



# the pioneer

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**MONEY 10**  
HISTORIC MILESTONE: DELHI AIRPORT FIRST IN INDIA TO CONNECT 150 DESTINATIONS



Photo: PTI

## One Nation, One Election Bills in Parliament today

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

The Narendra Modi-led Government is likely to introduce two Bills in the Lok Sabha paving way for simultaneous elections 'One Nation, One Election', on Tuesday. The Constitution (One Hundred and Twenty-Ninth Amendment) Bill, 2024, the legislation seeks to synchronise elections for the Lok Sabha, State Assemblies, and possibly local bodies. While the Union Territories Laws (Amendment) Bill 2024, is to amend the Government of Union Territories Act, 1963, the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi Act, 1991 and the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019. Union Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal will introduce the Bills in the Parliament. The BJP has issued a three-line whip to all its Lok Sabha MPs to be present in the

house on December 17, 2024. The Union Cabinet has already approved two Bills to facilitate simultaneous elections to the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies, though the decision on local body polls has been deferred for now. According to the statement of objects and reasons of the Constitution ((One Hundred and Twenty-Ninth Amendment) Bill, 2024), the Bill proposes to insert a new article 82A (Simultaneous elections to the House of the People and all Legislative Assemblies) and to amend article 83 (Duration of Houses of Parliament), article 172 (Duration of State Legislatures) and article 327 (Power of Parliament to make provision with respect to elections to Legislatures). According to Section 2 sub clause 5 of the Constitution (129th) Amendment Bill, "If the Election Commission is of the opinion that the

elections to any Legislative Assembly cannot be conducted along with the general election to the House of the People, it may make a recommendation to the President, to declare by an order, that the election to that Legislative Assembly may be conducted at a later date." The General Elections to the House of the People and all State Legislative Assemblies were held simultaneously in the years 1951-52, 1957, 1962 and 1967. However, due to premature dissolution of some Legislative Assemblies in 1968 and 1969, the cycle of holding Polls simultaneously with the House of the People got disrupted. The Law Commission of India in its 170th report, on "Reform of the Electoral Laws", inter alia, suggested that holding separate elections for State Legislative Assemblies should be an exception rather than the rule.

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## Gear up Delhi, GRAP-III is back

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Government has ordered that all primary schools shift to hybrid mode for classes. There is also a ban on BS III petrol and BS IV diesel light motor vehicles as well as all demolition work and mining activities in the entire National Capital Region (NCR) among the restrictions that have kicked in again in Delhi owing to the worsening air pollution, as the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) on Monday invoked restrictive measures under Stage three of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) amid a sharp dip in air quality due to unfavourable meteorological conditions, often persists from November to January. The Air Quality Index (AQI) of Delhi stood at 379 on Monday. However, this is only the second 'very poor' air day in the Capital this month, in what has been a fairly clean December overall. The AQI had already entered the "very poor" category on Sunday, climbing to 307 from 294 earlier in the day, which was at the upper limit of the "poor" range. Under the GRAP-Stage III guidelines, several key restrictions will come into effect. Petrol vehicles that do not meet the BS-III emission norms and diesel vehicles failing to comply with BS-IV standards are prohibited from entering Delhi and parts of the National Capital Region (NCR), including Gurugram, Ghaziabad, Faridabad, and Gautam Budh Nagar. These measures aim to reduce vehicular emissions, which are a major source of pollution during the winter months. Delhi Traffic Police has also intensified checks on vehicles following the implementation of restrictive measures under GRAP-Stage III. There are over 10 entry points from Haryana and Uttar Pradesh to Delhi. The BS-III petrol and BS-IV diesel vehicles will not be allowed to enter into the city. "Considering the highly unfavourable meteorological conditions including calm winds and very low mixing height leading the AQI of Delhi into the higher end of the very poor category, the panel's sub-committee on Graded Response



Photo: Ranjan Dimri/The Pioneer

## Coldwave conditions sweep across NCR

SAUMYA SHUKLA ■ NEW DELHI

Coldwave conditions swept several parts of the national Capital for a second consecutive day on Monday as the minimum temperature dropped to 4.5 degrees Celsius, four degrees below normal. This is the joint lowest minimum temperature so far this season after the city recorded 4.5 degree Celsius on December 12 as well. In the coming days, Delhi may witness a further increase in the coldwave with shallow fog in various parts due to calm winds and high humidity. In its weather bulletin, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) has also issued a cold wave warning for certain states of northern India, including Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, Haryana, and western Uttar Pradesh, among other states that would persist till Saturday in Delhi and several other states. The temperature in certain areas of Delhi went even below 4.5 degrees Celsius. The minimum temperature in Pusa was recorded at 3.5 degrees Celsius, while in Ayanagar, the minimum temperature was recorded at 4 degrees Celsius.

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## Yes. I am upset: Chhagan Bhujbal

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Making no bones about his displeasure over his exclusion from the Maharashtra Cabinet, a miffed The Nationalist Congress Party (NCP-AP) leader and a popular Other Backward Classes (OBC) face in the State, Chhagan Bhujbal said on Monday that he would decide on his next move after talking to his constituents and members of a Phule organisation of which he is the president.

"Yes. I am upset... I may or may not have been given a ministerial post but Chhagan Bhujbal is not finished," Bhujbal said, when media persons button-holed him for comment on his exclusion from the State Cabinet.

Talking to media persons on the first day of the Winter Session of the State Legislature in Nagpur, Bhujbal said, "I will take a call on my future course of action after consulting the people in the constituency and also the members of the Samata Parishad". Seventy-seven-year-old Bhujbal, who is an influential leader from OBC's Mali community, is the founder-president of the Akhil Bharatiya Mahatma Phule Samata Parishad.

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## Wanted to keep fighting but Russians evacuated him, says Assad

AP ■ DAMASCUS

Ousted Syrian leader Bashar Assad says he had no plans to leave the country after the fall of Damascus a week ago but the Russian military evacuated him after their base in western Syria came under attack.

The comments are the first by Assad since he was overthrown by insurgent groups. Assad said in a statement on his Facebook page that he left Damascus on the morning of December 8, hours after insurgents stormed the capital. He said he left in coordination with Russian allies to the Russian base in the coastal province of Latakia, where he planned to keep fighting. Assad said that after the Russian base came under attack by drones, the Russians decided to move him on the night of Dec 8 to Russia. "I did not leave the country as part of a plan as it was reported earlier," Assad said. "At no point during these events did I consider stepping down or seeking refuge nor was such proposal made by any individual or party," Assad said in the English text of his statement. "The only course of action was to continue fighting against the terrorist onslaught."

## V FOR VICTORY



Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh pays homage at the National War Memorial on the occasion of Vijay Diwas, marking India's victory in the 1971 Bangladesh liberation war. Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) Gen Anil Chauhan, Chief of Army Staff Gen. Manoj Pande, Navy Chief Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi and IAF Chief Air Chief Marshal AP Singh are also seen

## Priyanka's Palestine bag, sets cat among pigeons

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In a show of support for the people of Palestine, Congress Member of Parliament (MP) Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, on Monday, carried a bag to Parliament that had "Palestine" emblazoned on it. The Congress general secretary has been raising her voice against Israel's actions in Gaza and expressing solidarity with Palestinians. Priyanka was seen carrying a



Photo: PTI

handbag emblazoned with the word "Palestine" and Palestinian emblems, including a watermelon, seen as a symbol of Palestinian solidarity. "It is the moral responsibility of every right-thinking individual, including all those Israeli citizens who do not believe in hatred and violence, and every government in the world to condemn the Israeli government's genocidal actions and force them to stop," she had said in a post on X.

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## Why should the letter not be made public? BJP asks Sonia

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Monday asked former Congress president Sonia Gandhi to return the correspondences of first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru with a host of personalities, to the Prime Ministers' Museum and Library, saying the historical documents belonged to the country and were not anyone's personal property. Lok Sabha Member of Parliament (MP) and BJP spokesperson Sambit Patra cited reports of the PMML's deliberations on the issue to note that Nehru's correspondences with Edwina Mountbatten, wife of the last British Viceroy to India, and leaders Jayaprakash Narayan and Jagjivan Ram lay with the erstwhile Nehru Museum and Library Society, which returned them to Sonia Gandhi in 2008. Patra also raised the issue earlier in the day in the Lok Sabha during Question Hour when Union Culture Minister Gejendra Singh Shekhawat was replying to questions related to his ministry.

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## Meet Manoj Gahlyan, the matrimonial conman

SAUMYA SHUKLA ■ NEW DELHI

Thirty-five-year old Manoj Gahlyan, seemed like a perfect match listed on matrimonial apps including Shaadi.com and Jeevansathi.com. He presented himself as a charming, well-paid Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) employee. But the real man behind the online listing was a former security guard, who had turned matchmaking into a nightmare for over 50 women, whom he had duped for over seven years. According to police sources, the man posed as a General Manager of DMRC and claimed to earn Rs 15 to 20 lakhs. Gahlyan, a native of Jorashi Khalsa village in Haryana's Panipat district, has been using this claim to dupe women since 2017. However, he was exposed when a 35-year-old woman, who works in a nationalised bank, on November 23, stated in her police complaint that she had created a marriage profile on Jeevansathi, through which she had met Gahlyan online. "After they connected through the app, he lured her to talking and meeting to get to know her better for marriage, and then obtained her bank account number and credit card details, and made unauthorised transactions without her knowledge," Deputy Commissioner of



Representative photo

Police (West) Vichitra Veer said. The DCP added that after receiving the information through the complaint, the police team swung into action and found, through sources and information openly available on the internet, that the person named Manoj Gahlyan had been duping innocent and gullible women of their money. The police suspect that about hundreds of women have been lured by him in a similar manner and have also contacted three to four victims. "However, due to shame or guilt, they are not coming and giving us the information and are unlikely to report. Investigation regarding the number of victims and the probable amount that he might have defrauded, is underway," the DCP said, adding that they will now trace his bank accounts to ascertain the exact amount of money he has

cheated from the women. He was arrested after a raid in Northeast Delhi's Usmanpur area and five debit cards and a mobile phone bought using the complainant's card were recovered from him. However, this is not the first case of the manner reported this year in the National Capital. The Delhi Crime Branch arrested a 38-year-old man, identified as Mukeem Ayyub Khan, in September for allegedly duping over 50 women across several States. He would pose as a government official on various matrimonial sites to deceive high-profile professional women. Khan told police that he allegedly created multiple fake identities on popular matrimonial sites targeting unmarried, widowed, or divorced Muslim women. He would tell them that he is a Government servant, struggling to raise his daughter after the death of his wife.

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# Land grabbers must be dealt with iron hand: SC

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday said, as it promised to "go deep to find the truth" on how a century-old building housing a public library at Karol Bagh was demolished. A Bench of Justices Surya Kant and Ujjal Bhuyan was irked after being informed it was not the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) that demolished the building in 2018, but an official who had acted on an oral order. The SC was further displeased when it found no one from the Delhi Library Board was present to contest the case and no counsel was authorised to appear in the matter.

"Land grabbers must be dealt with iron hand," the Bench told senior advocate S Muralidhar, appearing for private firm Dimple Enterprise, which is the owner of the property and reportedly wanted to construct a commercial complex in place where once the building stood. Justice Surya Kant told Muralidhar, "We will go deep to find the truth. We will pass orders even without the petitioner (Delhi Library Board) contesting the case." The Bench added, "You (private firm M/S Dimple Enterprise) must have colluded with the MCD and library officials. You must have bribed them." The first Delhi Public Library was started by then Prime

Minister Jawaharlal Nehru near the old Delhi railway station in 1951. The Delhi Public Library, an autonomous body, is funded by the Ministry of Culture and has around 45 branches and mobile libraries in the National Capital. The Bench issued a show cause to the officials of Delhi Library Board why they were not appearing in the matter. It asked the MCD to file a better affidavit giving complete details of the property; who resided there and the current owner after terminating the affidavit filed by the civic body as "misleading". The Bench said it would enlarge the scope of its investigation to include the possibility of collusion of



library board officials with the private firm. Muralidhar said the dilapidated building, housing the public library, was a 100-year-old structure demolished by the MCD. He said there

was no material on record to suggest collusion of any kind between the officials of library or MCD officials with the firm and there was no mention of any bribe being paid.

Justice Surya Kant read out the affidavit filed by the MCD and said the civic body had accepted it had no record of any demolition of the building whereas an official executive engineer acted on oral orders. "Mr Muralidhar, you know very well how these things work. It is surprising that you are defending the land mafias. Do you think that the MCD official acted on his own? He must have acted on the oral direction of the MCD commissioner. Within days of the order of the high court, the building was demolished without giving them space to approach the high courts for relief," Justice Surya Kant said. The judge went on to add, "Thankfully, on the first

hearing of the matter, the Bench comprising Justice (ret'd) M B Lokur ordered for status quo on the property." Denying any collusion, Muralidhar said the firm had nothing to do with the demolition exercise. The Bench posted the matter on January 8, 2025. On November 25, the SC came down heavily on the MCD for demolishing the building that housed a public library, without giving a chance to the affected party to seek relief, and said "there is no divine power which can wake you up". It had questioned how the civic body demolished the building that housed the library since 1954, without waiting for the parties to approach the SC.

The SC had noted that the Delhi High Court passed an order on September 10, 2018, in the matter and without even giving a breathing time to the tenants and other occupants of the building to approach the SC, the MCD demolished the building at around 8.30 am on September 18, 2018. The SC had further sought to know the "hidden circumstances" for which the MCD denied the party the right to approach it. The SC said its interim order of September 18, 2018, would continue till further orders. On September 18, 2018, the SC ordered that no portion of the property at Karol Bagh would be demolished.

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# India will be run by legacy of Ram, Krishna, not Mughal rulers: Yogi

**PNS ■ LUCKNOW**  
Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said in the UP assembly on Monday that India will be run by the ancient traditions and legacy of Ram, Krishna, and Buddha, not the colonial legacy of Mughal rulers like Babur and Aurangzeb. He said, "If a Muslim procession can pass through a Hindu locality, why not a Hindu procession through a Muslim locality? If Muslims object to the slogan 'Jai Shri Ram', Hindus can also object to 'Allahu Akbar'." Replying to the adjournment notice given by the opposition Samajwadi Party over the violent incidents in Sambhal on November 24 and the communal incident in Bahraich, CM Yogi said, "I can live my life with 'Jai Shri Ram', 'Har Har

Mahadev' and 'Radhe Radhe'—no need for any other slogan. Baburnama also says that a structure was built by demolishing the Harihar temple in Sambhal." He added, "The victory of the BJP candidate in the Muslim-dominated Kundarki assembly seat is the victory of the Constitution and Sanatan, and the people are recognising their ancient Hindu roots." CM Yogi pointed out a historical divide between Turks and Pathans in Sambhal and Kundarki. He recalled that Shafiqur Rahman Barq, the late SP MP, used to proclaim that he was not an Indian citizen, but a descendant of Mughal ruler Babur. "Will you uphold the legacy of invaders, or the traditions of Ram, Krishna, and Buddha?" He reiterated, "Only the tradition of Ram, Krishna, and Buddha will endure in India, not that of Babur and Aurangzeb." "Why is there no issue when a Muharram or any Muslim procession passes peacefully through a Hindu locality or in front of a temple, but problems arise when a Hindu procession passes through a mosque or a Muslim-majority area? Can't the saffron flag be raised on Indian soil?" he asked. "Jai Shri Ram is not provocative; it is a reflection of our cultural consciousness and faith. If I tell you tomorrow that we don't like the slogan 'Allahu Akbar', will you be okay with that?" Yogi asked. Asking the Samajwadi Party MLA Mahmood, who tabled the adjournment notice, the CM said, "If you had read Baburnama, you would not be engaging in this debate. Your politics has been about 'Baatne and Kaatne', but we have made



Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath speaking on the first day of the winter session in UP assembly on Monday

it clear—'Na Batenge, Na Katenge.'" Recalling the long history of communal riots in Sambhal since 1947, CM said, "There were deaths and riots in 1947, and 1948, and continued unrest through the decades, with significant violence in 1978, where 184 Hindus were burned alive. In 1980-1982, there were more riots, and in 1990-1992, five people were killed. A total of 209 Hindus have lost their lives in Sambhal since 1947." He also referred to the brutal murder of a businessman in the 1978 riots, whose limbs were cut and then his throat was slit. CM Yogi assured the House that anyone involved in stonelling or attempting to disrupt peace will be strictly dealt with and will not be spared. Yogi urged the opposition to read the preamble of Baba

Saheb Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar's original Constitution and review the fundamental rights it guarantees. "If you examine its pages, you will find references to Ram, Krishna, Bajrang Bali, and Buddha. The philosophy of India's rich tradition is embedded within this Constitution, yet the words 'secular', 'sectarian', or 'socialism' do not appear anywhere in the original document," the CM remarked. Taking a dig at the Samajwadi Party, he added, "As soon as the truth about your actions in Sambhal came to light, the public declared 'Safachat'." Referring to NCRB data, CM Yogi highlighted that communal riots in Uttar Pradesh have dropped since 2017. "Since 2017, there have been no riots in UP. But between 2012 and 2017, during the

Samajwadi Party's tenure, there were 815 communal riots, and 192 people lost their lives. From 2007 to 2011, there were 616 incidents, with 121 deaths," he pointed out. He also noted that in the recent by-election, the Bharatiya Janata Party and the NDA alliance secured 7 out of 9 seats. "Chachhu, (Shivpal Yadav) was a little kinder, or else Karhal and Sisamau would also have been swept clean," the CM said, adding: "The victories in Kundarki, Katehari, Khair, Majhwa, Ghaziabad, Mirapur, and Phulpur are victories for the Constitution of India." CM Yogi emphasised that India is the only country where the majority community is not asking for special rights, but instead is advocating for a Uniform Civil Code (UCC). He supported the statement made

by a judge of the Allahabad High Court on the UCC and criticised the SP and Congress for their motion of no-confidence against the chairman of the Rajya Sabha. "These parties are trying to pressure constitutional institutions to align with their views by force," he said. CM Yogi also targeted the opposition over electricity theft in Sambhal, revealing that mini power stations are being run from religious places in the region. "Many mosques were found with illegal sub-stations where free connections were distributed," he said. "While the state's power corporation reports a line loss of less than 30%, in Deeprasai and Mirasrai localities of Sambhal, the losses are 78% and 82%, respectively. This is nothing but the looting of the country's resources," the chief minister added. The CM stated that the administration is handling the Bahraich and Sambhal incidents with fairness and transparency. He said, "A judicial commission has been set up to investigate the Sambhal incident, with its members tasked to record statements, hear all parties, and uncover the truth." He highlighted the importance of maintaining peace ahead of the Maha Kumbh 2025. Addressing the opposition, he urged them not to disrupt the state's harmony with irresponsible statements or actions. The CM reaffirmed the state government's commitment to ensuring the safety and security of Uttar Pradesh's 25 crore residents. "Any attempts at anarchy or stone-pelting will be dealt with firmly. Those who defy the law or disregard court orders will face strict action," he warned.

## Ready for discussions on all issues, says CM

**PNS ■ LUCKNOW**  
Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Monday urged all parties to ensure smooth proceedings of the state assembly and expressed the government's readiness to engage in discussions on all issues concerning the youth, women, farmers and security of the state. Ahead of the winter session of the assembly, he said the government is ready for meaningful discussions on public and developmental issues. "We seek everyone's cooperation in making the legislature a platform for constructive debate. I also urge my colleagues in the opposition to come prepared," he told reporters. "Development, security, prosperity, respect for faith, and modernity that Uttar Pradesh is experiencing today, originates from this very legislature," he said while welcoming all members to the Winter session. The chief minister called for a smooth and productive session, emphasising that the House should serve as a platform for constructive debates on key issues. Describing the Uttar Pradesh Legislature as the largest provincial legislature in the world, Adityanath said, "It is a moment of great honour that our nation has entered the 'Amrit Kaal' and is engaged in the sacred mission of building a developed India, as envisioned by Prime Minister Modi ji. Uttar Pradesh plays a significant role in this vision. "Many freedom fighters from Uttar Pradesh contributed to the struggle for the nation's independence. The state also holds the privilege of being the birthplace and 'karmabhoomi' of many revolutionaries," he said. The chief minister highlighted that during this session, in addition to legislative work, a supplementary budget will be presented. He added that important suggestions and issues from honourable members, related to public welfare and the state's development, will also be discussed in the House. "I urge all parties to ensure smooth proceedings of the House and engage in meaningful discussions on public and developmental issues," he said.



**NOTICE**  
Be it known to all I, Ajay Prakash Shrivastav (Army number JC 820789 N) am resident of Bihar Post Birbalpur District Ghazipur. In my service record, father's name is registered as Tribhuvan Lal Shrivastav and mother's name as Bunda Devi, which is wrong. In the Aadhar card, my father's correct name is Tribhuvan Lal and mother's name is Lakshamina Devi, which is correct. In future, they be known and identified by their correct name for all purposes.

**NOTICE**

I have changed my name from Mohd Afzal to Mohd Afzal Ansari S/o Musheer Ahmad R/o 97/154 Kallu Mal Street Talaaq Mahal, Kanpur Nagar 208001

**NOTICE**

I have changed my name from Zeeba Naaz to Zeeba Naaz Ansari. Zeeba Naaz Ansari W/o Mohd. Afzal Ansari R/o 97/154 Kallu Mal Street Talaaq Mahal, Kanpur Nagar 208001

**NOTICE**

I have changed my name A Taufeeq to Abdul Taufeeq S/o A Rafeeq for future purpose. 40-A Yashoda Nagar Kanpur Nagar.

**NOTICE**

I Shadab Ahamad S/o Paravej Ahamad R/o R/93, Benajhavar, new labour Colony, Kanpur Nagar, have changed my name Mohammad Shadab Ahamad to Shadab Ahamad for all future purposes.

**NOTICE**

Ahmed Yasir and Ahmad Yasir is the name of mine. In future, I should be known and recognised as AHMAD YASIR S/o Anwar Shahid R/o 39/07, Maida Bazar, Ram Gola Majeed Ahmad Road, Meston Road, Kanpur Nagar

**NOTICE**

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

General Public Is Here by Informed that Original Sale Deed Dated 01.04.1978 executed by Vishal Bharat Co-Operative Housing Society Limited through Secretary Abdul Ruzzaq s/o Sheikh Ahmad in favour of Shameem Ahmad Siddique s/o Azeez Ahmad Siddique in respect of Plot No. 94B, measuring 167.22 sq. mtr. situated at Vill. - Dabehi Sujanpur, Pargana, Tehsil & Distt. - Kanpur Nagar, which is duly registered in the office of Sub-registrar- Kanpur Nagar vide Book No. 1, Volume No. 3264 on pages 136 to 139 at Serial No. 2739 having Musanna No. 2740 on 01.04.1978. & Original correction deed Dated 23.05.1980 executed by Vishal Bharat Co-Operative Housing Society Limited through Secretary Abdul Ruzzaq in favour of Shameem Ahmad s/o Azeez Ahmad Siddique in respect of Plot No. 94B, part of Khasra no. 1324, measuring 167.22 sq. mtr. situated at Vill. - Dabehi Sujanpur, Pargana, Tehsil & Distt. - Kanpur Nagar, which is duly registered in the office of Sub-registrar- Kanpur Nagar vide Book No. 1, Volume No. 3511 on pages 336 to 339 at Serial No. 5144 Musanna No. 5145 on 23.05.1980 Has Been Lost From present owner Altah Ahmad s/o Fazlur Rahman (W.P.E. GOING TO MARKET at P Road, Kanpur, on 06.11.2023 around 4.00 PM for getting its photocopy. Please return to undersign if find by anyone or contact with undersign with written objection with supporting documents if anyone having any claim/objection, within 7 days from today. Its use by anyone is void. ILM & Associates, Civil Court Compound, Opposite Muslim hotel, Gate No-4 Kanpur Nagar-208001, MOB: 9936427876.

## CM Yogi unveils renovated visitors' gallery in assembly

**PNS ■ LUCKNOW**

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath inaugurated the newly renovated visitors' gallery at the Uttar Pradesh state legislative assembly on Monday. Dedicating it to all assembly members and the 25 crore citizens of the state, he emphasised that the legislative assembly serves as the cornerstone of democracy for its people. Referring to it as the "sacred temple of democracy," he remarked that a visitor's first impression of this temple is formed through the visitors' gallery. He added, "The renovation and beautification of the gallery, undertaken on the recommendation of all members, should bring pride and joy not only to the ruling party but also to the opposition." During the inauguration, Assembly Speaker Satish Mahana presented a copy of the original Constitution to the chief minister, all the ministers and the leader of the opposition. The chief minister also unveiled two publications by the assembly, which document the profiles of chief ministers and leaders of the opposition since India's independence. Highlighting the legislature's role as a crucial pillar of democracy, CM Yogi said, "It serves as a significant guiding force and a platform for honourable members to address issues of public interest and development." He also lauded the speaker for his efforts over the past two and three-quarter years in strengthening the assembly as a democratic institution while integrating it with modern advancements. He credited the largest



assembly in the country with successfully implementing the e-Vidhan system, which has transformed it into a paperless legislature, setting a national example. Yogi described this achievement as a matter of pride for the assembly, the state, and its 25 crore people. Additionally, he praised the beautification of the assembly's corridors. He highlighted that the rules, which were established after the formation of the first legislative assembly in 1952, had remained unchanged for decades. Despite evolving demands over time, necessary amendments had not been made until recently. He stated that these long-overdue updates have now been successfully implemented. Referring to the Question Hour, he emphasised its importance in fostering true democracy. He noted that members can now ask up to 20 questions to ministers, receiving immediate responses in the House. "This enables members to act as a bridge for raising public interest issues, ensuring accountability and transparency. Such progress was made possible by amending and modernising the assembly's rules," he added. He also pointed out several milestones achieved in the assembly, such as creating opportunities for members to raise topics of interest and designating special days exclusively for women members to discuss their concerns. These initiatives reflect the inclusive and progressive approach of the House. The CM remarked on the significance of a newly published book by the Vidhan Sabha's research library. He said, "The book chronicles the leaders of the House and leaders of the opposition from 1952 to the present, providing valuable insights into the contributions of various luminaries who have upheld the dignity of the assembly. It details the issues they addressed and their role in advancing development."

