They must observe humanitarian law and we would like a ceasefire and an early end of violence." When asked the reason for India's abstention from a resolution in the UN General Assembly on October 27, 2023, regarding the protection of civilians and upholding of legal and humanitarian obligations, Jaishankar said there were many resolutions in the UN General Assembly and in some India abstained and in some, it voted in favour. According to him, there are several reasons to abstain such as a resolution is not balanced, it is more divisive, it can set a precedence which has consequences for India or



it has larger implications. "In this particular case, we felt that the resolution was not well-drafted and not well-considered. We had reservations on the language. Our concern was not accommodated. That is why we abstained," he said. Responding to TMC MP Saket Gokhale, who asked about India's position on a ban imposed by the Israeli government on the UN aid agency UNRWA and how India is sending aid to Palestine, Jaishankar said the government has stood by its decision to send humanitarian aid and it has just released

the latest tranche of support to the UNRWA. He further asked that India always supported a two-state solution and in the UN, India abstained on a resolution against Israeli illegal settlement in the West Bank. What is India's position on the illegal settlement made by Israel in the West Bank in Palestine," Gokhale asked. "Regarding the two-state solution, we supported the two-state solution. We have been public and unambiguous about that. There should be no cause for confusion regarding a two-state solution," Jaishankar answered.

He reiterated that the wording of resolutions is important for deciding to support them. Talking about the October 27, 2023 resolution, he said, "There was no reference to terrorism. There was no reference to hostage-taking. In our mind if a resolution doesn't reflect the entirety of a situation, it is not a balanced resolution. A country like India which is itself a victim of terrorism, if we countenance the fact that terrorism is underplayed and ignored, it is not in our interest that we do so (support)." When asked about India's position on the International

Court of Justice's warrant against Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, former Israel Defence Minister Yoav Gallant and a Hamas leader for war crimes, the minister said, "India is not a member of the International Criminal Court. When the International Criminal Court was constituted, the question of our membership was considered. For very good reason and after a great deal of deliberation, India decided not to become a member. With regard to any decision passed by the ICC, it is not binding on us." Highlighting India's humanitarian assistance to Palestine, he said New Delhi has given assistance to people of Palestine at this particular time by making an annual contribution of USD 5 million to UNRWA the main assistance-providing agency. "This amount traditionally used to be USD 1 Million. This government decided to raise it from USD 1 million to 5 million," he said. Jaishankar added that India has provided 70 metric tonnes of aid of which 16.5 was of medicine in 2023. "We have given 65 metric tons of medicines to the Palestinian Authority and UNRWA in 2024. We have provided 33 metric tons of medicine to Lebanon," he said.

PM Modi, Bhutan King resolve to further expand 'exemplary' bilateral ties

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

India and Bhutan vowed on Thursday to further bolster the "exemplary" India-Bhutan partnership across all sectors with Prime Minister Narendra Modi conveying to Bhutanese King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck New Delhi's strong commitment to economic development of the Himalayan nation. Shortly after King Wangchuck arrived here on a two-day trip, he and Prime Minister Modi held talks focusing on bilateral cooperation in diverse areas, including clean energy partnership, trade and investment, space and technology. The two leaders exchanged ideas on the 'Gelephu Mindfulness City' initiative, a visionary project spearheaded by Wangchuck to catalyse Bhutan's development and strengthen linkages with adjoining border areas in India. The Bhutanese King was received at the airport by External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, in reflection of the importance India has attached to the Bhutanese leader's visit. The King is accompanied by Queen Jetsun Pema Wangchuck and senior officials of the Bhutanese government. Following the talks, Prime Minister Modi hosted a lunch



in honour of the King and the Queen. "The meeting underscored the tradition of regular high-level exchanges between India and Bhutan, reflecting the spirit of mutual trust, cooperation and profound understanding that underpins the bilateral relations between the two countries," an Indian readout said. The prime minister and the King expressed satisfaction at the excellent state of bilateral relations, encompassing development cooperation, clean energy partnership, trade and investment, space and technology cooperation, and people-to-people ties, it said. "They reaffirmed their commitment to further strengthening this exemplary partner-

ship across all sectors," it said. "The prime minister reiterated India's strong commitment to the economic development in Bhutan, highlighting the doubling of India's development support to Bhutan for its 13th five-year plan period," the readout noted. The King expressed gratitude to Prime Minister Modi and the people of India for the steadfast support of Bhutan's aspirations for happiness, progress and prosperity, it added. In the talks, Modi fondly recalled the "exceptionally warm hospitality" accorded by the Bhutanese government and the people of Bhutan during his state visit to the country in March.

Occurrence, filling up of vacant posts continuous process: Centre

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Occurrence and filling up of vacant posts is a continuous process and details of vacancies are maintained by the respective ministries or departments, the Centre said on Thursday. Ministries or departments of the central government have been directed, from time to time, to fill up the vacant posts in a time bound manner, Union Minister of State for Personnel Jitendra Singh told Rajya Sabha in a written reply. He was responding to a question seeking "details of the total number of vacancies in all central government ministries and departments to date, department-wise". "Occurrence and filling up of vacant posts in various ministries/departments is a continuous process. The details of vacancies are maintained by the respective ministry/department," Singh said. In response to another question, he said the contractual appointments in government departments are made by the individual ministries/departments strictly based on their requirements, in accordance with the provisions of General Financial Rules, 2017. "Vacant posts have been filled up in mission mode, in Rozgar Melas launched by Hon'ble Prime Minister on 22nd October, 2022. 13 Rozgar Melas have been held at central level in 40-45 cities across various states/Union Territories," the minister said. In a separate reply to a question seeking details of the number of recruitment letters pertaining to the central gov-



ernment handed over during Rozgar Melas, he said "several lakhs of appointment letters have been issued during the Rozgar Melas". As part of Rozgar Mela, the vacant posts in central government ministries and various organizations of central government are being filled up in a mission mode, he said. Details of various recruitments and vacancies, including category wise breakup are maintained by respective ministries/departments/central public sector undertakings (CPSUs) and the concerned recruitment agencies such as Union Public Service Commission (UPSC), Staff Selection Commission (SSC), Railway Recruitment Board (RRB), Institute of Banking Personnel Selection (IBPS) etc., Singh said. Replying to another question, he said as many as 63 specialists have been appointed in different Central government departments through the lateral entry mode from 2019 to 2023. Of these, 35 were appointed on contract basis and the

remaining 28 on deputation, the minister said in a written reply in the Upper House. "Lateral recruitment at the levels of joint secretary, director and deputy secretary has been undertaken since 2018 to appoint persons for specific assignments, keeping in view their specialised knowledge and expertise in the domain area," Singh said. Giving details, Singh said eight joint secretaries were appointed in 2019, including five on contractual basis and three through deputation from other government departments/organisations. Thirty recruitments were made in 2021 at the levels of joint secretary (3), director (18) and deputy secretary (9). Of these, 14 were on contract and 16 were through deputation, the minister said. In 2023, 25 such specialists were appointed, including three joint secretaries, 15 directors and seven deputy secretaries. Of them, 16 were appointed on contract basis and nine through deputation, the minister's reply said.

Rainfall brought by Western Disturbances mitigates northwest India's air pollution: Govt

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In response to repeated requests from the Delhi government, which had sought the Centre's assistance for artificial rainfall as a potential short-term solution to improve the city's hazardous air quality, the Government informed Parliament on Thursday that rainfall brought by Western Disturbances in northwest India during the winter months already serves to mitigate the region's air pollution, thus eliminating the need for cloud seeding. It also highlighted experts' concern over potential adverse effects of chemicals used in this process. Replying to a question in the Rajya Sabha, Union Minister of State for Environment Kirti Vardhan Singh said his min-



istry received four letters from the Delhi government between August 30 and November 19, asking it to consider cloud seeding as an emergency measure to improve air quality in Delhi during winters. The minister said expert opinions were sought from the India Meteorological Department (IMD), the

Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) and the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) regarding the feasibility of cloud seeding for artificial rainfall in the national capital. Citing the experts, Singh said, "Winter clouds in the region are primarily formed due to Western Disturbances (WD),

which are short-lived and travel from west to east. When low clouds form due to WDs, they typically result in natural rainfall over northwest India, eliminating the need for cloud seeding." The experts told the ministry that high-altitude clouds, which are typically at elevations above 5-6 km, cannot be seeded due to aircraft limitations. "Furthermore, effective cloud seeding requires specific cloud conditions which are generally absent during Delhi's cold and dry winter months. Even if suitable clouds were present, the dry atmospheric layer beneath them could cause any developed precipitation to evaporate before reaching the surface. "Additionally, concerns about the uncertainties, efficacy, and potential adverse effects of cloud seeding chemicals

remain," the minister quoted the experts as saying. Last year too, the Delhi government considered using cloud seeding in collaboration with IIT-Kanpur to improve air quality during winter. The goal was to induce rain to wash away pollutants. However, the project got delayed because it required permissions from several Central government agencies, including the aviation and environmental authorities. Cloud seeding involves dispersing substances into the air to encourage condensation, resulting in precipitation. The most common substances used for cloud seeding include silver iodide, potassium iodide and dry ice (solid carbon dioxide). These agents provide the nuclei around which water vapour can condense, ultimately leading to the formation of rain or snow.

PM Modi put farmers at centre stage: Dhankar

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Chairman Rajya Sabha and Vice President, Jagdeep Dhankar, on Thursday said that the issue of farmers, have been put by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the centre stage. In his remarks in the house he stressed that in every walk of life—whether affordable housing, whether solar house, whether Jal in Har Nal, and technology to farmers. Therefore, our expectations are bound to be high. It is a time when there is convergence to take the farmer to a greater height. "So I have no doubt what is being done at the moment will get greater momentum and all agencies are converg-

ing. Our expectations are high, but our accomplishments are also historic; our achievements are also splendid, and this will go a long way for the nation," he added. Earlier, taking note of Chairman's recent concerns on farmer issues, Former Prime Minister HD. Deve Gowda, stated in the House, "You speak so much about the farmer; yesterday.....on the issue of the farming communities. You are so much concerned about the farming community. I am a farmer, Sir." Recently, Dhankar had expressed concerns regarding the challenges faced by farmers. His remarks today reaffirm the government's commitment to the farming community.

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No proposal to increase retirement age of SC, HC judges: Government

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

There is no proposal to increase the retirement age of Supreme Court and high court judges, the government told the Rajya Sabha on Thursday. It also underlined that there is no mention of any "cooling off" period in the Constitution for post-retirement assignments for judges. Supreme Court judges retire at the age of 65, while High Court judges demit office at 62. District judges retire at the age of 60. "There is no such proposal for increasing the retirement age of judges of the Supreme Court and high courts," Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal said. The UPA 2 government had brought a constitutional



amendment bill in the Lok Sabha to bring the retirement age of HC judges on par with that of SC judges. But the bill lapsed as it was not taken up for consideration in the House. Asking a supplementary during Question Hour, AAP's Rajya Sabha MP Raghav Chaddha said judges have been given executive and political roles post-retirement. While some come to Rajya Sabha as members, others become governors after retirement. He claimed that this

raises several questions in the minds of people. "It raises the question of conflict of interest. It raises questions about executive interference in the judicial process. Independence of the judiciary is questioned," Chaddha said. The AAP MP said many committees have suggested and he also wants to know the government's view that there should be a cooling-off period. He said no judge should be given any political or executive role for at least two years after retirement. They should also not be given any chairmanship of any committee, he added. Chaddha also suggested that their pension should be enhanced to the extent that they should not be financially dependent on any post-retirement job.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Korean crisis

President Yoon Suk Yeol briefly declared martial law, a move that ignited domestic outrage and international condemnation

A brief martial law was imposed in South Korea, a country known to have a stable democracy and prosperity to vie for. The South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol took this extreme step to preserve his position amid falling popularity. He faces the toughest challenge of his presidency after a controversial decision to impose martial law backfired spectacularly, plunging the nation into a deep political crisis. The fallout has sparked widespread protests, calls for his resignation, and even moves toward impeachment. Yoon declared martial law, citing national security concerns and the need to eliminate "anti-state elements." However, many viewed the measure as a desperate attempt to consolidate power amid mounting political and personal scandals. The backlash was immediate and severe, with lawmakers rushing to overturn the decree and protesters gathering en masse in the streets of Seoul. Within hours, Yoon revoked the order, but the reversal failed to quell public anger. The damage was done.



Yoon's presidency, which began with a narrow 2022 election victory, has been riddled with controversy. His platform, focused on gender neutrality and hawkish stances on North Korea, initially appealed to younger male voters. However, a series of missteps and scandals—ranging from allegations of corruption involving First Lady Kim Keon Hee to tensions with the opposition-controlled National Assembly—have steadily eroded his approval ratings. The Democratic Party's landslide win in April's parliamentary elections further isolated Yoon politically. With an emboldened opposition, efforts to impeach

key government officials linked to Yoon's administration gained momentum, leaving the president with limited room to maneuver. The martial law declaration was a last-ditch effort by a president grappling with dwindling support and mounting resistance within his own party. Indeed the move was a miscalculation, a desperate attempt which backfired miserably with significant political fallout. The incident has intensified efforts by the opposition to impeach Yoon, with some members of his party now openly calling for his resignation. Protesters have taken to the streets in unprecedented numbers, with labour unions threatening nationwide strikes unless Yoon steps down. The crisis has raised alarm among South Korea's allies, including the United States and Japan have expressed serious concerns. Their worst fear of course is that North Korea may exploit the internal chaos to escalate tensions with the South, further destabilising the region. For South Korea, this moment represents a critical test of its democratic resilience. The swift revocation of martial law suggests that institutional checks and balances remain robust. However, the path forward will require careful navigation to prevent further polarisation and ensure stability in one of Asia's most vibrant democracies.

PICTALK



Flamingos at the Pulicat Lake with backwaters brimming to the full, near Sriharikota

Sexual and reproductive health can drive economic growth

By prioritising sexual and reproductive health in workplace policies, the private sector can be a powerful catalyst for change and lead the way

India stands poised on the brink of a transformative era, with unprecedented opportunities for economic and social progress. Yet, one critical area remains starkly underdeveloped: women's participation in the workforce. Despite notable strides in various sectors, women's workforce participation in India stagnates at a concerning 20 per cent.



Action and Accountability in the Workplace, businesses must take comprehensive actions to ensure women's well-being in professional environments.

SRH as a Catalyst for Women's Empowerment

Sexual and reproductive health (SRH) plays a vital role in empowering women to reach their full economic potential. In India, limited access to essential services like reproductive healthcare, family planning, and childcare continues to hinder women's workforce participation. These barriers are compounded by societal norms that disproportionately burden women with caregiving responsibilities, making it challenging to balance personal and professional lives.

Women and Workforce-Bridging the Gap

Women constitute nearly half the global population, yet workplaces often fail to accommodate their needs adequately. According to the UNFPA report Advancing Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in the Private Sector - The Case for

The care economy, encompassing both paid and unpaid caregiving roles, is a cornerstone of workforce participation, particularly for women. Many women are compelled to leave the workforce or transition to part-time roles due to caregiving responsibilities. Affordable childcare, eldercare, and flexible work arrangements provided by businesses can significantly alleviate these challenges.

Investing in the care economy is more than corporate social responsibility it is a sound economic strategy.

When women are supported in managing their dual roles, they are more likely to remain in the workforce, contributing to economic growth and workplace inclusivity.