## Rai: Govt afraid of Cong's assembly siege programme

**PNS ■ LUCKNOW**

President of Uttar Pradesh Congress Committee Ajay Rai on Monday claimed that the Yogi Adityanath-led government is afraid of the Congress assembly siege programme on the coming Wednesday, hence using official machinery to stop the workers and leaders from coming to the state capital. Addressing journalists here at the party's state headquarters on Monday, Rai said that the people of the state are suffering due to the "misrule" of the Yogi government. "The Yogi government, which has completely failed on every issue related to the people, is scared of Congress's programme of gherao of the Vidhan Sabha," he added. He said that Yogi Adityanath has ordered the Uttar Pradesh director general of police to instruct the police officers of the districts that, no matter what it takes, no Congress worker should be able to leave home and reach Lucknow. "Action will be taken against the officers of the districts from where Congress workers reach Lucknow. Due to this instruction, the police in the districts have started threatening and terrorising our workers," Rai said. "Yogiji has forgotten the day when he cried bitterly in Parliament due to fear of the same police, and everyone had supported him then. Today, sitting on the post of chief minister, he is terrorising political workers with the power of the same police, filing thousands of cases, crushing democratic rights, and stopping dharnas, demonstrations, agitations, and sieges. Rai said the BJP has forgotten that it came to power on the strength of protests in the first place and it is also forgetting that it will not be in power in 2027. "Whatever it is doing today, they will have to face the same once out of power," he added. Rai warned the government that none of the Congress workers should be stopped. "We are a Gandhian party and know the limits of the movement. Fascism has not yet fully arrived in India, and there is still democracy, so the Congress will not tolerate any attempt to kill democracy. When we were not afraid of the British, then why would we be afraid of the informers and agents of the British?" Rai said. He called upon the workers to reach Lucknow no matter what they do. "They have to surround the state assembly and show the mirror to the government that its jungle raj cannot be tolerated anymore," Rai said. He asked the workers to give themselves up for arrest in case the police tried to forcibly stop them. Rai also warned the police officers to stay within their limits and not kill democracy under the pressure of the government. "It is the right of a political party to protest peacefully, and this is a fight between the government and the Congress. Do not make it a fight between the Congress and the police, or else remember that we are coming to power in 2027 and we will note down the name of every officer who oppresses the workers and will then hold them accountable," Rai said. He added that what could be worse than this degradation, where Income Tax and ED are pressurising people and making the leaders of opposition parties join the BJP and forcing people to commit suicide.

## Elderly businessman alleges torture, theft by servant

**Lucknow (PNS):** An elderly businessman from Gautampalli area in Lucknow has accused his servant and his family of torturing him by drugging his food, stealing his gold jewellery, and forging a will to claim his property. The victim, 80-year-old Ajay Singh, has filed an FIR against five individuals, including his servant Gaya Prasad, and his family. Ajay Singh, a resident of Gulistan Colony, deals in farming-related goods. His wife passed away some time ago, and he has two sons, Janmejaya and Jayant, live away from him—one in America and the other in Gurugram. Singh alleged that Gaya Prasad, his servant for the past 32 years, along with his family—wife Bijuri, daughter Saraswati, and sons Balram and Krishna—had been living with him in his home. According to Ajay Singh, Gaya Prasad

and his family had been drugging his food for a long time, leading to a deterioration in his health. Singh also claimed that, in collusion with a bank officer, the servant withdrew lakhs of rupees from his account during this time. Singh further alleged that his servant and his family had stolen \$4,000, gold coins, and other valuable items worth lakhs from his home. "Once I became aware of the theft, they began to torture me even more," he said. In his complaint, Singh also accused Gaya Prasad and his family of forging a will to make themselves heirs to his property. However, when Janmejaya returned from America, the conspiracy was exposed. Janmejaya reportedly threw the servant and his family out of the house. Inspector Pankaj Kumar Ambast from Gautampalli police station stated that an investigation is underway.

## French envoy meets CM Yogi to explore investment opportunities

**Lucknow (PNS):** French Ambassador Dr Thierry Mathou, along with a delegation, met Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Monday to discuss potential MoUs and investments in Uttar Pradesh's defence, pharma, and education sectors. Yogi assured the delegation of full support for investments in the state. He invited French companies to invest, especially in NCR, Bundelkhand, and the defence sector. The delegation expressed interest in UP's youthful demographic, with 60% of its population under 30. Dr Mathou highlighted the importance of strengthening trade and cultural ties between UP and France. They also discussed collaboration on IT corridors, smart cities, and cultural development. The discussions also touched on boosting bilateral relations, renewable energy projects, and increasing the presence of French companies. Yogi emphasised the value of ancient manuscripts at Sampurnanand University, stressing the importance of educational and cultural exchanges. Both sides agreed to enhance cooperation in education, culture, and trade, with a focus on defence and pharma investments.

**HDFC BANK**  
We understand your world

**POSSESSION NOTICE APPENDIX IV [RULE 8(1)]**  
Whereas, the undersigned being the authorized officer of the HDFC Bank Ltd. under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13 read with rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, issued demand notice dated 13.09.2024 calling upon the borrower(s) 1. Ms Maa Kotari Filling Station Through its Proprietor Mrs. Ruchi Singh (Borrower) 2. Mrs. Ruchi Singh W/o Mr. Ravindra Pratap (Co-Borrower) 3. Ms. Kapten Filling Station Through its Proprietor Mr. Rajendra Singh (Co-Borrower) 4. Mr. Rajendra Singh S/o Mr. Loknath Singh (Co-Borrower) 5. Mrs. Kusum Devi W/o Mr. Rajendra Singh (Co-Borrower & Mortgagee) to pay the amount mentioned in the notice Rs. 49,27,711.00/- (Rupees Forty-Nine Lakhs Twenty-Seven Thousand Seven Hundred and Eleven Only) within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The borrower(s) having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower(s) and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under section 13 (4) of the said Act on the read with rule 8 & 9 of the said Rules, on this 12 DEC 2024. The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to charge of HDFC Bank Ltd. for an amount of notice Rs. 49,27,711.00/- (Rupees Forty-Nine Lakhs Twenty-Seven Thousand Seven Hundred and Eleven Only) and interest thereon together with expenses and charges etc., less amount paid, if any.

**DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY**  
Plot No. 23 Of Ramjanki Colony, Admeasuring- 3956 Sq. Ft., Situated At- Over Part Of S. Plot No. 391, Situated At- Mauja Lalpur Meerapur Basahi, Pargana Shivpur, Tehsil And Distt- Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh (property Owned By Mrs. Kusum Devi) Bounded As Under: North : House Of Officers South: Proposed Walled East: Plot No. 394 West: Colony Plot

Date : 12/12/2024, Place : Varanasi  
Authorized Officer: HDFC Bank Ltd.

**Directorate of Ports & Inland Water Transport,**  
Fortune Tower, Ground Floor, Zone - A,  
Chandraskharpur, Bhubaneswar  
Phone: 0674-2300885, Email: - portsniwt.od@nic.in

**PROCUREMENT NOTICE**

01. Name of the Work	Improvement of Passenger Jetty at Mahensha in Chilika Lake under Krishnaprasad Block of Puri District, Odisha.
02. Bid Identification No.	DPIWT/09/2024-25
03. No. of Covers	Double
04. Approximate Value of Work	Rs.13.50 Crore
05. Tender Paper Cost	Rs.10,000.00
06. Period of completion	18 (Eighteen) Months
07. Date & Time of availability of Bid Document in the portal	17.12.2024 to 02.01.2025 up to 05.00 P.M.
08. Date & Time of submission of Bid Document in the portal	17.12.2024 to 02.01.2025 up to 05.00 P.M.
09. Date & Time of Bid Clarification	17.12.2024 to 23.12.2024 up to 03.00 P.M.
10. Date & Time of Pre-Bid meeting	24.12.2024 at 03.30 P.M
11. Last Date/Time for receipt of Bids in the portal	02.01.2025 up to 05.00 P.M.
12. Class of Contractor	'A' & 'Special' Class Contractor
13. Date & Time for opening of Technical Bid (Cover-1)	03.01.2025 at 11.30 A.M.
14. Name and Address of the Officer Inviting Tender (I.O.T)	Director, Ports & Inland Water Transport, Fortune Tower, Ground Floor, Zone-A, Chandraskharpur, Bhubaneswar, Odisha, Pin-751023 Phone-0674-2390355, Fax-2396885. e-Mail:- portsniwt.od@nic.in

Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal "https://tendersodisha.gov.in"  
The Addendum / Corrigendum if any will be hosted in the website only.

OIPR-380354/11/00122425  
Director Ports & IWT, Odisha

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

**Possession Notice** Branch : Panki Site-1, Kanpur

Whereas the undersigned being the Authorised Officer of Bank of Baroda under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13 (12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a demand notice calling upon the borrower & guarantor to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being with in 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

The borrower/guarantor having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrowers/guarantors and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under section 13 (4) of the said Act read with rule 8 & 9 of the said rules.

The borrower/guarantor in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the first charge of Bank of Baroda for amount & interest thereon.

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.

**Name and Address of Borrower/Guarantor & Description of Mortgage Property & O/S Amount as per Demand Notice/Demand Notice Date & Possession Notice Date**

**Borrower : Smt. Pushpa Devi W/o Shri Arvind Kumar Sharma and Shri Arvind Kumar Sharma S/o Shri Brij Lal Sharma, Both R/o: 40-G & 41-G, MIG, Gujaini, Kanpur Nagar-208020.**  
**Demand Notice Date: 13-08-2024 - Date of Constructive Possession: 12-12-2024**  
**Property :** House No. 40, Block-G, MIG, Gujaini, Kanpur-208020, in the name of Smt. Pushpa Devi W/o Shri Arvind Kumar Sharma, Area : 189 Sq. Mtr., Bounded-North : Plot No. 33, South : 7.50 Mtr. Wide Road, East : Plot No. 39, West : Plot No. 41.  
O/s Amount as per Demand Notice : **Rs. 5,22,846.77 + Intt. + Others Charges**  
Total Dues Amount as on Dated 11-12-2024 : **Rs. 5,31,220.42 + Intt. + Others Charges**

**Date : 12-12-2024 Place : Kanpur Authorised Officer**

# Son, girlfriend arrested after found dead in borewell

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Ramu Rawat (44), whose body was recovered from a borewell in Rampur Garhi village of Nigohan police station area on December 12, was killed by his son. His son's girlfriend is a co-accused in the murder. Police made this startling revelation after the arrest of the accused, Dharmesh and his girlfriend Sangeta.

According to the police, the two plotted to kill Ramu over a property dispute. They initially lured Ramu into consuming alcohol and attempted to convince him to transfer the family's land to Dharmesh's name. When Ramu refused, the accused, in a fit of rage, beat him

up and pushed him into the borewell. To cover their crime, they threw burnt wood and straw into the borewell, hiding the body. Ramu ultimately suffocated and died.

The investigation began after a complaint was filed by Ramu's daughter Julie. Following a thorough inquiry, the police arrested both Dharmesh and Sangeta on Monday.

DCP (South) Keshav Kumar shared the details of the case at a press conference and announced a cash reward of Rs 25,000 for the investigation team. Further probe revealed that Ramu had been living separately from his wife for about 20 years after a legal dispute in which she had filed a dowry

harassment case against him, but he was acquitted. Ramu's younger son lived with his mother, while his daughter Julie lived with him. Julie had married five years ago and moved to her in-laws' house, leaving Ramu to live with his elderly mother in Rampur Garhi. Ramu had one bigha of

land in his name, which he shared with his mother. Dharmesh had long coveted this property.

Sources said that Dharmesh had orchestrated a scheme to use Sangeta, who is already married and lives in Mohari Khurd Navi Kheda of Gosaiganj, as a pawn. His plan

was to make Sangeta gain Ramu's trust and persuade him to transfer the land to Dharmesh. Once this was achieved, Dharmesh and Sangeta intended to live together, sidelining Ramu.

ACP (Mohanlalganj) Rajnesh Verma said that Dharmesh's marriage had been arranged

with a girl from Amethi district. The girl's family had asked about Dharmesh's occupation, to which he falsely claimed to be a farmer. However, when Ramu found out and informed the girl's family that Dharmesh was unemployed, the accused feared his marriage would be

called off. To prevent this, he devised the deadly plot. After killing his father, Dharmesh and Sangeta attended a fair in a nearby village. The two spent the night together and later returned to attend Ramu's funeral the next day. Police were able to crack the case through a combination of call

records (CDR), along with other evidence. The deceased's mobile phone, Dharmesh's mobile, and a motorcycle have been recovered from the accused. DCP (South) Keshav Kumar commended the investigation team, including ACP Rajnesh Verma, for their work in solving the case.

# Two groups clash over grazing cow

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A heated argument erupted between two groups on Sunday morning in Kakori over a dispute regarding a cow grazing on crops and being tied up at a disputed location. Both sides used sticks and bricks during the confrontation, and one group claimed that a youth from the opposing party fired a weapon, although no one was injured in the incident.

According to the victim's side, they had filed a complaint with the police two days prior about the cow grazing on their crops and an assault that occurred when the opposing party entered their house. They alleged that instead of taking action, the police attempted to make them strike a compromise, which allowed the unruly youth from the other side to escalate the conflict further, even firing a weapon during the dispute.

from Jai Singh's side started arguing with him. Anoop managed to escape and ran towards the house. Hearing the commotion, others from Ram Surat's side rushed to his aid, and a full-scale confrontation ensued, with both sides using sticks and bricks.

## TIPSY MAN BEATS VEGETABLE VENDOR, OPENS FIRE IN AIR

A drunk man allegedly beat up a vegetable vendor and later fired a gun in Madaion police station area, creating panic among shopkeepers and customers in the market. The police are investigating the incident after receiving a complaint.

According to reports, Vikas Kumar, a vegetable vendor from Bharat Nagar in Madaion, was at his shop on Sunday night when Surendra Pratap Singh, a local resident, approached him asking for gutkha. When Vikas explained that paan masala was not available at his shop, Surendra became angry and abused him.

Vikas's friend Akshay tried to intervene, but Surendra got into a confrontation with him as well. As a crowd began to gather, Surendra left the scene and went home. The situation escalated when Surendra returned shortly afterwards, this time armed with a licenced gun. He abused Vikas again and fired a shot into the air.

Vikas, trying to prevent further violence, protested, but Surendra attacked him, causing injuries to his hands and legs. Madaion Inspector Shivanand Mishra confirmed that Surendra, around 65 years old, was intoxicated during the incident. "His licenced gun has been seized, and the case is under investigation," the inspector stated.

According to the victim's side, they had filed a complaint with the police two days prior about the cow grazing on their crops and an assault that occurred when the opposing party entered their house. They alleged that instead of taking action, the police attempted to make them strike a compromise, which allowed the unruly youth from the other side to escalate the conflict further, even firing a weapon during the dispute.

A video showing the assault and alleged firing went viral on social media, although the police denied that a shooting occurred. Both parties have filed cases. Farmer Ram Surat, a resident of Gauri village, explained that two days earlier, Jai Singh's cow had been grazing on his standing crops at night. Despite filing a complaint, Jai Singh's family did not tie up the cow. In retaliation, Ram Surat's side caught and tied Jai Singh's cow. This angered Jai Singh's family, who then attacked Ram Surat's house. Ram Surat reported the assault to the police, but no action was taken.

The situation worsened on Sunday morning when Ram Surat's nephew, Anoop, went out with a stick in his hand to defeat. Seeing him with the stick, Deepu, Mulayam, the Ramayan, Abhay, and Guddu

# MAHA KUMBH 2025

# Geotubes technology to treat wastewater from 22 untapped drains

PNS ■ MAHAKUMBH NAGAR

Preparations are in full swing to ensure the Maha Kumbh 2025, set to take place in Prayagraj from January 13 to February 26, is not only grand and spiritually elevating, but also safe and hygienic. In line with these efforts, UP Jal Nigam (Urban) has set up a geotube technology-based treatment plant in Salori. Built at the cost of Rs 55 crore, the plant will treat wastewater from all 22 untapped drains in the city, ensuring that no untreated water flows into the Ganga, in line with Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's directives.

## Built at the cost of Rs 55 crore, the plant will treat wastewater from all 22 untapped drains in the city, ensuring that no untreated water flows into Ganga

flows at the Sangam during the grand event. He further explained that the geotube technology is a modern sewage water treatment method. The technology treats 40-50 per cent of biochemical oxygen demand (BOD) and approximately 80 per cent of the total suspended solids (TSS) directly within the geotubes.

Following this, the treated water is purified using hydrogen peroxide and undergoes ozonisation. Kumar clarified that ozonisation is used instead of chlorination in this plant as high concentrations of chlorine in treated water can be harmful to aquatic life.

Ozonisation effectively kills all types of faecal bacteria, making the water safe for release into rivers. The entire process is monitored 24/7 through OCEMS technology. Notably, during his visit to Prayagraj on December 12, CM Yogi inspected the treatment plant and gave instructions to ensure its smooth functioning during the Maha Kumbh.

The initiative is aimed at ensuring that the waters of the holy river remain clean, uninterrupted, and meet the highest standards of purity as millions of devotees are expected to gather in Prayagraj to take a holy dip at Sangam, the confluence of Ganga-Yamuna-Saraswati rivers. It is worth mentioning here that in the Magh and Kumbh Melas held before 2019, devotees often had to bathe in the contaminated water of the Sangam. However, in line with CM Yogi's explicit directive to prevent the discharge of untreated wastewater from drains or sewage into the Ganga, in line with Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's directives.

Executive engineer of Jal Nigam (Urban) Saurabh Kumar stated that the plant, built at a cost of Rs 55 crore, is currently undergoing trial runs and will be fully operational from January 1, ensuring clean and pure water

**Piramal Capital & Housing Finance Limited**  
 Registered Office Address: Unit No.601, 6th Floor Piramal Amiti Building, Piramal Agastya Corporate Park, Kamani Junction, Opp Fire Station, LBS Marg, Kuria (West), Mumbai- 400 073, CIN: L65910M1984PLC032639, Website: www.piramalfinance.com  
 Branch Address : Dhiraj Baug, Building "A" Ground & 1st Floor, Beside Axis Bank, Opp. Monalisa Building, Agra Road, Hari Niwas Circle, Naupada, Thane (West) – 400 602.

**DEMAND NOTICE**  
 Under Section 13(2) of the Securitisation And Reconstruction of Financial Assets And Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with Rule 3 (1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002. The undersigned is the Authorised Officer of Piramal Capital & Housing Finance Limited (PCHFL) Rules, 2002. The Authorised Officer has issued the Demand Notice under Section 13(2) of the said Act, calling upon the following Borrower(s) (the "said Borrower(s)"), to repay the amounts mentioned in the respective Demand Notice(s) issued to them that are also given below. In connection with above, the undersigned is hereby given, once again, to the said Borrower(s) to pay to PCHFL, within 60 days from the publication of this Notice, the amounts indicated herein below, together with further interest as detailed in the said Demand Notice(s), from the date(s) mentioned below till the date of payment and/or realization, payable under the loan agreement read with other documents/writings, if any, executed by the said Borrower(s). As security for due repayment of the loan, the following assets have been mortgaged to PCHFL by the said Borrower(s) respectively.