Strengthening Social Protections

Robust social protections are fundamental to ensuring women's economic security. Enhancing maternity benefits, broadening health insurance coverage, and providing mental health support can create a workplace culture where women feel valued and supported. Such measures are crucial to fostering gender equality and inclusivity.

Fostering Inclusivity An inclusive workplace requires more than offering flexible hours or equal pay-it demands a cultural shift. Companies must actively combat discrimination and harassment, creating environments where women feel safe and supported. Initiatives like vocational training and entrepreneurship programmes can also help close the gender gap.

Creating a Supportive Ecosystem for SRH

Effective SRH initiatives require a supportive ecosystem that promotes awareness and access to resources. This includes regular training, accessible services, open dialogue, and confidential counselling for employees.

Ensuring Accountability

To maximise the impact of SRH policies, businesses must establish clear metrics for monitoring and evaluation. Regular progress reports promote transparency and accountability, building trust among employees and stakeholders. (The writer is CEO, UpFront, member of UNFPA's Coalition for Reproductive Justice in Business; views are personal)



SHAONLI CHAKRABORTY

G20 Rio summit: A new voice for the Global South

The summit addressed pressing global challenges such as economic disparities, environmental degradation, food security and poverty alleviation



SUDHIR HINDWAN

The nineteenth Summit of the G 20 held recently in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil holds a lot of significance in raising the voice of the Global South. In addition to the 19 member states, this summit also had two more members which included the African and the European Unions. Amid uncertainty on account of West Asian crises and the ongoing Russian-Ukraine conflict the summit focused on two pertinent issues: the increasing economic disparities and the degradation of the environment besides, the question of food security and poverty alleviation have also become paramount topics of the agenda for a stable and peaceful world order.

In the wake of the economic crisis of 1997, the G-20 Group was formed in 1999 with the basic purpose of uplifting the economies from economic doom and since then economic aggrandizement has been the central point of discussions in all the G-20 summits. The Group of 20 includes an amalgamation of the most powerful as well as the developing countries of the global order like: the United States, France, China, India, Japan, Germany, Russia, the UK, Brazil, Canada, Italy, Indonesia, Japan, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, Turkey, Argentina, Australia. Adding Spain as a permanent guest of the G20 and the recent inclusion of the African Union and the European Union has extended its scope and area of influence.

The latest meeting of G 20 is important from the point of view that now countries of the south started giving a major push to their innate aims and the latest in the series is the idea of green industrial planning and strategies. The increasing demand for bringing about a few reforms in the major international monetary and governing institutions such as the World Bank, IMF the WTO and the Security Council of the UNO indicates the changing dimensions of the Group as now there seems to be a shift towards a more transparent and inclusive world system beside the Cultural Contiguity and exchanges about



energy resources are some new take away of the G 20 meetings. On the other hand, the member countries have increasingly realised the need for sustainable development along with increasing concern for deadly spikes of increasing temperature across the globe. The fullest utilisation of modern technology in the economy such as the digital economy remains another important topic that can play a magnificent role in upgrading the old pattern to save valuable time. The rich experience of India in promoting brotherhood and uplifting standards particularly from developing countries to undoubtedly a developed nation is a lot to learn from.

India's remarkable progress in the IT industry has opened new doors for Indian companies, which are now aggressively expanding into overseas markets. The country's compliance and regulatory authorities have ensured that foreign investments are secure and economic transactions are monitored thoroughly. Despite the challenges posed by a tough global economic climate, India's G20 Presidency during 2023 had already provided it with an opportunity to position itself as a key player in global manufacturing and a reliable partner in various sectors. The cooperation among G20



DESPITE THE CHALLENGES POSED BY A TOUGH GLOBAL ECONOMIC CLIMATE, INDIA'S G20 PRESIDENCY DURING 2023 HAD ALREADY PROVIDED IT WITH AN OPPORTUNITY TO POSITION ITSELF AS A KEY PLAYER IN GLOBAL MANUFACTURING AND A RELIABLE PARTNER IN VARIOUS SECTORS

nations has also fostered the development of new strategies to meet the needs of vulnerable countries, fostering a more inclusive global society. This cooperation could promote a positive shift in international relations, promoting greater harmony and collaboration. India's impressive progress is largely attributed to its incredibly foresighted leadership, immense talent and superb foresight. The setting up of the International Solar Alliance, the Green Hydrogen Innovation Centre, One Sun One World One Grid. and the Global Biofuel Alliance along with the waste-to-energy efforts of India speaks volumes of its being the front leader among G 20 Countries. Prime Minister Modi has very well highlighted the remarkable efforts and achievements of India in his speech. He is undoubtedly the most respected and popular leader of World Politics who has made India the leading voice of the Global South. Gradually the scope of G 20 partnership has expanded to include critical areas such as disaster management, digital infrastructure, and climate change, making it a multifaceted initiative with both security and development dimensions as these are also some issues that are raising concerns about the international community.

However, the G-20 countries are also navigating through social and political pressures and their success will depend on how these countries maintain growth momentum amid numerous challenges. By addressing these challenges on account of socio, cultural economic and political pangs, the G 20 can further solidify its position as a global economic powerhouse, capable of driving growth not only among member countries but also able to create an inclusive world order. By fostering diplomatic engagement and conflict resolution mechanisms, the G20 group members may also promote stability while ensuring economic prosperity for all member nations. The group's shared strategic vision is vital in shaping a multi-layered, multilateral strategy for dealing with not only economic but also security challenges in an increasingly interconnected world. The G 20 can also become a platform for fostering development in fields such as education, science, biotechnology, and strategic planning, further strengthening the bonds between its members and slowing the entire world community and India is playing front runner's role with the ablest leadership at the helm. (The writer is a professor and expert on strategic affairs; views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

INDIA MUST ACT NOW

Madam — Apropos of the editorial 'No love lost' and the headlines 'Bangladesh challenges India,' the trajectory of diplomatic relations between India and Bangladesh is steeply going down from unfriendliness to the bottom of hostility in the long-term perspective. Bangladesh is moving menacingly fast to Pakistan's fate with a point of no return. Atrocities on Hindu minorities have been echoed across continents and the phenomenon is similar to Pakistan and Afghanistan. Hindus in India are in deep anguish and seek diplomatic and trade and commerce cessation with Bangladesh. The extremist political and religious culture of Bangladesh will not allow cordiality of diplomatic relations with India even at the cost of their own peril as Pakistan did. Afghanistan has already done it. Pakistan, Afghanistan, the Maldives, and now Bangladesh, all neighbours of our country, are in long-lasting turmoil on religious militancy, extremism, and atrocities on minorities, as well as economic bankruptcy. These countries are killing their own minorities of Hindus and other religions and even their own minorities within the Islamic fold. Bangladesh is now a liability for India, and we can't risk our 4156 km border with Bangladesh with insecurity, violence, and infiltration. We can't afford to allow five states-Assam, Tripura, Mizoram, Meghalaya, and Tripura-to be inflamed in communal violence and anarchy. Bangladesh is devastated by its extremists and their supporters and sponsors in the government. Truly, the mayhem on Hindus can't be perpetrated without government support. It is the most opportune time to stop and cease all civil & food supplies, electricity, tourism, and rail-air-road links with Bangladesh. Even Bangladesh-bound air traffic on our skies should be banned. As Pakistan is fighting for its existential survival, so will Bangladesh, sooner than later. The Modi government must contemplate tough action against Bangladesh, as it will send a strong message to countries like Pakistan

Assassination bid on Badal



The attack on SAD chief Sukhbir Singh Badal at the Golden Temple complex is the surprising incident. Sukhbir Singh, who is fulfilling his religious punishment given by Akal Takt, has been targeted by the lone wolf attacker, Narain Singh Chaura. The open fire

incident within the Harmandir Sahib Golden Temple Complex is a sheer breach of security and raised concerns over the safety of the Gurudwar complex.

Although Sukhbir Singh is safe now, thanks to the Z-plus protection, the police in plain clothes rescued him from the intended act of the assassination. Amidst the bullet-firing attack, it is regrettable that security failure happened, although the alertness of the police personnel halted any misdeed, and every worshipper is safe, including Sukhbir Singh. But somewhere the security breach at the golden temple complex yet remains a question. Meanwhile the investigation is initiated, and police are probing for the real guilty for this whole act; the government must step in to enhance the security of the golden temple complex so that future such incidences can be avoided.

Kirti Wadhawan | Kanpur

and China. There is no point in soliciting the UN Peacekeeping force in Bangladesh, as the UN failed to stop even the bloodiest wars in West Asia and Ukraine.

Vinod Johri | Delhi

WATER AS 'HIGH-RISK FOOD'

Madam — The food regulatory body of India, FSSAI, has categorised packaged drinking water and mineral water as "high-risk food." According to FSSAI, high-risk foods are those that pose a higher risk of food poisoning due to contamination, poor storage, or poor handling. These require closer and regular inspections to safeguard consumers from food poisoning and other health issues. Consumption of drinking water that is not fully purified can lead to cholera, diarrhoea, typhoid, amebiasis, hepatitis, gastroenteritis, and various other health issues.

Also, if the containers used to store water are unsafe, it can lead to chronic health issues. According to the FSSAI, manufacturers of packaged drinking water will have to pass mandatory inspections before getting a license, and packaged drinking water

products will now undergo more stringent safety checks through regular inspections and audits.

M Pradyu | Kanpur

FRAUDSTERS TARGET SENIOR CITIZENS

Madam — Increasing cybercrime frauds are a nightmare for senior citizens. The senior citizens are not tech-savvy enough to operate a smartphone, which they prefer to use mostly for communicating with their near and dear ones. The fraudsters target the senior citizens who are lonely and carry on their vices, resulting in losing their hard-earned savings. Banks may exercise adequate caution in honouring the transfer requests by delaying a day or two by instituting sufficient checks on the destination account before carrying on the instructions. The telecom authorities also may advise the service providers to institute sufficient firewalls on the spam callers.

Gopalaswamy J | Chennai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



FIRST COLUMN

US-CHINA TRADE WAR HEATS UP

Trump set to amplify Biden's tough stance with tariffs and export controls



KUMARDEEP BANARJEE

The loaded guns are out for the two largest economies of the world, the US and China, even before the original hard hitter Donald Trump takes charge as the new President in January next year. In one of his last "Containing China" measures outgoing President Joe Biden has imposed additional export controls on high-end chips, chip-making equipment to China, which can be used as components or in the manufacturing of weapons as well. The new restrictions also directly target some of the largest chipmakers in China, thus throwing in as many road blocks as possible in the dragon's aggressive weaponisation programme. Not to be covered China imposed retaliatory controls on the export of critical minerals such as Gallium, Antimony etc, which are essential components of the chips.

Even as these measures were being announced, President-elect Donald Trump has been threatening the 9 member BRICS nations with severe 100 per cent tariffs, in case, they choose to create an alternate global currency to the dollar. Mr Trump has already threatened Canada, Mexico and the EU with the tariffs scalpel unless they come back to him with offers that are hard to ignore. Trump's third favourite word is tariffs, which he uses as leverage to negotiate trade deals with allies and enemies.

The nations that have faced the latest threat of high tariffs from Donald Trump have already taken a cautious approach to negotiating with the tough business person. Canada and Mexico have sounded out that would be more interested in sweetening the deal with the US under Trump, than confronting him on the tariff issues. China knows that Trump would be higher on optics, than his predecessor Joe Biden, on issues where the



US considers them as a direct threat. In one of the recently published editorials in the Chinese government mouthpiece Global Times, the Internet Society of China, the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers, the China Semiconductor Industry Association, and the China Association of Communications Enterprises are quoted to have issued statements terming US chips as unsafe and unreliable.

It further states "The US has used this measure to greatly expand its power, affecting many countries and regions, including Japan, the Netherlands, Israel, Malaysia, Singapore, South Korea, and China's Taiwan region. This will severely disrupt the stability of the global industrial and supply chains and undermine the international economic and trade order." Incoming President Trump is likely to have a harder stance on export controls and, high tariffs for China imports. The incoming administration is likely to focus on high decibels, high optics, and control China measures than what the Joe Biden administration has achieved. It would be worthwhile to note, that some of the restrictive measures against China introduced, during Trump's first presidency, have only been upgraded and made tougher under President Joe Biden.

Therefore at some level, there is bipartisan support for containing China in the US government. India has been watching this space carefully and knows well that it cannot escape the US tariff cannon for too long. It is also well aware that, there is a trade surplus with the US, which means it exports more than imports. Incoming President Trump even though has good relations with Indian PM Modi, is hardly going to miss this infraction. Obviously, the only safe prediction is a degree of unpredictability. Different countries have had their own experiences from the first Administration and would presumably draw from that to approach the second. Naturally, between two major economies, there will always be some give and take. When we look at economic or technology domains, the case for trusted and reliable partnerships have actually increased in recent years. A lot of what lies ahead would be in fashioning terms of engagement that are perceived as mutually beneficial. "A careful recalibration of India's trade relations is on the anvil, not just with the US, but also with its other allies.

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

Charting Bharat's role in a multipolar world

Renowned Russian philosopher Aleksandr Gelyevich Dugin advocates for civilisational revival and the decolonisation of the mind



BHABANI SONOWAL



Aleksandr Gelyevich Dugin, the Russian philosopher, presents a compelling vision of a multipolar world that seeks to restore balance and harmony to international relations. His recent visit to India, during which he delivered an insightful speech at the Russian Centre in New Delhi on November 19, highlighted his ideas on the importance of civilisational revival. Listening to Dugin was a profound experience, as he articulated the need for great civilisations such as Bharat (India), Russia, and China to assume their rightful roles in shaping a new global order. Dugin's philosophy is deeply intertwined with the concept of State-Civilisation, which transcends the boundaries of the Nation-State model imposed by the Westphalian system. In this framework, civilisations are not merely political entities but repositories of spiritual, cultural, and historical identity.

For Dugin, Bharat exemplifies this notion as it represents a civilisation rooted in ancient wisdom, from the teachings of the Vedas and Upanishads to its rich traditions of Dharmic philosophy. He argues that this heritage uniquely positions Bharat to lead a process of decolonisation—not just politically, but mentally and spiritually. Decolonisation of the mind, Dugin asserts, is essential for nations seeking to reclaim their civilisational sovereignty. Bharat's re-engagement with its Vedic and Upanishadic traditions is not merely an academic exercise but a means of reconnecting with eternal principles that transcend the temporal constructs of modernity. In his view, traditional spiritual processes should be revived as living, evolving frameworks that can guide contemporary governance and social organisation. He draws a parallel with Russia's return to Orthodox Christianity, which he sees as a similar act of reclaiming spiritual identity in defiance of Western liberalism. The philosopher emphasises that the post-Cold War unipolar world order, dominated by Western hegemony, has exhausted itself. Dugin critiques the universalisation of liberal values, arguing that they are inherently tied to the Atlanticist worldview and therefore unfit to govern the plurality of human cultures. Liberalism, he contends, prioritises individualism and market ideology at the expense of collective, spiritual, and civilisational values.

As he wrote in The Fourth Political Theory,

"Modernity is a project that has exhausted itself. The future lies in the revival of traditional societies, metaphysical truths, and spiritual values." For Dugin, multipolarity represents an alternative to this unipolar dominance, offering a framework for civilisations to engage with one another as equals.