Name of the Borrower(s)/ Guarantor(s)	Demand Notice Date and Amount with NPA date	Property address	Name of the Borrower(s)/ Guarantor(s)	Demand Notice Date and Amount with NPA date	Property address
(LC No. 2400000386 of Kanpur Branch) Kalpana Singh (Borrower) Hemant Singh (Co Borrower 1)	21-11-2024 / ₹ 415663 / (₹ Four lakh Fifteen Thousand Six Hundred Sixty Three Only) NPA (08-11-2024)	Private Plot No 18 Part Of Arazi No 70 Maqsoodabad Kanpur Urban Uttar Pradesh - 208017	(LC No. M0235166 of Moradabad Branch) Jagat Singh (Borrower) Meera (Co Borrower 1) Panka (Co Borrower 2)	18-11-2024 / ₹ 193551.68 / (₹ Nine lakh Nineteen Thousand Three Hundred Fifty One Only and Sixty Eight Paise) NPA (03-10-2024)	Khar No. 774, 775, Situated at Pandit Nagla K Milak, Shiv Mandir, Moradabad-244001, Uttar Pradesh.
(LC No. 2400000387 of Kanpur Branch) Kalpana Singh (Borrower) Hemant Singh (Co Borrower 1)	21-11-2024 / ₹ 1309166 / (₹ Thirteen lakh Nine Thousand One Hundred Sixty Six Only) NPA (08-11-2024)	Private Plot No 18 Part Of Arazi No 70 Maqsoodabad Kanpur Kanpur Urban Uttar Pradesh - 208017	(LC No. M0235321 of Moradabad Branch) Arun Kumar (Borrower) Omwati (Co Borrower 1)	18-11-2024 / ₹ 1332367.3 / (₹ Thirteen lakh Thirty Two Thousand Three Hundred Fifty Seven Only and Thirty Paise) NPA (03-11-2024)	Part of Gata No.77, New Generation Future Academy, Moradabad-244001, Uttar Pradesh.
(LC No. 06000005098 of Lucknow - MMM Marg Branch) Dr Moolchand Memorial Nari Avam Bal Vikas Samiti (Borrower) Rakesh (Co Borrower 1) Anita Jaiswal (Co Borrower 2) Prabh Dev (Co Borrower 3) Pratima Jaiswal (Co Borrower 4)	21-11-2024 / ₹ 5781340 / (₹ Fifty Seven lakh Eighty One Thousand Three Hundred Forty Only) NPA (09-07-2023)	Plot At Land Kharsa No.50(m) NA Gram Ahilparanpur, Gram Ahilparanpur, Ward-triveni Nagar, Lucknow Uttar Pradesh IN 226020	(LC No. M0236977 of Moradabad Branch) Mohd Rizwan (Borrower) Rafika (Co Borrower 1)	18-11-2024 / ₹ 2023044 / (₹ Twenty lakh Twenty Three Thousand Forty Four Only) NPA (03-11-2024)	Khar No.136, Village Pipal Jagir, Pargana Budhpur Tehsil, Chandpur-246734, Bijnor, Uttar Pradesh.
(LC No. 06000004369 of Lucknow - MMM Marg Branch) Rakesh (Borrower) Pratima Jaiswal (Co Borrower 1)	21-11-2024 / ₹ 3828231 / (₹ Thirty Eight lakh Twenty Eight Thousand Two Hundred Thirty One Only) NPA (09-07-2023)	House No. 538 B/735 (421b), at Plot No. 73 -b & 73-c At Land Kharsa No.428(m) Roushni Khurd ward Ayodhya Das Lucknow Lucknow Uttar Pradesh - 226020	(LC No. M0248536 of Moradabad Branch) Azam Ali (Borrower) Nazreen (Co Borrower 1)	18-11-2024 / ₹ 1862171.3 / (₹ Eighteen lakh Fifty Two Thousand One Hundred Seventy One Only and Thirty Paise) NPA (03-11-2024)	Khar No.291, 297, Indian Oil Petrol Pump 100.00 Mts, Ayodhya, Moradabad-244001, Uttar Pradesh.
(LC No. 24000001106 of Kanpur Branch) Lal (Borrower) Malvi Devi (Co Borrower 1)	18-11-2024 / ₹ 362627 / (₹ Three lakh Sixty Two Thousand Six Hundred Seventy Two Only) NPA (08-11-2024)	House No. 22, Block B, E W S, Barra - 7, Kanpur Kanpur Urban Uttar Pradesh - 208027	(LC No. M0253022 of Muzaffarnagar - Bhopa Road Branch) Raisalat Khan (Borrower) Chand Rani (Co Borrower 1)	18-11-2024 / ₹ 1305694.5 / (₹ Thirteen lakh Five Thousand Six Hundred Ninety Four Only and Fifty Paise) NPA (03-11-2024)	Khar No.2312, Mohalla Makinagar, Par. & Teh. & Dist.-Muzaffarnagar-251001, Uttar Pradesh.
(LC No. 15000001711 of Haldwani Branch) Prema Pal (Borrower) Sudha (Co Borrower 1)	18-11-2024 / ₹ 848904 / (₹ Eight lakh Forty Eight Thousand Nine Hundred Two Only) NPA (08-10-2024)	Part Of Kharsa No 58/3 Min Pvt Plot No 0-4, Kaushalya Enclave Ph 3 Village Bignara Kaurpur Udhamsinghnagar Uttar Pradesh - 225001	(LC No. M02500559C of Moradabad Branch) Mohd Rais (Borrower) Asma Be (Co Borrower 2) Mohd Drees (Co Borrower 3)	18-11-2024 / ₹ 2576650.48 / (₹ Twenty Five lakh Seventy Six Thousand Six Hundred Fifty Five Only and Forty Eight Paise) NPA (03-11-2024)	Part Of Kharsa No.161, Saleem Cement Store Approx. 100.Mts, Village Rasoolpur Nagla Khem, Moradabad-244001, Uttar Pradesh.
(LC No. 24000001106 of Kanpur Branch) Lal (Borrower) Malvi Devi (Co Borrower 1)	18-11-2024 / ₹ 362627 / (₹ Three lakh Sixty Two Thousand Six Hundred Seventy Two Only) NPA (08-11-2024)	House No. 22, Block B, E W S, Barra - 7, Kanpur Kanpur Urban Uttar Pradesh - 208027	(LC No. M0260252 of Moradabad Branch) Sarit Singh (Borrower) Aruna (Co Borrower 1)	18-11-2024 / ₹ 658477.06 / (₹ Six lakh Fifty Eight Thousand Four Hundred Seventy Seven Only and Six Paise) NPA (03-10-2024)	Gata No.83, Mohalla Heera Nagar Dhanura, HF Gas Agency, Jyotba Pheela Nagar Tehsil- Aligarh, Distt.-Agra, Uttar Pradesh - 244321
(LC No. 25700001805 of Gorakhpur Branch) Brihadi Yadav (Borrower) Niraj Yadav (Co Borrower 1) Sawaru Yadav (Co Borrower 2)	18-11-2024 / ₹ 2388822 / (₹ Twenty three lakh Eighty Eight Thousand Two Hundred Eighty Two Only) NPA (24-02-2024)	Plot Situated At Arazi No.212, Mauza- Gulharia, Tappa- Khuthan, Pargana- Haveli, Tehsil- Sadar Gorakhpur Gorakhpur Uttar Pradesh - 227003	(LC No. M0269490 of Meerut Branch) Aarif (Borrower) Sabana (Co Borrower 1)	18-11-2024 / ₹ 1457759.68 / (₹ Fourteen lakh Fifty Seven Thousand Seven Hundred Fifty Nine Only and Sixty Eight Paise) NPA (03-11-2024)	Khar No.1901, Situated At New & Un Developed Colony, Andar Nagar Palika Campari, Near Makkar Masjid, Khar No.250342, Uttar Pradesh.
(LC No. 19300004293 of Lucknow - MMM Marg Branch) Haris Mohd Farid (Borrower) Safiya Parveen (Co Borrower 1)	18-11-2024 / ₹ 3804590 / (₹ Thirty Eight lakh Four Thousand Five Hundred Ninety Only) NPA (08-10-2024)	Plot No. 211/2/665(4) On Plot No.4 Part Of Kharsa No.267 Adil Nagar Shankar Purva Lucknow Lucknow Uttar Pradesh - 226020	(LC No. HLSA00007205 of Lucknow - Gomti Nagar Branch) Manish Singh (Borrower) Preeti Singh (Co Borrower 1)	18-11-2024 / ₹ 1457759.68 / (₹ Fourteen lakh Fifty Seven Thousand Seven Hundred Fifty Nine Only and Sixty Eight Paise) NPA (03-11-2024)	Plot Bearing Nagar Nigam No.Khar No.424, Being Portion of Khar No.424, Lucknow Law College Village Ahmamu, Ward-Vistarit Area Part-1, Lucknow, 226002 Uttar Pradesh.
(LC No. 06000007296 of Lucknow - MMM Marg Branch) Arun Sharma (Borrower) Rajni (Co Borrower 1)	18-11-2024 / ₹ 535299 / (₹ Five lakh Thirty Five Thousand Two Hundred Ninety Eight Only) NPA (08-11-2024)	K T No. E-05, E-Block, Part Of Kharsa No. 287 Five Naha, Village- Basahil, Pargana- Mahona, B K T Lucknow Lucknow Uttar Pradesh - 226020	(LC No. HLSA0000442D of Meerut Branch) Arvind Kumar (Borrower) Renu Devi (Co Borrower 1)	18-11-2024 / ₹ 1360467.94 / (₹ Thirteen lakh Sixty Thousand Four Hundred Sixty Seven Only and Ninety Four Paise) NPA (03-11-2024)	Plot No.234, Ward No.6, Valmiki Mandir, Muzaffarnagar-247776, Uttar Pradesh.
(LC No. 19300004302 of Lucknow - MMM Marg Branch) Sachchida Nand Patel (Borrower) Sonam Devi (Co Borrower 1)	18-11-2024 / ₹ 1048178 / (₹ Ten lakh Forty Eight Thousand One Hundred Seventy Eight Only) NPA (08-10-2024)	Plot No. 2, Kharsa No. 192 Village /, Danyalpur, Pargana- Deva, Tehsil Wabalganj, zila - Barabanki, Barabanki Barabanki Uttar Pradesh - 225001	(LC No. HLSA0002C298 of Lucknow - PGI Branch) Rekha Srivastava (Borrower) Rohit Mishra (Co Borrower 1)	18-11-2024 / ₹ 1838892.2 / (₹ Eighteen lakh Thirty Eight Thousand Five Hundred Ninety Two Only and Twenty Paise) NPA (03-11-2024)	Flat No.203 on 2nd Floor, Part of Kharsa No. 970, Near RL School Sector 8, J & S Height, Situated At Village Ismailganj, Lucknow Gomti Nagar 226028 Uttar Pradesh
(LC No. 06000009047 of Lucknow - MMM Marg Branch) Sunil Kumar Mishra (Borrower) Rini Mishra (Co Borrower 1)	18-11-2024 / ₹ 662394 / (₹ Six lakh Sixty Two Thousand Three Hundred Ninety Four Only) NPA (08-10-2024)	D/5/201 Second Floor Multi Storied Apt C G City Sultanpur Road, Lucknow Lucknow Uttar Pradesh - 226020	(LC No. BLSA0000599C of Aligarh Branch) Aslam (Borrower) Amina Begam (Co Borrower 1)	18-11-2024 / ₹ 968425 / (₹ Nine lakh Sixty Eight Thousand Four Hundred Twenty Five Only) NPA (03-11-2024)	Plot No.3194, Mukta Khasa Kasba Koli, Nagla Ashiq Pargana & Tehsil Koli District Aligarh-202001, Uttar Pradesh.
(LC No. 06000003672 of Agra Branch) Akber Khan (Borrower) Rumana Khan (Co Borrower 1)	18-11-2024 / ₹ 450186.88 / (₹ Four lakh Fifty Thousand One Hundred Eighty Six Only and Eighty Eight Paise) NPA (29-09-2024)	Evs -265 Tajnagar Phase 2 Sector -11 Tajnagar Aligarh Uttar Pradesh - 208001	(LC No. HLSA00009766 of Bareilly Branch) Shahrukh (Borrower) Shahid (Co Borrower 1) Chanda Bi (Co Borrower 2)	18-11-2024 / ₹ 1253062.02 / (₹ Twelve lakh Fifty Three Thousand Sixty Two Only and Two Paise) NPA (03-11-2024)	Plot No.3194, Mukta Khasa Kasba Koli, Nagla Ashiq Pargana & Tehsil Koli District Aligarh-202001, Uttar Pradesh.
(LC No. 06000004811 of Lucknow - MMM Marg Branch) Mukul Kumar Gupta (Borrower) Raju Kumar Gupta (Co Borrower 1) Phool Kumari (Co Borrower 2)	18-11-2024 / ₹ 811155.9 / (₹ Eight lakh Eleven Thousand One Hundred Fifty Five Only and Ninety Paise) NPA (08-11-2024)	Part Of Plot No 9 Min Kharsa 497 Amrai Gao Ward Saheed Bhagat Singh Lucknow Lucknow Uttar Pradesh - 226020	(LC No. HLSA00003246 of Lucknow - Gomti Nagar Branch) Pravintra Kumar Mishra (Borrower 1) Manorama Mishra (Co Borrower 2)	18-11-2024 / ₹ 1253062.02 / (₹ Twelve lakh Fifty Three Thousand Sixty Two Only and Two Paise) NPA (03-11-2024)	Plot No.3194, Mukta Khasa Kasba Koli, Nagla Ashiq Pargana & Tehsil Koli District Aligarh-202001, Uttar Pradesh.
(LC No. 06000008304 of Lucknow - MMM Marg Branch) Vijay Bhakuni (Borrower) Neelam Srivastava (Co Borrower 1)	18-11-2024 / ₹ 1368398 / (₹ Thirteen lakh Sixty Eight Thousand Three Hundred Ninety Eight Only) NPA (08-11-2024)	House Built On Plot No. 02, Part Of Kharsa No. 106 & 107, At Gram & Ward Faizullaganj /226399 Lucknow Uttar Pradesh - 226020	(LC No. HLSA0000209A of Aligarh Branch) Rajkumar Gautam (Borrower) Prem Lata (Co Borrower 1)	18-11-2024 / ₹ 1360467.94 / (₹ Thirteen lakh Sixty Thousand Four Hundred Sixty Seven Only and Ninety Four Paise) NPA (03-11-2024)	Plot Bearing Portion Of Kharsa No.19M, Petrol Pump, Lucknow-226010, Uttar Pradesh.
(LC No. 08200002397 of Jabalpur Branch) Jitendra Singh (Borrower) Prabhunath Singh (Co Borrower 1)	18-11-2024 / ₹ 364966 / (₹ Three lakh Sixty Thousand Three Hundred Sixty Eight Only) NPA (08-11-2024)	Kh. No. 549/4, Ph. No. 24, Set. no. 458 Ward /226399 Lucknow Uttar Pradesh - 226020	(LC No. HLSA000046862 of Lucknow - PGI Branch) Nishant Kumar (Borrower) Sagar Srivastava (Co Borrower 1)	18-11-2024 / ₹ 959420.42 / (₹ Five lakh Ninety Four Thousand Five Hundred Twenty Only and Fifty Paise) NPA (03-11-2024)	Flat No.2, Kharsa No.294, Mohalla Nigamganj, near Bharat Mandir, Kheri-267101, Uttar Pradesh.
(LC No. 09200001751 of Delhi - Pitampura Branch) Trilokpati Kumar (Borrower) Mohd Ajmer Ansari (Co Borrower 1)	18-11-2024 / ₹ 1140831 / (₹ Eleven lakh Thirty Thousand Eight Hundred Thirty One Only) NPA (08-11-2024)	Mh. No. 549/4, Ph. No. 24, Set. no. 458 Ward /226399 Lucknow Uttar Pradesh - 226020	(LC No. BLSA000102DA of Panipat Branch) Ashli Khan (Borrower) Rulsana (Co Borrower 1) Shahid Khan (Co Borrower 2)	18-11-2024 / ₹ 968425 / (₹ Nine lakh Sixty Eight Thousand Four Hundred Twenty Five Only) NPA (03-11-2024)	Chak No.4083, Hadud Hadbast No.3, Kharsa No.712, Darbar Khurd 2, Darbar Khurd Khar, Near Makkar Masjid, Kairana, Muzaffarnagar-247774, Uttar Pradesh.
(LC No. 19300001854 of Noida - Sector 2 Branch) Mohd Aslam Khan (Borrower) Zarina Begum (Co Borrower 1)	18-11-2024 / ₹ 1059807 / (₹ Ten lakh Fifty Seven Thousand Five Hundred Eighty Four Only) NPA (08-11-2024)	Plot No. 103, Kharsa No. 715 Min Vill. auli Nagar Duguriya Lucknow Lucknow Lucknow Uttar Pradesh - 226020	(LC No. HLSA000049511 of Meerut Branch) Sant Kumar Niranjan (Borrower) Kusun (Co Borrower 1)	18-11-2024 / ₹ 1237098.14 / (₹ Twelve lakh Thirty Seven Thousand Ninety Eight Only and Fourteen Paise) NPA (03-11-2024)	Plot No.A21, Kharsa No.753, Village Khadauli, Triveni Enclave Lucknow, Meerut-250005, Uttar Pradesh.
(LC No. 12000001106 of Varanasi Branch) Kanhayia Lal Bharti (Borrower) Savita Prabha (Co Borrower 1)	18-11-2024 / ₹ 1074301 / (₹ Ten lakh Seventy Four Thousand Three Hundred One Only) NPA (08-11-2024)	Arazi No 257 Mauza-suswahi, Pargana-dehat Amanat Varanasi Varanasi Uttar Pradesh - 221001	(LC No. HLSA00008808 of Gonda Branch) Ravi Kumar (Borrower) REKHA DEVI (Co Borrower 1) VED PRAKASH (Co Borrower 2)	18-11-2024 / ₹ 1166949.5 / (₹ Eleven lakh Sixty Six Thousand Nine Hundred Forty Nine Only and Fifty Paise) NPA (03-11-2024)	Plot Part of Gata No.131 Situated at Gram-Kanjada,Pargana-Ikkauna, Tehsil-Ikkauna, District-Shravasti Uttar Pradesh 271845
(LC No. 12000003664 of Varanasi Branch) Umesh Singh (Borrower) Neetu Singh (Co Borrower 1)	18-11-2024 / ₹ 759703 / (₹ Seven lakh Fifty Nine Thousand Seven Hundred Three Only) NPA (08-11-2024)	Arazi No 937, Mauza Paramanandpur Pargana Shivpur, Ward Shivpur, Varanasi Varanasi Uttar Pradesh - 221002	(LC No. HLSA0000598D of Stipar Branch) Anurag Kumar Shukla (Borrower) SHANTI DEVI (Co Borrower 1)	18-11-2024 / ₹ 629597.06 / (₹ Six lakh Twenty Five Thousand Nine Hundred Fifty Seven Only and Six Paise) NPA (03-11-2024)	Plot No 10, Village barkehra mahesh, Mohalla Ram nagar, gata no 225, Lakhimpur Kheri Uttar Pradesh 262701
(LC No. 12000003994 of Varanasi Branch) Rakesh Kumar Gupta (Borrower) Urmila Devi (Co Borrower 1)	18-11-2024 / ₹ 1821721 / (₹ Eighteen lakh Twenty One Thousand Nine Hundred Twenty One Only) NPA (08-11-2024)	Arazi No 318/2, Mauza - Mahmudpur Tahsil-Cherni No. 614/66/19, SHUBHKARMA LVIA, SECTOR, SECTOR-CHIV., VILLAGE, GREATER NOIDA GREATER NOIDA Uttar Pradesh - 201308	(LC No. HLSA000109A of Aligarh Branch) Rajkumar Gautam (Borrower) Prem Lata (Co Borrower 1)	18-11-2024 / ₹ 2708382.98 / (₹ Twenty Seven lakh Eight Thousand Three Hundred Eighty Two Only and Ninety Eight Paise) NPA (03-11-2024)	Nagar Panchnayag, House No.146, Ward No.07 / Mohalla Shivpuri Gali No.6, Near Shreenath Hospital, Aligarh-202130, Uttar Pradesh.
(LC No. 14600001664 of Meerut Branch) Rahul Khatir (Borrower) Asha Gahlot (Co Borrower 1)	18-11-2024 / ₹ 1714958 / (₹ Seventeen lakh Fourteen Thousand Nine Hundred Fifty Eight Only) NPA (08-11-2024)	Plot No. 318/2, Mauza - Mahmudpur Tahsil-Cherni No. 614/66/19, SHUBHKARMA LVIA, SECTOR, SECTOR-CHIV., VILLAGE, GREATER NOIDA GREATER NOIDA Uttar Pradesh - 201308	(LC No. HLSA00006862 of Lucknow - PGI Branch) Nishant Kumar (Borrower) Sagar Srivastava (Co Borrower 1)	18-11-2024 / ₹ 959420.42 / (₹ Five lakh Ninety Four Thousand Five Hundred Twenty Only and Fifty Paise) NPA (03-11-2024)	Flat No.2, Kharsa No.294, Mohalla Nigamganj, near Bharat Mandir, Kheri-267101, Uttar Pradesh.
(LC No. 15000003372 of Haldwani Branch) Muzaffar Khan (Borrower) Anjum Begam (Co Borrower 1)	18-11-2024 / ₹ 210131 / (₹ Two lakh Ten Thousand One Hundred Thirty One Only) NPA (08-11-2024)	Plot No. 318/2, Mauza - Mahmudpur Tahsil-Cherni No. 614/66/19, SHUBHKARMA LVIA, SECTOR, SECTOR-CHIV., VILLAGE, GREATER NOIDA GREATER NOIDA Uttar Pradesh - 201308	(LC No. BLSA000102DA of Panipat Branch) Ashli Khan (Borrower) Rulsana (Co Borrower 1) Shahid Khan (Co Borrower 2)	18-11-2024 / ₹ 968425 / (₹ Nine lakh Sixty Eight Thousand Four Hundred Twenty Five Only) NPA (03-11-2024)	Chak No.4083, Hadud Hadbast No.3, Kharsa No.712, Darbar Khurd 2, Darbar Khurd Khar, Near Makkar Masjid, Kairana, Muzaffarnagar-247774, Uttar Pradesh.
(LC No. 19000000253 of Ghaziabad Branch) Chandra Jeet Yadav (Borrower) Reenu Yadav (Co Borrower 1)	18-11-2024 / ₹ 253528 / (₹ Two lakh Fifty Three Thousand Five Hundred Twenty Eight Only) NPA (08-11-2024)	Plot No. 803, 8th Floor, Tower G Block 03, Type G, Amara Homes Plot G, Gh. 02c, Sector-10 Greater Noida West Gautambudh Nagar Uttar Pradesh - 201517	(LC No. HLSA000049511 of Meerut Branch) Sant Kumar Niranjan (Borrower) Kusun (Co Borrower 1)	18-11-2024 / ₹ 1237098.14 / (₹ Twelve lakh Thirty Seven Thousand Ninety Eight Only and Fourteen Paise) NPA (03-11-2024)	Plot No.A21, Kharsa No.753, Village Khadauli, Triveni Enclave Lucknow, Meerut-250005, Uttar Pradesh.
(LC No. 19300004355 of Lucknow - MMM Marg Branch) Arun Kumar Gupta (Borrower) Avani Gupta (Co Borrower 1)	18-11-2024 / ₹ 1998687 / (₹ Nineteen lakh Ninety Eight Thousand Six Hundred Eighty Seven Only) NPA (08-11-2024)	HOUSE ON PLOT NO. 54, K-BLOCK, SCHEME-2 KIDWAI NAGAR KANPUR Uttar Pradesh - 208002	(LC No. HLSA00008808 of Gonda Branch) Ravi Kumar (Borrower) REKHA DEVI (Co Borrower 1) VED PRAKASH (Co Borrower 2)	18-11-2024 / ₹ 1166949.5 / (₹ Eleven lakh Sixty Six Thousand Nine Hundred Forty Nine Only and Fifty Paise) NPA (03-11-2024)	Plot Part of Gata No.131 Situated at Gram-Kanjada,Pargana-Ikkauna, Tehsil-Ikkauna, District-Shravasti Uttar Pradesh 271845
(LC No. 19300004375 of Lucknow - MMM Marg Branch) Pateshwar Gupta (Borrower) Suman Gupta (Co Borrower 1)	18-11-2024 / ₹ 958810 / (₹ Nine lakh Fifty Eight Thousand Eight Hundred Ten Only and Twenty Paise) NPA (08-11-2024)	Plot No. 11, Aazi No 413, Gram Pargahi Bargar, Kanpur Kanpur Urban Uttar Pradesh - 208002	(LC No. HLSA0000598D of Stipar Branch) Anurag Kumar Shukla (Borrower) SHANTI DEVI (Co Borrower 1)	18-11-2024 / ₹ 629597.06 / (₹ Six lakh Twenty Five Thousand Nine Hundred Fifty Seven Only and Six Paise) NPA (03-11-2024)	Plot No 10, Village barkehra mahesh, Mohalla Ram nagar, gata no 225, Lakhimpur Kheri Uttar Pradesh 262701
(LC No. 193UK131226 of Lucknow - MMM Marg Branch) Kapilish Construction Private Limited (Borrower) Ripin Kapilish (Co Borrower 1) Vandna Kapilish (Co Borrower 2)	18-11-2024 / ₹ 1054311 / (₹ Ten lakh Fifty Four Thousand Three Hundred Eleven Only) NPA (08-11-2024)	Plot No. 11, Aazi No 413, Gram Pargahi Bargar, Kanpur Kanpur Urban Uttar Pradesh - 208002	(LC No. HLS		

DEGREE DISTRIBUTION PROGRAMME OF DAV PG COLLEGE

CUSB V-C stresses on making degree meaningful

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The degree distribution programme of DAV PG College, affiliated to Banaras Hindu University (BHU), was organised in the auditorium of Malviya Moolya Anysheelan Kendra (MMAK) in BHU here on Monday as part of the 104th convocation. In the inaugural session, the chief guest and Vice-Chancellor of Central University of South Bihar (CUSB), Gaya (Bihar), Prof Kameshwar Nath Singh, while addressing the students, said that our aim should be to make the degree obtained from this university, built by Mahamana Pt Madal Mohan Malaviya, meaningful.

"This is just a convocation, not an end of studies. After receiving initiation from the university, there will be ample opportunities for education", he said, adding that all the students came here for education but they will go from here only for service. Prof Singh said that Mahamana was not just a living personality, but a way of life, by following which the entire life of every student can



The degree distribution ceremony of DAV PG College being held at BHU in Varanasi on Monday.

improve. Special guest and Dean of Commerce Faculty of BHU Prof HK Singh said that after the convocation, there is a need for introspection and a positive attitude becomes very important in student life as this attitude also helps in building our character. Acting Principal of the college, Prof Mishrilal said students should never be proud of their knowledge but

should move ahead in life with concentration, humility and harmony. Presiding over the ceremony, BHU Rector Prof Sanjay Kumar said there is a need to understand the difference between literate and educated society and its importance. "When the youth receiving degrees from here will help in nation building, then definite-

ly this country will touch greater heights", he said. In the degree distribution ceremony of DAV, organised in three different sessions, University BHU's Controller of Examinations, Prof NK Mishra, Chief Proctor Prof SP Singh, Dean of Social Sciences Faculty Prof Binda Dattatreya Paranjape, Dean of Arts Faculty Prof Maya Shankar Pandey

and DAV's heads of all departments also attended the function. In the function, 817 graduates and 225 post graduates were awarded degrees. The students who came to receive their degrees wearing white turbans and *uttariyas* showed a lot of enthusiasm. On the occasion, a souvenir on the achievements and works of the college in one year was also released by the guests. The guests were welcomed by acting Principal Prof Mishrilal by presenting souvenirs while coordination was done by Prof Satyagopal. The programme was conducted by Dr Deepak Sharma, Dr Parul Jain and Dr Taru Singh and the vote of thanks was proposed by Prof Rahul. On this occasion, Vice-Principal Prof Sangeeta Jain, Prof Richarani Yadav, Prof Prashant Kashyap, Prof Sanjay Sah, Prof Satish Singh, Prof Anoop Mishra, Prof Vijaynath Dubey, Prof Madhu Sisodia, Prof Swati Sucharita Nanda, Prof Rakesh Ram, Prof Vinod Chaudhary, Prof Meenu Lakra, Prof Habibullah, Prof Indrajit Mishra and other teachers and staff were present.

Minister inaugurates AYUSH Vatika

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Uttar Pradesh Minister of State (Independent Charge) for AYUSH Dr Dayashankar Mishra 'Dayalu' inaugurated AYUSH Vatika in the park located at AYUSH Medical Centre (Manas Nagar, Durgakund) here on Sunday. The 'vatika' (garden) was established under the massive tree plantation campaign in the city, courtesy Ganga Haritima UP brand ambassador and Srijan Samajik Vikas Nyas president Anil Singh, understanding the importance of medicinal plants in increasing immunity during the COVID-19 pandemic. The minister planted an Arjuna sapling and told people about its importance for the treatment of heart disease and said that we get oxygen 24 hours a day from the Peepal tree. Appealing to the people present he said that be it birthday or wedding anniversary or any other occasion, a tree must be planted. He also administered oath to everyone for plantation on this occasion. Presiding over the function,



UP Minister Dr Dayashankar Mishra 'Dayalu' planting a sapling at AYUSH Vatika in Varanasi.

Parasnath Upadhyay highlighted the importance of AYUSH Vatika for envi-

ronmental protection. On this occasion, medicinal quality and high immunity enhancing plants like Arjun, Jamun, Guava, Mithi Neem, Neem, Choti Illachi, Black Pepper, Kalmegh, Ashwamedh, Sarpagandha, Amla, Aloe Vera, Giloy, Van Tulsi, Cinnamon, Tej Patta (Bay Leaf), Hing (Asafoetida), Turmeric, Garam Masala, Ajvayin (Celery), Lemongrass, Clove, Pipali, Parijat etc were planted. In order to increase awareness among people about medicinal plants, this AYUSH Vatika will help the coming generations to stay safe from all kinds of diseases in future. On the occasion Madan Ram Chaurasia, AYUSH minister's PRO Gaurav Rathi, Nagendra Dwivedi, Dr Hardat Shukla, Akshayvar Singh, Sudhir Singh, Santosh Saini, Saurabh Pathak, Jai Vishwakarma, Ramakant Tripathi, Rahul Pandey, Diwakar Dubey, Regional Forest Officer and forest workers, Municipal Corporation employees, citizens of Manas Nagar Colony, etc were present.

Tunnel construction progressing rapidly

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

The tunnel construction from Swadeshi Cotton Mill towards Kanpur Central under Corridor-1 of the Kanpur Metro Rail Project (IT-Naubasta) is progressing rapidly. Both Tunnel Boring Machines (TBMs) 'Azad' and 'Vidyarthi', have completed a 330-metre stretch from the ramp area near Swadeshi Cotton Mill to Transport Nagar station. The 'Azad' TBM is tunneling on the 'upline', while the 'Vidyarthi' TBM is working on the 'downline'. After reaching Transport Nagar station in October, the 'Azad' TBM was 'dragged' approximately 215 metres to the other end of the station. On Sunday it was launched to continue the tunnel construction along the remaining 1.80 km underground stretch towards Kanpur Central. This machine



will now dig through about 720 metres of tunnel on the 'upline' until it reaches Jhakarkati underground station. After 'dragging' the 158-metre station length again in Jhakarkati, the TBM will be launched for the final stretch, constructing a tunnel of approximately 940 metres to Kanpur Central. The 80-metre-long 'Azad' TBM after reaching the Transport

Nagar underground station, was first towed to the other end of the station using a 'dragging' method. The civil engineers from Uttar Pradesh Metro Rail Corporation Ltd (UPMRC) had previously completed the platform level construction inside the station to facilitate the 'dragging' process. Typically, TBMs are not 'dragged' inside underground metro stations instead, they are retrieved via a retrieval shaft at one end of the station and re-launched from a launching shaft at the other end. The 'dragging' method, however, significantly reduces the time typically required for this process. Managing Director of UPMRC, Sushil Kumar, said, "Today, Kanpur Metro has launched the 'Azad' TBM machine on the 'upline' for tunnel construction from Transport Nagar station to Kanpur Central station. The

'Vidyarthi' TBM, which is operating on the 'downline', has also reached Transport Nagar station and will soon be launched after being 'dragged' to the other end of the station. I am proud that the Kanpur Metro team is successfully tackling the challenging task of tunnelling beneath some of the most congested and busiest areas of the city. Metro construction is not just about building cement and steel structures on vacant land it also involves engaging with people, finding solutions and coordinating with local authorities. This collaborative effort, carried out with consent and coordination, is a true example of 'human engineering'. The Kanpur Metro team is fully committed to expanding passenger service from IIT to Kanpur Central by January. I am confident that with their dedication, they will successfully achieve this goal."

Woman ends life

Kanpur (PNS): A woman

committed suicide by hanging herself in Anand Vihar under Hanuman Vihar police station area on Sunday night. On getting information police sent the body for autopsy. According to a report, Sunita Gupta (39) of D Block, Barra World Bank was suffering from depression for the past several days. Her husband Satish Gupta runs a sweetmeat shop. According to him, few years ago, Sunita had a debate with neighbours and thereafter was afraid of something untoward happening to her. She often felt as if somebody wanted to kill her. Therefore he had got CCTV cameras installed in house but still she was always found scared. On Sunday she had arrived at her father-in-law's house in Anand Vihar, with husband where she hanged herself. Daughter Laxmi and sons are distraught by her death.

Sangathan Mahapary of BJP: 153 file nomination for posts of mandal chief

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

In the ongoing organisation- Lal election under Sangathan Mahapary-2024 of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the nomination process was completed in the presence of the Election Officer in all 13 Mandals in Varanasi city unit here on Sunday. City president Vidyasagar Rai said that 153 people filed nomination papers for the posts of Mandal president in a cordial atmosphere in all 13 Mandals. He said during the nomination, the contenders for the posts of Mandal chiefs reached the nomination site with their supporters and filed their nomination papers before the Mandal Election

Officer in a joyous atmosphere. Rai said 10 people filed nominations in Bageshwar Mandal, 15 in Sarnath Mandal, 16 in Rajarshi Mandal and 12 in Dhoop Chandi Mandal, falling under the City North assembly constituency. Besides, he said nine party workers filed nomination papers in Deendayal Mandal, seven in Kashi Vishwanath Mandal and 14 in Madhyameshwar Mandal, falling under the City South assembly constituency while nine filed nominations in Cantt Mandal, four in Cantonment Mandal, 19 in Mahamana Mandal, 16 in Ravidas Mandal, 9 in Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Mandal and 13 in Ranganagar Mandal,

falling under the Varanasi Cantt assembly constituency. City Election Officer Purushottam Khandelwal appointed by the state Bharatiya Janata Party organisation said the nomination process for the posts of Mandal president was completed in all 13 mandals of Varanasi City unit areas. After scrutiny of the filled forms, a Mandal-wise panel of three names will be made and sent to Kashi region. This panel of Mandal presidents will be sent to Lucknow through Kashi region, later after discussion in the Kashi region meeting to be held on December 19 in Lucknow the announcement of the Mandal presidents is expected to be announced on December 20.