This vision is rooted in dialogue rather than conflict, with each civilisation contributing its unique insights and values. Bharat, China, and Russia, he argues, form a natural triad that can anchor this new world order. He views these three civilisations as distinct yet complementary, with Bharat's Vedic traditions, China's Confucianism and Taoism, and Russia's Orthodoxy providing diverse philosophical and spiritual foundations for a balanced global system. Dugin's ideas resonate with contemporary geopolitical realities, as platforms like BRICS demonstrate the potential for collaboration among major civilisational powers.



BHARAT'S RE-ENGAGEMENT WITH ITS VEDIC AND UPANISHADIC TRADITIONS IS NOT MERELY AN ACADEMIC EXERCISE BUT A MEANS OF RECONNECTING WITH ETERNAL PRINCIPLES THAT TRANSCEND THE TEMPORAL CONSTRUCTS OF MODERNITY

He sees BRICS not merely as an economic bloc but as a symbolic embodiment of multipolarity—a round table where civilisations can cooperate without succumbing to Western hegemony. Drawing on the Arthurian legend, Dugin suggests that the multipolar world should function as a round table, where all participants, including the West, have an equal seat, provided they relinquish hegemonic ambitions. Bharat's renaming from India, in Dugin's view, exemplifies the philosophical and cultural depth of this multipolar project.

He perceives this act as a profound rejection of the colonial narrative imposed by Western powers. For Dugin, names carry immense metaphysical significance, and "Bharat" embodies a self-affirmed identity that reclaims the spiritual and cultural essence of the civilisation. This aligns with his broader advocacy for civilisations to transcend the artificial constructs of modernity and rediscover their historical and spiritual cores. The philosopher

also stresses the strategic importance of Eurasia in achieving this vision. He argues that the geographic, cultural, and economic ties between Bharat, China, and Russia make them natural allies in reshaping global power structures. By aligning their civilisational and strategic interests, these three powers can mediate international conflicts and create a more equitable world order. As Dugin writes in Foundations of Geopolitics, "Russia's mission is to unite the peoples and nations of Eurasia into a single geopolitical space that rejects Western domination and promotes a multipolar world." Central to Dugin's vision is the rejection of Western universalism.

He critiques the West's attempt to impose its values globally, arguing that this approach erases the distinctiveness of other cultures and leads to alienation. In contrast, the multipolar world Dugin envisions celebrates diversity, recognising the plurality of human experience and thought. Civilisations, he asserts, should engage in dialogue while preserving their unique identities. As he states in "The Great War of Continents," "The salvation of humanity lies in preserving the plurality of cultures and civilisations."

This rejection of universalism extends to Dugin's critique of modernity, which he sees as a destructive force that undermines traditional values. He identifies a global trend toward the revival of traditionalism, noting that civilisations are increasingly turning to their spiritual roots in response to the moral and cultural relativism of liberalism. From Bharat's Vedic revival to Russia's Orthodox resurgence and China's embrace of Confucianism, Dugin sees a worldwide movement toward reclaiming heritage. "The return to tradition," he writes, "is not an act of nostalgia but a necessity for survival in the face of cultural erosion."

Dugin views Bharat as a cornerstone of this traditionalist resurgence. Its

ability to mediate tensions, whether between China and the Islamic world or within the broader multipolar framework, highlights its potential as a stabilising force. Bharat's emphasis on spiritual heritage and cultural unity, he argues, sets an example for other civilisations seeking to harmonise their internal diversity with their external roles. The path to a multipolar world is not without challenges. Dugin acknowledges that the West's resistance to relinquishing its dominance could lead to conflicts, even escalating to dangerous levels. However, he remains optimistic about the long-term prospects of multipolarity, which he sees as a natural evolution of global history. This optimism is grounded in his belief that civilizational revival offers a more stable and equitable alternative to the power struggles of unipolarity.

In Dugin's analysis, the future lies in the hands of civilisations willing to reclaim their spiritual and cultural identities. Bharat's role is pivotal in this transformation. By embracing its Vedic heritage and fostering partnerships with other great civilisations, Bharat can help shape a world that values harmony over domination. As Dugin wrote in The Fourth Political Theory, "The multipolar world is not a competition of powers but a symphony of civilisations, each contributing its melody to the greater harmony."

Dugin's vision challenges conventional paradigms of International Relations, offering a deeply philosophical and civilisational approach to global politics. By placing spirituality and tradition at the core of his analysis, he provides a framework for a world that celebrates diversity while striving for collective progress. Bharat's role in this vision is both profound and indispensable, symbolising the potential for civilisations to lead humanity toward a more balanced and equitable future.

(The writer is an Assistant Professor at Bennett University; views expressed are personal)

Financial literacy: The key to unlocking India's economic power

By teaching money management skills early, India can cultivate a generation of financially savvy individuals capable of driving economic growth

As we are about to wrap up 2024, it cannot be underestimated how important financial literacy is with changing trends of the economy, where education is pivotal in determining India's arrival as an economic superpower. Even now, with the growing financial awareness, only 27 per cent of Indian adults are financially literate; that number drops to a mere 16.7 per cent for students. Recognising the urgency for the skills of financial management, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 revolves around putting in place financial literacy from the early days of schooling in the country's educational system. Teaching children money management skills early in life helps develop financially responsible



AJAY LAKHOTIA

adults who can make sound decisions benefiting both themselves and the economy. In earlier times, financial education was largely informal. The previous generation was focused on accumulating tangible assets like gold and property. However, India's banking and financial system has undergone a vast transformation since the 1990s. With SEBI paving the way for new regulated asset classes for the

common public - mutual funds, stocks, bonds, REITs and multiple other financial products are available for the common public to invest and grow their capital. The establishment of the Securities Exchange Board of India (SEBI), has instilled confidence in financial markets and led to greater participation in investments. As India progresses towards a digital financial ecosystem, the demand for financial literacy has never been so crucial in navigating opportunities.

Why Financial Literacy Needs to Start Early: Financial literacy goes beyond just education; it is a life skill and mindset that needs to be cultivated from an early age. All the education policies stress encourage students to be mindful and well-

read towards financial issues so that they can cope with anything ranging from budgeting to retirement savings. Students with such financial sensibilities provided that they have been exposed practically to these concepts, would be able to cope with investment volatility, financial contingencies and planning for a strong future. Building such a ground is vital for citizens to contribute towards building a balanced economy.

Taking Inspiration across the globe: Switzerland, Japan, and South Korea have leveraged their core strengths—banking, technology, and manufacturing, respectively—to drive economic growth and establish distinct global identities. These unique specialisations have not only accelerated their eco-



nommic development but also secured their positions as global leaders in their respective domains. Following their example, India could prioritise financial literacy as a national initiative to enhance its citizens' saving and investing behaviours while increasing economic participation. This focus could yield significant social benefits: reducing poverty, narrowing income

inequality, and improving the quality of life for millions. India's abundant advantages—from its tech-savvy youth to its robust educational infrastructure—position it favourably for global leadership in financial prosperity. However, these strengths alone are insufficient. Without proper financial knowledge, even the most talented individuals may struggle to maximise their potential, ultimately hindering economic growth. By combining financial education with India's technological expertise and expanding educational framework, the nation can nurture future entrepreneurs, investors, and professionals who will not only excel in their careers but also effectively manage and grow their wealth. A multi-pronged approach can

help to establish a financially literate India. The key steps to follow:

Integrating Personal Finance into Curricula: Personal finance should be included as part of the school and college syllabus so that a strong foundation towards money management & finance for a lifetime.

Nationwide Awareness Programs: Public campaigns on financial literacy will reach areas lacking financially literate communities, effectively democratizing access to that knowledge as well as encouraging wider economic participation.

Leveraging Technology and Partnerships: Public-private partnerships can make financial education accessible and attractive. By using technolo-

gy, it is possible to cast interactive sessions and impart practical, real-life skills to a broader audience, regardless of their location.

A Call to Action for all of us: It is now time to recognise financial literacy as an indispensable part of our journey towards education and the economic boom of India. Financial literacy, more than a skill, should be regarded as a strategic enabler to achieve personal growth. Through the infusion of financial education across all levels, which range from classrooms to boardrooms, we can unleash a superpower that will help our population bloom and lead us into the 21st century.

(The writer is founder and CEO of StockGro; views expressed are personal)

BJP responds to Adani allegations with claims of foreign interference



In an unusual protest, leaders of several INDIA bloc parties wore black jackets with stickers reading "Modi Adani Ek Hai" and "Adani Safe Hai" on them and raised slogans on the Parliament premises to demand a joint parliamentary probe into the Adani issue

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Congress on Thursday engaged war of words in and out of Parliament over findings of a media report which had alleged links with a US based multi-billionaire regarding which the ruling party alleged that Opposition used baseless reports to tarnish the image of India. Parliament witnessed uproarious scenes and adjournments after treasury benches alleged Congress led Opposition tried to derail proceedings following the reports which the Opposition vehemently denied. BJP said the Congress had sought to derail Parliament on various issues published by OCCRP, including the Pegasus spying row, questioning the efficacy of vaccines against COVID-19 developed in India and the Hindenburg reports. While BJP claimed a link between Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and international forces, including an investigative media

platform, trying to destabilise India and that the Congress leader was a "traitor of the highest order", Congress wrote to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla Birla alleging BJP's conduct was a "clear violation" of the decorum and ethics expected of a Member of Parliament. Rajya Sabha saw uproarious scenes when BJP MP Sudhanshu Trivedi alleged attacks by foreign forces on India's national interests and demanded a thorough probe besides asking all MPs to discuss the serious issue. He cited examples of the Hindenburg report, Covid vaccine report and one on Indian farmers, a BBC documentary, Pegasus issue and a video on violence against women in Manipur during the past three years. He also cited the recent report on the indictment of an Indian business house by a US attorney just ahead of the Winter Session. He also quoted a recent report by a French publication that certain foreign powers are funding the Organised Crime and

Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP) which also focusses on India and has association with billionaire investor George Soros. Lok Sabha proceedings were adjourned twice over BJP member Nishikant Dubey's remarks targeting Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi and seeking to link him to a US-based multi-billionaire. Congress members strongly objected to Dubey's remarks leading to uproar in the House. At a Press conference BJP MPs K Laxman and Sambit Patra cited a report published by French media outlet "Mediapart" to target Gandhi, after the ruling party raised the issue in the Lok Sabha. On their part, Congress MP Manickam Tagore wrote to Birla expressing deep concern over BJP's Sambit Patra allegedly using "slandorous language" against Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi at a media interaction, and sought stringent action against the ruling party leader. "Such behaviour not only tar-

nishes the image of Parliament but also insults the dignity of a high constitutional office. As a custodian of Parliament, I urge you to take immediate and stringent action against Sambit Patra," the Congress MP from Tamil Nadu's Virudhunagar and the party's whip in the Lok Sabha said. Patra's conduct was a clear violation of the decorum and ethics expected of a member of Parliament, he added. "I trust that you will address this matter with the seriousness it deserves and take appropriate steps to uphold the dignity and integrity of our parliamentary system," Tagore said. Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju said the behaviour of the opposition was not acceptable. "They (opposition) came into Parliament wearing colourful clothes, and outside Parliament, they have started a fashion show wearing those colourful clothes. This lowers the dignity of Parliament, and I condemn it. Such disruptions will achieve nothing; it won't fetch votes," Rijiju said.

J and K Statehood: Omar caught in Catch-22 situation

MOHI KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Even after completing 50 days in the office, Chief Minister (CM) Omar Abdullah is caught in a catch-22 situation over restoring statehood to Jammu and Kashmir (J and K). After recording a historic victory in the Assembly polls, held after a gap of 10 long years, Omar started his second innings with a bang. In his first cabinet meeting held two days after the oath taking ceremony, the government led by Omar Abdullah passed a resolution urging the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) - led Centre to restore statehood to J and K. Omar also called on Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi and Union Minister of Home Affairs Amit Shah with a categorical demand to restore 'statehood' to J and K. Subsequently, the J and K Legislative Assembly also passed a motion in support of granting special status to the former state. So far the Union government has not moved an inch. On Thursday, Abdullah reiterated his stand on the issue and maintained that he will discuss the issue of restoring statehood to J and K with the PM and home minister Shah very soon. "The prime minister and the home minister were busy with elections in Maharashtra and Jharkhand. But now that they have time, this issue will be taken up so that J and K's statehood is restored soon,"



Abdullah told reporters after attending a function to commemorate the 42nd foundation day of SKIMS Hospital here. Earlier, Omar attended a special prayer meeting marking the birth anniversary of Sheikh Mohd Abdullah. On the occasion when he asked if the holiday on the NC founder's birth anniversary will be restored, the CM said there are many things that need to be brought back in J and K, but the priority is to restore its statehood first. "There are many other dates as well, but we have to fight a bigger contest. We have to fight for

the restoration of J and K's statehood. We are hopeful that the PM will keep his promise made not to us, but to the people of J and K during the Lok Sabha election and the Assembly polls that followed," Abdullah said. "The elections saw huge participation of people. There were no complaints of people being forcibly taken to the booths. Rather, they went on their own and made the elections a huge success with the hope that the promises made to them, especially on restoring J and K's statehood, will be fulfilled," the CM said.

BMW drives over divider near Delhi Gate, driver apprehended

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A high-end BMW Sports car collided with a road divider near Delhi Gate here in central Delhi. Although, there were no casualties reported in the accident. According to the police on Thursday, the BMW Z4 Convertible car was driven by a 20-year-old man, Sukhwinder Singh, when he was bringing back his owner's 12-year-old son. No one received any injury due to the accident, they said. Police said that a case under sections 281 (rash driving or riding on a public way), 324(4) (causing damage) against the owner of the vehicle at IP Estate Police Station. An accident was reported around 3 pm, near Delhi Gate wherein a car went out of control and hit the divider of the road. No injuries have been reported. Vehicle is registered in the name of one Mintu Singh, a resident of Laxmi Nagar area. Further investigation is going on," Deputy Commissioner of Police (central) M Harsha Vardhan said. Police said that the driver of the car was identified as Sukhwinder Singh and his medical examination is being conducted to check if he was intoxicated. According to the police, it has also emerged in the investigation that one of the externed person ('tadi paar')

Tamil Nadu remembers Amma, but what about her party leaders?

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

It has been eight years since Jayalalitha Jayaram breathed her last becoming the second chief minister of Tamil Nadu to die in office. The factors that led to the demise of Jayalalitha remain a mystery despite a commission of inquiry probing the same for more than five years. It is not known how many among the AIADMK leadership are aware of the findings of the A Arumughaswamy Commission which submitted its report in August 2022. The Pioneer was the first newspaper in the country to predict that with the death of Jayalalitha, the AIADMK would become a part of history. With dozens of leaders belonging to the Thevar, Vanniyar and Gaunder communities pulling the party in different directions, the AIADMK, Tamil Nadu's largest political party ended up in groups, sub-groups headed by families and local chieftains. Jayalalitha who led the party to impressive victories in 2011 and 2016 assembly elections and 2014 Lok Sabha polls ensured that the party reached an unassailable position. Though there was deterioration



in her health after the 2016 assembly election, neither her aides or party subordinates took any interest in admitting her to a hospital. She was seen shivering and struggling to take even a step during the Independence Day Flag Hoisting Ceremony at Fort Saint George (Tamil Nadu's seat of power). She was admitted to a corporate hospital in Chennai on 22nd September 2016 where she passed away around 11.30 pm on 5th December 2016. O Panneerselvam succeeded Amma (as Jayalalitha was addressed by party cadres and followers) and he was ousted within two months through a palace coup staged by her close aide V K Sasikala and her

nephews. Stage was set in for the swearing-in of Sasikala as chief minister on 14th February 2017. But the Supreme Court order upholding the Parappana Agrahara special court verdict which had sentenced Jayalalitha and Sasikala for four years rigorous imprisonment in a disproportionate asset case. Since Jayalalitha was no more, Sasikala and her two relatives, who were the co-accused had to undergo the imprisonment. On the day she was sworn in as chief minister, Sasikala's cavalcade rushed to the Bangalore jail and surrendered before the IG (prisons). Before leaving for serving her jail term, Sasikala

had anointed Edappadi Palaniswamy as chief minister. But within months, TTV Dhinakaran, her nephew who had successfully infiltrated into Veda Nilayam (Jaya's palatial building in Poes Garden) launched his mission to overthrow Palaniswamy and appoint himself as chief minister. That attempt failed and the disintegration of AIADMK commenced on the 45th year of its launching. What Tamil Nadu saw after Jayalalitha's demise was the withering away of the AIADMK while the DMK became a rallying point. Jayalalitha's first tenure as chief minister was emmeshed in corruption while her subsequent tenures (2001-2006 and 2011-2016) did not throw out any corruption charges. The male chauvinistic Dravidian parties could not digest the fact that a woman could speak chaste English, Hindi, Telugu and Kannada. It was Jayalalitha who taught the north Indian politicians some basic rules of the game. Brand Amma became a household name by the time she was hospitalized. With her passing away, the second rural leadership went astray and the AIADMK is in deep trouble from which the party is unlikely to get out.

Pricy tomatoes, add sharp bite in veg thali rates

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The average cost of preparing a thali at home is calculated based on the input prices for it, which includes cereals, pulses, broilers, vegetables, spices, edible oil and cooking gas. The prices prevailing in North, South, East and West India are all taken into account to calculate an average. An 11 per cent drop in fuel cost - from Rs 903 last year for a 14.2 kg LPG cylinder in Delhi to Rs 803 currently - prevented further increase in the thali cost. In October, prices of onion and potato rose 46% and 51% year on year, respectively, because of lower arrivals due to incessant

rainfall in September. Rainfall in Maharashtra and Karnataka has delayed onion harvests. "The cold storage stocks of roti potato, which accounts for about 95% of annual potato production, are declining due to the end of the season, while fresh arrivals are slated to begin from December/January. Prices of tomato have more than doubled from Rs 29/kg in October 2023 to Rs 64/kg in October 2024 due to the September rains that damaged the crop and affected their arrivals from states like Maharashtra, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, coupled with the festive demand," the report added.

Akhilesh Yadav's daughter inaugurates CLC union office

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

After making foray into the Delhi University's student's politics, Samajwadi party chief Akhilesh Yadav's daughter Aditi Yadav inaugurated the Campus Law Centre's union office on Thursday. SP backed candidate Uday Yadav won the presidential post at the Campus Law Centre. She was accompanied by SP's one of the youngest MP and DU alumni Priya Saroj. The event was organized by CLC students Arpit Verma and Sachin Yadav. After the arrival of Ms Yadav at the event, speculations rife



that she will venture into politics in due course of time, as she is currently understanding know-how of the students' politics. Further her appearance at the DU also indicated that the SP will contest the next year's union election in Delhi with much more vigour as this time it won seats in several colleges of DU.

IndiGo Airlines crashlands as one of the worst ranked...

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Brussels Airlines has been crowned the world's best airline for 2024, securing the top position with an impressive overall score of 8.12 out of 10. The Belgian carrier distinguished itself through exceptional performance across punctuality, service quality, and compensation claim handling. Qatar Airways claimed the second spot with an outstanding 8.11 score. The Doha-based airline narrowly missed a tenth consecutive first-place finish, maintaining its reputation for luxury and customer satisfaction. United Airlines jumped an impressive seven places to claim third place with an 8.04 score, while American Airlines moved up three places to fourth, also scoring 8.04. Play Airlines from Iceland emerged as the most notable newcomer, ranking fifth with a 7.89 score.

Doodh mein kitna paani...

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Tests revealed that the sucrose content was below the minimum standard, and excessive moisture was present. Gupta was found guilty and fined Rs 6,000. Like the milk vendors, he was also sentenced to remain in court custody until the court closed for the day. Advocate RK Sharma remarked, "It's unfortunate that justice took decades, but the verdict reinforces the importance of strict food safety enforcement.. These judgments highlight the prolonged delays in resolving cases under the PFA Act. Experts and legal observers have pointed to the need for streamlining judicial processes to ensure timely verdicts in such cases. The FSDA, while welcoming the verdicts, emphasised the importance of robust monitoring to prevent food adulteration and protect public health. While the penalties might seem symbolic compared to today's standards, these cases serve as a reminder of the need for both accountability and efficiency in food safety enforcement.

Blue skies, bright sun, GRAP IV revoked, GRAP II invoked

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Additional Solicitor General (ASG) Aishwaraya Bhati today submitted that since the air quality has improved due to meteorological conditions, the Court should now allow easing of the restrictions. Bhati further said the Commission has suggested moving to a hybrid of Stage-II and Stage-III under GRAP from the Stage IV. "Lordships may look holistically at how Delhi air behaves during November-December. Our meteorological conditions do not allow European or

Finland-like conditions unfortunately my lords," Bhati said. "Let us operate the GRAP schedule as per AQI. It is now predicted that it won't go beyond Stage II," she added. Amicus Curiae Aparajita Singh expressed her disagreement that there cannot be any further improvement in air quality. "Lordships, it is about implementation. I disagree with ASG on that we cannot improve further than this. In Mundka, open garbage burning is still happening, in Delhi itself," the senior counsel said.

Fadnavis Bhau-kaal returns...

From page 1

Ahead of the Nagpur Winter Session, a brief three-day Session will be held in Mumbai from December 7 to 9. At this Session, all newly elected MLAs would be administered oath, a Speaker will be elected and the Governor will address a joint session of the Maharashtra Legislature. On his part, Fadnavis said that his government would be vindictive in its approach towards the Opposition. "Our government will not be vindictive at all. Instead, we will be concentrating on

politics of change and not politics of vindictiveness". Fadnavis said that his government would keep all the promises that the BJP-led MahaYuti made during its campaign, including the proposed increase in the quantum of assistance to women under its flagship scheme "Mukhya Mantri Ladki Bahin Yojana. In view of the fact that none of the Opposition parties, including Congress, Shiv Sena (UBT) and NCP (SP), managed to get even ten per cent of the total 288 seats, Fadnavis was asked if there will be a leader

of the Opposition in the State Assembly. "We will treat the Opposition with respect. As far as LoP is concerned, it is a decision to be taken by the Speaker," the CM said. Earlier, leaders from the Congress-led Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) stayed away from the swearing-in ceremony. Fadnavis disclosed that he had personally invited all the major political party leaders for the event. However, the ceremony held at Azad Maidan proved to be an impressive one. Apart from Prime Minister Narendra Modi, at least dozen Union

Ministers, including Amit Shah, Rajnath Singh and Nitin Gadkari, Chief Ministers Yogi Adityanath (Uttar Pradesh), Nitish Kumar (Bihar), Chandrababu Naidu (Andhra Pradesh) and corporate bigwigs like Mukesh Ambani, Gautam Adani and Anil Ambani were present on the occasion. The presence of film stars like Shah Rukh Khan, Salman Khan, Randir Kapoor, Sanjay Dutt, Madhuri Dixit and Ranvir Singh added glamour to the event. Cricket icon Sachin Tendulkar and his wife Anjali made their presence felt at the ceremony.

Chori chori chupke chupke... cable theft delays Metro ops

From page 1

With speed restrictions in place, passengers faced longer waiting times, resulting in overcrowding at stations and on trains. On a working day, these aggravated further problems for the commuters, with many complaining about missed appointments and extended travel times. A daily commuter, Sarita

Singh said the delay due to cable theft is extremely inconvenient. "The trains were running late, and the platforms were packed. The authorities need to improve security," she said. Others also raised concerns over safety, questioning the Central Industrial Security Forces (CISF) over lapses. "Someone stole cable from the Delhi Metro's busiest line, the blue line. This

caused delays on blue line metro trains today. What's this CISF, how can such things happen inside Delhi Metro premises?" another office goer added. In a video message, Delhi Cabinet Minister Saurabh Bharadwaj stated that the cable on the Blue Line of the Delhi Metro, from Kirti Nagar to Moti Nagar, has been stolen. He expressed his shock that, "This is Delhi,

the Capital of the country. The central government and Union Home Minister Amit Shah are responsible for its security, and yet, a Metro cable was stolen." Bharadwaj further emphasised that this cable theft is just one example saying "in Delhi, vehicles are being stolen daily. Tyres from cars are being taken, mobile phones are being snatched, chains are being

snatched, and even robberies at banks are happening. Water pumps from people's homes are being stolen. Government installed motors and their wires are being taken as well." Meanwhile, according to the police, at around 6 am, the DMRC's signalling controller informed them that about 150 metre of Transmission Cable (TC) along the railway track between Moti Nagar

and Kirti Nagar was stolen. "Due to this damage, in the morning hours the speed of metro trains was reduced to 25-30 kmph, from normal speed of 70 kmph between the two stations. The normal metro train services were restored at 1:38 PM after repair," a senior officer said, adding that a case under section 303(2) and 329 (3) of BNS has been registered and an investigation is ongoing.

No-confidence vote topples Barnier govt in France

AP ■ PARIS

French President Emmanuel Macron will address the nation Thursday, a day after the National Assembly ousted Prime Minister Michel Barnier in a historic no-confidence vote that has left France without a functioning government. Macron is expected to focus on stabilising the political crisis and possibly naming a new prime minister to navigate the fractured parliament. Barnier formally submitted his resignation Thursday morning at the Elysée Palace, fulfilling a constitutional obligation. The no-confidence motion passed by 331 votes in the National Assembly, forcing Barnier to step down after just three months in office — the shortest tenure of any prime minister in modern French history. **Pressure to act swiftly:** Macron faces the critical task of naming a replacement capable of leading a minority government in a parliament where no party holds a majority. Yaël Braun-Pivet, president of the National Assembly and a member of Macron's party, urged the president to move quickly. "I recommend he decide rapidly on a new prime minister," Braun-Pivet said Thursday on France Inter radio. "There must



French Prime Minister Michel Barnier addresses the National Assembly prior to a vote on a no-confidence motion that could bring him down and his cabinet for the first time since 1962 in Paris. AP/PTI

not be any political hesitation. We need a leader who can speak to everyone and work to pass a new budget bill." The process may prove challenging. Macron's administration has yet to confirm any names, though French media have reported a shortlist of centrist candidates who might appeal to both sides of the political spectrum. Macron took more than two months to appoint Barnier after his party's defeat in June's legislative elections, raising concerns about potential delays this time.

Calls for Macron to step down: The no-confidence vote has galvanised opposition leaders, with some explicitly calling for Macron's resignation. "I believe that stability requires the departure of the President of the Republic," said Manuel Bompard, leader of the far-left France Unbowed party, on BFM TV Wednesday night. Far-right National Rally leader Marine Le Pen, whose party holds the most seats in the Assembly, did not explicitly call for Macron's resignation but warned that "the pressure on the President of the Republic

will get stronger and stronger." Macron, however, has dismissed such calls and ruled out new legislative elections. The current French constitution does not call for a president to resign after his government was ousted by the National Assembly. "I was elected to serve until 2027, and I will fulfil that mandate," he told reporters earlier this week. The constitution also says that new legislative elections cannot be held until at least July, creating a potential stalemate for policymakers. **Economic uncertainty:** The political instability has heightened concerns about France's economy, particularly its debt, which could rise to 7 per cent of GDP next year without significant reforms. Analysts say that Barnier's government downfall could push up French interest rates, digging the debt even further. Rating agency Moody's warned late Wednesday that the government's fall "reduces the likelihood of consolidating public finances" and worsens the political gridlock. Macron's speech, scheduled for 8 pm local time, is expected to address these economic challenges while setting a course for the future government.

Yoon replaces defence minister as S Korea's parliament nears vote on their impeachments

AP ■ SEOUL

South Korea's president replaced his defence minister Thursday as opposition parties moved to impeach both men over the stunning yet short-lived imposition of martial law that brought armed troops into Seoul streets. The main opposition Democratic Party and other small opposition parties submitted a joint motion to impeach President Yoon Suk Yeol on Wednesday over his martial law declaration the previous night. Martial law lasted about six hours, as the National Assembly quickly voted to overrule the president, forcing his Cabinet to lift it before daybreak Wednesday. On Thursday, Yoon's office said he decided to replace Defence Minister Kim Yong Hyun with Choi Byung Hyuk, a retired four-star general who is South Korea's ambassador to Saudi Arabia. Vice Defence Minister Kim Seon Ho will be the acting minister until Choi assumes the job after a parliamentary hearing. The hearing is a formality as the president holds the power to appoint ministers outside of the prime minister without the approval of lawmakers. Yoon's office didn't provide any further comments by him.

He hasn't appeared in public since he announced in a televised address that his government was lifting the martial law declaration. The opposition parties earlier submitted a separate motion to impeach Kim, alleging he recommended that Yoon impose martial law. Kim had offered to resign and apologized for causing disruption and concern to the public. Kim said "all troops who performed duties related to martial law were acting on my instructions, and all responsibility lies with me," according to the Defense Ministry. The impeachment motion against Yoon was introduced in parliament early Thursday, meaning it can be put to a vote between Friday and Sunday. It will be scrapped if it isn't voted within 72 hours of its parliamentary introduction, but a new motion can be submitted if the current one is scrapped or voted down, according to National Assembly officials. Jo Seung-lae, spokesperson of the Democratic Party, said it will push for a National Assembly vote on the impeachment motion on Saturday evening, to provide sufficient time for the conservative lawmakers to contemplate their decisions on what he described as an "unconstitutional, illegal rebellion or coup."

On Friday, the Democrats and other opposition lawmakers voted to impeach Choi Jae-hae, chairman of the country's board of audit and inspection, and three top public prosecutors, including Seoul Central District Prosecutors' Office chief Lee Chang-soo. The four will be suspended from their duties until the Constitutional Court rules whether to remove them from office. Members of the Yoon's ruling conservative People Power Party boycotted the votes, leaving the totals overwhelming over the threshold to impeach them. The Democratic Party's continued impeachment attempts of senior government officials and prosecutors have been a major source of conflict with Yoon, who during his martial law announcement accused the opposition of "anti-state activities" and "paralyzing the government". Prospects for Yoon's impeachment isn't clear as Yoon's People Power Party decided Thursday to oppose the motion's passage. Choo Kyung-ho, the floor leader of the PPP, told reporters that his party would hold another meeting to determine how to oppose the motion's passage. Observers say PPP members could simply boycott a floor vote or cast ballots against the motion.

Impeaching him would require support from two-thirds of the National Assembly, or 200 of its 300 members. The opposition parties together have 192 seats and they need additional votes from the PPP. Some experts earlier said the motion will likely be passed through parliament as 18 PPP lawmakers, who belong to an anti-Yoon faction in the party, already voted down Yoon's martial law decree together with opposition lawmakers. But speaking to reporters Thursday, PPP leader Han Dong-hun, head of the anti-Yoon faction, said he would work to ensure that the impeachment motion doesn't pass though he remains critical of Yoon's action, which he described as "unconstitutional." Han said that there is a need to "prevent damage to citizens and supporters caused by unprepared chaos." Experts say rival factions in PPP could unite not to repeat their traumatic experiences following the 2016 impeachment of scandal-ridden conservative President Park Geun-hye, which happened after some lawmakers at her own party voted to impeach her. Park was eventually removed from office and arrested in 2017, and the liberals easily won the presidency in a by-election as conservatives remained in disarray.