Tribute paid to Zakir Hussain

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Former president of Uttar Pradesh Sangeet Natak Academy, Culture Department, Government of Uttar Pradesh, Padma Shri Dr Rajeshwar Acharya, Mahant of Sankat Mochan Temple Prof Vishwabharath Mishra and many others paid rich tribute to great tabla maestro Ustad Zakir Hussain. "It was a sad news that a great tabla player and a carrier of tradition in both the rhythm and preparation of music, who gave global fame to India, has passed away suddenly. He was born in the house of an 'ustad' and even after global fame, he was courteous towards elders and in Banaras his behavior had charmed all the artists," said Dr Rajeshwar Acharya. He said that he had seen Ustad Zakir Hussain growing up since childhood. "His skill was not only in playing the tabla, but sometimes he also made Zakir Hussain's tabla sing. The departure of such a great artiste has hurt me. A rhythm player who was a representative of the world-renowned Ustad Allahrakha Kha Sahab. Ustad Zakir Hussain will always be remembered in his glory", he added. Prof Vishwabharath Mishra recalled Kashi Utsav at Dhrupad Teerth Tulsi Ghat in 1993, where Ustad Zakir Hussain performed with his father and 'Guru' Ustad Allahrakha Sahab. Both of them were accompanied on Sarangi by Ustad Sultan Khan. "It was a memorable programme and Ustad Zakir Hussain will always be remembered as the best example of dedication and talent", he said. World record holder singer and stage director Dr Preetesh Acharya said that even when he was a child sitting in his father's lap he recalled the memorable performance of Ustad Zakir Hussain, along with Ustad Allahrakha and sitar player Pt Ravi Shankar in a music festival organised in Varanasi by RIMPA established by Bharat Ratna Pandit Ravi Shankar in 1981. "His name will remain etched in the hearts of music lovers in the times to come", he said.

Pension Adalat settles 73 complaints

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Pension Adalat was organised for the final payment of dues of retired employees of Varanasi Division, North Eastern Railway (NER) and their dependents in Bharatendu Sabhakaksha located in DRM Office here on Monday under the chairmanship of Divisional Railway Manager (DRM) Vineet Kumar Srivastava. Welcoming everyone the DRM said like every year, this year also Pension Adalat has been organised in which the employees of Personnel and Accounts departments have tried to settle 100 per cent of the complaints with their best efforts. "It is a matter of happiness that out of 76 complaints received for this Adalat, 73 were completely settled and three others were kept pending due to lack of authentic documents", he said, adding that the ideal situation will be considered when there is no need for Pension Adalat, but sometimes the orders for increase in the rate of allowances are received late or there are correction letters or amendments in rates on some items, or sometimes due to lack of documents, there is a compulsion not to release the payment even if everything is correct or the recommendation of Pay Commission is considered applicable from the previous date and this is the reason why such an event is required. Senior Divisional Personnel Officer



(SDPO) Sameer Paul welcomed everyone and said that Pension Adalat is organised every year for immediate redressal of the problems of retired railway employees. This year, most of the cases in the Pension Adalat were found to be related to pension revision, payment and coordination with banks. Senior Divisional Finance Manager (SDFM) Rajesh Kumar addressed the pensioners and their dependents and said it has now become easier for railway pensioners to submit life certificate. The NER has simplified the process of submission of Jeevan Pramaan for pensioners or family pensioners through Digital Life Certificate Campaign 3.0. Traditionally, pensioners were required to visit the bank every year in the month of November to ensure continuity of their pension. Now pensioners have been given the option to submit Jeevan Pramaan online, which will save time, he added. The Pension Adalat was conducted by Chief Welfare Inspector (CW1) Jitendra Kumar

Shrivastava and vote of thanks was proposed by SDPO Sameer Paul. Assistant Divisional Personnel Officers Virendra Yadav and Anirudh Kumar along with divisional secretary of OBC Association BN Yadav, divisional secretary of SC/ST Association Pramod Kumar and president Thaddeus Ddungdung and president of NER Pensioners Association (Varanasi Division) Pradeep Kumar Srivastava besides retired employees and their dependents were present. MEMORANDUM: A memorandum addressed to the Railway Minister was handed over to Divisional Railway Manager (DRM) of North Eastern Railway (NER) Vineet Kumar Srivastava regarding increasing the width of the under-construction Nakkhi Ghat under-bypass near the Varanasi City railway station in Varanasi. Led by former city president of Samajwadi Party (SP) Vishnu Sharma, the party workers reached DRM office in Lahartara here on Monday and handed over a memorandum to latter. Prominent among others who handed over the memorandum were former corporator Prashant Singh 'Pinku', city president of Yuva Jan Sabha Rahul Gupta, city chief of Lohia Vahini Sandeep Mishra, city president of Backward Class Cell Vivek Kahar 'Rocky', Dilip Kashyap, Jawahar Yadav, Sanjay Yadav, Hanuman Yadav, Altab Khan, Satyam Sonkar and Manish Yadav.

Laptops, projectors distributed

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Under the Shiksha Plus Project run in partnership with Janamitra Nyas and Shiv Nadar Foundation, 19 laptops and projectors were distributed to 19 Jan teachers (public teachers) for the adult literacy campaign in a programme organised at Kathiraoon Panchayat Bhawan under Badagaon block here on Monday. This initiative is an effort towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, especially Goal 4 (Quality Education) and Goal 5 (Gender Equality). The chief guest of the programme was Badagaon Block Development Officer (BDO) Rajesh Kumar Singh. ARP from the Education department Satish Kumar Singh and gram pradhans of Barji and Kathiraoon village panchayats also attended the programme. The BDO praised the initiative and called it an exemplary step to improve rural literacy and community development. Suggestions were also given to encourage public teachers and connect deprived persons with social development schemes. The aim of Shiksha Plus Project is to establish adult literacy centres and make 2,500 learners literate through digital means and

modern methods. Under the literacy empowerment programme, health awareness, financial literacy and information about government schemes have been made a part of education in which special help has been taken from information and communication technology based teaching methods. Janamitra Nyas has written a letter to the CM and the DM requesting cooperation to make the project more effective. In the letter emphasis has been laid on the establishment of literacy centres and coordination of government schemes under the project. In his statement, Lenin Raghuvanshi, senior adviser of Janamitra Nyas said, "Shiksha Plus Project is not only a means of providing literacy, but is a means of empowering life, increasing social awareness and developing decision making ability. This partnership with Shiv Nadar Foundation is a symbol of excellence in the field of education." Shrutu Nagvanshi (Managing Trustee of Janamitra Nyas), financial director Rinku Pandey, programme coordinator Mangala Prasad, along with Arvind Kumar, Sanjay Rajbhar, Vinod Kumar, Dinesh Yadav, Sandeep Kumar, Soni, Priya, Deepa, Deepak Pandey and hundreds of people participated in the programme.

One killed in mishap

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

A Bolero-borne farmer was killed while three others were injured when a speeding dumper going towards Mahoba hit them in Bharua Sumerpur police station area of Hamirpur on Monday morning. All the four injured farmers, residents of Ingohata village, were taken to the Maudaha community health centre (CHC) where one of them, was declared dead by the doctors. According to a report received here, Anshuman Singh (45) of Ingohata village along with farmer friends Jai Ram Nishad and Ranvijay Sonkar was going towards the field on the Bolero. He collected the tubewell boring mechanic Kalka near Artara village turn. Immediately after they moved ahead from there the speeding dumper going towards Mahoba hit them around 6 am and dragged up to 20 metres after which the Bolero fell into a pit and got badly damaged and all the four persons remained crushed under it for around one-and-half hours. The other farmers found that way informed the police which rushed to the spot. With the help of villagers, police rescued the farmers and sent them to Maudaha CHC by an ambulance where Anshuman Singh was declared dead by the doctors. Kalka was referred to Sadar Hospital while two other farmers who sustained minor injury were sent to home after first aid. MEMORANDUM: The Bajrang Dal activists demanded immediate arrest and dismissal of an ACP accused of 'sexually assaulting' a student. They reached the office of Police Commissioner Akhil Kumar on Monday and handed over a memorandum to his staff officer ADCP Amita Singh. They threatened to launch a movement if the city police authorities failed to arrest the police officer soon. ADCP Amita Singh said a committee had been set up to probe the issue. She assured the activists of an impartial action in the matter.

KCA organises prize distribution ceremony

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

The Kanpur Cricket Association (KCA) organised prize distribution ceremony for three years (2021-22, 2022-23 and 2023-24) at the Ganges Club on Sunday night. Chief guest Dr Sanjay Kapoor felicitated the players of winner and runner-up teams for three years with the prizes. Prashant Gupta awarded prizes to century makers, bowlers hauling seven wickets and making hatrick, best batters and bowlers. Former Ranji player Shashikant Khandekar awarded trophies and prizes to winner, runner-up teams and players of KC Awasthi and JN Trivedi Cricket tournament.



KCA Secretary Kaushal Kumar Singh, vice-president Sanjay Tewari, PS Negi, Saurabh Gupta, Manish Mehrotra, Ashwani Kohli and Vinay Anand were present. Arvind Singh conducted the proceedings. KCA President SN Singh proposed vote of thanks. CHESS TOURNAMENTS: The UP Chess Sports Association will organise two major chess tournaments aimed at promoting the growth of chess in the state and India. Addressing mediapersons on Monday, president Karthik Kapoor said these tournaments were designed to encourage chess players at national and international levels and to popularise the game across the

state. He said the Krishna Gopal Kapoor Memorial International Rating Chess Tournament will be held here at the Ganges Club from December 18 to 22. It carries a prize money of ₹11 lakh to be played on classical format (90 minutes plus 30 seconds increment per move). Besides, the ₹11 lakh prize money World Peace International Below 1800 Chess tournament will be organised at JP Public School, Noida, from January 4 to 7, 2025. It will also be played on classical format (60 minutes plus 30 seconds increment per move). He said the initiative by the UPSCA aims to position Uttar Pradesh as a leading state in chess while providing opportunities to budding and talented players.

Emphasis on precautions to keep kids safe during winter

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

As the winter season has begun it is important for parents to take proactive steps to protect their children from seasonal illnesses. The colder months see a rise in respiratory infections such as flu, strep throat and other common illnesses, which young children are more prone to. Since children have a developing immune system, they are more vulnerable to cold. By following a few simple precautions, parents can help keep their children safe and healthy during the winter season. This was stated by paediatrician at Regency Health, Dr Neha Agarwal, while addressing

mediapersons here. She said, "Winter illnesses can take a toll on young children, but parents can keep their children safe with certain precautions and important habits. Getting your child vaccinated against the flu, promoting good hygiene and minimising exposure to crowded places are simple but effective ways to keep your little ones healthy during the cold months. By being cautious and making small changes, parents can create a safe environment for their children. Let's prepare for a healthy winter season and help our children thrive as the temperatures drop". She added one of the most effective ways to protect children's health is to get timely flu

vaccines. Paediatricians recommend vaccinating children before the peak of the flu season as this strengthens immunity and reduces the risk of serious illness. In addition, children should have as little contact as possible with people who are very sick. By doing this, the chances of infection can be reduced to a great extent. To avoid exposure to infectious diseases, parents should avoid unnecessary visits to crowded places, such as hospitals or social gatherings. She said creating a healthy home environment is also very important. Avoiding indoor smoking and exposure to secondhand smoke is important to maintain good respiratory

health. For children with cold symptoms, measures such as saline drops, nasal aspirators or humidifiers can help ease discomfort. However, it is also important to avoid making the room too humid as this can make respiratory problems worse, especially for children with asthma. She said maintaining strict hygiene habits is the most important aspect of prevention. Children should be taught the importance of washing hands regularly. Also, ensure that they wash their hands properly and prevent the spread of germs. For children with respiratory illnesses like asthma, it is important to consult a paediatrician to avoid potential triggers.

# PM Modi holds talks with Sri Lankan President

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

India and Sri Lanka on Monday here adopted a futuristic vision to expand their partnership, resolved to soon conclude a defence cooperation pact and decided to ramp up energy ties by establishing electricity grid connectivity and multi-product petroleum pipelines. The decisions were taken during wide-ranging talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Disanayaka. Modi said both sides decided to emphasise investment-led growth and connectivity for the India-Sri Lanka economic partnership, and it was decided that physical, digital and energy connectivity will be key pillars of the cooperation. Work will be done to establish electricity grid connectivity and multi-product petroleum pipelines, Modi said, adding India will supply liquefied natural gas to the island nation's power plants. The prime minister also announced that a ferry service will be started between



Ranjana Dimri

Rameshwaram and Talaimanar to boost connectivity between the two nations. "We both agree that our security interests are interconnected. We have decided to soon finalise the defence cooperation agreement. There has also been an agreement for cooperation on hydrography," Modi said. The vexed fishermen issue also figured in the talks. "We also discussed issues related to the livelihood of fishermen. We agree that we must proceed with a humanitarian approach

to this matter," Modi said. Referring to the Tamil issue, the Prime Minister said India hopes that the Sri Lankan government will fulfil the aspirations of the community. The prime minister also noted that India has so far provided Lines of Credit and grant assistance worth USD 5 billion to Sri Lanka. "We have cooperation in all 25 districts of Sri Lanka and selection of our projects is always based on priorities of our partner countries," he said.

# Why Govt not acting against SEBI chief, asks Congress

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Monday levelled conflict of interest allegations against the SEBI chairperson Madhabi Buch and claimed that Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's "failure" to act decisively on it has not only tarnished the credibility of the government but also jeopardised the financial governance framework. Attacking the government over the Adani issue during the discussion on the supplementary demands for grants in Lok Sabha, Congress MP KC Venugopal said a joint parliamentary committee must probe the entire matter. He alleged it is a government "by Adani, of Adani, for Adani".

Venugopal said between 2017-2024, Buch allegedly received over Rs 16.4 crore from ICICI bank while serving as a Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) official regulating that bank. "This was five times her salary from SEBI, presenting a blatant conflict of interest, he said. She received rental income from entities linked to a firm under SEBI investigation, said Venugopal, who also heads the Public Accounts Committee (PAC).



"What does it mean sir, SEBI is investigating the company and the chairperson is renting out property to entity linked to that company," he said. Venugopal also alleged that the SEBI chairperson traded in securities worth of Rs 36.9 crore while holding access to unpublished price-sensitive information which he said was a direct violation of SEBI code of ethics. She failed to disclose assets in Singapore and the US between 2017-21 despite being obligated to do

so, Venugopal said. Despite these allegations, the finance minister neither initiated an independent inquiry nor has taken any disciplinary action, Venugopal said. "Inaction undermines the government's claim of transparency and commitment to investor confidence," he said. Posing questions to the Finance Minister, Venugopal asked why has the Finance Ministry not initiated any disciplinary and legal proceedings against the SEBI

chairperson despite clear evidence of conflicts of interest that undermines the integrity of the regulatory body. "Doesn't the finance minister take note, acknowledge and take responsibility for the damage to investor confidence, both domestic and foreign, due to the lack of timely action against SEBI chairperson?" he said. Can the Finance Minister clarify whether the government is willing to accept responsibility for the uncertainty and

volatility of stock market, stemming from the conflict of interest involving the SEBI chairperson, he said. What steps does the finance minister intend to take to ensure transparency and accountability in SEBI leadership especially in the light of the allegations, Venugopal asked. "Does the Ministry believe that retaining the chairperson under such circumstances send a wrong signal to India's commitment to corporate governance and regulatory transparency?" he said. "The Finance Minister's failure to act decisively not only tarnished the credibility of the government but also jeopardised the national financial governance framework. What is the complicit interest of the government and the SEBI chairperson?" Venugopal said. Why the Government is not taking any action, he asked. He alleged that the name of Adani group figured in stock manipulation and questioned how the SEBI chairperson can investigate that when "she is part of the scandal". He demanded that a JPC inquiry be initiated in the entire matter. In the country, 11 crore people are dependent on stock markets, most of them from middle income groups, he said.

# Debate on Glorious Journey of 75 Years of Constitution of India: Treasury, Opp benches trade charges

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Rajya Sabha on Monday saw treasury and opposition benches trading charges during the discussion on the 'Glorious Journey of 75 Years of the Constitution of India'. Initiating the debate, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said the Congress party carried out major amendments to the Constitution to brazenly help the "family" and the "dynasty". Leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha and Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of misleading the country by 'twisting facts' about Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's letter on reservation to states and demanded an apology. The Upper House will debate on the issue on Monday and Tuesday. Sitharaman also termed the Congress party as "anti-women" for not passing the Women's Reservation Bill under pressure of its coalition partners. The senior BJP leader said the economic policies of the previous Congress governments for about 50 years did not strengthen the Indian economy. "Each time the Congress brazenly (amended Constitution)... Only to help the family, the dynasty... Kept

amending the Constitution," she said. Citing various amendments, including the 42nd Constitutional Amendment and one related to the Shah Bano case, the Finance Minister said none of the amendments passed the test of four criteria -- economic good, social intent, due process, and constitutional spirit. She said the amendments were not to strengthen democracy but to protect those in power and strengthen the family. In her speech, she said renowned lyricist Majrooh Sultanpuri and actor Balraj Sahni were both jailed in 1949. Congress' record of curtailing freedom of speech was not just confined to Sultanpuri and Sahni, she said and highlighted many more instances, including banning of a film called 'Kissa Kursi Ka' just because it questioned the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and her son. Sitharaman further said the spree of curtailing the freedom of expression and freedom of press had happened before 1949 and thereafter also during the Congress rule. The Minister said India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru adopted the Soviet Model and was carried forward by Indira Gandhi, but

the socialist model did not benefit India. She said the economic policies followed by the Congress governments for 50 years did not strengthen the economy. Referring to the women reservation in Parliament and state assemblies, Sitharaman said a bill regarding it was passed in the Rajya Sabha in 2008, but the ruling Congress did not take it to the Lok Sabha, as its alliance partners were not in favour of the legislation. She said Congress is "anti-women" as it did not pass the Women's Reservation Bill to save "Kursi" (power). Rajiv Gandhi had 426 members in Lok Sabha and 159 members in the Rajya Sabha, they did not have the conviction to pass the Women's Reservation Bill at that time. Very clearly, they have always been anti-women. Shah Bano case is a very clear example, she said. The Congress Party, she said passed the Muslim Women Protection of Rights on Divorce Act, 1986 which denied Muslim women their right to alimony. On the other hand, the Modi government brought the 'Nari Shakti Vandan Adhinyam' in the first session, which was held in the new building of the Parliament. On the contrary, she said her party, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), has always been



committed to women's reservation and increasing women participation in politics. "I myself am a beneficiary of this," the Finance Minister said. At the start of her speech, she paid homage to the 389 members of the Constituent Assembly, including 15 women, who took up the arduous challenge and prepared the Constitution for India in a very challenging environment. The Constitution of India "has stood the test of time," she said. "Today we are extremely proud of the way India's democracy is growing." Stating that India and its Constitution stands out in a separate league of its own, Sitharaman said post the second World War, over 50 countries had become independent

and they had their constitution written. While accusing Prime Minister Modi of misleading the country by "twisting facts" about Pandit Nehru, Kharge also charged the BJP leaders of indulging in 'bhakti' of Prime Minister Modi, asserting that it was leading the country towards dictatorship. The Congress President cited Modi's speech in which he had said there was no elected government between 1947-1952 and the Congress had illegally amended the Constitution. Kharge said the first amendment was carried out by the Constituent Assembly members which included Syama Prasad Mookerjee and was undertaken to provide reservation to Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribes, fix problems related to education,

employment and abolish Zamindari system. "I want to inform the House that the Supreme Court had rejected Madras state's decision on reservation." He said the other aspect of this amendment was to stop communal propaganda and Sardar Patel in a letter on July three, 1950 had suggested to Nehru that constitutional amendment was the only remedy for this problem. "Therefore, Nehru wrote a letter to chief ministers. This has been mentioned in PM's speech after twisting facts to defame Nehru for which he should apologise to the nation. This is my demand. If you twist the facts before the nation and attempt to defame, then you should apologise in this House and other House and before people of this country," Kharge said. He said the prime minister lives in past, not in present and it would have been better had he listed present achievements that strengthened democracy. Kharge claimed erstwhile leaders of RSS were against the Constitution. "In 1949, the entire country knew that RSS leaders opposed the Constitution because it was not based on Manusmriti. RSS mouthpiece Organiser in the edition of November 30, 1949 had written about it," he said.

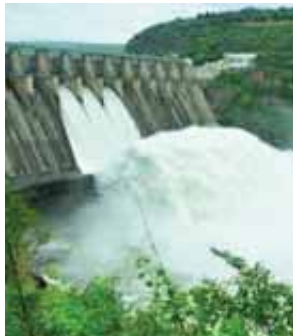
Kharge said it is clear from debates of the Constituent Assembly that erstwhile leaders of RSS were against the Constitution. Those who hated the flag, Ashok Chakra and the Constitution are today giving lessons to us on the Constitution." He said even when many powerful countries were not practising universal adult franchise, women and all sections of societies in India were given the right to vote during the Congress regime through the Constitution. He said that government leaders cut-paste information and present them as per their convenience to twist facts. "Those who did not fight for the country, how will they know the importance of freedom, Constitution?" Kharge asked. BJP has been giving 'jumlas' and befooling people of the country and questioned promises made by Modi to pay Rs 15 lakh, he said adding people are still waiting for the money as well as two crore jobs and doubling of farmers' income. Kharge said that BJP is against reservation and that is why the party is against caste census. He further said the Congress government will implement women reservation faster than BJP. He also raised the issue of

Manipur, which is suffering from ethnic violence for the last one-and-half years. He said the prime minister travels everywhere but has no time to visit the strife-torn state. Some other Opposition MPs accused the government of attacking the federal structure and undermining constitutional bodies while claiming that an Emergency-like situation exists in the country. Debashish Samantaray, whose party Biju Janata Dal (BJD) is not a part of either the ruling National Democratic Alliance (NDA) or opposition's Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA), alleged that Constitutional watchdogs have been converted into "pet-dogs". "What is the situation today, anyone can be sent to jail, chief ministers were put in jail, denied bail. There is definitely an Emergency in the country, I will say it openly," he said. Trinamool Congress Rajya Sabha MP Saket Gokhale alleged that justice is being denied to people under the NDA government and accused it of destroying the Constitution. He alleged that minorities are being subjected to "atrocities every day". DMK's Tiruchi Siva accused the Union government of undermining the federal structure of the country.

# 224 big dams in country over century old, Minister tells RS

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

India has 1,065 large dams that are between 50 and 100 years old while 224 are over a century old, the Union Jal Shakti Ministry said on Monday. There are a total of 6,138 constructed and 143 under-construction dams in the country. Responding to a question in the Rajya Sabha, Minister of State for Jal Shakti Raj Bhushan Choudhary said the government enacted the Dam Safety Act, 2021 to address the challenges posed by ageing dams and to prevent disasters arising from dam failures. He said dams, apart from serving irrigation and power generation purposes, play a significant role in mitigating floods. According to the National Register of Large Dams (NRLD-2023 edition), compiled jointly by the National Dam Safety Authority (NDSA) and CWC, there are 6,138 constructed and 143 under construction dams which aggregate to a total of 6,281 large dams. Of these numbers, only 224 dams are more than 100 years old and there are 1065 large dams which are 50 to 100 years old. Choudhary said the govern-



ment enacted the Dam Safety Act and is also implementing the Dam Rehabilitation and Improvement Project (DRIP) Phase II and III, aimed at rehabilitating 736 dams across 19 states and three central agencies. After China and America, India ranks third in the world in terms of the number of dams. In August, the Government had told Parliament that at least 47 dams—38 commissioned and 9 under construction—have been identified by the Central Electricity Authority as potentially affected by Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOFs) from glacial lakes in India. GLOF studies have been completed for 31 of these projects, the Government said. A glacial lake outburst flood (GLOF) is a type of outburst flood caused by the failure of a dam containing a glacial lake.

# Delhi's groundwater resources heavily strained, says Jalshakti Minister

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi's groundwater resources are heavily strained, with the overall extraction rate at 99.13 per cent, categorised as "critical", while the situation in Bengaluru is even more alarming with the overall groundwater extraction rate at 150.84 per cent, the Union Jal Shakti ministry said on Monday. Responding to a question in the Rajya Sabha, Minister of State for Jal Shakti, Raj Bhushan Choudhary, said that while desalination technology using reject heat from nuclear reactors is operational at Kalpakkam, Tamil Nadu, it is not widely applicable. Instead, the reverse osmosis (RO) membrane technology is deemed suitable for treating groundwater, the minister said. The government has also assessed groundwater dynamics in urban areas like Delhi and Bengaluru, but similar data for Mumbai is unavailable due to insufficient data collection. Delhi's groundwater resources are heavily strained, with the overall extraction rate at 99.13 per cent, which is categorised as "critical", Choudhary informed. Areas like Vasant Vihar, Mehrauli, and Saket are in



dire straits, recording extraction levels of 153.13 per cent, 117.9 per cent, and 116.31 per cent, respectively. Vasant Vihar topped the chart for overextraction, drawing more than 1.6 times the available resource, he said. The critical zones in Delhi include central and south regions like Karol Bagh (114.47 per cent), Chanakypuri (131.45 per cent), and Dwarka (99.83 per cent). Shahdara and south-west districts also reported concerning levels, with overextraction exacerbating water stress. The situation in Bengaluru is even more alarming, with the overall groundwater extrac-

tion rate at 150.84 per cent, the minister said. Yelahanka emerged as the most stressed region, extracting over 225 per cent of its available groundwater resource. Other urban areas, including Bangalore North, East, and South, recorded over extraction rates exceeding 200 per cent. Bangalore City itself reported an extraction rate of 217.4 per cent. The minister also emphasised that advanced desalination and groundwater recharge technologies could play a role in water conservation, but their scalability is constrained by infrastructure and feasibility challenges.

# Only 28 per cent of urban wastewater undergoes treatment in India: CSE report

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Just 28 per cent of about 20,236 million liters per day urban wastewater generated in India undergoes treatment, leaving the remaining i.e. 72 per cent untreated and flowing into rivers, lakes, and land, a report by the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) has revealed. The largest gap in wastewater treatment is seen in states like Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Delhi, and Haryana. The untreated water not only causes environmental damage but also presents an opportunity to tackle India's growing urban water crisis due to rapid urbanization, industrial growth, population expansion, and climate change, says the report. "Waste to Worth: Managing India's urban water crisis through wastewater reuse" was released recently at a national workshop organized jointly by CSE and the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG), under the Union Ministry of Jal Shakti. Speaking on the occasion, Sunita Narain, director general, CSE said: "India faces significant water scarcity challenges due to rapid urbanisation, industrial growth, population expansion -- and most importantly -- climate change. Wastewater reuse can be a key part of the strategy to address these concerns and promote



water circularity and sustainability." Rajiv Kumar Mital, director general, NMCG echoed similar views and said that "Using and disposing treated water, without harnessing its potential, means we are losing out on utilising an important resource. The challenge is to scale up and ensure that the work we do in this sector is impactful." The Jal Shakti Ministry has mandated that cities must recycle and reuse at least 20 per cent of the water they consume. The report also highlights good examples -- cases of states that have introduced policies to encourage treated wastewater reuse." Maharashtra, for instance, mandates industries in urban areas to use treated wastewater. Gujarat targets 100 per cent reuse with applications in agriculture and industry, and Tamil Nadu promotes reuse for industrial and urban greening projects. At the national level, the National Urban Sanitation

Policy (NUSP) and the Namami Gange Programme emphasise wastewater management and reuse as key components of water security initiatives. Cities like Nagpur, Bengaluru and Chennai have taken the lead in implementing wastewater reuse practices. Nagpur supplies treated wastewater to power plants, significantly reducing freshwater usage, while Bengaluru utilises it for agriculture, lake revival and groundwater recharge. Chennai has adopted treated wastewater for industrial applications, urban landscaping and groundwater recharge. While advancements in decentralised and cost-effective treatment technologies can address infrastructure deficits, the report also calls for public-private partnerships that can help mobilise investments for scaling up reuse projects, and capacity-building initiatives to improve awareness and acceptance among urban managers and communities.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

## Economy slowing down

India, celebrated as the fastest-growing economy in the world, is showing signs of slowdown

India is facing a pivotal moment as it navigates a notable slowdown. Between July and September 2024, the country's GDP growth rate fell to 5.4 per cent, its lowest in seven quarters and well below the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) forecast of 7 per cent. While this growth rate remains enviable compared to developed economies, it highlights significant structural challenges that could impede India's long-term economic ambitions. The implications of this slowdown are multifaceted. A decline in consumer demand and muted private investment have curtailed economic momentum. Sales of fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) have dropped, wage bills of publicly traded firms have shrunk, and urban spending has softened. In November alone, car sales plunged by 14 per cent, underscoring the waning strength of urban consumption. Rising inflation adds another layer of complexity. In October 2024, inflation surged to 6.2 per cent, exceeding the RBI's target ceiling of 4 per cent. Escalating



food prices, driven by climate disruptions and inefficiencies in supply chains, have inflated costs across sectors, further squeezing disposable incomes.