Syrian army withdraws from Hama after insurgents broke through its defences

AP ■ BEIRUT

The Syrian army says it has withdrawn from the central city of Hama after insurgents broke through its defences, in another setback for President Bashar Assad. The announcement Thursday came hours after opposition fighters said they had entered the city and were marching toward the centre. The Syrian army said it redeployed from Hama and took positions outside the city to protect the lives of civilians. The capture of Hama, Syria's fourth largest city, is another blow for Assad days after insurgents captured much of the northern city of Aleppo, the country's largest city. Syrian state media confirmed violent clashes between government forces and opposition gunmen on the eastern edges of Hama city but denied that the

insurgents had breached it. Hama is one of the few cities that remained under full government control during Syria's conflict, which broke out in March 2011 following a popular uprising. Its capture would be a major setback for President Bashar Assad. The offensive is being led by the jihadi group Hayat Tahrir al-Sham as well as an umbrella group of Turkish-backed Syrian militias called the Syrian National Army. Their sudden capture of the northern city of Aleppo, an ancient business hub, was a stunning prize for Assad's opponents and reignited the conflict which had been largely stalemated for the past few years. Aleppo's takeover marked the first opposition attack on the city since 2016, when a brutal Russian air campaign retook it for Assad after rebel forces had initially seized it. Intervention by Russia, Iran and Iranian-allied Hezbollah

and other militant groups has allowed Assad to remain in power. The latest flare-up in Syria's long civil war comes as Assad's main regional and international backers are preoccupied with their own wars. Tens of thousands of people have been displaced by the renewed fighting, which began with the surprise opposition offensive on November 27. The insurgents claimed on their Military Operations Department channel on the Telegram app Thursday that they have entered Hama and are marching toward its centre. "Our forces are taking positions inside the city of Hama," the channel quoted a local commander identified as Maj. Hassan Abdul-Ghani as saying. The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, an opposition war monitor, said gunmen have entered parts of the city, mainly the neighbourhoods

of Sawaaeq and Zahriyeh to the northwest. It added that gunmen are also on the edge of the northwestern neighbourhood of Kazo. "If Hama falls, it means that the beginning of the regime's fall has started," the Observatory's chief, Rami Abdulrahman, told The Associated Press. Hama is a major intersection point in Syria that links that country's centre with the north as well as the east and the west. It is about 200 kilometres north of the capital, Damascus, Assad's seat of power. Hama province also borders the coastal province of Latakia, a main base of popular support for Assad. The city's name is synonymous with the 1982 massacre of Hama, one of the most notorious in the modern Middle East, when security forces under Assad's late father, Hafez Assad, killed thousands to crush a Muslim Brotherhood uprising.

Starmer to outline his 'Plan for Change'

AP ■ LONDON

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer is trying to change the narrative on his five-month-old government after plummeting approval ratings, business anxiety over tax hikes and protesting farmers clogging London streets. Conservative opposition leader Kemi Badenoch calls it an "emergency reset" by a floundering administration. But Starmer's office says the "Plan for Change" speech the prime minister will deliver on Thursday is not a relaunch or about-face, but "the next phase" in his government plan, intended to persuade voters that the government is making their lives better. Starmer's centre-left Labour Party was elected in July — ending 14 years of Conservative government — on a promise to get Britain's sluggish economy growing and restore frayed public services such as the state-funded National Health

Service. But it has been criticised, including by Labour supporters, for failing to show people how their lives will improve any time soon. The speech will set out "milestones" for measuring progress on economic growth, clean energy, reforming childcare and education, bolstering the NHS and cutting crime. It includes a pledge of 13,000 more neighbourhood police officers within five years. Starmer's office said he will say that "hard-working Brits ... reasonably want a stable economy, their country to be safe, their borders secure, more cash in their pocket, safer streets in their town, opportunities for their children, secure British energy in their home, and an NHS that is there when they need it." The government hopes to reverse a slew of negative headlines over its economic decisions — taken, it says, because the previous Conservative government left a 22 billion pound

(\$28 billion) "black hole" in the public finances. Spending cuts have included removing from millions of retirees a payment that helps cover winter heating costs — a move that sat awkwardly with revelations that Starmer had accepted clothes and other freebies at a time when millions of people are struggling with the cost of living. The government's first budget in late October included billions in new money for the health system, but also hiked a tax paid by employers, to the alarm of many businesses, and imposed inheritance tax on farmers for the first time in decades. Thousands of farmers thronged the streets around Parliament in November to protest a levy they say will ruin many family farms. The government says three-quarters of farms won't have to pay inheritance tax under the new rules. Starmer also lost a member of his Cabinet last week, when

Transport Secretary Louise Haigh resigned over an old fraud conviction involving a cell phone she'd reported stolen. The bad news has sent Starmer's poll ratings plunging deep into negative territory — though the opposition Conservatives are no more popular. Starmer has had more success abroad, where he is trying to reset Britain's relations with its European neighbours following years of acrimony over Brexit. But efforts to move closer to the bloc risk angering incoming President Donald Trump, who is hostile to the EU and has threatened to impose tariffs on European goods. Members of Starmer's government have been strongly critical of Trump in the past, but the Labour government has worked to build ties with the president-elect. Before the US election, Starmer flew to New York for dinner with the then-Republican presidential candidate.

Taiwan, Guam should work together to defend freedom, says Prez Lai

AP ■ TAIPEI (TAIWAN)

Taiwan and Guam should work together to defend freedom and democracy in the region, Taiwanese President Lai Ching-te said Thursday on a visit to the American territory. Guam was Lai's second US stop during an ongoing tour of the Pacific Islands, following a visit to Hawaii last weekend. China's government claims Taiwan as its territory and says the self-governing island must come under its control at some point in the future. Lai, speaking to Guam's legislature, emphasised the shared values and strategic

importance of Taiwan and Guam in the Indo-Pacific region. "Let us together become the crucial force in defending freedom, democracy in the first island chain," he said, referring to a string of islands off the Asian continent that includes Japan, Taiwan and part of the Philippines. China, which considers Taiwan a renegade province, opposes any official interaction between the island's government and the United States. The US is the main overseas supplier of arms for Taiwan's defence, and has naval and air force bases on Guam. In Beijing, China's Foreign Ministry announced

sanctions on Thursday on 13 American companies and six executives in response to recently announced weapons sales to Taiwan. The executives include the president and vice president of Raytheon's Naval Power strategic business unit. The sanctions include a ban on entering China, including Hong Kong and Macao. Earlier this week, the ministry said it "strongly condemned" US support for Lai's visit to Hawaii and had lodged a complaint with the United States. A resolution from Guam's legislature welcomed Lai and expressed appreciation for Taiwan's "significant contri-

butions to Guam's economy and community," Speaker Therese Terlaje said. Lai called for deeper cooperation with Guam, highlighting aquaculture, hydroponic agriculture, construction projects and alternative energy as potential areas of partnership. Lai arrived in Guam on Wednesday night after visits to the Marshall Islands and Tuvalu. He was scheduled to fly to Palau, the final stop on his trip. The three Pacific Island countries are among 12 governments that recognise Taiwan diplomatically. The rest of the world, including the United States, has official ties with the Chinese government in Beijing.

Bangladesh's ICT bans Sheikh Hasina's 'hate speeches'

PTI ■ DHAKA

The International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) of Bangladesh on Thursday ordered the authorities to remove all the "hate speeches" of ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina in the media and on social networking platforms. The order follows Hasina's recent speech, her first public address after fleeing Bangladesh four months back, in which she mounted a stinging attack on the country's interim leader Muhammad Yunus, accusing him of perpetrating "genocide" and failing to protect minorities including Hindus. Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS) reported that a two-member tribunal led by Justice Md

Golam Mortuza Mozumder passed the order and directed the authorities to remove all the "hate speeches" of Hasina from social media and take necessary steps to stop their dissemination in future in all types of mass media. Prosecutor Advocate Abdullah Al Noman told the news agency that the tribunal asked secretaries of the ICT Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, and Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) to execute the order. The prosecution earlier filed the petition, pleading to remove and restrict all types of hate speech and incitement by the ousted prime minister, which may intimidate the witnesses or vic-

tims or hamper investigation. Earlier, prosecutor Gazi MH Tamim briefed the media in this regard, saying not only in Bangladesh, making hate speech is a criminal offence in every law and every country around the world. "Sheikh Hasina has made speeches, where she was heard saying she got the license to kill 227 people as the same number of cases were filed against her. She was even heard giving threats to the victims and witnesses of the cases against her, through these speeches," Tamim said. In remarks delivered virtually to her supporters at an event in New York, Hasina, presently living in India, also claimed that there were plans to kill her

and her sister Sheikh Rehana just like their father Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was assassinated in 1975. Describing Yunus as "power-hungry", Hasina alleged that the places of worship in Bangladesh are under attack and the current dispensation has totally failed to deal with the situation. Hasina was speaking to supporters of her Awami League party at the event organised on Sunday to mark "Bijoy Dibos" or Victory Day that falls on December 16. Though Hasina made several statements in the last few months, it was her first public address after taking shelter, said an expert closely tracking developments in Bangladesh.

Bitcoin tops USD 100,000 as big rally sparked by Trump election win rolls on

AP ■ NEW YORK

Bitcoin has topped the USD 100,000 mark as a massive rally in the world's most popular cryptocurrency sparked by the election of Donald Trump rolls on. The milestone comes just hours after the President-elect signalled a lighter regulatory approach to the crypto industry when he said he intends to nominate cryptocurrency advocate Paul Atkins to be the next chair the Securities and Exchange Commission. Bitcoin has soared to unprecedented heights since Trump won the election November 5. The cryptocurrency has climbed dramatically from USD 69,374 on Election Day and rose as high as USD 103,713 Wednesday, according to CoinDesk. Just two years

ago, bitcoin dropped below USD 17,000 following the collapse of crypto exchange FTX. How long bitcoin will stay above the USD 100,000 mark is uncertain. It fell back to just under USD 102,000 early Thursday. As with everything in the volatile cryptocurrency, the future is impossible to predict. And while some are bullish on future gains, other experts continue to warn of investment risks. **Back up. What is cryptocurrency again?** Cryptocurrency has been around for a while now. But, chances are, you've heard about it more and more over the last few years. In basic terms, cryptocurrency is digital money. This kind of currency is designed to work through an online network without a central authority — meaning it's typically not

backed by any government or banking institution — and transactions get recorded with technology called a blockchain. Bitcoin is the largest and oldest cryptocurrency, although other assets like ethereum, tether and dogecoin have also gained popularity over the years. Some investors see cryptocurrency as a "digital alternative" to traditional money, but the large majority of daily financial transactions are still conducted using fiat currencies such as the dollar. Also, bitcoin can be very volatile, with its price reliant on larger market conditions. **Why is bitcoin soaring?** A lot of the recent action has to do with the outcome of the US presidential election. Trump, who was once a crypto sceptic, has pledged to make the US "the crypto capital of the

planet" and create a "strategic reserve" of bitcoin. His campaign accepted donations in cryptocurrency and he courted fans at a bitcoin conference in July. He also launched World Liberty Financial, a new venture with family members to trade cryptocurrencies. Crypto industry players have welcomed Trump's victory, in hopes that he would be able to push through legislative and regulatory changes that they've long lobbied for — which, generally speaking, aim for an increased sense of legitimacy without too much red tape. Trump made a move in that direction Wednesday when he said he intends to nominate Paul Atkins to chair the Securities and Exchange Commission. Atkins was an SEC commissioner during the presidency of George W. Bush.

In the years since leaving the agency, Atkins has made the case against too much market regulation. He joined the Token Alliance, a cryptocurrency advocacy organization, in 2017. Under current chair Gary Gensler, the SEC has cracked down on the crypto industry, penalizing a number of companies for violating securities laws. But he's also faced criticism from industry players in the process, like the chief legal officer of Robinhood, who described Gensler's approach toward crypto as "rigid" and "hostile." Gensler will step down when Trump takes office. One crypto-friendly move the SEC did make under Gensler was the approval in January of spot bitcoin ETFs, or exchange trade funds, which allow investors to have a stake in bitcoin without directly buying it.

The Spot ETFs were the dominant driver of bitcoin's price before the election — but, like much of the crypto's recent momentum, saw record inflows postelection. **What are the risks?** History shows you can lose money in crypto as quickly as you've made it. Long-term price behaviour relies on larger market conditions. Trading continues at all hours, every day. At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, bitcoin stood at just over USD 5,000. Its price climbed to nearly USD 69,000 by November 2021, during high demand for technology assets, but later crashed during an aggressive series of rate hikes by the Federal Reserve. And the late-2022 collapse of FTX significantly undermined confidence in crypto overall,

with bitcoin falling below USD 17,000. Investors began returning in large numbers as inflation started to cool — and gains skyrocketed on the anticipation and then early success of spot ETFs. But experts still stress caution, especially for small-pocketed investors. And lighter regulation from the coming Trump administration could mean less guardrails. "I would say, keep it simple. And don't take on more risk than you can afford to," said Adam Morgan McCarthy, a research analyst at Kaiko, adding that there isn't a "magic eight ball" to know for certain what comes next. **What about the climate impact?** Assets like bitcoin are produced through a process called "mining," which consumes a lot of energy.

Operations relying on pollutive sources have drawn particular concern over the years. Recent research published by the United Nations University and Earth's Future journal found that the carbon footprint of 2020-2021 bitcoin mining across 76 nations was equivalent to the emissions from burning 84 billion pounds of coal or running 190 natural gas-fired power plants. Coal satisfied the bulk of bitcoin's electricity demands (45 per cent), followed by natural gas (21 per cent) and hydropower (16 per cent). Environmental impacts of bitcoin mining boil largely down to the energy source used. Industry analysts have maintained that clean energy has increased in use in recent years, coinciding with rising calls for climate protections.

India pushes for fast-tracking special safeguard mechanism at WTO

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
India has pitched for fast-tracking negotiations in the WTO on special safeguard mechanism (SSM), which would allow developing countries to temporarily raise tariffs on agricultural imports in response to import surges or price drops, an official said. The country flagged the issues during a meeting of a committee on agriculture issues in Geneva on December 4. In the meeting, India emphasized on the need to prioritize unresolved mandated issues such as a



permanent solution to public stockholding, SSM, and cotton, treating them as standalone issues. "India highlighted the Nairobi Ministerial Decision's

mandate to prioritize and fast-track SSM negotiations, calling for modalities that are simple, operational, and equitable," the Geneva-based official said. Regarding Guyana's proposal, India reiterated that any facilitator-led processes should be consensus-based and respect WTO's (World Trade Organization) multilateral principles, rejecting the non-traditional approach based on convergence. Guyana has presented a new proposal to advance agricultural negotiations ahead of MC14 (ministerial conference).

The 14th conference is tentatively scheduled to take place in Cameroon (Africa) in 2026. Further India has urged members to conduct text-based negotiations on finding permanent solution to public food stockholding. Under text-based negotiations in WTO, an agreement is finalised around draft texts floated by the chair of a particular committee dealing with the subject. The draft is based on discussions amongst the member countries and is finalised till all the nations are in agreement with it.