The slowdown has also placed pressure on India's exports, which account for just 2 per cent of global goods trade. A stronger dollar and rising tariffs have eroded the competitiveness of Indian products in international markets. Compounding the issue is stagnant job creation, particularly in agriculture, manufacturing, and small-scale industries. Collectively, these factors are eroding confidence in India's growth narrative, despite the government's optimistic outlook. The roots of this economic deceleration lie in several factors.

Demand weakness is a central issue. While rural demand remains relatively resilient thanks to a favourable monsoon, it alone cannot offset the broader slowdown. Restrictive monetary policies have further constrained growth. To combat inflation, the RBI has kept interest rates steady for two years, leading to high borrowing costs that discourage both business investment and consumer spending. Global and domestic challenges compound the problem. Slowing global demand and climate-related disruptions in agriculture have adversely affected exports and food production. Additionally, the RBI's interventions to stabilise the rupee by selling dollars have inadvertently tightened liquidity, slowing economic growth. A stronger rupee, while stabilising in some respects, makes Indian exports more expensive and less competitive internationally. Addressing these challenges requires targeted solutions. Boosting consumption through wage growth could be a key strategy. Policy measures that reduce bureaucratic hurdles, provide tax incentives, and simplify labour and land laws can unlock the potential of small and medium enterprises, which form the backbone of the economy. Tackling inflation and strengthening supply chains will also play a critical role in stabilising the economy.

## PICTALK



An artist paints a wall at Lodhi Road area, in New Delhi

## South Asia: Two decades of turmoil



SANTHOSH MATHEW

December marks two pivotal anniversaries — Soviet intervention in Afghanistan and Kandhar Hijacking — that changed South Asia's geopolitics

December marks two pivotal anniversaries that significantly influenced South Asia's geopolitical landscape: 45 years since the Soviet Union's intervention in Afghanistan and 25 years since the hijacking of Indian Airlines Flight IC-814 from Kathmandu to Kandahar. Despite occurring two decades apart, these events underscore the fragility of South Asia and the profound influence of external powers and non-state actors in shaping the region's trajectory.

On December 24, 1979, Soviet troops entered Afghanistan to support the struggling communist regime in Kabul, led by Babrak Karmal. This intervention, ostensibly aimed at stabilising Afghanistan, set off a decade-long occupation and transformed the country into one of the Cold War's fiercest battlegrounds. The repercussions extended far beyond Afghanistan, triggering global, regional and internal upheavals that persist to this day. The Soviet invasion catalysed a chain of events that hastened the disintegration of the Soviet Union and radicalised South Asia. The mujahideen-fighters armed and financed by the United States, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and other allies became a formidable force against the Soviets. This external patronage laid the groundwork for militant extremism, which would later engulf the region. The Soviet intervention underscored Afghanistan's strategic importance as the fulcrum of great power politics. Pakistan emerged as a critical player, acting as a frontline state in the anti-Soviet effort.

Two decades later, on December 24, 1999, South Asia faced another defining moment when Indian Airlines Flight IC-814 was hijacked en route from Kathmandu to Delhi. Five armed men commandeered the aircraft, eventually forcing it to land in Kandahar, then under Taliban control. What ensued was a week-long standoff that exposed the vulnerabilities of regional counter-terrorism strategies and marked a turning point in how nations approached security and terrorism.



The Kandahar hijacking exposed the evolving nexus between terrorism and geopolitics in South Asia. The Taliban's willingness to shelter the hijackers highlighted its transition into a state sponsor of terrorism. For India, this incident was a stark reminder of the threats posed by cross-border terrorism, often enabled by Pakistan's support for extremist proxies in Afghanistan and Kashmir. The release of Masood Azhar not only emboldened groups like JeM but also underscored the growing influence of non-state actors in undermining regional stability.

Although the Soviet intervention and the Kandahar hijacking may seem unrelated, they are deeply interconnected in shaping South Asia's trajectory. The destabilisation of Afghanistan during the Soviet occupation created fertile ground for militancy, enabling the rise of networks that facilitated events like the Kandahar hijacking. Pakistan's role as a key US ally during the Soviet-Afghan war empowered its military-intelligence complex, which later exploited jihadist networks to further strategic objectives in Kashmir and Afghanistan. These same networks became instrumental in orchestrating attacks against India, exemplified by the IC-814 hijacking.



ADDRESSING SOUTH ASIA'S FRACTURED SECURITY LANDSCAPE REQUIRES COLLECTIVE ACTION. COUNTRIES IN THE REGION MUST TRANSCEND HISTORICAL ANIMOSITIES TO COMBAT TERRORISM AND ADDRESS SHARED CHALLENGES LIKE EXTREMISM AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC DISPARITIES

Both events marked the ascendancy of non-state actors in South Asia's security dynamics.

The mujahideen's success against the Soviets emboldened militant groups across the region, while the Kandahar hijacking demonstrated their ability to exploit state vulnerabilities for political gains. The Kandahar episode underscored the inadequacy of India's counter-terrorism infrastructure at the time. It led to significant reforms, including the establishment of specialised counter-terrorism units like the National Security Guard (NSG) and the strengthening of aviation security protocols. Pakistan's dual role in these episodes—as a US ally during the Soviet-Afghan war and as a sanctuary for groups like JeM—has perpetuated instability in the region. Its support for extremist proxies has strained relations with India and exacerbated internal security challenges.

Addressing South Asia's fractured security landscape requires collective action. Countries in the region must transcend historical animosities to combat terrorism and address shared challenges like extremism and socio-economic disparities. Both the Soviet intervention and the Kandahar hijacking highlight the need

for strong democratic institutions and accountable governance. Weak states are particularly susceptible to external manipulation and internal subversion, further destabilising the region.

The lessons from these pivotal episodes remain crucial as South Asia navigates the 21st century. The radicalisation fueling terrorism often stems from socio-economic deprivation. Investments in education, healthcare, and employment can help counter extremist ideologies. Strengthened regional cooperation and robust international partnerships are essential to addressing the complex interplay of geopolitics and terrorism.

Much like the Grand Trunk Road connecting distant regions and histories, these events remind us of the intersecting paths of interventionism and terrorism in shaping modern South Asia.

They were not mere crises but turning points that redefined the region's political, social, and economic trajectories. As South Asia confronts new challenges, the enduring lessons of these anniversaries emphasize the importance of resilience, cooperation, and proactive governance in securing a stable future.

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

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## DEBATE ON CONSTITUTION

Madam — The two-day debate on the Constitution, which began on 13th December, has seen heated discussion on the historical and contemporary significance of the Constitution. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh initiated the debate, emphasising the collective efforts behind the creation of the Constitution. Though he accused Congress and Indira Gandhi for imposing an emergency and supersession of Supreme Court judges to charge Congress with violating constitutional principles, he lauded the progressive and transformative nature of the Constitution that allows individuals from humble backgrounds to rise to the highest positions of power in India.

The newly elected MP, Priyanka Gandhi, an articulate and combative speaker, accused the government of undermining the constitutional promises of social, economic and political justice over the past decade. Without mentioning the name of Jawaharlal Nehru, she lauded his contribution in creating so many public sector as well as government firms. She also warned the present government that his role in the freedom struggle and Independent India could never be erased from Indian history. Concluding the debate, Prime Minister Narendra Modi hailed the role of women members of the constituent Assembly in making the Indian Constitution. He also hailed Indian democracy and reminded the journey of the Constitution.

P Victor Selvaraj | Tirunelveli

## INDIA'S GDP RISES

Madam — Forbes India estimates India's GDP to be \$3.94 trillion in 2024. Prime Minister Narendra Modi said India rose to the 11th largest economy in the world in seven decades of independence, but in just the last decade, India has risen to the 5th largest economy while addressing a gathering at the Jaipur Exhibition and Convention Centre after the inauguration of the Rising Rajasthan Global Investment Summit 2024. He attributed this growth

## Tabla maestro Zakir Hussain passes away



The four-time Grammy Award winner, Indian tabla maestro and an innovative music fusion creator, Zakir Hussain is no more with us. The silence on his tabla is a huge loss for Hindustani classical music and jazz fusion. Zakir was truly an indelible gem in the world of music. The list of his national and international accolades is really long, as he had always made India proud with his tireless contribution in

taking Hindustani classical music to collaborate and fuse with world music. Like his father, Ustad Alha Rakha, Zakir always attempted to proceed to the legacy footprint of his father.

His tabla virtuoso legacy had been curated in the golden letters in the history of Indian music because of his glorious contribution to music. Taking an Indian, 18th-century membranophone percussion instrument (tabla) to the world stage is truly an incredible achievement, and history will credit this legendary maestro, Zakir Hussain, for his pertinacious contribution towards Hindustani classical music. He will always stay alive in our hearts and continue to inspire the upcoming generations of music and instrument lovers.

Kirti Wadhawan | Kanpur

to the exceptional efficiency of his government.

Nevertheless, the story would be incomplete without a mention of the economic growth across different regions. Southern states, which occupy 19.34 per cent of India's land area and 20.76 per cent of its population, contributed about 30.5 per cent of the GDP. Western states of Maharashtra and Gujarat, which together occupy 15.32 per cent of India's land area and 14.27 per cent of its population, added another 21.4 per cent.

On the contrary, the NDA-BJP-ruled states of Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, which cover 34.09 per cent of the area and have 38.95 per cent of the population, together contributed only 22.4 per cent to the GDP. This is despite the fact that the five BJP states received a significantly higher share of funds from the central divisible revenue pool. They received a 45.29 per cent share, whereas the five southern states got only 15.81 per cent. Further, according to the IMF World Economic Outlook

(October 2024), India is currently ranked 144th among 194 economies in terms of GDP (nominal) per capita at \$2698 at current prices. This suggests that the standard of living and quality of life in much of India improved at a snail's pace, even though the economy expanded rapidly.

Haridasan Rajan | Kozhikode

## PM MODI SLAMS CONGRESS

Madam — Modi lambasted the first parivar as the killers of the constitution during the debate on the constitution in parliament. Right from Nehru's letter in 1951 to the state CM's, Indira's emergency, Rajiv's dealing with the Shah Bano case, and Rahul's tearing of an ordinance, Modi spoke the truth. It is a big blow to the Congress since they were at fault in their earlier tenure. It should introspect. Secondly, Modi has drawn up an 11-point Sankalp like the 20-point programme of Indira Gandhi.

N R Ramachandran | Chennai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

## Overcoming fear to unlock limitless possibilities

Embracing the unknown is essential for innovation, resilience and realising our true potential

Humans possess four basic emotions — happiness, sadness, anger and fear. Each has a unique place in our lives and shapes much of our responses to situations. The unknown is probably one entity that invokes all four emotions and spurs us into action. However, it is the fear of what we project onto the unknown that often paralyzes us into inaction. Action is built into our psyche. We must necessarily move, even though we do not know the results of our endeavours. Instead of focusing on the happiness we will derive from success, we let this uncertainty bog us down. We procrastinate terrified of failure and refuse to take the next step. This is an all too familiar phenomenon that we encounter every day of our lives. As we start going up the professional ladder, many of us follow time-tested formulae, handed down to us by predecessors. We hesitate to make decisions contrary to the established norms, even though such decisions may result in sub-



stantial gains, within the framework of certain acceptable risks. All our efforts are guided by that one decision in 10 which did not click. We do not look at the nine that did. We forget that as a child we had no fears when we started exploring the universe around us. We fell, as we tried to get on our two feet, but were encouraged, or even forced, to keep trying till we mastered the art of walking; or for that matter everything. We also forget that we were not scared to take up a job after college, even though we knew nothing about the work we had to do. We learned from our mistakes. The worst was that we failed the first time, and the best

was that we succeeded eventually. Ah! The joy of success! We forget that humans evolved due to an inherent desire to explore the unknown, without a care for failure or success. New worlds were found, and new inventions and scientific discoveries were made.

All because a few dared to venture into the unknown. We deny ourselves the endless new opportunities that each new day brings. It is not that we do not possess this spirit. It is just that generations of conditioning have made it dormant, till we are in a situation with our backs to the wall. Nowhere is it more in evidence, than in jugaad, the flexible approach to solve a problem innovatively when one has limited resources. In our personal lives, we are told to pursue our dreams but are often guided towards the more tried and safer options.

We do not even try to think of the endless possibilities and the heights that society can reach if everyone is encouraged not to fear the failure of the unknown, but

to think about success, and is free to follow his or her heart!

This is the contradiction that most of us from the earlier generation, specifically from the middle class, face when teaching the young. Fortunately for our race, the young of today are better prepared for the unknown with the availability of much better sources of information which were also created by a few who dared to dream. We should teach the young to step out in the rain without an umbrella and get drenched. Let the sky be the roof. They should not regret that they might have led a better life if they had not feared the unknown. Esmeralda Santiago sums it up so well. "How can you know what you are capable of, if you do not embrace the unknown?"

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



SANJAY CHANDRA



## FIRST COLUMN

## WORKPLACE SURVEILLANCE

As remote work redefine workplaces, businesses are increasingly turning to employee monitoring



SHAINY SHARMA

In the modern workplace, the rise of remote and hybrid work has led to significant shifts in how businesses operate, manage and monitor their employees. Among the most controversial developments is the growing use of tattleware or brassware, the common nicknames of software applications that monitor employees' activities during work hours.

With the advent of normalised remote work, employer surveillance of workers has accelerated. Today, such tools can track a wide range of data, including keystrokes, mouse movements, screenshots, and even video or audio feeds from an employee's device. Not only this, but the much-advanced systems may also use artificial intelligence to analyse patterns, flag unproductive behaviour, or even detect potential security breaches. Employers claim these tools provide valuable insights into work habits, protect sensitive data, and improve overall efficiency. It allows businesses to track productivity metrics thereby ensuring that the employees meet deadlines and work efficiently, especially in remote setups where physical supervision is absent.

Also, such surveillance tools help prevent data breaches or intellectual property theft by monitoring unauthorised activities. Moreover, these wares provide evidence in disputes about working hours or performance, thereby offering an objective record of employee activity. When implemented transparently and ethically, these tools even foster accountability and help underperforming employees improve. Despite the above-mentioned benefits, the use of tattleware raises significant ethical concerns wherein the most



common one talked about is privacy. Employees believe that privacy is a fundamental right, and excessive surveillance can infringe upon it. A survey conducted recently found that nearly 78 per cent of employers use monitoring software to track employee performance or online activity.

When employees are monitored constantly, they often feel dehumanised, as though they are untrusted or reduced to mere data points resulting in eroding trust between employers and their teams, making it harder to foster collaboration and loyalty. Additionally, the psychological impact often leads them to stress, anxiety, and burnout. Employees may feel pressured to overwork or engage in performative productivity - appearing busy rather than genuinely contributing. Over time, this can harm creativity, innovation, and overall job satisfaction. Not only this, but the use of tattleware has also resulted in legal challenges, including claims of unpaid wages for work performed away from computers or intrusion upon privacy. Some employers face allegations of unfair labour practices if monitoring interferes with protected activities, such as union organising? To adhere to the challenges posed by tattleware, businesses must strive to balance productivity goals with respect for employees' rights. As rightly said transparency is the key to success.

Only when employees are informed about them being monitored, the necessities for the use of such tattleware or how the data will be used can help build trust and foster a sense of shared responsibility. As businesses navigate the complexities of remote and hybrid work, they must adopt a thoughtful and balanced approach to workplace monitoring. Only by prioritising transparency, fairness, and respect for individual rights, companies and business organisations can create an environment that values both productivity and human dignity.

(The writer is an educator; views are personal)

## Call for fast-tracking WTO agricultural negotiations



UTTAM GUPTA

In a recent WTO meeting, India urges prioritisation of issues, including a permanent solution for public stockholding and special safeguard mechanism



In a meeting of the Committee on Agriculture (CoA) of the World Trade Organization (WTO) held in Geneva on December 4, 2024, India insisted that negotiations on unresolved/previously mandated issues in agriculture, including a permanent solution to public stockholding, special safeguard mechanism (SSM) and elimination of trade-distorting cotton subsidies by rich countries etc, be 'prioritised' and 'fast-tracked' by treating them as standalone issues instead of clubbing them with other issues.

The US, on the other hand, criticised the prioritisation of certain issues over others, stating that this was the primary cause of the longstanding stalemate in agriculture. India also rejected a new proposal presented by Guyana to advance agricultural negotiations ahead of the WTO's 14th Ministerial Conference (MC14) tentatively scheduled to take place in Cameroon in 2026) by adopting a so-called 'non-traditional approach based on convergence'. India reiterated that any facilitator-led process should be 'consensus-based' and respect WTO's multilateral principles. It emphasised on Text-based negotiation (TBN). TBN refers to the process of working up the text of an agreement that all parties are willing to accept and sign. Negotiating parties may begin with a draft text prepared by the Chair of the particular committee dealing with the subject.

The draft is based on discussions amongst the member countries and is fine-tuned till all the nations are in agreement with it. This is in sharp contrast to a convergence-based approach that involves superimposition of non-multilateral trade regimes on the multilateral trading system (MTS). The theorists dealing with international trade in particular, WTO-related issues describe it as a process of 'gradually aligning different trade regimes, in particular preferential trade agreements (PTAs) and the MTS'. Others define convergence as requiring 'greater coherence between trade rules and policies, norms and standards in other areas of international cooperation'. Shorn of jargon, this is a well-orchestrated attempt by the developed countries - the US, the European

Union (EU), the UK, Australia, etc (they exercise disproportionately greater influence during actual confabulations at the WTO, set the agenda of meetings, float proposals more often through small countries such as Guyana and get away with what they want) to scuttle the standard practice of taking decisions by consensus where every member country has an equal voice.

Therefore, India has rejected this approach, rightly so. But, what happens to India's demand for 'prioritising' and 'fast-tracking' negotiations? In a meeting of the CoA held on October 2, 2023, in Geneva, the EU agreed to consider India's demand for a permanent solution to the public stock-holding (PSH) program for food security. Accordingly, India had urged WTO members to start TBN on the issue as soon as possible and get this deliberated at the WTO MC-13 slated to be held in Abu Dhabi from February 26-29, 2024. But, that was not to be. The Ministerial Conference ended in a deadlock. On the issue of finding a permanent solution to the (PSH) for food security, India's stance was vehemently opposed by the USA/EU. Earlier attempts by India also met with the same fate. At the Trade Policy Review (TPR) meeting held at WTO in January 2021, India insisted that the three issues should be taken up on a priority basis at the MC-12. But, in that Ministerial Conference held in Geneva on June 12-17, 2022, the issues were not even put on the table. The deadlock has existed for more than two decades despite India taking up these issues at WTO under what has come to be known as the Doha Development Agenda (DDA). Developed countries had junked DDA at MC-10 held in Nairobi (2015). On the most contentious issue of a permanent solution for PSH, a ray of hope emerged when in the WTO-General Council (GC) meeting in Geneva (July 31, 2014),

India insisted on a time-bound action plan on the subject matter to be executed before the end of 2014 co-terminus with approval of Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) - an area of great interest to developed countries. This was a good strategic move but it was abandoned mid-stream. In December 2014, even as the developed countries got away with the TFA, the developing countries got an "extension of the peace clause till a permanent solution was found." Put simply, India had literally surrendered its right to secure a permanent solution; that it was "Ok" with "the benefit of peace clause."

## What is the peace clause?

To understand this, let us look at the Agreement on Agriculture (AoA) of the WTO. Under it, a developing country cannot give aggregate measurement support (AMS) - an acronym for subsidies - over 10 per cent of the value of its farm production. The AMS includes "product-specific" subsidies and "non-product specific" subsidies on agricultural inputs such as fertilisers, seed, irrigation and power. The "product-specific" subsidy is the excess of the Minimum Support Price (MSP) paid to farmers over the External Reference Price (ERP) multiplied by the quantum of agri-produce. Whereas the MSP is taken for the relevant year, say, 2023-24, the ERP is the average of the global price prevailing during 1986-88 fixed in rupee terms. If the subsidy given by a developing country exceeds 10 per cent, it will be treated as a violation of its WTO commitment. This has been a major worry as India could face action in a situation of AMS exceeding the 10 per cent threshold. In this backdrop, the MC-9 in Bali (2013) had agreed to a "peace clause" under which "if a developing country gives AMS in excess of 10 per cent, no member will challenge this until 2017, when the WTO would look for a permanent

solution to address their food security concerns." It came with several riders such as submission of data on food procurement, stockholding, distribution and subsidies. These also include establishing that subsidies are not "trade distorting." Besides, programs implemented after 2013 are not covered under the ambit of the 'peace clause'. In December 2014, the WTO-GC modified the above decision to provide for "extension of the peace clause till a permanent solution was found". Unfortunately, India concurred with this modification. This took away the sanctity of the 2017 deadline by which time members were to find a permanent solution as per the MC-9 mandate.

A decade since then, India is still looking for a solution! In regard to SSM - it allows members to temporarily raise tariffs beyond the "bound levels" (this is the maximum permissible duty that a member country can impose under a bound rate agreement) to counter surges in import or price drops. The 2015 MC-10 in Nairobi recognized that developing countries will have the right to take recourse to SSM as envisaged under the Hong Kong Ministerial Declaration. That was at MC - 6 (December 2005). Since then, it has been almost two decades. Even now, these countries can't take recourse to SSM. They haven't also been able to prompt developed countries to eliminate their cotton subsidies. To conclude, despite the deft handling of negotiations at the WTO and representing the majority of the developing countries (India leads about 80 countries - the G33 including India, African, Caribbean and Pacific countries or ACP) so far, India hasn't succeeded in securing the intended outcomes. Given the intransigence of developed countries and their clout at WTO, there is little hope from the MC - 14.

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



THE DRAFT IS BASED ON DISCUSSIONS AMONGST THE MEMBER COUNTRIES AND IS FINE-TUNED TILL ALL THE NATIONS ARE IN AGREEMENT WITH IT. THIS IS IN SHARP CONTRAST TO A CONVERGENCE-BASED APPROACH THAT INVOLVES SUPERIMPOSITION OF NON-MULTILATERAL TRADE

## Persisting Central Information Commission vacancies challenge transparency claims

## Eight vacancies of Information Commissioners undermine the cause of transparency and accountability

Recently on December 10, Dr. Jitendra Singh, MoS (Personnel, Public Grievances and Pension) made a pitch for Vikashit Bharat, 2047 while addressing the 16th Annual Convention of Central Information Commission at Bharat Mandapam in Pragati Maidan. Ironically, it was the last date allowed by the Supreme Court for the central government to file a status report on the eight posts of Information Commissioners lying vacant out of a total of ten in the Central Information Commission (CIC) for the last year. It might be remembered in October 2023 Anjali Bharadwaj had brought to the notice of the Supreme Court that whereas seven posts were already lying vacant in the



PRIYADARSHI DUTTA

CIC, four incumbents were due to retire within a week. Sadly, the situation has worsened over the last year, notwithstanding the government's claim to transparency and accountability. At present, there are two Information Commissioners viz. Anandi Ramalingam and Vinod Kumar Tiwari in addition to Chief Information Commissioner viz. Heeralal

Samariya. As per the Pending Cases Report available on the website of CIC, there were a total of 3134 cases - comprising 2310 second appeals and 824 direct complaints with the Commission as of November 1, 2023.

A year later on November 1, 2024, the total number of pendency has risen to 20,437 - comprising 17,717 second appeals and 2,720 direct complaints. At the time of writing this piece, the total pendency clocked 22,957. This figure is not quite a compliment to the government's alleged commitment to transparency and accountability. A recent RTI application filed by Commodore Lokesh Batra (Retd) elicited the reply that 161 applications were received for filling eight vacancies in

CIC in response to the DoPT's advertisement dated August 14, 2024. Under Section 12(3) of the RTI Act, 2005 the appointments are to be made by a committee chaired by the Prime Minister, and comprising the Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha and another Union minister nominated by the Prime Minister. Filling these positions before the 16th Annual Convention on the RTI would have been a favourable gesture.

However, the government did not prioritize the task. A second appeal from this columnist filed on September 13, 2023, is indicated at no 18162 in the list of pendency. The matter was transferred to IC Vinod Kumar Tiwari, after IC Ms. Saroj Punhani retired on November 11, 2023. The



high amount of pendency incentivizes the CPIOs/Appellate Authorities in the ministries/departments to display a cavalier attitude towards applications filed under the RTI Act, 2005. This columnist, however, was able to obtain the information through a fresh application. Though in both cases, the Appellate Authority within the division, who in an IAS officer colluded with the CPIO,

in one of his decisions he stated that the reason for denying information was that the file was under submission with the Joint Secretary.

The columnist filed a third application under the RTI Act, 2005 asking the CPIO whether the Joint Secretary had been 'exempted' from the obligation to provide information under the RTI Act, 2005. If the Joint Secretary had been 'exempted', the CPIO must produce the necessary official order, and further inform who else in the ministry had been similarly 'exempted'.

Any claim that a Joint Secretary has been 'exempted' from the obligation to provide information would have become controversial for the government. It could have sullied the service record of the

officer attracting a minor if not major penalty for disregarding a Parliamentary statute. The RTI Act, 2005 provides no authority-wise 'exemption'. Exemption under Section 8 of the Act applies only to certain well-defined matters based on merit like security/diplomatic/trade secrets, matters expressly forbidden by court from publication, or cabinet papers etc. This time the CPIO quickly provided the information. The episode, however, underscores a few grievous lapses. First, had the Central Information Commission (CIC) been working at full strength, the second appeal would have been decided within a few months, and the delinquent CPIO might have to pay the monetary penalty for denying information.