Government open to explore alternative financing models for MSMEs: Piyush Goyal

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Thursday urged the industry to share specific issues they are facing in accessing bank credit and suggested that the government is open to exploring alternate financing models for MSMEs. He also said the ministry can earmark particular areas in the proposed industrial townships for the MSMEs (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises). Exporters have raised concerns over declining bank credit, particularly to the MSME segment. While exports grew by 15 per cent in the rupee terms between 2021-22 and 2023-24, the outstanding credit in March 2024 dropped by 5 per cent over the same month in

2022, according to exporters. "Give me specific details (as in) what kinds of problems they (MSMEs) face. Is too much collateral being asked? Suppose an ECGC (Export Credit Guarantee Corporation) cover is available, do they (banks) still ask for collateral, what kind of interest they charge when a 90 per cent guarantee is taken by ECGC in the event of any failure of export credit? "If we get that more specific feedback then we will be able to take it up with the bankers. ECGC is looking at factor services also but my own personal view is that being costlier, people will still prefer to go to the bank and take a loan but we are open to the idea of alternate financing models," he said

here at a function. In August, the cabinet approved 12 new project proposals under the National Industrial Corridor Development Programme (NICDP) with an estimated investment of Rs 28,602 crore to set up industrial parks/townships in the country. These industrial areas will be located at Khurpia in Uttarakhand, Rajpura-Patiala in Punjab, Dighi in Maharashtra, Palakkad in Kerala, Agra and Prayagraj in UP, Gaya in Bihar, Zaheerabad in Telangana, Orvakal and Koppurthy in AP and Jodhpur-Pali in Rajasthan. "I am happy to commit to a particular area earmarked for MSMEs because without MSMEs no large industries will survive.

Amazon Web Services commits USD 100 million in cloud credits for underserved students

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
Amazon Web Services (AWS) on Thursday said it is committing up to USD 100 million in cloud credits over the next five years to help eligible educational institutions and underserved students worldwide develop and scale digital learning solutions. The programme, a part of AWS Education Equity Initiative, will grant recipients cloud credits, which function similarly to cash, allowing organisations to reduce their expenses when utilising AWS's cloud services. "At AWS, we are committed to levelling the playing field in education, ensuring learners from underrepresented and underserved communities have equal access to transformative learning opportunities. That's why AWS is committing up to USD 100 million in cloud credits over the next five years to help qualifying education organisations around the world build or scale digital learning solutions as part of

the AWS Education Equity Initiative," a company blog said. With these credits, recipients can leverage AWS's comprehensive portfolio of cloud technology and advanced AI services to create innovations such as AI assistants, coding curriculums, connectivity tools, educational platforms, mobile applications, chatbots, and various technology-driven learning experiences, it said. Additionally, they will have access to technical guidance from AWS solution architects, who will offer architectural guidance, best practices for responsible AI implementation, and continuous optimisation support. AWS is already working with more than 50 organisations from across 10 countries, and in the past year, more than 2 million students have received over 17 million hours of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), literacy, and career development courses as part of the AWS Education Equity Initiative, the blog read.

Sebi mulls revising requirement on settlement of account of clients' funds

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
To facilitate ease of doing business, markets regulator Sebi on Thursday proposed that funds of clients, who have not done any transaction in the last 30 days, will be settled by stock brokers on the upcoming settlement dates of monthly running account settlement cycle. Under the rule, if a client has not done any transaction in the last 30 days and has a credit balance, the stock broker is required to return the fund to the client within three working days. This is known as running account settlement or quarterly settlement. With a view to facilitate ease of doing business as well as to safeguard the investors' interest, Sebi, in its consultation paper, proposed revising the requirement of mandatory settlement of such clients' funds. "It is being proposed that the funds of such clients who have not traded in the last 30 calendar days shall



be settled on the upcoming settlement dates of monthly running account settlement cycle as notified by exchanges in the annual calendar issued by them from time to time," Sebi said. The proposal came after Brokers' Industry Standards Forum (ISF) represented that the current requirement necessitates TM to identify such clients daily, potentially leading to the daily settlement of client funds and resulting in procedural inefficiencies. Also, it has further been represented that since the client funds are anyway upstreamed to the clearing corporation, there is a need to revisit the time for settling such client's funds. The Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) has sought public comments on the proposal till December 26.

Finance Minister to begin pre-Budget consultation from Friday

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will start pre-Budget consultations with various stakeholders beginning Friday as part of Budget making exercise. The first meeting as part of this series will be held with eminent economists on December 6. Sitharaman, who will chair these meetings, will seek their inputs regarding upcoming Budget amid seven-quarter low GDP print of 5.4 per cent in second quarter of the current financial year. It will be followed by a meeting with farmer associations and agriculture economists and stakeholders in MSME sector on December 7, sources said. Union Budget 2025-26 is likely to be tabled in Parliament on February 1. This would be the eighth straight Budget of Sitharaman and second full budget of the Modi 3.0 government, which will give

policy direction for achieving the goal of Viksit Bharat (developed India) by 2047. The pre-Budget consultations will end on December 30 with consultations with captains of Indian industry and players in the social sector, especially education and health. Besides the finance minister, Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary; Finance Secretary and DIPAM Secretary Tuhin Kanta Pandey; Economic Affairs Secretary Ajay Seth; Revenue Secretary Sanjay Malhotra; and Financial Services Secretary M Nagaraju are expected to be present. The Budget for the current fiscal had projected a nominal GDP growth of 10.5 per cent, while fiscal deficit was pegged at 4.9 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP). Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government in 2017 scrapped a colonial-era tradition of presenting the Budget at the end of February.

India awarded for social security good practices

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
India has received awards for adopting good practices in providing social security to its workforce at a regional forum of Asia-Pacific held in Saudi Arabia, an official statement said on Thursday. The 'Good Practice Award for Asia and Pacific 2024' was presented by Mohammed Azman, President of ISSA (International Social Security Association), at Regional Social Security Forum in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, the labour ministry said in a statement. The Employees' Provident Fund Organization (EPFO) received five certificates of merit for communication channels, E-proceedings: A case on use of information and communication technology in justice delivery, district outreach programme (Nidhi Aapke Nikat), multilingual call centres.

Gold climbs ₹300 to reclaim ₹79k-mark, silver continues to shine for third day

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
Gold price surged to reclaim the Rs 79,000-level in the national capital on Thursday due to fresh buying by jewellers and stockists, according to the All India Sarafa Association. Snapping its three-day losing run, the precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity rose Rs 300 to Rs 79,150 per 10 grams from the previous close of Rs 78,850 per 10 grams on Wednesday. Traders said gold climbed due to fresh demand by jewellers and retailers in the local markets. Silver continued to shine for the third straight day by jumping Rs 1,300 to Rs 93,800 per kg on Thursday. It ended at Rs 92,500 per kg on Wednesday. Price of gold of 99.5 per cent purity advanced Rs 300 to Rs



78,750 per 10 grams. It settled at Rs 78,450 per 10 grams in the previous trading session. Meanwhile, in futures trade on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), gold contracts for February delivery dipped Rs 160 or 0.21 per cent to trade at Rs 76,932 per 10 grams. "Gold traded flat to positive. In MCX, gold is expected to trade within the range of Rs 76,700-77,400," Jateen Trivedi, VP Research

Analyst - Commodity and Currency, LKP Securities, said. Silver contracts for March delivery declined Rs 188 or 0.2 per cent to Rs 93,105 per kg on the exchange. Globally, Comex gold futures fell USD 7.20 or 0.27 per cent to USD 2,669 per ounce. "Persistent global risk, as well as political uncertainty in France and South Korea, contribute to driving up the safe-haven precious metal price. Traders will be awaiting the US macroeconomic data, including new unemployment claims and trade balance to be released later on Thursday," Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst of Commodities at HDFC Securities, said. According to commodity market experts, the bullion remained slightly

subdued as Federal Reserve (Fed) Chair Jerome Powell on Wednesday said the US economy is in good shape, adding that September's policy rate cut was a message to support the labour market. Powell stated that despite showing progress, it's premature to declare victory on inflation, and the US central bank could be cautious in setting monetary policy. Silver also traded 0.27 per cent lower at USD 31.83 per ounce in the Asian market hours. "Traders believe gold prices are poised to rise further, though a potential delay in additional interest rate cuts could lead to short-term declines, offering opportunities to accumulate," Abans Holdings' Chief Executive Officer Chintan Mehta, said.

Rupee rises three paise to close at 84.72 against US dollar



PTI ■ MUMBAI
The rupee recovered from its all-time low level and settled for the day with gains of just 3 paise at 84.72 (provisional) against the US dollar in a range-bound trade on Thursday, amid a positive trend in domestic equities. Forex traders said the Indian rupee recovered slightly on strength in the domestic markets and overnight decline in crude oil prices. However, a positive US dollar capped a sharp upside. At the interbank foreign

exchange, the rupee opened at 84.72, moved in a narrow range and touched an intraday high of 84.70 and a low of 84.74 against the greenback. On Wednesday, the rupee slumped by 7 paise to hit its lowest-ever closing level of 84.75 against the US dollar. "We expect the rupee to trade with a negative bias on the strong dollar and worries over economic slowdown. However, weakness in crude oil prices and fresh FII outflows may support the rupee at lower levels," said Anuj Choudhary - Research Analyst at Mirae Asset Sharekhan. Choudhary further added that traders may take cues from weekly unemployment claims and trade balance data from the US. "USD-INR spot price is expected to trade in a range of Rs 84.50 to Rs 84.95," he said.

market participants are also awaiting cues from the upcoming Reserve Bank of India (RBI) monetary policy on Friday, which will likely focus on balancing inflation and growth. The Reserve Bank's high-level panel on Wednesday started deliberations on the bi-monthly monetary policy amid expectations of status quo on interest rate as the retail inflation is above the upper tolerance level of the central bank. The decision taken by the RBI Governor Shaktikanata Das headed six-member Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) will be announced on Friday. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading lower by 0.16 per cent at 106.15.

DRI report reveals rise in commercial fraud, FTA misuse worth ₹1,427 Crore in 2023-24

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI
The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI)'s report on 'Smuggling in India' 2023-24 highlights a rise in commercial fraud, including misuse of foreign trade agreements (FTA) by individuals/companies. According to the report, the agencies have detected cases of FTA misuse worth Rs 1,427 crore during 2023-24 compared to Rs 481 crore in 2022-2023. Moreover, the DRI booked 109 cases involving 8223.61 kg of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances including 107.31 kg of cocaine, 48.74 kg of heroin, 136 kg of methamphetamine, 236 kg of mephedrone and 7348.68 kg of ganja in 2023-24. The seizures indicate an increasing trend of smuggling of cocaine through air passenger route, from 21 cases in 2022-23 to 47 cases in 2023-24, with majority of seizures effected at airports. According to report, Free



Trade Warehousing Zones in the Middle East are emerging as a major transit point from where cigarette-concealed consignments are shipped to India. "Though illicit cigarettes are reportedly manufactured in certain South East Asian countries, it appears that the consignments are initially shipped to Dubai from southeast Asia and then re-routed to India," it said. According to the report for the fiscal 2023-24, the DRI initiated 485 import cases, involving illicit benefits totaling Rs 5,907.79 crore. The most common offenses included mis-

sticks during the same period in FY24. Illicit foreign currency seizures have also surged. DRI officials seized Rs 13.8 crore in foreign currency during the first half of FY25, surpassing the Rs 12.4 crore confiscated in all of FY24. Additionally, the agency uncovered a Rs 576 crore trade-based money laundering (TBML) racket. The scheme involved importing cheap electrical goods and cosmetics at inflated prices to channel foreign exchange out of the country. According to the report, gold smuggling in India follows a "hub and spoke" model. In this system, contraband is first brought into the country and transported to central hub locations before being distributed to various destinations. During the financial year 2023-24, the DRI seized a total of 1,319 kg of gold, with the land route accounting for 55% of the seizures and the air route

contributing around 36%. The DRI has also shared valuable intelligence with Customs field formations, resulting in significant gold seizures by these units. The report highlights how gold smuggling in India has evolved over time. Smuggling syndicates now employ a wide range of "mules," including foreign nationals, families, and even insiders. These syndicates are increasingly using international departure gates, where airport workers and other staff are involved in smuggling gold from transit passengers. Furthermore, there has been a rise in the number of carriers used by these syndicates to transport smaller amounts of gold, which helps reduce potential losses if the gold is intercepted by law enforcement. There is a sharp rise in seizures of drugs such as cocaine and methamphetamine and contraband cigarettes and

illicit foreign currency over the past year. According to report, the agency conducted 47 cocaine seizures worth Rs 975 crore in 2024—more than double the number recorded in the previous financial year. The quantity of cocaine smuggled into India, primarily through airports, increased by 9 per cent to 107 kg during the same period. Methamphetamine seizures of 136 kg, the first half of 2025 alone saw 123 kg confiscated in 11 cases. In 2024, DRI booked 109 cases involving 8,224 kg of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. This included 107 kg of cocaine (Rs 975 crore), 49 kg of heroin (Rs 365 crore), 236 kg of mephedrone (Rs 357 crore), and 136 kg of methamphetamine (Rs 275 crore).

IN BRIEF

GNDU SECURES SECOND RUNNERS-UP TROPHY IN INTER-UNIVERSITY YOUTH FESTIVAL 2024
AMRITSAR: Guru Nanak Dev University has brought laurels to the state by securing the Second Runners-Up Trophy in the Punjab State Inter-University Youth Festival 2024.

GNDU RESEARCH STUDENT BAGS PRESTIGIOUS PRIME MINISTER FELLOWSHIP
AMRITSAR: Ms. Aanchal Khanna from Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences of Guru Nanak Dev University bagged the prestigious Prime Minister Fellowship for doctoral research for the 2024 session.

PSPCL DIRECTOR ADMIN WELCOMES NOTIFICATION ON ELECTRICITY CONNECTIONS
PATIALA: Punjab State Power Corporation Limited (PSPCL) Director Administration Jasbir Singh Sur Singh has welcomed a notification issued regarding release of electricity connections to the applicants of unauthorised regularised colonies.