Second, it underscores that Appellate Authorities, who are part of the department, actually help the CPIOs to suppress the information, where it is in their interest. Instead of this obligation, they can manipulate the CPIOs in other matters. The high amount of pendency in CIC could be attributed to the devious behaviour of the Appellate Authorities. The RTI Act, 2005 should have provision to penalize not just the CPIO but also the First Appellate Authority if the Information Commissioner declares him/her guilty of deliberate suppression of information.

(The writer is an author and an independent researcher based in New Delhi. The views expressed are his personal)

# Mungantiwar downplays exclusion from Maharashtra Cabinet

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI



Senior BJP leader Sudhir Mungantiwar on Monday played down his exclusion from the Maharashtra Cabinet, by saying that he was not upset at all for not failing to make it into the Devendra Fadnavis-led ministerial team and said that he would take up any assignment whatever his party wanted him to.

A day after he was denied a ministerial berth, Mungantiwar said: "I am not upset. I will do whatever work the party assigns me... I do all the work with full sincerity," Mungantiwar said. However, he said that the party told him that he would be given a ministerial job. "I was never told that I would not be made a minister," he said.

Mungantiwar said that neither Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis nor state BJP President Chandrashekar Bawankule had told him that he would not be made minister. "On the contrary,

I was told that my name has been sent to BJP high command." In fact, Mungantiwar was number two from his party in the Devendra Fadnavis government. However, from 2022-24, he was made the Forest portfolio and Cultural Affairs ministry. "Whatever was given to me, I have given my full," he told a TV channel.

It may be recalled that Mungantiwar, popularly known as Sudhir Bhai, contested the Chandrapur Lok Sabha seat.

He however lost the LS polls. However, he contested the State Assembly polls.

Queried as to why he had not been inducted in the state Cabinet, Mungantiwar said: "I cannot answer this question..." Mungantiwar handled the Finance and Planning and Forest portfolio from 2014-19. However, from 2022-24, he was given the Forest portfolio and Cultural Affairs ministry.

He is reported to be in a critical condition with ventilator support. Allegedly, the boy was transfused into two different blood types on 5th December 2024 and 7th December 2024. In a statement issued here the human rights body said, "The Commission has observed that the contents of the news report,

# NHRC takes cognisance of blood transfusion, borewell death in Rajasthan

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) on Monday took suo motu cognisance of the media report that a 10-year-old child was transfused with the wrong blood type while undergoing treatment at the JK Lon Hospital of the Sawai Man Singh Medical College (SMS), Jaipur, Rajasthan.

if true, raise a serious issue of violation of the human rights of the boy. Any kind of negligence by doctors or medical professionals can cause irreversible loss to the patients. Reportedly, a 23-year-old patient lost his life at the SMS hospital, Jaipur only a few months back."

Two reported cases of negligence in blood transfusion at the same govt run medical facilities are indeed shocking and are a matter of concern for the Commission as these amount to the violation of the right to health and life of the patients. The matter requires a thorough probe to identify the persons responsible for such negligence and to ensure such incidents do not recur. In yet another case, the NHRC took suo motu cognisance of a

media report that a five-year-old boy died on 11th December, 2024 after being trapped in 150 feet deep borewell for nearly 56 hours in the Dausa district of Rajasthan. Reportedly, the boy fell in the borewell while playing in a field.

Noting that if the contents of the news report, if true, raise a serious issue of violation of human rights. This apparent negligence not only amounts to dereliction of duty on their part but also tantamount to violation of the people's right to life, said the NHRC.

In both the cases, accordingly, the Commission has issued notices to the Chief Secretary and the Director General of Police, Government of Rajasthan calling for detailed reports within two weeks.

# Bomb threats sent to over 10 Delhi schools

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Marking the four instances in the past eight days when school authorities remained on their toes, more than 10 schools across the national Capital received bomb threats through e-mails on Monday.

According to a Delhi Police source, the fire department, bomb detection team and dog squad searched the school premises but nothing suspicious was found. Among the 10, one school in the south district also received the threat.

The schools that received the threats include DPS RK Puram, Gyan Bharati School in Saket and Ryan International School in Vasant Kunj among others.

According to police sources, the contents of the letters are similar to the previous one and it is suspected to be sent by the same sender. The e-mail includes lines like 'Pakistan upar uthega, India neeche jayega.'

On December 14, eight schools, including DPS RK Puram, had received the similar kind of mail, with the sender threatening to trigger blasts with "bomb vests". On December 13, about 30 schools received bomb threats over email, triggering a multi-agency search.

On December 14, the police said that they have identified a private school student as being responsible for sending a bomb threat email to a school in Paschim Vihar.

# Priyanka's Palestine bag, sets cat among...

From page 1

Hitting out at the Wayanad MP over the bag issue, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Lok Sabha member Anurag Thakur wondered what message she wanted to send across. "She did not speak a word on atrocities on Hindus in Bangladesh but wants to make a fashion statement with the Palestine bag," he claimed.

Asked about BJP leaders raising the 'Palestine' bag issue, Priyanka Gandhi said, "Tell them that they should do something about the atrocities that are happening on minorities, Hindus and Christians, in Bangladesh. Talk to the Bangladesh government and stop these atrocities." Abed Elrazek Abu Jazer, the Charge d'Affaires of the Palestine Embassy in New Delhi, last week called on Priyanka to congratulate the Congress leader on her recent Lok Sabha bypoll victory from Kerala's Wayanad.

# Meet Manoj Gahlyan...

From page 1

"He would also meet these women's families to talk about marriage and to fix a date for the wedding. Once these women trusted him, he would take money from them, under the pretense of booking a resort or marriage hall or hotel for the wedding," said DCP (Crime Branch) Sanjay Sain.

According to DCP Sain, in some cases, he even convinced the victims to buy expensive items such as mobile phones, jewellery, and vehicles in their names, which he later would sell for cash. He'd also make them buy his flight tickets when he'd come to visit their families.

# Land grabbers must be dealt...

From page 1

It issued a notice on a plea filed by the Delhi Library Board challenging the high court's September 10, 2018 order granting six months to the library to relocate its branch to another location accessible to the public. The High Court had said since the plea before it primarily pertained to preservation of books at the DPL's Karol Bagh branch, it would not interfere in the dispute over the building where the library was housed. The order came on a petition against the North Delhi Municipal Corporation's notices to the library to vacate the premises, which according to the civic body was structurally unfit and dangerous. The library was issued two notices by the corporation, asking it to vacate the building so that it could be demolished.

# Delhi launches 'Hasya Rang Utsav'

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A three-day festival, 'Hasya Rang Utsav', organised by the Delhi government began on Monday at the national capital. The event, curated by the Sahitya Kala Parishad under the Department of Art, Culture and Languages, will run until December 18 at the Kamani Auditorium in Mandi House, an official statement said.

Delhi Minister of Art, Culture and Language Saurabh Bharadwaj expressed delight at the enthusiastic response on the opening day. He said that the city has always

embraced art and culture with open arms and this festival reflects the commitment to bringing joy and meaningful entertainment to the city. He encouraged everyone to join in celebrating the rich tradition of laughter and theatre.

The inaugural evening featured a stand-up performance by comedian Sunil Pal, who entertained the audience with his relatable anecdotes and punchlines, the statement said. This was followed by 'Charandas Chor', a classic play by Habib Tanvir, directed by Rajesh Tiwari.

# DU extends e-library to NCWEB girls

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi University (DU) on Sunday extended e-library facilities worth Rs 50 crore for use of girl students of Non-Collegiate Women's Education Board (NCWEB). A statement by the university said that the DU VC Professor Yogesh Singh during his interaction with the NCWEB students came to know of the library needs of the students and the University initiated the provision.

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Disanayake laid a wreath and paid tribute to Mahatma Gandhi at Rajghat, in Delhi on December 16. This is the Sri Lankan President's first State visit to India.

"Today, I paid my respects to Mahatma Gandhi at his memorial. I laid a wreath, observed a moment of silence, signed the Visitor's Book, and planted an Ashoka Pendula plant at Gandhi Darshan. A truly humbling experience," Disanayake shared on X.

Union Minister of State in the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, L Murugan, was also present with him. In a post on X, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) official spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal stated, "President @anuradis-anayake of Sri Lanka paid his



respects to Mahatma Gandhi at Rajghat this morning. Babu's timeless values of truth and

non-violence continue to inspire humanity all over the world."

# Why should the letter not be made public? BJP asks Sonia

From page 1

Shekhawat noted that Patra's query, a supplementary, was unrelated to the main question raised in the House by BJP member Saumitra Khan. The minister said he has noted down Patra's suggestions and appropriate action can be taken in the matter.

The Nehru Museum was expanded to include memorials to all prime ministers and renamed the Prime Ministers' Museum and Library after the BJP came to power at the Centre. Patra informed the media that 51 cartons of Nehru's correspondences were given

to Sonia Gandhi after approval of the museum's then director.

However, following a legal opinion, Rizwan Kadri, one of the 29 members of the society tasked with running the PMML, recently wrote to Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, seeking his help in restoring the papers to the museum's custody, he added. The BJP leader said Kadri did not receive any reply.

Taking a swipe at the Gandhi family, Patra said these were not personal property of anyone or any family but historical documents part of the "treasure" of India. As Nehru was a member of the

family, it suffers from a sense of entitlement over his letters, he alleged. "What were the contents of the letter that the first family felt should not be made public?" BJP sought to know.

Patra noted that the digitisation process began in the museum in 2010 but the Gandhi family decided to take back the letters' possession before that.

In his letter to Rahul Gandhi, Kadri, has also shared a brief note on the legacy of the erstwhile NMML located at the historic Teen Murti House in the heart of Delhi, and excerpts from the minutes of PMML's Annual General Meeting (AGM) held

on February 13, 2024.

"The PMML further informed the AGM that as per records, the private papers of Jawaharlal Nehru, spanning both the pre-independence and post-independence periods, were transferred to PMML in several batches starting in 1971.

"This transfer was facilitated by the Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, acting on behalf of Nehru's legal heir, Smt. Indira Gandhi, who apparently remained the owner of these documents until her demise in October 1984," read the minutes quoted in the document attached with the letter.

# Yes. I am upset: Chhagan Bhujbal

From page 1

A seven-term MLA, Bhujbal represented Mazgaon constituency in south Mumbai for two terms and was elected to the State Assembly for the next five-terms from Yeola in Nashik district. He also served as an MLC for one term. Apart from being a senior minister in a Congress government in the late eighties and early eighties and Food and Civil Supplies Minister in the Uddhav Thackeray-led Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government from 2019 to 2022, Bhujbal was the deputy chief minister in the Congress-led Democratic Front government between 1994 and

2004. "I may or may not have been given ministerial posts but Chhagan Bhujbal is not finished," he told reporters in Nagpur on Monday. One of the senior most politicians in the state, Bhujbal (77) is a two-time MLA from Mazgaon in Mumbai and five-term MLA from Yeola in Nashik besides serving a term as an MLC.

Asked as to why he had not been inducted in the Devendra Fadnavis government, Bhujbal said: "Whom to induct in the ministry is the decision of the party leaders. They (party leaders) told us that senior leaders were not being included to give a chance to

new people... That being the case, I feel I have been rewarded... (for challenging Manoj Jarange-Patil)... I am an ordinary worker, what difference does it make if I am ignored or thrown out?" However, NCP MLC and spokesperson Amol Mitkari denied that anyone had been upset over the expand expansion carried by Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Sunday: "We don't think so (that any one is upset)... if anyone is upset, he or she can take up the issue in a party forum. As far as Bhujbal is concerned, we heard it in the media... we also heard reports that he would be sent to Rajya Sabha."

# One Nation, One Election Bills...

From page 1

The Bill, inter alia, provides that after its enactment, a notification is to be issued by the President on the date of the first sitting of the House of the People after a general election, and that date of the notification shall be called the appointed date.

According to the Bill, the tenure of the House of the People shall be five years from that appointed date. The tenure of all Legislative Assemblies, constituted by elections to the Legislative Assemblies after the appointed date and before the expiry of the full term of the House of the People, shall come to an end on the expiry of the full term of the House of the People.

Thereafter, all general elections to the House of the People and all Legislative Assemblies shall be held together simultaneously. In case of dissolution of the House of the People or a Legislative Assembly, sooner than the full term of the House of the People or the Legislative Assembly, the term of the House or Assembly constituted pursuant to elections shall be for the unexpired term of the House or the Assembly.

The Bill further states the Department related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances and Law and Justice, in its 79th report had also examined the

feasibility of holding simultaneous elections to the House of the People (Lok Sabha) and State Legislative Assemblies and recommended an alternative and practicable methods of holding simultaneous elections is needed and expressed confidence that a solution would be found to reduce the frequency of electoral processes.

The Bill seeks to insert a new article in the Constitution and amend three articles to put in place the mechanism to hold simultaneous polls to the Lok Sabha and state Assemblies. The motivation behind this shift is multifaceted. Simultaneous elections can mitigate the frequency of the Model Code of Conduct disrupting development projects across the country, streamline the election process, and lower the logistical and financial pressures that repeated elections impose on administrative machinery and public resources.

While the Union Territories Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2024 proposes to make consequential amendments in section 5 of the Government of Union Territories Act, 1963, Section 5 of the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi Act, 1991 and section 17 of the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019 to align the holding of simultaneous elections along with the House of the People and State Legislative

Assemblies.

"A High Level Committee under the Chairmanship of Ram Nath Kovind, former President of India was constituted on 2nd September, 2023 to examine the issue of simultaneous elections and make recommendations for holding simultaneous elections in the country. After due deliberation and examination of all the material available on record and the consultations held on the subject, the Committee submitted its recommendations to the Hon'ble President on 14th March, 2024 for holding of simultaneous election to the House of the People and all Legislative Assemblies at the first stage. The Government has accepted the recommendations of the High Level Committee.

"The Committee recommended that in the first stage elections to the House of the People and the Legislative Assemblies, including Legislative Assemblies of Union territories should be held simultaneously. For implementation of the recommendations of the High Level Committee at the first stage, a Bill, namely, the Union Territories Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2024 is proposed, providing for holding of simultaneous elections to the House of the People and the Legislative Assemblies of the Union territories," according to the statement of objects and reasons of the Bill.

# Gear up Delhi, GRAP-II is back

From page 1

Areas like Alipur, Anand Vihar, Bawana, and Burari Crossing saw AQI levels ranging from 350 to 397, indicating hazardous air quality. Other parts of Delhi, including Dwarka Sec 8, Nehru Nagar, and Rohini, recorded AQI levels above 370, far exceeding the 'very poor' category and pushing the air into 'severe' territory. Shallow fog with a minimum visibility of around 800 metres was observed across the Capital, as Delhi's air quality index (AQI) deteriorated to the 'very poor' category.

"The Sub-Committee for GRAI] in its meeting held on December 16, 2024 comprehensively reviewed the air quality scenario in the region as well as the IMD and IITM forecasts for meteorological conditions and air quality index of Delhi and observed as under: "AQI of Delhi has crossed the 350 mark and is showing an increasing trend on 16. 12.2024 owing to extremely calm wind conditions and buildup of an inversion layer adversely affecting the vertical mixing height. Forecasts from IMD and IITM also indicate a likelihood of the AQI to

remain in the higher end of "Very Poor" category owing to the continued adverse meteorological conditions". Even if the AQI forecasts do not indicate the AQI of Delhi to be breaching a particular threshold and under extreme meteorological conditions or due to any episodic event the AQI breaches the threshold, that particular Stage of the GRAP shall be invoked with immediate effect in respect of actions / measures that can be invoked immediately. Previously, such restrictions were applicable only to BS-III vehicles. Persons with disabilities are exempt from restrictions imposed on BS-

working from home, may work from home.

The Government will also intensify the frequency of mechanised sweeping of roads and ensure daily water-sprinkling along with dust suppressants, added the official statement. During winters, Delhi frequently enforces restrictions under the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP), which categorises air quality into four stages: Stage I (Poor) with AQI between 201 and 300, Stage II (Very Poor) between 301 and 400, Stage III (Severe) between 401 and 450, and Stage IV (Severe Plus) for AQI above 450.

# Coldwave conditions sweep across NCR

From page 1

At Najafgarh, the minimum temperature was slightly higher, at 6.2 degrees Celsius. Amid the coldwave sweeping through the national capital, many people are seeking refuge in night shelters, hoping to find food, shelter, and warmth to endure the freezing nights. Those without proper housing often seek refuge at railway platforms, whilst others gather around bonfires that are maintained throughout the night for warmth. A coldwave is officially declared in the plains when

the minimum temperature falls to 4 degrees Celsius or below, or when it registers a drop of 4.5 to 6.4 degrees from normal. With temperatures hovering around these thresholds, the Capital has been biting cold mornings, forcing residents to bundle up against the chill. As cold wave conditions prevail in Delhi, the city's old age homes have started taking measures to ensure the safety and comfort of their residents. A nutritious diet, daily sun exposure, thermal blankets and insulated flooring are among several steps the old age homes have

taken to protect elderly people who are more susceptible to cold-related illnesses like hypothermia. Sai Sahara Old Age Home founder member Rajeshwari Mishra said, "Individuals aged between 60 and 90, are more susceptible to cold-related illnesses such as hypothermia and respiratory issues. It's essential to ensure that they are warm and breathing comfortably." Residents are being encouraged to spend time in the sun daily and boost their Vitamin D levels, he said. "We have stopped serving certain cold foods like curd

and included chyawanprash and seasonal foods in their diet," he said. Geeta Basin, a caretaker at Nirmal Chhaya Old Age Home, said, "Our old age home is situated on a farmhouse with 30 rooms, currently housing 18 elderly residents aged between 68 and 90. Being an open space, the home allows for long hours of sun exposure during the day."

"After sunset, the residents settle indoors with heaters, warm food, and regular exercises, all of which we are meticulously taking care of," Basin said. A coordinator from We Care Old Age Home

said, "Since there is ample sunlight, we are not providing heaters as they can cause discomfort or suffocation to many. We only use heaters when absolutely necessary." Thermal blankets, insulated flooring and warm beverages are among the other measures being implemented. "We are closely monitoring the residents for any signs of cold stress and ensuring immediate medical attention if required. Additionally, we are focusing on group activities, which are scheduled during the daytime in sunlit areas," the coordinator said.



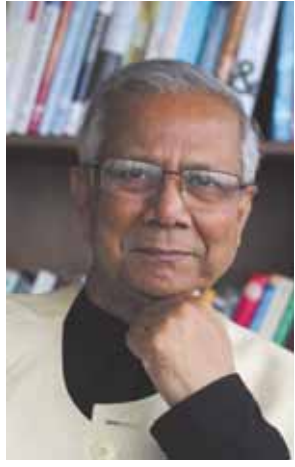
# Yunus celebrates end of Hasina's 'autocratic govt'

## No mention of Mujibur Rahman in his Victory Day address

PTI ■ DHAKA

Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus led Bangladesh Monday in marking the 54th Victory Day, his speech making no mention of founding leader Mujibur Rahman while calling deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina's administration the "world's worst autocratic government". "Bijoy Dibosh" commemorates the Pakistan military's surrender to Indian forces and the liberation of Bangladesh in 1971. "Bangabandhu" Mujibur Rahman is seen as the independence movement's iconic figure. His daughter Sheikh Hasina fled to India on August 5, after massive student-led protests against her government. Nobel laureate Yunus then took over as head of an interim government. In his televised address to the nation, Yunus indicated that elections might be held by

early 2026. "Broadly speaking, the election can be scheduled between the end of 2025 and the first half of 2026," he said. The country could not build on its achievements because of its own faults and, of late, a "monstrous autocratic government" had grabbed power, he said in an apparent reference to Hasina's Awami league government. He said the ouster of the "world's worst autocratic government" amid a mass upsurge added extra significance to the celebration this year. Yunus and Bangladesh President Mohammed Shahabuddin separately paid tributes to Liberation War martyrs at the National Memorial on the outskirts of the capital. "I recall the millions of martyrs including numerous children and juveniles, youths and the elderly people's sacrifices that made possible the achievement of our independence," he



said. His speech, however, made no mention of the political leadership in 1971 and of Mujibur Rahman -- a sharp departure from previous Victory Day addresses. Critics accuse his interim government of trying to erase

Mujibur Rahman's legacy. The authorities have earlier announced a decision to phase out the currency notes currently in circulation. The new ones will not carry Rahman's image. On Monday, Army bugles played the Last Post, commemorating those killed during the 1971 War. East Timor President Jose Ramos-Horta accompanied Yunus at the celebrations. Deviating from tradition, Bangladesh did not stage a Victory Day Parade in the capital. "The army is currently engaged in activities across the country, and organising the parade requires advance preparation, which wasn't feasible this year," Liberation War Affairs Adviser Farook-e-Azam told the Daily Star newspaper. But he said the celebration would be inclusive for all with 'Victory Fairs' across the country featuring art and craft

exhibits and agricultural product displays, and showcasing domestic goods. He said schools were hosting their own events as part of the festivities and cultural programmes would include the participation of children, women and men, making the celebration inclusive for all. "The shift in the celebration format aims to bring more active public involvement and create a festive atmosphere in every part of the country," Azam said. The liberation movement began when the West Pakistan leadership refused to hand over power to the Awami League in line with the 1970 election results. India backed Bengali guerrillas and dealt with mass migration of people from Bangladesh. Eight Indian military veterans of the Liberation War travelled to Dhaka this year to mark Victory Day. Similarly, eight

Bangladesh veterans were in Kolkata to join the Vijay Diwas celebrations. In his speech, Yunus indicated that elections would be held in 2025 or early 2026 after updating the voters' list. "From now on, the responsibility has been entrusted to them to start the process of forming the future government. They have started their preparations. They have a lot of work to do," he told a local news agency, referring to the Election Reforms Commission. "We have to make sure that the names of all those who have become eligible to vote in the last 15 years are included in the voters' list. This is a big task," he said. He said after the student the student uprising there is no room for making any mistakes. Many young people who were deprived of this right in the past will vote for the first time, he added.

# Two killed on first day of anti-polio campaign in Pak

PTI ■ PESHAWAR

A polio worker and a police constable were shot dead in separate incidents in Pakistan's restive Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province on Monday as the country began a week-long polio eradication campaign amid tight security. Unidentified assailants opened fire and killed a polio worker in Bannu district on the very first day of the anti-polio drive that commenced across Pakistan on Monday. The incident occurred in Kala Khel Masti Khan and the attackers managed to escape. Police stated that the deceased polio worker was on his way to duty when he was attacked. In a separate incident in Karak district, Constable Ishtiaq Ahmed, escorting a team of polio workers, was killed when unidentified motorcyclists opened fire. The assailants managed to escape. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

Governor Faisal Karim Kundi and Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur condemned the attacks on polio teams in the province. A week-long polio eradication campaign across Pakistan began on Monday amid tight security to ensure its smooth sailing against the crippling disease that saw a surge this year with 63 cases reported so far. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), Pakistan and Afghanistan remain the only countries where the paralyzing virus is still rampant. News agency AP reported that authorities deployed thousands of police officers to protect the health workers following intelligence reports that insurgents could target them. Citing health officials and authorities, AP said more than 200 polio workers and police assigned for their protection have been killed since the 1990s.

# Amnesty: Serbia spying on political opponents, journalists

AP ■ BELGRADE

Serbia's secret service and police have been spying on journalists and opposition activists by installing a spyware on their mobile phones, Amnesty International said Monday. The watchdog's report, backed by testimonies of those who claim their phones have been hacked in recent months, says the spy software was used to unlock phones to capture covert screenshots and copy contact lists, which were then uploaded to a government-controlled server. The report titled "A Digital Prison: Surveillance and the Suppression of Civil Society in Serbia" said the Serbian police and the Security Information Agency (BIA) used the spyware to infect devices while their owners were detained or interviewed by police. "Our investigation reveals how Serbian authorities have deployed surveillance technology and digital repression tactics as instruments of wider state control and repression directed against civil society," said Dinushika Dissanayake, Amnesty International's deputy regional

director for Europe. Serbia's police did not respond to a request for comment by The Associated Press. Serbia's spy agency said on its website that it "works exclusively in accordance with the laws of the Republic of Serbia." "Therefore, we are not even able to comment on nonsensical allegations from their (Amnesty) text, just as we do not normally comment on similar content," BIA said. The Amnesty report comes as President Aleksandar Vucic is facing one of the biggest challenges to more than a decade of his increasingly autocratic rule, with widening anti-government protests that so far have been largely peaceful. Protests have been led by university students and opposition activists following the collapse last month of a concrete canopy at a railway station in the country's north that killed 15 people on Nov. 1. Many in Serbia believe rampant corruption and nepotism among state officials led to sloppy work on the building reconstruction, which was part of a wider railroad project with Chinese state companies. Vucic has accused Western intel-

ligence services, NGO groups and foreign media of conducting a "hybrid warfare" against him and his country by illegally financing the protests. The Belgrade Centre for Security Policy, an NGO group, strongly condemned the authorities' misuse of digital technologies for surveillance and demanded an immediate, transparent and independent investigation into the allegations reported by Amnesty International. It also called for the prosecution of those responsible within the police and the Security and Information Agency. "In a country where civil protests are growing in scale, and discontent with the regime is becoming louder, these practices represent a direct attack on fundamental freedoms, including the right to peaceful assembly, freedom of expression, and the right of association," the group's statement said. Serbia, which formally seeks European Union membership, has been forging close ties with Russia and China, including their spy agencies in what officials said was a joint action against the so-called "coloured revolutions" -- street protests against repressive regimes.

# 12 Indians found dead at restaurant in Georgia

PTI ■ TBILISI

Twelve Indian nationals were found dead at a restaurant in Georgia's mountain resort of Gudauri, according to the Indian mission here. Georgia's Ministry of Internal Affairs said in a statement that no signs of injuries or signs of violence were detected in an initial inspection. All victims died from carbon monoxide poisoning, local media reported, citing police. The Indian mission in Tbilisi said that all 12 victims were Indian nationals. However, Georgia's internal affairs ministry statement said 11 were foreigners while one victim was its citizen. It added that the bodies of all victims, employees in the same Indian restaurant, were found in bedrooms on the second floor of the facility. "Mission has just learned about the death of 12 Indian nationals in Gudauri, Georgia. Deepest condolences to the bereaved families. Mission is in touch with the local authorities to get details of the Indian nationals who lost their lives. All possible assistance will be given," the Indian mission here said in a statement. The police started an investigation under Article 116 of the Criminal Code of Georgia, which implies negligent manslaughter. According to the preliminary investigation, a power generator was placed in an indoor area, a closed space near the bedrooms, which was turned on, probably after the power supply was turned off on Friday night. A forensic medical examination has also been appointed to determine the "exact cause of death". Investigative actions are "actively" being carried out, with forensic-criminalistics working on the spot, and interviews of persons related to the case are being conducted.