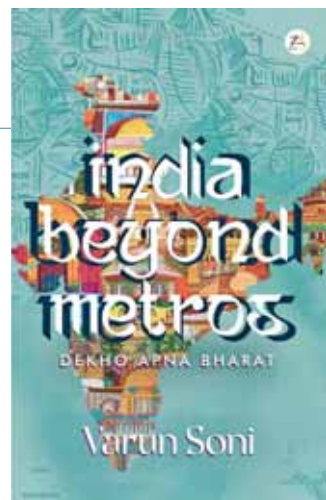


“India Beyond the Metros: Dekho Apna Bharat” by Varun Soni explores 50 lesser-known cities, highlighting their cultural, historical and natural attractions, says **SAKSHI PRIYA**

A JOURNEY BEYOND THE METROS

Varun Soni's *India Beyond the Metros: Dekho Apna Bharat* serves as an insightful travelogue that ventures into the heart of India's lesser-explored Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities. Unlike conventional guides focusing on metropolitan hubs or popular tourist destinations, this book offers a window into the charm and cultural richness of small-town India. Covering approximately 50 cities, each chapter provides a comprehensive travel guide detailing places to visit, accommodation options, transportation and unique shopping experiences. The book's unique appeal lies in its focus on destinations that often remain overlooked, such as Jabalpur, Gorakhpur, Kollam and Hubballi. Soni's narrative highlights the beauty and significance of these locations, offering readers a chance to explore India's hinterlands. His accounts are not just factual but are peppered with personal anecdotes and observations gathered during his extensive travels since 2010. For instance, Soni sheds

light on the breathtaking North Kerala, the architectural marvel of the Brihadeswara Temple in Thanjavur and the serenity of the Krishna-Godavari Sangam. Each chapter is thoughtfully crafted to guide readers through the essence of the city, from its historical significance to its natural beauty and cultural heritage. The depiction of Jabalpur, for example, showcases its strategic location on the Narmada River and its rich history as a hub of the Kalachuri and Gond dynasties. Similarly, the chapter on Kollam highlights its enchanting Ashtamudi backwaters and the iconic Jatayu Earth Centre, a masterpiece of art and mythology. Soni's ability to bring these cities to life is commendable. His description of local attractions, such as Hubballi's Chandramouleshwara Temple and Ranmal Lake or Jamnagar's Lakhota Palace and Darbargadh Palace, reflects his keen observation and deep appreciation for India's diverse culture. Furthermore, the book also includes practical travel tips, like transportation options and shopping suggestions, making it a useful resource for



ABOUT THE BOOK

Book: India beyond metros by Varun Soni
Publisher: Zorba Books Pvt Ltd
Price: ₹299 Pages: 172

travellers. The book serves as a timely reminder for urban dwellers, often caught up in international travel plans, to turn their gaze inward and rediscover the treasures within their own country. By exploring these smaller cities and towns, Soni argues, one can truly experience the pulse of India's vibrant traditions, natural beauty, and historical depth. However, *India Beyond the Metros* is not just about sightseeing. It subtly urges readers to appreciate the cultural and historical wealth that lies beyond the metropolitan gloss. It also recognises the role of local tourism, noting that nearby residents often form the backbone of these cities' visitor economies. *India Beyond the Metros* is an inspiring and informative read that fills a much-needed gap in Indian travel literature. It is not only an invitation to explore but also a celebration of the untapped potential of India's smaller cities. Ideal for corporate travellers, families or anyone looking to delve deeper into the country's heartland, this book is both a guide and a companion for those ready to embrace the unexplored.

A Celebration of culture, humanity, and timeless narratives

Shakila and Other Stories stands as a remarkable anthology that transcends its regional origins to deliver universally resonant narratives, writes **SHALEEN KUMAR SINGH**

Shakila and Other Stories is a compelling anthology that showcases Dr. Lakshmana Iyer Rama Swamy's nuanced cultural insights and humanistic vision. Renowned for his contributions to Telugu short fiction, Dr. Swamy adeptly captures the essence of middle-class Telugu life alongside the complexities of industrial labor. The collection, translated into English by T.S. Chandra Mouli, a distinguished scholar in translation studies, brings Swamy's narratives to a global audience while retaining their cultural authenticity. Swamy's stories are a masterful blend of tradition and modernity, juxtaposing rural values against urban dilemmas to illuminate the evolving Telugu society. As a Tamil Brahmin from Kerala, his life is as fascinating as his storytelling. Multilingual and multicultural, Swamy embodies the intersection of diverse identities, an influence evident in his writing. Fluent in Malayalam, Tamil, Telugu, Hindi, and English, he brings a rich linguistic texture to his work, infusing his characters with authenticity and vitality. In the foreword, Prof. Sushil Kumar Sharma praises Swamy's narrative finesse, which melds traditional storytelling zeal with modern sensibilities. Sharma highlights storytelling as an ancient art form that Swamy rejuvenates by weaving timeless themes with contemporary relevance. Swamy's identity as a polyglot and chemical engineer further enriches his writing. His exposure to varied cultural contexts—Malayali traditions in Assam, Telugu life in Mumbai, and Tamil values in Dubai—adds a unique depth to his narratives. With over 40 short stories, numerous translations, and insightful journalistic work, Swamy has cemented his place in Indian literature. His acclaimed short story *Shakila*, part of the anthology *Hundred Stories* by Hundred Writers, exemplifies his storytelling prowess.

own faith, challenges societal norms but also underscores interfaith cohesion. Swamy's narratives, such as *Shakila*, *The Sun and the Moon*, and *A Cry in the Wilderness*, often examine the intersection of industrialisation and globalisation with everyday lives. His characters grapple with conflicts between tradition and modernity, presenting a poignant critique of urbanisation's impact on relationships and the natural world. The juxtaposition of organic life against mechanised industrial settings underscores a recurring theme: "one who works among machines becomes a machine."



ABOUT THE BOOK

Book: *Shakila and Other Stories* by L.R. Swamy
Publisher: Aadi Publications
Price: ₹375

A VOICE FOR CHANGE: Swamy's writing is marked by realism, emotional depth, and a secular outlook. His stories tackle superstition, advocate reform, and celebrate resilience. His portrayal of women is particularly notable, as they emerge as agents of change, challenging traditional norms and embodying strength. His use of Telugu expressions, preserved in translation by Chandra Mouli, adds authenticity while inviting global readers to engage with the richness of Telugu culture.

THE TRANSLATOR'S CRAFT: T.S. Chandra Mouli's translation preserves the essence of Swamy's stories, balancing

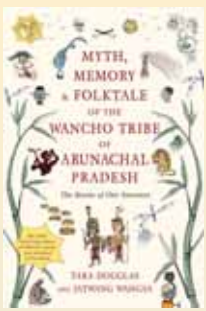
fidelity to the original text with accessibility for a global audience. By retaining Telugu phrases and providing contextual explanations, Mouli captures the cultural subtleties that make Swamy's work unique.

A UNIVERSAL APPEAL: *Shakila and Other Stories* transcends regional boundaries, offering readers a vivid portrayal of the human experience through the lens of Telugu culture. Swamy's characters, caught between tradition and modernity, resonate universally, reflecting the complexities of contemporary society. Chandra Mouli's meticulous translation amplifies this resonance, ensuring that the anthology's themes remain both timeless and relevant.

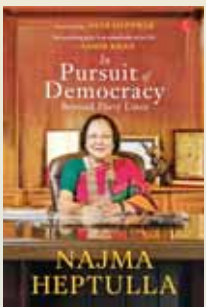
The collection reaffirms the significance of regional Indian literature in representing the country's socio-cultural landscape. It invites readers into a world deeply rooted in Indian ethos while exploring universal questions of resilience, ethics, and the search for meaning.

A TALE OF LOVE, CLASS AND CULTURAL IDENTITY: The titular story *Shakila* delves into complex themes of love, class and cultural identity through the evolving relationship between a childless mistress and her maid, *Shakila*. Adopted and raised abroad, *Shakila* becomes a bridge between her employer's values and her estranged birth family. Her marriage to Kabir, a man from her

New Releases



Book: *Myth, Memory & Folktales of the Wancho Tribe of Arunachal Pradesh: The Stories of our Ancestors*
Author: Tara Douglas and Jatwang Wangsa
Publisher: Niyogi Books
Price: ₹595 Pages: 188



Book: *In Pursuit of Democracy: Beyond Party Lines*
Author: Najma Heptulla
Publisher: Rupa Publications
Price: ₹695 Pages: 695



Book: *Nagrota Under Siege*
Author: Bhavna Arora
Publisher: Penguin
Price: ₹299 Pages: 256

Revamping India's Housing

Government housing schemes often fail due to corruption and poor execution, highlighting the stark contrast with private sector successes, says **KUMAR CHELLAPPAN**



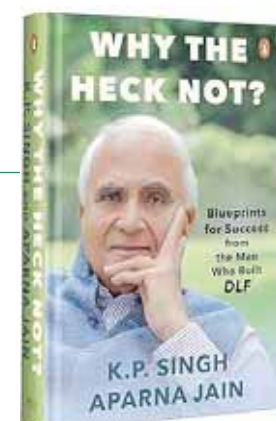
The governments at the Centre and the States are sincere in their efforts to provide shelter to those without roofs over their heads. It must be said that food, clothing, and shelter remain the essential elements that constitute the life of any ordinary person. The administrations have conceived and executed many housing projects such as the Prime Minister's Awaas Yojana and the Indira Gandhi Housing Scheme. In Tamil Nadu, former Chief Minister J Jayalithaa launched a mission to construct houses for the poorest of the poor at heavily subsidised rates.

During the tenure of C Achutha Menon as Chief Minister (1969 to 1977), the Kerala Government launched Laksham Veedu (1,00,000 Houses), a housing scheme for the poorer sections of society. Small houses were built under this scheme across the State for the benefit of people below the poverty line. Although the intention was noble, these houses ended up as dens of all vices. Residents of Laksham Veedu colonies were treated as anti-social elements, as many excelled in dubious professions such as theft, dacoity, bootlegging, pimping, and prostitution. The scheme died a natural death, like many other government-sponsored initiatives. Later, the LDF Government led by Pinarayi Vijayan launched Life Mission in 2016 with the aim of providing residential accommodation to those without homes. However, this multi-crore project is reportedly embroiled in corruption, with central agencies investigating the issue.

In Tamil Nadu, the Slum Clearance Board has constructed four-storey apartments for the poor along the scenic Marina Beach. However, the quality of construction and the ambience are worse than the slums themselves. Why do government schemes fail so frequently? The answer is not difficult to ascertain. Massive corruption involving public works departments, bureaucrats, contractors, and politicians turns these schemes into milch cows. "To hell with the beneficiaries... we can make as much money as possible from these schemes," seems to be the driving mantra of these anti-nationals.

The Central Public Works Department, responsible for constructing central government buildings, and the State PWDs, entrusted with building roads, offices, and residential accommodations, are classic examples of corruption in high places. One need only look at the buildings, be they office complexes, hospitals or housing projects for the poor. What stands out is the careless manner in which they have been designed and built. Hygiene and sanitation in these buildings are often appalling. Walls double as spittoons, toilets are worse than hell, and cleanliness seems alien to such structures. Contrast this with the apartments and villas built by private developers, and the difference is stark. Major players such as Tata Housing, L&T, DLF, Ashok Leyland, the Godrej Group, Hiranandani, Chettinadu Group, Ceebros, Puravankara, and Sobha City (to name a few) create visual treats. Their projects cost a fortune and cater to the affluent, but they stand as a testament to

quality construction and planning. The townships they build, with their panoramic views, starkly contrast the stinking low-income group apartment complexes constructed by CPWD and PWDs. These public works departments have effectively become Public Waste Departments, proving themselves incapable of fulfilling their intended purpose. It is indeed possible to build beautiful and safe houses for the poor. What is needed is a change in the attitude and approach of bureaucrats. The success of private developers in building well-planned townships and apartments stems from thoughtful planning and treating construction as an art. The life and achievements of Kushal Pal Singh (KP Singh), who single-handedly built the DLF empire, illustrate this point. The township at Gurugram (which I have read about and seen on television) is a breathtaking achievement. Thanks to companies like DLF, India has become a global player in



ABOUT THE BOOK

Book: *Why The Heck Not?* by K.P. Singh and Aparna Jain
Publisher: Penguin Viking
Price: ₹799

constructing townships, major software parks, and apartment complexes. Is it not possible for doyens like K P Singh to build affordable housing for the poor?

Such a vision could materialise by loosening the stranglehold of the government (both Centre and State) on these sectors. For every high-end township that private developers construct, they could be tasked with building housing complexes for low-income groups, complete with well-laid-out landscapes. Given proper incentives and recognition, these companies would likely embrace such missions. It would also be crucial to foster respect for business leaders like Singh, the Godrejs, the Tatas, and others. India cannot afford to view its entrepreneurs, who employ millions, with suspicion. Business and entrepreneurship are forms of art that can drive progress where the government cannot.

The memoir *Why The Heck Not*, by K P Singh with Aparna Jain, is an eye-opener. It highlights the often-overlooked role of Indian entrepreneurs in nation-building. Figures like JRD Tata and Dhirubhai Ambani were visionaries who lacked the recognition they deserved within India, even as foreign media sought their insights. Singh's story, from studying aircraft maintenance engineering in Coventry to heading the DLF Group, is nothing short of inspiring. His advice, peppered throughout the book, offers valuable lessons for parents, youth, and policymakers alike.

After reading the memoir, one cannot help but wish Singh another 95 years of health, strength, and happiness. His contributions to India's infrastructure and business landscape make him a national treasure. The insights he shares about India's fragile infrastructure and the steps needed to achieve the five trillion-dollar economy are profound. His vision of a better, more inclusive India should inspire policymakers to let a thousand flowers bloom.

One blemish on Singh's otherwise remarkable career is his association with a less-than-reputable individual, often referred to as Damaad Shree. With his wisdom and experience, Singh could have avoided such associations and still achieved success.

KL Rahul will open innings, I will bat in middle: Rohit

PTI ■ ADELAIDE

KL Rahul's composure and brilliant technique while opening the innings in Perth convinced skipper Rohit Sharma to move himself down the order and "bat somewhere in the middle" in the day/night Test against Australia starting here on Friday. The Indian captain said on Thursday he didn't wish to tinker with a combination that brought the team success in the series opener of the five-match rubber which the visitors lead 1-0 following their 295-run win at Optus Oval. Rahul looked solid with scores of 26 and 77 and added 201 runs with fellow opener and centurion Yashvi Jaiswal in the second innings of the first Test. "He (Rahul) will open the innings. I will play

somewhere in the middle," Rohit told reporters on the eve of the second Test. The Indian skipper was both categorical and objective in his reply when asked about his hotly-debated batting slot after returning from a brief paternity break. A team man to the core, the 37-year-old Rohit explained part by part the need for continuity. "How I came to that decision of, you know, batting down the order is clearly, you know, we want results. We want success." Rohit was categorical about his decision to take a step back after opening the innings for five years. He was also objective about the rationale. "Those two guys (Jaiswal and Rahul) at the top, just looking at this one Test match, they batted brilliantly. I was at home with my newborn (son



Ahaan) in my arms and I was watching how KL batted." Rohit didn't want to disturb Rahul but also said that the decision is based on current situation. "It was brilliant to watch, to be honest. And I felt that there is no need to change that now. I don't know, maybe in the future, things will be different." Rahul has so far scored eight Test hundreds, and five of those tons have come in Australia, South Africa and England, and the skipper feels the Karnataka player is the most deserving to face the new ball. "Based on what has happened and what KL has shown outside of India, you know, he probably deserves that place at this point in time. And, you know, it is something that has given us success in the first Test, to have that big partnership

with Jaiswal on the other side." With the team getting 500-odd runs in the second innings besides a double-century opening stand, Rohit doesn't want unnecessary tweaks which can become counter-productive. "You know, when you come here in a place like Perth and you get 500 runs, it's a massive tick to the box. So, I don't see we need to change that. "But what I saw from the outside looked brilliant. So, and there was no need to change anything. So, it was actually pretty simple for me." While Rohit waxed eloquence on the 32-year-old Rahul, he didn't want to divulge the details of the conversation he had with the player. "This is between me and him. It's a personal matter. I can't share it," he said.



Indian women's team loses to Australia by five wickets in first ODI

PTI ■ BRISBANE

India put up a dismal show with the bat as Australia stamped their superiority over the visitors with a five-wicket win in the first Women's ODI here on Thursday. Opting to bat, India collapsed to 100 all out in 34.2 overs with Australia pacer Megan Schutt returning an impressive five-wicket haul. Australia did experience a minor stutter in the run chase, when Renuka Thakur struck twice in the same over, before coasting to victory in 16.2 overs. Debutant opener Georgia Vull (46 not out off 42 balls) produced a measured knock to ensure a comfortable win. Her effort included a six off Renuka in the cow corner region. Her opening partner Phoebe Litchfield (35 off 29 balls) was the aggressor in their 48-run stand, smashing six fours in a row, four of those coming off Renuka and two off debutant pacer Titas Sadhu. The second ODI will be played at the Allan Border Field here on December 8. Jemimah Rodrigues, who batted at number five, top-scored for India with a 23 off 42 balls.

Opting to bat, India failed to get off the blocks, losing the openers in the first seven overs. Priya Punia (3 off 17), playing in place of the dropped Shafali Verma, looked totally out of sorts in her comeback game. Smriti Mandha (8 off 9) was caught behind, chasing a wide outswinger from Schutt. Punia, in her attempt to break the shackles, was caught at backward point off Schutt. Skipper Harmanpreet Kaur (23 off 42) was trapped in front by pacer Annabel Sutherland. Rodrigues looked comfortable in the middle until she was bowled by Kim Grath as she tried to run a delivery down to the third man. From 62 for three, India were all out for 100 in 34.2 overs. Their last three batters got out with the score reading 100 on the board. Schutt completed her maiden five wicket haul by casting Priya Mishra. It was a batting performance to forget for India. **Brief Scores:** Indian Women: 100 all out in 34.2 overs (Jemimah Rodrigues 23; Megan Schutt 5/19). Australia 102/5 in 16.2 overs (Georgia Vull 46 not out; Renuka Thakur 3/45).

Don't think Adelaide debacle of 2020 will haunt India: Shastri

PTI ■ ADELAIDE

The Adelaide debacle of 2020 is history now but it should be at the back of players' minds when they take field in the day/night Test against Australia, reckons Ravi Shastri, who was India's coach in that series. India, under Virat Kohli, were shot out for their lowest-ever Test total of 36 in the second innings of the Adelaide Test that Australia won by eight

wickets. Bruised and battered, and with hardly anyone giving them a revival chance, India staged a remarkable comeback to win the four-Test series 2-1 to clinch the Border-Gavaskar Trophy. "I don't think it (Adelaide drubbing) will play any role but it should be at the back of their mind because you know things happen very quickly with a pink ball," Shastri, who was the coach of the India team during the series, told

The ICC Review. A 1-0 lead in pocket, India will clash with the hosts in the second Test, starting Friday. "You realise that in a session of play if things don't go your way and the bowling is good, things can happen rapidly." Shastri added that India's defeat in the match was a freak thing and that he had not seen so many nicks flying to the fielders in his four decades of cricket. "What we did after that 36 was - like I said at that time - that

Id never seen, and I said it in the dressing room, I'd never seen so much of playing and nicking as opposed to playing and missing. "And I'd watched cricket for about 40 years. And to be honest, that was a session where hardly any player played and missed. If he did anything, he got a nick. So it was not beating the bat. You know, the bowlers (being) unlucky... It was just the batsmen being unlucky on that day." The legendary all-rounder

added that the 1-0 lead in the ongoing series should act as a catalyst for India to further tighten their grip on the hosts, who he felt were under pressure. "Now the fact that they are one-up, should put them in a really great frame of mind going ahead in this Test match because I think it's a massive opportunity for India to tighten the screws further. The pressure will be on Australia." "In my mind, it was very clear you can't do worse than that

(Adelaide). You'll have a day when the luck is in your favour and you can bounce back. And that's exactly what happened. "Sometimes you don't over-think when something as drastic as that happens. You don't want a knee-jerk reaction taking place where you just lose the plot. Sometimes calmness in situations like that produce the best results." India went on to level the series in Melbourne and followed it up with a fighting draw in Sydney.

'Border-Gavaskar Trophy win one last thing to tick off'

PTI ■ ADELAIDE

He has won the ODI World Cup, the Ashes and also the Test Championship mace but the Border-Gavaskar Trophy against India remains the "one last" unchecked item in the bucket list of Australia skipper Pat Cummins, who is confident of pulling it off this time despite the opening Test debacle. Cummins, who made his Test debut in 2011, played a Test against India for the first time in 2017. Since 2014-15, Australia have not won an India series either at home or away. The pacer is determined to change this stat despite the 295-run drubbing in the Perth game last month. "For half of the (Australian) change room, we haven't won the Border Gavaskar Trophy. It is one last thing to tick off for a lot of us. Almost every challenge that we faced in last few years, we have stepped up and done well," Cummins spoke with a lot of determination on the eve of the second Test against India in Adelaide. "I think we need to do that for another home summer and series. From two-three season thing, it has suddenly been a half a generation thing," he added. Mitchell Starc, Josh Hazlewood (not playing this Test), Mitchell Marsh, and Nathan Lyon are some of the players, who were part of the 2-0 win back in 2014-15. From that point onwards, India have won all four series - two at home (2017 and 2023) and two overseas (2018-19, 2020-21). So, is there pressure on him to win it back this time? "I don't think it's pressure. You are playing at home and you want to do well. We know they (India) are a really strong side and lot of us were part of those recent three series (defeats). "Yeah, it's a big series and kind of not looking too far in the past. And every summer, when we play against them we want to do well," Cummins said. The 31-year-old, who has 272 wickets from 63 Tests, didn't want to compare the Ashes with the Border-Gavaskar Trophy (BGT) but



termed the battle with Indian teams as the most closely contested over the years. "I think it has been the most closely fought. I think the Ashes has got a rich history and (it is) watched as well but I think Border-Gavaskar Trophy has been a very tight series that I have kind of seen in recent times. "Both teams play quite similar at times. For the first time (since 1991-92), it is a five-Test series and that adds a bit extra. It really gets attritional with its history as well so it is a big one," the skipper said. All praise for Nitish Reddy With Rishabh Pant coming in at number five and one among Shubman Gill or Rohit Sharma at number six followed by Washington Sundar and Nitish Reddy, India's top-order does have a scary look. But Cummins backed his bowlers. "Pretty scary five, six and seven I think. If they come in and bowlers have already had plenty of overs into them, then they are a scary proposition. "Just like we have seen, when we have been two, three or four down, then (Mitchell) Marshy or (Travis) Heady have put out a 100. That changes dynamics pretty quickly," Cummins said. Having captained Reddy in the IPL for Sunrisers Hyderabad, Cummins is pretty impressed with the Andhra all-rounder's seam-up bowling. "He didn't bowl as much as he potentially could have but really impressed with what we saw and looks like he can swing the ball a little bit. Great young kid"

Jay Shah vows to take cricket to 'unprecedented heights'

PTI ■ DUBAI

Newly-appointed ICC chairman Jay Shah on Thursday vowed to take cricket to "unprecedented heights" following his first visit to the headquarters of the game's global governing body as its head. Elected unopposed in August, the 36-year-old Shah became the youngest and fifth Indian to take over as the ICC chair. His term began on December 1. Shah visited the ICC Headquarters in Dubai for the first time in his role as chairman as he described it as "productive and inspiring." "While I am encouraged by what I have seen, I recognise



that this is just the beginning," Shah stated in an ICC release. "The hard work to elevate cricket to unprecedented heights starts now, and I am confident that together, we will deliver on this vision." Speaking after meeting with ICC Board Directors and staff, Shah emphasised the importance of collaboration in shaping the future of cricket. "This visit provided an invaluable opportunity to connect with my colleagues on the ICC Board where we discussed the initial roadmap and strategies to shape the future of this incredible sport. "I was equally delighted to meet with the dedicated ICC team working tirelessly

behind the scenes to propel cricket forward." ICC deputy chairman Imran Khwaja commended Shah for his ambitious vision for the sport. "On behalf of the Board I would like to welcome Jay Shah to the role and share our enthusiasm for his tenure," Khwaja said. "Shah's ambition and experience will be instrumental in guiding the ICC and the sport into the future. It has been a very productive visit for everyone, and we look forward to working alongside him, the Members and ICC team in achieving success." Shah succeeded Greg Barclay, who had held the post of ICC chairman since 2020.

E-AUCTION SALE NOTICE
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Zonal Office
128/24 Om Laxmi Tower, H-Block, Kidwai Nagar, Kanpur-208011, Tel: 0512-2985004

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 rule proviso to 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, the constructive possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of Bank of India, Secured Creditor will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is" and "Whatever there is" on below mentioned date for recovery of mentioned amount in demand notice issued due to the Bank of India, secured creditor from below mentioned borrowers / guarantors. The details of the property as given below, reserve price and EMD amount are marked against all the properties.

Sl. No.	Name of Borrower / Guarantors, Demand Notice date, Amount & Possession Date/Type of Possession	Description of Mortgage Properties & Owner of Property	Reserve Price (in Lakh) Earnest Money Deposit (in Lakh)
TP Nagar (Kanpur) Branch: Plot no-127/W-2/5 Block-W Plot 5 Scheme-11 Jubi Kanan Kanpur Distt- Kanpur Nagar-208027			
1.	Borrower: 1. M/s MRS Industries 2. Mr. Rajesh Kumar Saxena s/o Late Narayan Prakash Saxena 3. Mr. Sunil Kumar Singh S/o Late Ram Pratap Singh Demand Notice Date: 01.04.2022 Amt.: Rs. 2,63,24,115.00 + Interest w.e.f. 01.04.2022 + other charges Possession Notice: 02.06.2022/Symbolic	1. EOM over lease hold land of UPSIDC and shed/building thereon situated at Plot No G-53 Industrial Area Kanpur Dehat, admeasuring 4429 square meter in the name of firm M/s MRS Industries through its partners vide lease deed dated 17.01.2019 Unexpired period is 66 years Area-4429.00 Sqmtr., Boundaries- East: Plot No. K-33, West- 18.00 Mtr. Wide Road no. 9, North-Plot no G-52, South-18.00 Mtr. Wide Road no. 10	Rs. 260.45 Rs. 26.05
		2. Hypothecation of Plant & Machinery and other fixed asset installed/laying at the above premises. Note- Bid can not placed alone on property. It can be placed with plant & Machinery along. Further, Bid on Plant and Machinery can be placed alone.	Rs. 38.05 Rs. 3.81
Branch: Maharajpur Branch, Kuku Market Vill. & PO-Maharajpur Kanpur-209402			
2.	Borrower: Mrs. Rashmi Shukla W/o Ashutosh Shukla Co-Borrower: Mr. Ashutosh Shukla S/o Suraj Prasad Shukla Guarantor: Mr. Manish Gupta S/o Durga Prasad Gupta Demand Notice Date: 06.11.2023 Amt.: Rs. 39,84,894.98 + Interest w.e.f. 06.11.2023 + other charges Possession Notice: 08.02.2024/Symbolic	EQM of all property situated at Premises No. 5/C/364 LIG Phase 5, Swarn Jayanti Vihar and Kanpur Nagar having admeasuring area 60.00 sq. Mtr. Owner: Mrs Rashmi Shukla Area: 60.00 Sq mtr Boundaries of Premises: East: Plot No.C-363, West: Plot No. C-365, North: 7.50 Mtr Wide Road, South: Plot No. C-303	Rs. 30.74 Rs. 3.08
Branch: Ratan Lal Nagar, Plot No.1352 and 1352 A, Kanpur Nagar- 208022			
3.	Borrower: Mr. Arvind Kumar S/o Jagat Narayan Demand Notice Date: 10.11.2021 Amt.: Rs. 4,84,072.49 + Interest w.e.f. 10.11.2021 + other charges Possession Notice: 13.10.2023/Symbolic	All Land and building situated at House No.119 EWS Block G Scheme No.4 KUDP Gujaini Kanpur-208022 Owner: Mr. Arvind Kumar S/o Jagat Narayan Built up Area: 36.75 Sq mtr Boundaries of Premises: East: House Constructed Over Plot No.120, West: House Constructed Over Plot No.118, North: House Constructed Over Plot No.144, South: 4.50 Mtr Wide Road	Rs. 20.00 Rs. 2.00

Last date for submission of EMD for all the above properties is 26.12.2024 by 04.00 PM
E-Auction of above mentioned properties will be held on Date 26.12.2024 Time at Morning 11 AM to 5.00 PM (with unlimited extension of 5 min. interval)

Terms and Conditions of Sale :- 1. This e-Auction is being held on "AS IS WHERE IS", "AS IS WHAT IS" and "WHATEVER IT IS" basis. 2. The property being auctioned by the Authorized Officer is free of charge till the maximum information and belief, yet the intending tenderer should independently enquire all the encumbrances, title claim statutory dues (Customs and Excise Tax / Income Tax) before participating in the e-auction and or any other government agency etc. All assets are being sold with all current and future encumbrances known or unknown. The Authorized Officer will not be liable for any claim rights and liabilities of any third / third party. 3. It is the responsibility of the tenderers to inspect the property and satisfy itself completely before participating in the e-auction. You can contact the concerned branch of Bank of India for property inspection. 4. Interested tenderers will be able to get their User ID and Password free of cost by registering on the web portal <https://www.BAANKNET.com> and EMD can be deposited through this portal. 5. After registration in the web portal, the interested bidders should upload the following documents in the web portal before submitting the tender. 1. Copy of PAN Card 2. ID Proof (KYC) like Self Attested Aadhar Card / Voter ID - Card / Driving License / Passport etc. 6. Only tenderers having valid User ID, Password will be able to participate in the e-auction process. 7. Only those interested bidders who have made EMD payment by 26.12.2024 within the stipulated time will be able to participate in the e-auction process. 8. If the reserve price of the property is up to Rs. 50 lakh the incremental value bid will be in multiple of 25000 and if reserve price is above 50 lakh it will be Rs. 50000. 9. The highest bidder shall be declared the successful bidder with the permission of the authorized officer. The information of which will be given - to him by electric mode on his email address. 10. The Authorized Officer will not be bound to accept the highest bid and the Authorized Officer will have the right to accept/reject any bid. 11. EMD amount of successful bidder will remain in BAANKNET wallet and all unsuccessful bidder's amount can be withdrawn from BAANKNET. No interest will be payable by BAANKNET on the EMD amount. 12. The successful bidder will have to deposit 25% (including EMD amount) of the selling price (i.e. maximum bid amount) immediately. He has to deposit the remaining balance amount within 15 days. In case successful bidder failed to deposit bid amount in prescribe time the amount deposited will be forfeited without any prior notice. 13. Bidders are advised to go through the detailed terms and condition at <https://www.bankofindia.co.in>, <https://www.BAANKNET.com> before submitting the tender. 14. TDS tax will be payable by the successful bidder on the maximum sale price under Income Tax Act 1941 (A), if the selling price exceeds Rs. 50 lakhs or more and additional GST will be payable (wherever applicable) on the sale price as per Government rules. 15. The intending tenderer should have proper resources related to the bid, no objection will be accepted in this regard. 16. Bids above reserve price will be accepted.

15 days sale notice to borrowers/guarantors/mortgagors

The above mentioned borrower / depositor / mortgagor is informed to pay the amount mentioned in section 13(2) before the date of auction. In case of failure to deposit the amount, the property will be auctioned and the balance amount along with interest and cost will be recovered from you or the borrower can also participate in the auction organized by the bank on the above date to recover the amount due in his account.

Date: 06.12.2024 Place : Kanpur Authorised Officer: Bank of India

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