# 'Death toll in Gaza Strip from Israel-Hamas war tops 45,000'

AP ■ DEIR AL-BALAH

The death toll in the Gaza Strip from the 14-month war between Israel and Hamas militants has topped 45,000 people, Palestinian health officials said Monday, with 52 dead arriving at hospitals across the bombed-out strip over the past 24 hours. The Gaza Health Ministry does not distinguish between civilians and combatants in its count, but it has said that more than half of the fatalities are women and children. The Israeli military says it has killed more than 17,000 militants, without providing evidence. The Health Ministry said 45,028 people have been killed and 106,962 have been wounded since the start of the war. It has said the real toll is higher because thousands of bodies are still buried under rubble or in areas that medics cannot access. The latest war has been by far the deadliest round of fighting between Israel and Hamas, with the death toll now amounting to roughly 2 per cent of Gaza's entire prewar

population of about 2.3 million. Among the dead reported in the overall toll were 10 people, including a family of four, who were killed in an overnight Israeli strike in Gaza City, Palestinian medics said. The strike late Sunday hit a house in Gaza City's eastern Shijaiyah neighbourhood, according to the Health Ministry's emergency service. Rescuers recovered the bodies of 10 people from under the rubble, including those of two parents and their two children, it said. Israel claims Hamas is responsible for the civilian death toll because it operates from within civilian areas in the densely populated Gaza Strip. Rights groups and Palestinians say Israel has failed to take sufficient precautions to avoid civilian deaths. The war began when Hamas-led militants stormed into southern Israel on October 7, 2023, killing some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducting another 250. Israel responded by heavy bombardment and a ground incursion into the Palestinian enclave. Around 100 hostages are still inside Gaza, at least a third of whom are believed to be dead. Most of the rest were released during a cease-fire last year. A separate strike on a school on Sunday in the southern city of Khan Younis killed at least 13 people, including six children and two women, according to Nasser Hospital where the bodies were taken. The hospital initially reported the strike had killed 16 people, but it later revised the death toll as the three other bodies had been found from a separate strike that hit a house. The Israeli military said it had "conducted a precise strike on Hamas terrorists who were operating inside a command and control centre embedded within a compound" that had served as a school in Khan Younis. It did not provide evidence. In central Gaza's Nuseirat urban refugee camp, mourners gathered for the funeral of a Palestinian journalist working for the Qatari-based Al Jazeera

TV network who was killed Sunday in a strike on a point for Gaza's civil defence agency. They carried his body through the street from the hospital, his blue bulletproof vest resting atop. The strike also killed three civil defence workers, including the local head of the agency, according to Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital. The civil defence is Gaza's main rescue agency and operates under the Hamas-run government. Al Jazeera said Ahmad Baker Al-Louh, 39, had been covering rescue operations of a family wounded in an earlier bombing when he was killed. The International Federation of Journalists said last week that 104 journalists and media workers have been killed so far in 2024, with more than half of them perishing during the Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip. The group said that since the October 7, 2023, start of the war, at least 138 had been killed, including 55 Palestinian media professionals in the calendar year.

# Japanese bank apologises over theft of millions of dollars from safe deposit boxes

AP ■ TOKYO

Japan's biggest bank apologised Monday for the alleged theft by an employee of more than 1 billion yen (USD 6.6 million) from customers' safe deposit boxes. The bank, formally known as Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group, Inc., said Monday that it was investigating and that verified thefts from about 20 of the 60 clients thought to have been affected amounted to 300 million yen (nearly USD 2 million). Compensation was being worked out, it said. The thefts occurred at two Tokyo branches of the bank, from April 2020 until the end of October this year, when the problem was discovered. MUFU's president and CEO

Junichi Hanzawa told reporters the female employee responsible for managing the safe deposit boxes and their keys is suspected of taking advantage of that position to steal cash and other valuables. "The case has undermined the customers' trust and confidence and shaken the very foundation of our banking business," Hanzawa said. He apologised for causing concern and trouble to MUFU clients. MUFU said the employee admitted taking the money and using it for investments and her personal purposes. She was fired and was cooperating with the bank's internal probe and a police investigation but has not yet been arrested. After news of the thefts sur-

passed, dozens more people came forward with claims of suspected losses that the bank is working to verify, it said. The MUFU case is the second recent one involving criminal activity at a major Japanese financial institution. In November, Nomura Holdings acknowledged that a former employee had been arrested on suspicion of robbery, attempted murder and arson targeting a client in Hiroshima. Asked about the MUFU thefts, the chief government spokesman said Monday that banking operations require high levels of trust and a sense of public service. The case was "extremely regrettable," said Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshimasa Hayashi.



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu attends his trial on corruption charges at the district court in Tel Aviv, Israel, on Monday.

AP/PTI

# Popeye, Tintin enter public domain in 2025 along with novels from Faulkner, Hemingway

AP ■ WASHINGTON

Popeye can punch without permission and Tintin can roam freely starting in 2025. The two classic comic characters who first appeared in 1929 are among the intellectual properties becoming public domain in the United States on Jan. 1. That means they can be used and repurposed without permission or payment to copyright holders. This year's crop of newly public artistic creations lacks the landmark vibes of last year's entrance of into the public domain of Mickey Mouse. But they include a deep well of canonical works whose 95-year copyright maximums will expire. And the Disney icon's public domain presence expands. "It's a treat! There are a dozen new Mickey cartoons -- he speaks for the first time and dons the familiar white gloves,"

said Jennifer Jenkins, director of Duke's Center for the Study of the Public Domain. "There are masterpieces from Faulkner and Hemingway, the first sound films from Alfred Hitchcock, Cecil B. DeMille, and John Ford, and amazing music from Fats Waller, Cole Porter, and George Gershwin. Pretty exciting!" Here's a closer look at this year's crop. **Comics characters loom large:** Popeye the Sailor, with his bulging forearms, mealy-mouthed speech, and propensity for fistfights, was created by E.C. Segar and made his first appearance in the newspaper strip "Thimble Theater" in 1929, speaking his first words, "Ja think I'm a cowboy?" when asked if he was a sailor. What was supposed to be a one-off appearance became permanent, and the strip would be renamed "Popeye."

But as with Mickey Mouse last year and Winnie the Pooh in 2022, only the earliest version is free for reuse. The spinach that gave the sailor his super-strength was not there from the start, and is the kind of character element that could spawn legal disputes. And the animated shorts featuring his distinctive mumbly voice didn't begin until 1933 and remain under copyright. As does director Robert Altman's 1980 film, starring Robin Williams as Popeye and Shelley Duvall as his oft-fought-over sweetheart Olive Oyl. That movie was tepidly received initially. So was director Steven Spielberg's "Adventures of Tintin" in 2011. But the comics about the boy reporter that inspired it, the creation of Belgian artist Hergé, were among the most popular in Europe for much of the 20th century. The simply drawn teen with

dots for eyes and bangs like an ocean wave first appeared in a supplement to the Belgian newspaper Le Vingtième Siècle, and became a weekly feature. The comic also first appeared in the US in 1929. Its signature bright colors -- including Tintin's red hair -- didn't appear until years later, and could, like Popeye's spinach, be the subject of legal disputes. And in much of the world, Tintin won't become public property until 70 years after the 1983 death of his creator. **Books show American lit at its height:** The books becoming public this year read like the syllabus for an American literature seminar. "The Sound and the Fury," arguably William Faulkner's most essential novel with its modernist stream-of-consciousness style, was a sensation after its publication despite being famously difficult for

readers. It uses multiple non-linear narratives to tell the story of a prominent family's ruin in the author's native Mississippi, and would help lead to Faulkner's Nobel Prize. And Ernest Hemingway's "A Farewell to Arms" joins his earlier "The Sun Also Rises" in the public domain. The partly autobiographical story of an ambulance driver in Italy during the First World War cemented Hemingway's status in the American literary canon. It has been frequently adapted for film, TV and radio, which can now be done without permission. John Steinbeck's first novel, "A Cup of Gold," from 1929, will also enter the public domain. The British novelist Virginia Woolf's "A Room of One's Own," an extended essay that would become a landmark in feminism from the modernist literary luminary, is also on the

list. Her novel "Mrs. Dalloway" is already in the US public domain. **Movie legends in the making:** While a host of truly major movies will become public in the coming decade, for now early works by major figures from the not-always-stellar early sound era will have to suffice. A decade before he would move to Hollywood and make films like "Psycho," and "Vertigo," Alfred Hitchcock made "Blackmail" in Britain. The film was begun as a silent but shifted to sound during production, resulting in two different versions, one of them the UK's -- and Hitchcock's -- first sound film. John Ford, whose later Westerns would put him among film's most vaunted directors, also made his first foray into sound with 1929's "The Black Watch," an adventure epic that includes Ford's

future chief collaborator John Wayne as a young extra. Cecil B. DeMille, already a Hollywood bigwig through silents, made his first talkie with the melodrama "Dynamite." Groucho, Harpo and the other Marx Brothers had their first starring movie roles in 1929's "The Cocoanuts," a forerunner to future classics like "Animal Crackers" and "Duck Soup." "The Broadway Melody," the first sound film and the second film ever to win the Oscar for best picture -- known as "outstanding production" at the time -- will also become public, though it's often ranked among the worst of best picture winners. And after "Steamboat Willie" made the earliest Mickey Mouse public, a dozen more of his animations will get the same status, including "The Karnival Kid," where he spoke for the first time.

**Music rings out the 20s:** Songs from the last year of the Roaring Twenties are also about to become public property. Cole Porter's compositions "What Is This Thing Called Love?" and "Tiptoe Through the Tulips" are among the highlights, as is the jazz classic "Ain't Misbehavin'," written by Fats Waller and Harry Brooks. "Singin' in the Rain," which would later forever be associated with the 1952 Gene Kelly film, made its debut in the 1929 movie "The Hollywood Revue" and will now be public domain. Different laws regulate sound recordings, and those newly in the public domain date to 1924. They include a recording of "Nobody Knows the Trouble I've Seen" from future star and civil rights icon Marian Anderson, and "Rhapsody in Blue" performed by its composer George Gershwin.

# Sensex falls 385 points Rupee falls 9 paise to all-time low of 84.89 against US dollar

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty closed lower on Monday due to weak global cues amid caution ahead of the US Fed interest rate decision later this week. The 30-share BSE benchmark Sensex declined 384.55 points or 0.47 per cent to settle at 81,748.57. During the day, it dropped 581.84 points or 0.70 per cent to 81,551.28. The NSE Nifty lost by 100.05 points or 0.40 per cent to 24,668.25.



In Asian markets, Seoul, Tokyo, Shanghai and Hong Kong settled lower. European markets were quoting in the red. Wall Street ended mostly lower on Friday. Meanwhile, wholesale price-based inflation declined to a three-month low of 1.89 per cent in November on cheaper food items. Foreign Institutional Investors

(FIIs) bought equities worth Rs 2,335.32 crore on Friday, according to exchange data. Global oil benchmark Brent crude declined 0.75 per cent to USD 73.91 a barrel. The BSE benchmark Sensex jumped 843.16 points or 1.04 per cent to settle at 82,133.12 on Friday. The Nifty climbed 219.60 points or 0.89 per cent to settle at 24,768.30.

The rupee depreciated by 9 paise to close at an all-time low level of 84.89 (provisional) against the US dollar on Monday, dragged down by a negative trend in domestic equities. Forex traders said the Indian rupee declined on weak domestic markets and rising US bond yields. However, a soft US dollar cushioned the downside. At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 84.83 and touched 84.89 against the greenback during intraday trade. The unit finally ended the session 9 paise down at 84.89 (provisional) against the dollar.

On Friday, the rupee rebounded from its all-time low level and settled with a gain of 8 paise at 84.80 against the US dollar. The unit's previous all-time low level was recorded on December 12 when it closed at 84.88 against dollar.



"We expect the rupee to trade with a negative bias on rising odds of a rate cut by the Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) and weak tone in the domestic

markets. Elevated crude oil prices may also weigh on the rupee," said Anuj Choudhary - Research Analyst at Mirae Asset Sharekhan. However, FII inflows and

cooling off of inflation may support the rupee at lower levels.

On the domestic macroeconomic front, wholesale price-based inflation declined to a 3-month low of 1.89 per cent in November on cheaper food items.

Retail inflation declined in November to 5.48 per cent and came within the Reserve Bank's comfort zone mainly due to easing food prices, creating headroom for a rate cut at the central bank's rate-setting panel meeting under new Governor Sanjay Malhotra in February.

"Traders may take cues from PMI and Empire State Manufacturing Index data from the US. Investors may watch out for the FOMC meeting decision later this week. USD-INR spot price is expected to trade in a range of 84.65 to 85.05," Choudhary added. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six

currencies, was trading marginally lower by 0.14 per cent at 106.85.

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, fell 0.78 per cent to USD 73.91 per barrel in futures trade.

On the domestic equity market front, the 30-share benchmark index Sensex closed lower by 384.55 points or 0.47 per cent at 81,748.57 points. The Nifty was down 100.05 points, or 0.4 per cent, to 24,668.25 points.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) purchased Rs 2,335.32 crore in the capital markets on net basis on Friday, according to exchange data. Meanwhile, India's forex reserves dropped by USD 3.235 billion to USD 654.857 billion for the week ended December 6, the RBI said on Friday.

In the preceding week, the reserves had increased by USD 1.51 billion to USD 658.091 billion, ending a multi-week decline in the overall kitty.

## Indian IT services hiring to remain low till growth momentum picks up by H2 FY26: ICRA

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Hiring in the Indian IT services industry is expected to remain low-key in the near term until the growth momentum picks up by H2 FY2026, according to ICRA.

The formation of the new government in the US may create some policy uncertainty in the immediate term and thus will remain monitorable, it said.

Lower discretionary tech spends by customers in key markets of the US and Europe, amid an uncertain macroeconomic environment, has led to moderation in demand for Indian IT services companies over the last 6-8 quarters. Factors such as lower employee attrition and a focus on increasing employee utilisation also contributed to the slowdown in hiring.

"While there has been some recovery in Q2 FY2025, ICRA expects hiring to remain low in the near term until the growth momentum picks up by H2 FY2026," the agency said.



Moderation in demand coupled with the increase in utilisation of excess manpower added during FY2022-FY2023 exerted pressure on hiring by IT services companies through FY2024 and Q1 FY2025.

Coupled with an increase in attrition levels, this also led to negative net employee addition for the seven quarters till Q1 FY2025 for ICRA's sample set companies, which includes HCL Technologies, Infosys, Tata Consultancy

Services, Tech Mahindra and Wipro Ltd.

As Gen AI makes rapid inroads, all leading IT services companies are upskilling their employees as they explore AI-driven business opportunities. This is likely to lead to an overall moderation in fresh hiring, as compared to pre-Covid levels, it predicted.

ICRA said that the impact of higher adoption of Generative AI (Gen AI) on improving employee productivity is

expected to be visible over the next few years.

Average revenue in USD per employee for the sample set has largely been stable at around USD 50,000 over FY2020-FY2024.

However, this metric will show steady improvement if assessed on revenue in rupee terms due to depreciation of the rupee against some key foreign currencies over this period.

The last twelve-month (LTM) attrition rate had peaked at about 23 per cent during Q4 FY2022 and Q1 FY2023, led by significant hiring and subsequent demand-supply mismatch.

However, it sequentially tapered with lower hiring by IT services companies amid moderation in demand in key markets of the US and Europe. The LTM attrition rate for ICRA's sample set companies started stabilising from Q3 FY2024 at about 13 per cent, much lower than the pre-pandemic level of about 18 per cent in Q1 FY2020 for the sample set companies.

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Airport has achieved a historic milestone by becoming the first airport in India to connect 150 destinations and a preferred gateway for passengers. Thai AirAsia X has launched direct flights between Delhi and Bangkok-Don Mueang (DMK), marking the 150th destination connected to Delhi Airport. The route will operate with Airbus A330 aircraft at a 2x weekly frequency, increasing to 4x weekly by mid-January 2025.

In a statement, Delhi International Airport Ltd (DIAL) said it has become the first airport in the country to connect 150 destinations. Over the years, Delhi Airport has added more than 20 exclusive international destinations, including Phnom Penh, Bali Denpasar, Calgary, Montreal, Vancouver, Washington Dulles, Chicago O'Hare, Tokyo Haneda, etc. "Of all the long-haul destinations from India, 88 per cent of destinations are connected from Delhi and 56 per cent of



all long-haul weekly flights departing from India, operate from Delhi. "Almost 50 per cent (42 per cent to be precise) of long-haul passengers from India chose Delhi airport as their gateway," it said. The airport handles around 1,400 flight movements daily. "In the last decade, the airport has experienced a 100 per cent increase in transfer passengers, solidifying its position as

a leading transit hub in South Asia. Of all the long-haul destinations from India, 88 per cent of destinations are connected from Delhi & 56 per cent of all long-haul weekly flights departing from India, operate from Delhi. Almost 50 per cent (42 per cent to be precise) of long-haul passengers from India chose Delhi airport as their gateway," it added.

"This milestone of connecting 150 destinations is a testament to our unwavering commitment to enhancing global connectivity and providing world-class travel experiences. We are proud to lead India into a new era of aviation and remain dedicated to being a hub of choice for travelers worldwide," said Videsh Kumar Jaipuria, CEO, Delhi International Airport Limited.

## JNPA, DGS ink pact for skill training in Vadhvan region

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Leading container port JNPA on Monday said it has signed an initial pact with the shipping regulator DGS for providing skill development training to locals and project-affected people in the Vadhvan region, where a new greenfield port is coming up through selected Maritime Training Institutes (MTIs).

The facility, being developed near Dahanu in Palghar district of Maharashtra at an investment of Rs 76,200 crore, is being developed by Vadhvan Port Project Ltd (VPPL), a special purpose vehicle formed by Jawaharlal Nehru Port Authority (JNPA) holding a 74 per cent stake and Maharashtra Maritime Board owning the remaining 26 per cent.

The pact between JNPA and the Directorate General of Shipping (DGS) is aimed at empowering local candidates from the Vadhvan Port area by providing recognised mar-



itime qualifications in GP (General Purpose) Rating and certificate in maritime catering, enabling them to pursue careers as seafarers, the port operator said.

Supported through JNPA's CSR funding, with an estimated cost of Rs 2-3 lakhs per candidate, the initiative will cover training fees, accommodation, and boarding, it said, adding collaborating with DG Shipping and MTIs, the program ensures high-quality training, including

shipboard experience, to create sustainable career pathways in the maritime sector while contributing to India's growing seafaring workforce. Besides this, another pact was signed between VPPL and the Dye Makers Association at Vadhvan to provide exclusive branding opportunities to the Association, it said.

"The signing of important Memorandums of Understanding and the start of the Vadhvan Port skilling program represent an enor-

mous step in achieving our goal of inclusive growth and community empowerment. These programs are aimed at establishing long-term employment possibilities and promoting economic growth in the Vadhvan area, from giving youth skills as per their needs to providing branding, finance, and advanced training to dye manufacturers," said Unmesh Sharad Wagh, Chairman and Managing Director of JNPA and VPPL.

The facility, once completed, is expected to create 1.2 million direct and indirect jobs. In addition to this, JNPA and VPPL will also be signing a MoU with Balasaheb Sawant Konkan Krishi Vidyapeeth for developing and implementing an integrated agricultural and horticulture plan for the selected villages in Dahanu and Palghar taluka of Palghar district as a part of the welfare activities for locals in and around greenfield Vadhvan port project, it stat-

ed. JNPA also said a Fishermen's Compensation Policy is being designed to support the fishermen community aligning with the guidelines of the Maharashtra Government and funds to the tune of Rs 300 crore is allocated for the construction of two fishing harbours.

To support dye makers, the port operator, in collaboration with the Union Bank of India, has proposed a cluster-specific scheme with a concessional rate of interest and an attractive interest subvention scheme to provide low-cost funding, enabling artisans to invest in better machinery and scale up their businesses.

Additionally, initiatives will focus on technology upgradation through training programs on automation, AI, and advanced tools like AutoCAD and CNC machines to enhance productivity and competitiveness, it stated.

## Concord Enviro Systems' IPO to open on Dec 19; fixes price band of Rs 665-701/share

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Concord Enviro Systems, an environmental engineering solutions firm, on Monday said it has set a price range of Rs 665-701 per share for its initial share-sale, which will open for public subscription on December 19.

The initial share-sale is scheduled to close on December 23 and the bidding for anchor investors will open for a day on December 18, the company announced.

The proposed IPO comprises a fresh issuance of equity shares worth Rs 175 crore and an Offer For Sale (OFS) of 46.41 lakh equity shares valued at Rs 325.33 crore, at the upper end of the price band, by promoters and an investor. This aggregates the issue size to Rs 500.33 crore.

Those selling shares in the OFS are, promoters -- Prayas Goel and Prerak Goel, promoter groups -- Namrata



Goel, Nidhi Goel and Pushpa Goel -- and investor AF Holdings.

Proceeds from the fresh issue will be invested in Concord Enviro FZE (CEF) for setting up a new assembly unit for water treatment systems as well as its working capital requirement.

Additionally, funds will be invested in Rochem Separation Systems (India) Private Ltd to expand its manufacturing facilities and support activities, payment of debt, technology and growth initiatives, working capital requirements and for general corporate purposes.

At the upper end of the price band, the company's market capitalisation has been pegged at Rs 1,450 crore.

Half of the issue has been reserved for qualified institutional buyers, 35 for retail investors and the remaining 15 per cent for non-institutional investors. Concord Enviro Systems is an integrated solutions provider for industrial waste water reuse and zero liquid discharge solutions, with an in-house position across the value chain. The company's reach extends to diverse regions with exports to countries in North America, Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia.

Motilal Oswal Investment Advisors and Equirus Capital are the book running lead managers to the issue. The equity shares of the company are expected to be listed on December 27 on the NSE and BSE.

## Project of Rs. 35.5 lakh sanctioned to GNDU's Assistant Professor

PNS ■ AMRITSAR

A research project has been granted to Dr. Amanpreet Kaur, Assistant Professor (Contractual), Department of Mathematics, Guru Nanak Dev University to develop efficient estimators of population parameters of sensitive study character in survey sampling using randomized response technique.

The project is sponsored by the Department of Science and Technology, under WISE PDF Scheme that has sanctioned Rs. 35.5 lakh to carry out the research work under the mentorship of Dr. Lovleen Kumar Grover, Associate Professor,

Department of Mathematics, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar. Dr. Palwinder Singh, Dean Academic Affairs said that this research will help in the development of estimators for population parameters of sensitive variables that may be used for government policy making decisions.

Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Karamjeet Singh congratulated on her achievement. Prof. Palwinder Singh, Dean Academic Affairs and Prof. K.S. Kahlon, Registrar also congratulated her. Dr. Amanpreet Kaur is thankful to the Vice Chancellor & other officials for providing the infrastructure and support.

## GNDU Music Department pays tribute to Zakir Hussain

PNS ■ AMRITSAR

The Department of Visual and Performing Arts of the Guru Nanak Dev University organized a Tribute Ceremony on the occasion of the eternal departure of the World Renowned legendary Tabla Player of India, Ustad Zakir Hussain Khan Sahib. Dr. Rajesh Sharma, Head of the Department, while garlanding on the picture of late Ustad Zakir Hussain said that although Ustad Zakir Hussain Ji has left us physically but he will remain alive in the hearts and memories of every music lover due to his contribution to the field of music and giv-

ing a special place to Tabla playing as a solo Vadan. Along with this, he also motivated the students to move forward by learning and taking inspiration from the lives of these personalities. After this, the department faculty Dr. Murli Manohar, Sh. Siddhartha Chatterjee, Dr. Gavish, Dr. Harmeet Singh, Dr. Priyanka Arora, Dr. Ramandeep Kaur, S. Gunveer Singh and research scholars Satnam Singh, Hasandeep Singh, Krishan Singh and other students also paid their tributes to Ustad Zakir Hussain Ji and prayed that God may grant his soul a place in heaven.

## WPI inflation declines to 3-month low of 1.89 pc on cheaper food, RBI may cut rate in Feb

PTI ■ NEW DELHI,

Wholesale price based inflation declined to a 3-month low of 1.89 per cent in November on cheaper food items, and experts predicted a 0.25 per cent interest rate cut by the RBI in the policy review in February. The Wholesale Price Index (WPI) based inflation was 2.36 per cent in October 2024. It was 0.39 per cent in November, last year. In August, 2024, it was 1.25 per cent.

As per the data, inflation in food items eased to 8.63 per cent in November, as against 13.54 per cent in October. The decline was led by a dip in vegetable inflation which stood at 28.57 per cent, as against 63.04 per cent in October.



Inflation in potato, however, continued to be high at 82.79 per cent, while in onion it fell sharply to 2.85 per cent in November.

The fuel and power category witnessed a deflation of 5.83 per cent in November, against a deflation of 5.79 per cent in October. In manufactured items, inflation was 2 per cent

in November, against 1.50 per cent in October.

In a research note, Barclays said wholesale price inflation softened in November, on lower primary food inflation, which more than offset higher inflation seen in manufactured products.

"December to date, global prices are up 0.7 per cent and

are likely to push December WPI inflation higher," Barclays said.

As per the consumer price index data released last week, retail inflation moderated to 5.5 per cent in November, compared with 6.2 per cent in October.

Barclays said this is within the monetary policy committee's (MPC) tolerance band of 2-6 per cent indicating that CPI inflation will be drifting closer to the 4 per cent target by March 2025.

"We expect the MPC to cut the policy repo rate by 25bps in its February meeting. We are mindful of the almost new-looking MPC that will be in charge of this decision," Barclays said.

# Manchester United stuns Manchester City with 2-1 win

AP ■ MANCHESTER

Amad Diallo struck a 90th-minute winner as Manchester United staged a stunning late comeback to beat Manchester City 2-1 in the Premier League. Four-time defending champion City led the Manchester derby 1-0 going into the 88th minute at the Etihad Stadium. But the game was turned round in dramatic fashion as Bruno Fernandes leveled from the penalty spot and Diallo sealed victory for United — prompting head coach Ruben Amorim to declare “something magic happened.”

“It was a very tough match but we believe until the end. We managed to score. We needed that win. It was important for us and for our fans,” Amorim said. City fans jeered at the final whistle as their once dominant team’s woeful run of form extended to one win and eight losses in 11 games.

“I’m the boss, I’m the manager and I’m not good enough. It’s as

simple as that,” Guardiola said. It was a first derby victory for new United head coach Ruben Amorim, who led Sporting Lisbon to a 4-1 win against City in one of his last games in charge of the Portuguese club in November. But for a long time it looked like being a third-straight league loss for United after Josko Gvardiol’s headed goal in the 36th.

Fernandes was guilty of missing the target when through on goal in the second half and United struggled to create chances against a City team that rarely looked like adding to its lead. But in a dramatic end to the match, Diallo raced after an underhit backpass from Matheus Nunes. Nunes then brought down the United forward in the box and referee Anthony Taylor pointed to the penalty spot. Fernandes made no mistake this time — sending Ederson the wrong way.

Moments later, Diallo ran onto a long pass from Lisandro Martinez, flicked the ball high and past Ederson before rolling it



United is 13th and five points behind fifth-place City, which has seen its title defense unravel during its losing run.

“This is a big club and in a big club when you lose eight in 10 (11) something wrong is happening,” Guardiola said.

**CHELSEA CHALLENGE**  
Chelsea, in second, closed the gap on Liverpool to two points after a 2-1 win against Brentford. It’s now seven straight wins in all competitions for Enzo Maresca’s team, which is unbeaten in 10. Its last league defeat was in October — a 2-1 loss to Liverpool. Marc Cucurella scored in the 43rd and Nicolas Jackson made it 2-0 in the 80th for his ninth goal of the season.

Bryan Mbeumo scored for Brentford in the 90th and Cucurella was sent off for a second yellow card in added time. Chelsea is four points ahead of third-place Arsenal.

**MARTIN FIRED**  
Southampton fired manager Russell Martin after being routed 5-0 by Tottenham.

Last-place Southampton is nine points from safety and appears to be heading straight back to the second tier after earning promotion to the top flight last season. The decision came on the same day as another relegation-

threatened team, Wolverhampton, fired head coach Gary O’Neil. Wolverhampton is second to last in 19th. Spurs scored all five goals against Southampton before halftime at St Mary’s Stadium, with James Maddison getting two. Son Heung-min, Dejan Kulusevski and Pape Sarr also scored. Tottenham moved up to 10th and is five points off the Champions League places.

**SARR DOUBLE**  
Ismaila Sarr scored twice as Crystal Palace beat Brighton 3-1 in the Premier League on Sunday. The forward also provided an assist for Trevoh Chalobah in the win at the Amex Stadium, which lifted Palace four points clear of the relegation zone.

Brighton is ninth and without a win in four matches. Palace went ahead in the 27th minute through Chalobah, and Sarr doubled the lead for the visitors in the 33rd. Sarr scored his second in the 82nd pulled one back for Brighton.

## Kerala Blasters sack head coach Mikael Stahre

PTI ■ KOCHI

Kerala Blasters FC on Monday announced the termination of services of their head coach Mikael Stahre with immediate effect after a string of poor performances by the club in the ongoing Indian Super League.

Assistant coaches Bjorn Westrom and Frederico Pereira Morais have also left the club, along with Stahre. “The club sincerely thanks Mikael, Bjorn, and Frederico for their contributions throughout their time with Kerala Blasters FC. We wish them nothing but success in their future endeavours,” the club said in a statement.

“The new head coach will be announced in due course.” Till the new appointment is confirmed, reserve team head coach and head of youth development, Tomasz Tchorz, and assistant coach TG Purushothaman will take over the responsibility of managing the first team.

The 49-year-old Stahre, appointed ahead of the current season, enjoyed a promising



start in the Durand Cup, but the Blasters suffered a last-minute elimination in the quarter-finals against rivals Bengaluru FC.

However, Blasters’ ISL campaign under the Swede has been a challenging one. Kerala Blasters currently sit 10th in the table, with just three wins and two draws from their first 12 matches. They are on a three-match losing streak, managing only one win while losing six of their last seven games.

Four of their seven defeats have come at home. In total, the Blasters played 16 matches under Stahre (including four non ISL matches), managing only five wins while suffering eight defeats.

## ‘Completely and utterly blindsided’: Gillespie slams PCB for lack of communication

PTI ■ SYDNEY

Former Australia pacer Jason Gillespie on Monday slammed the PCB, revealing that he stepped down as Pakistan’s Test head coach after being “completely and utterly blindsided” by the country’s cricket board.

Gillespie, whose contract was set to expire in 2026, resigned last week and he expressed his frustration over the lack of communication, which led him to feel that the Pakistan Cricket Board no longer wanted him in the role.

“There were certainly challenges. I went into the job eyes wide open, I want to make that really clear. I knew that, you know, Pakistan had cycled through a number of coaches in a pretty short space of time.

“The straw that broke the camel’s back, I suppose, was, as a head coach, you like to have clear communication with your employer,” Gillespie told ABC Sport. “I was completely and utterly blindsided by a decision to not have a high-performance



coach,” he added. The PCB didn’t review the contract of Tim Nielsen, who was brought in on the recommendation of the former Aussie quick, as the high performance coach of the team.

“Tim Nielsen was told that his services were no longer required and I had absolutely zero communication from anyone about that.

“And I just thought after a number of other things that had gone on in the previous few months, that was probably the moment where I thought, ‘Well, I’m not

really sure if they actually want me to do this job or not.”

Adding to Gillespie’s frustration was the fact that the feedback given to him regarding Nielsen and the team’s performance was positive.

“I developed a really close relationship with the Test captain, Shan Masood, and felt we were certainly going in the right direction and things were going really well,” he said.

“All the feedback that I’d got or the feedback the PCB got was just how effective, you

know, Tim had been in his role as well and the players were getting a lot out of him.”

Gillespie guided Pakistan to a 2-1 win against England in October, after losing the first match by an innings and 47 runs.

However after the loss in the first Test, he was informed that a new selection panel would be introduced, and he would not be a part of it. He felt his role as head coach was diminished and even suggested that he often didn’t know the team lineup until the day before a match.

This lack of clarity and communication only deepened his frustration with the PCB’s handling of his position.

“I felt I was basically hitting catches and that was about it on the morning of a game,” he said.

“You want to be able to have clear communication with all stakeholders, with selectors, for instance, knowing what the team is as head coach well before the game, or before at least the day before the game,” he said.



## Women’s Champions League to wrap up group stage

AP ■ LONDON

The competitive imbalance in women’s club soccer in Europe will be underscored this week in the final round of Champions League group-stage matches where little is on the line because of the dominance of the continent’s top teams.

The eight teams advancing to the quarterfinals have already secured their spots with one round remaining: Lyon and Wolfsburg from Group A; Chelsea and Real Madrid from Group B; Bayern Munich and Arsenal from Group C; and Manchester City and Barcelona from Group D.

All are either established clubs in the women’s game — especially Lyon — and Wolfsburg, the winners of nine of the 10 Champions League titles from 2011-2020 — or huge European clubs in men’s soccer who have started to really pour money and extra focus into their women’s teams in recent years.

Madrid’s women’s team, for example, was only founded in 2020.

The only thing needing to be settled across Tuesday and Wednesday is which teams qualify in first place and which progress as group runners-up, though there might not be any huge benefit either way given the high standard of the teams going through.

The qualified teams play each other this week, with only Group A fully decided as Lyon is guaranteed to finish in first place with Wolfsburg second.

The two meet in France on Tuesday.

In Group B on the same night, second-place Madrid hosts first-place Chelsea and can jump above the English team with a win courtesy of a superior goal difference.

On Wednesday, Arsenal hosts Bayern and is one point behind the visitors from Germany in Group C. Bayern just needs to avoid defeat to finish top. Also that night, Barcelona is at home to first-place Man City and must beat the English team by two goals or more to win Group D.

Growing gap The lopsided results in the fifth round of games highlighted the gap between the so-called bigger and smaller clubs in the Champions League.

The eight teams advancing to the knockout stage all won their games, scoring a combined 33 goals and conceding a combined three. On the same night, Chelsea, Lyon and Wolfsburg each scored six goals.

Barcelona, the defending champion, has scored 23 goals in its five group games so far — including a 9-0 win over Hammarby and a 7-0 thrashing of St. Polten in its last two outings.

Of the teams in third or last place in their groups, only one — Roma — has more than three points.

The Champions League will expand next season to 18 teams in a single standings, with UEFA hoping for same uplift that the men’s Champions League has had since increasing to a 36-team league.

## FIFA apologises to Ukraine for Crimea map error at 2026 World Cup draw



AP ■ ZURICH

FIFA apologised to the Ukrainian soccer federation for displaying a map during its World Cup qualifying draw that excluded Russia-occupied Crimea from the country’s territory.

“We fully understand the delicate sensitivity of this matter and while the incident was unintentional, we sincerely regret any concern it may have caused,” FIFA’s chief member association officer, Elkhann Mammadov, wrote in a letter

published Sunday by the Ukrainian soccer body. Ukraine was one of 54 national teams included in the draw Friday in Zurich for European qualifying groups for the 2026 World Cup. Russia, which has been banned from FIFA competitions because of the military invasion of Ukraine, has illegally occupied Crimea since 2014. The peninsula was not colored as part of Ukrainian territory in a graphic broadcast during the draw event at FIFA headquarters.

“Are you OK, (at)FIFACOM?” Ukraine government spokesman Heorhii Tykhyi wrote Saturday in a post on the social media platform X, adding: “We fixed the map for you and expect a public apology.”

Mammadov replied that the map was provided by an outside supplier and FIFA was reviewing how to “ensure such oversights do not recur in future.”

Ukraine was drawn into a qualifying group with either France or Croatia, plus Iceland and Azerbaijan. The group winner will advance directly to the World Cup being hosted by the United States, Canada and Mexico, and the runner-up will enter a playoff in March 2026.

FIFA and European soccer body UEFA banned Russian teams from international competitions February 2022, citing expected chaos because some European federations refuse to play games against Russia.

## Edoardo Bove says he’s ‘feeling good’ as he recovers from on-field collapse

AP ■ FLORENCE

Fiorentina midfielder Edoardo Bove said he is “feeling good” and that the support he received from fans, teammates and opponents helped him recover after being placed in a medically induced coma. Bove collapsed on the field during a game against Inter Milan on Dec. 1.

“It’s in moments like these that I understand how genuine this sport truly is and how, beyond the results, competition and rivalries, we are all connected,” Bove posted on Instagram on Monday in his first public comments since the incident. “Connected by a bond that, once created, grows stronger during challenging times becoming almost unbreakable.

“I have experienced it firsthand in these last few days: the affection I’ve received, the warmth of the fans, the support from



teammates and opponents and the closeness of the ENTIRE football world gave me incredible strength and courage,” Bove added. “I felt surrounded by positive energy, which helped me stay calm and not feel the loneliness that often comes with situations like this.”

The 22-year-old Bove was released from the hospital on Friday but won’t be able to play in Italy again if he needs a defibrillator for his heart. Playing with a defibrillator is

prohibited in Italy. But Bove could follow former Inter Milan midfielder Christian Eriksen, who resumed his career in the English Premier League after he went into cardiac arrest while playing for Denmark at the European Championship in 2021 and had a defibrillator implanted.

“I’m feeling good and that’s the most important thing!” Bove said. “See you soon... On the pitch!”

# It’s not just about chess, there’s lot of emotional pressure too: Gukesh on world title

PTI ■ CHENNAI

His history-scripting world title was not just a result of good strategy on the chess board, said Indian Grandmaster D Gukesh on Monday, crediting mental conditioning coach Paddy Upton for helping him tame the “emotional pressure” of competing at the biggest stage.

The 18-year-old Gukesh, who defeated China’s Ding Liren to become the youngest ever owner of the world title, arrived here on Monday to a rousing welcome from enthusiastic fans and officials.

“In a world championship, it’s not only about chess. There is a lot of mental and emotional pressure to deal with. Paddy’s

teachings helped me in that regard,” Gukesh said in a press meet organised by Velammal Vidyalaya, his childhood school.

Upton, a renowned mental conditioning coach, worked with Gukesh in the run-up to and during the 14-game marathon event in Singapore. “The suggestions and the conversations I have had with him, have been very important for me and my development as a player,” he said.

Gukesh also detailed how his association started with the South African, who has the experience of working with the 2011 cricket World Cup-winning Indian cricket team and the national men’s hockey team that bagged a bronze at

the Paris Olympics. “Paddy has been a very important part of my team. After I won the Candidates (April), I asked Sandeep sir (Sandeep Singhal of Westbridge Capital) for a mental trainer,” Gukesh recalled.

“He immediately put me in touch with Paddy Upton, who has a lot of experience working with high-performance athletes,” said the youngster.

In an interview to PTI a day after Gukesh’s win, Upton had lauded the teenager’s “self-awareness.”

“I think that’s the thing that’s really stood out, his ability to recognise his thoughts and manage his mind and his understanding of how to do



so,” Upton said. “...He is a world champion because he was able to manage himself and remain focused and stay in the game even though he’s 0-1 down

right from the beginning. So that really is a mark of a champion,” he had stated. Gukesh also thanked Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin and Deputy CM

Udhayanidhi Stalin for supporting him in his chess journey.

“Definitely, there was a lot of support from the Tamil Nadu government. Honorable Chief Minister and Deputy Chief Minister invite me home and encourage me whenever I achieve something.

“The Tamil Nadu government sponsored me during the Chennai Grandmasters last year. They made all the arrangements. That’s how I won the tournament and qualified for the Candidates.

“If we get more support like this, I believe more chess players will come. I am very thankful to the Tamil Nadu government,” he said.

Gukesh is only the second Indian after the great

Viswanathan Anand to claim the world title. Anand played a pivotal role in shaping the teenager at his academy here. Accidental chess player Gukesh’s father Dr Rajnikanth, who is an ENT surgeon by profession, said he encouraged his son to join chess sessions in the school as a hobby.

“You have to have interest and hard work, otherwise nothing will happen. We did not plan to make him a chess player, but enrolled him in Velammal school chess class as part of the extra-curricular activity.

“But we supported him once he showed interest and worked hard. As a parent, we tried to give him as much exposure as possible. That’s

what I can suggest to other parents as well.

“We should try to give as much exposure as possible to what your children are interested in,” he added. Rajnikanth said Gukesh likes to continuously play in tournaments to ensure that he always remains in touch with the sport.

“Some players play tournaments once in two months — one month preparation and next month playing in tournaments. As far as he (Gukesh) is concerned, games are his practice.

“He learns from his losses and wins. If I don’t give him a tournament for a month, he becomes restless. That’s his choice,” he added.

# Jasprit Bumrah defends struggling Indian team in Australia

PTI ■ BRISBANE

Jasprit Bumrah on Monday defended the struggling Indian team in Australia and played down talk of additional pressure on him, saying it's a side in transition and given his experience, it's his "job" to shoulder extra responsibility. Having taken a seemingly erroneous call of bowling first in the third Test at the Gabba here, India conceded a huge first-innings total of 445 despite Bumrah returning 6/76. In response, the visitors were 51/4 on a rain-hit third day with questions being raised about batters' technique and the quality of bowling, save for Bumrah. "We don't, as a team, point fingers at each other and we don't want to get into that mindset where we are pointing fingers at each other that 'you should do this, you should do that,'" Bumrah told media after stumps when asked for his assessment of India's batting. "We, as a team, are going through a transition, new players are coming

here and it's not the easiest place to play cricket. Over here, it's a different atmosphere with this wicket being a different challenge so yeah, we are not looking at that." Bumrah, who leads the bowling chart in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy with 18 wickets so far, defended the Indian attack amid chatter that he is not getting adequate support from fellow bowlers. "As a bowling unit, as I said, we are in transition so it's my job to help the others. I have played a little more than them so I am trying to help them," said the owner of 191 Test wickets in just 43 Tests. "Everyone will learn through it, will get better and eventually will find different ways so this is the journey that you'll have to go through," he added. Bumrah rejected suggestions that India's poor first innings scores were putting more pressure on the bowlers and on him. "We have 11 players, it's not like that. I don't look at it that I have to do extra (work). As I said, we are a new team, a lot of new players have



come into the side. We have to be considerate and give them that cushion that they will learn from experience," he said. "Nobody is born with all the experiences, nobody is born with all the skills. You keep learning, you keep finding new ways (and) you keep learning about your own game," he continued. The Indian vice-captain said he has enjoyed the challenge of bowling on different pitches in Australia. "I always find different challenges very interesting. Because in the Test match that we played in Perth, the wicket was different. (At) Adelaide (with the pink ball (was) different, the wicket behaved differently, the ball behaved differently," he said. "Here it is a little different because the wicket is at a level and the run-up is low. In India we are not used to that," he explained. "Don't like whinging, don't take opinions seriously" Bumrah said his primary target on encountering a challenge is to tackle it instead of looking at

others to come up with the solutions. "I look at how do I solve it, what can I do in this scenario rather than whinging or complaining or looking at someone else or pointing fingers that I need this from this person," he said. Bumrah reiterated he wants to remain level-headed in dealing with success and failures and that he cannot carry the "baggage of expectations." "When I was a youngster, yes, maybe I used to take extra baggage of fans and opinions. But I don't take any opinions seriously," he said. "I look at myself. I look at answers what I have to do. I give it my absolute best. If I have given it my absolute best, I will accept the results. (But) I cannot carry someone else's energy or baggage that people are expecting me to do the heavy-lifting," he gave a peak into his mindset. "There will be days when I will not get wickets. Somebody else will do, so I will have to do a holding job," Bumrah added.



## Marsh admits being nervous at gully, hails team's bowling on Day 3

PTI ■ BRISBANE

Australian all-rounder Mitchell Marsh on Monday conceded that fielding at gully makes him the "most nervous", particularly because of Cameron Green's excellent reputation in that position. Green is not playing in the ongoing Border-Gavaskar Trophy owing to a spine injury, but Marsh has stepped into that role with some degree of comfort, underlined by his flying catch to dismiss India batter Shubman Gill on day three of the Third Test here. "Yeah, I think since I've come back into the Test team, fielding at gully is probably when I feel the most nervous because Green is likely to go down as one of the best ever. If you drop one there, you're always compared to him," Marsh said during the post-day press conference. Marsh's brilliant catch off left-arm quick Mitchell Starc led to Gill's dismissal for one as India ended Day 3 on a precarious 51 for four. "Any time I can do something like that -- I probably didn't even need to dive, to be fair -- but I thought it had a bit of a moment, and it is a fun team. It's a great team to be a part of. "So, yeah, I like being there, but honestly, being at square leg is just as good." Marsh was happy to see the hosts scoring 445 in their first

innings. "I think when you get sent in and you make 450, it's always positive, and then I guess you earn the right to attack, especially early with the ball. Like I said before, now it's just about how do we try and take 20 wickets. We've got six more to get, and then we just assess from there." Asked if they would enforce the follow-on, he said: "I think we've got six wickets to take first, but we know that we've got to take 20 wickets to try and win this Test and I guess all the conversations and all the planning will be, how do we do that." "So, hopefully the weather holds off, and then tomorrow it's just about coming in, having a crack, and see where we get to." After their humiliating defeat in the opening Test in Perth, Australia have been able to get on top of the Indian batters. "I think we bowled really well. Today was no different, and we've been able to take wickets with the new ball, albeit the second innings in Perth. "Our bowling attack has some great bowlers, and they're attacking, they look to take wickets all the time, and hopefully that can continue." Premier batter Virat Kohli once again fell prey to his longstanding vulnerability outside the off-stump, chasing a delivery pitched wide and edging it to the wicketkeeper Alex Carey.

## Mohammed Siraj bowling with a niggle

PTI ■ BRISBANE

India pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah on Monday revealed that Mohammed Siraj has been bowling with a niggle and praised him for fighting through pain during the ongoing third Test against Australia here. Siraj claimed two wickets in his 23.2 overs in the first innings, and Bumrah, who once again emerged as the best bowler with figures of six for 76, credited his colleague for supporting the team despite the discomfort. "We (Siraj and I) have had conversations but this was the conversation he had with me before we came here (Brisbane). When we came here in Perth, as well as the last game, he looked in very good spirits," Bumrah told reporters after day three. "He was bowling well and he has picked up a fair few of the wickets. In this game, I will give him credit that he had a



little bit of a niggle but he still kept on bowling and still helped the team because he knew if he goes inside and he doesn't bowl, then that team will go under pressure. "So I think he has got a great attitude and he has got a fighter spirit that the team loves," he said. Siraj looked in discomfort as he clutched his hamstring after bowling the second ball of the 37th over of Australia's first innings. The physio was called onto the

field and Siraj then left the field as Akash Deep completed the over. The 30-year-old, however, returned to the field on Day 2 and ended up taking the wickets of Australia skipper Pat Cummins and Nathan Lyon. "I personally love that as well, that he is up for a fight and he always gives it all for the team. So I think that is the biggest positive for any cricketer going forward. "That he gives it his absolute

best on the field. And even when he is not 100% fit, when he has got a niggle, he is still fighting for the team. So that is a great attitude." "Keep running in, keep having a smile on your face" Siraj has taken five and four wickets in the first two Tests in Perth and Adelaide but he has also been criticised for a lack of control over his lines and lengths, especially during the third Test, which allowed the Australian batters to get away early in their innings on Day 2. However, Bumrah has advised Siraj to just focus on the controllables. "Yes, in terms of wickets and all, some days you will bowl well, the wickets will come as I spoke to him before. And some days you will not bowl very well but the wickets will follow. So it's all money in the bank," Bumrah said. "That is the conversation that I have had with him. That you keep focusing on your stuff, things that you can control."



## Gavaskar urges Virat Kohli to refrain from playing cover drive

PTI ■ BRISBANE

The legendary Sunil Gavaskar on Monday urged India superstar Virat Kohli to draw inspiration from Sachin Tendulkar's monumental 241 against Australia in Sydney in 2004 and refrain from playing cover drive in order to end his persistent struggle against deliveries outside off-stump. On a rain-marred third day of the ongoing Brisbane Test, Kohli copped yet another failure when Josh Hazlewood had him caught behind for 3 as a struggling India ended at 51 for 4 when the stumps were drawn. Gavaskar said Kohli, who has scores of 5, 100 not out, 7, 11 and 3 so far on this tour, need not look beyond "his hero" Tendulkar, who responded with an exceptional 436-ball 241 including 33 fours at the SCG when he too was going through a similar phase of getting caught behind during the Australia tour of 2003-04. Tendulkar's knock, for which he batted more than 10 hours, is widely considered as one of his best-ever as the legendary batter curbed his instinct to drive and scored the majority of his runs on the on-side. "He (Kohli) only needs to

look at his hero, Sachin Tendulkar. The way in which he (Tendulkar) had kept his patience and control on his off-side game, scoring those 241 runs at Sydney," Gavaskar told Star Sports. "He did not play any shot on the off-side, or at least in the cover (region) because before that he was getting dismissed while attempting to play in covers. "The shots that he played were pretty much straight or on the on-side," he added. Gavaskar said Kohli, who has been caught behind the wickets thrice on this tour, must look to defend every single delivery in the channel of the off-stump and find other scoring areas like Tendulkar did. "Similarly, he (Kohli) should keep a control on his mind and on his game. If the ball is on the off-stump, (he should think that) 'I would defend it. I would not try to score of it,'" Gavaskar said. The legendary batter said Kohli should trust his bottom-hand play more than going for his drives in order to banish his troubles. "He has such a wonderful bottom hand play, with that he can play in that area, straight or towards midwicket," Gavaskar said.

## Isa Guha calls Bumrah a 'primate', apologises for her remark later

PTI ■ BRISBANE

Former England player and commentator Isa Guha, who referred to Indian pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah as a "primate" during the third Test between India and Australia here, apologised for her racist remark on Monday. She said she was "deeply sorry" for choosing a wrong word to describe the India pacer's brilliant display with the ball. Guha made the comment in response to Brett Lee's praise of the Indian bowler after Bumrah dismissed both Australian openers on day two of the Test on Sunday. "Well, he's the MVP, isn't he? Most valuable primate, Jasprit Bumrah," Guha had said while commenting for Fox Cricket. "He is the one that's going to do all the talking for India, and why so much focus was on him in the buildup to this Test match, and whether he would be fit." The usage of the word "primate" by Guha caused a social media storm, as fans



slammed her and forced the 39-year-old to issue an apology. "Yesterday in commentary I used a word that can be interpreted in a number of different ways. I'd like to apologise for any offence caused," Guha said on air at the start of day three. "I set myself really high standards when it comes to empathy and respect of others. If you listen to the full transcript I only meant the highest praise for one of India's greatest players. And someone that I

admire greatly." Guha, who is of Indian heritage and has been in Fox Sports' broadcast team for several years, said there was no malice in her comments. "I'm an advocate for equality and someone who has spent their career thinking about inclusion and understanding in the game. "I was trying to frame the enormity of his achievement and I've chosen the wrong word. For that I am deeply sorry," she added. "As someone who is also ... of South Asian heritage, I hope people would recognise there was no other intention or malice there. I hope this doesn't overshadow what has been a great Test match so far and I look forward to seeing how it progresses. Once again, I am really, really sorry." Former India head coach Ravi Shastri, who sat next to Guha when she issued the apology, praised her for addressing the matter live on air. Former Australia wicketkeeper Adam Gilchrist was also there.

# Kane Williamson makes 156 as New Zealand sets a target of 658 for England

AP ■ HAMILTON

Kane Williamson made 156 as New Zealand amassed a lead of 657 runs before both England openers were dismissed to leave the hosts in a commanding position at the end of the third day of the third cricket test on Monday. To compound an already dim day for the tourists, England captain Ben Stokes limped from the field with a recurrence of a hamstring injury. Williamson's 33rd test century was his seventh at Seddon Park and his fifth in consecutive tests on a home ground on which he averages more than 100. New Zealand finally was dismissed for 453 after leading by 204 on the first innings and in five overs

before stumps England slumped to 18-2. Tim Southee bowled Ben Duckett (4) off an inside edge in the second over of the England innings as the opener charged the veteran seamer who is playing his final test. Zac Crawley (5) was dismissed by Matt Henry for the sixth time in the series, trapped lbw one over before stumps. Jacob Bethell 9 not out and Joe Root had yet to score were at the crease at the close. "Whenever you take a wicket for New Zealand it's special," said Southee who now has 390 test wickets. "Playing for New Zealand has been such a big part of my life and it's been such an honor to do what I've been able to do. "Hopefully the next couple of

days will be a good couple of days but an emotional couple of days too." Stokes was bowling the second ball of his 13th over when, on his follow-through, he clutched at the hamstring of his left leg. He immediately walked from the field with his hand covering the lower half of his face on which was etched both pain and distress. Stokes suffered a serious injury to his left hamstring while playing in The Hundred in August for the Northern Superchargers against the Manchester Originals. He was on crutches for some time and forced to miss England's test series against Sri Lanka and the first test of the subsequent series against Pakistan. Ollie Pope took over the captaincy in Stokes' absence.



During his six-hour innings, Williamson overtook South Africa's Graeme Smith to move up to 17th place on the list of leading test run-scorers six behind another South African, Hashim Amla.

He shared partnerships on Monday of 107 with Rachin Ravindra (44) and 92 with Daryl Mitchell (60). His century came from 137 balls and his 150 from 196 balls, the third 50 from 59 runs as

New Zealand stepped up its scoring towards an expected declaration. The entire first session on the third day was lost to rain and a damp outfield. Play resumed at 1.30 with New Zealand 136-3, Williamson 50 not out and Ravindra 2. Williamson scored fluently throughout the day, hitting 14 fours and a six in his century. He was typically powerful square of the wicket, particularly in his use of the cut shot. Ravindra was sometimes bogged down, at the start of the day when he added only a handful of runs in the first hour and later when he found his scoring options limited. At times England bowled to a 7-2 offside field which plugged some scoring zones. With wide gaps on the leg

side, Ravindra tried to drag a ball from Matthew Potts outside his off stump through mid-wicket but edged it from the outside half of the bat to Brydon Carse at mid-off. Mitchell joined Williamson and batted with more urgency which seemed an indication of an impending declaration. He hit two sixes and seven fours in his 60 from 84 balls before holing out to Matthew Potts in the deep to give Jacob Bethell his first test wicket. New Zealand had a 500 run lead by 4.55pm on a day when play could go on until 7.30pm, under lights if necessary, because of the loss of the morning session. It led by 600 at 6.10pm but no declaration came. England took the second new ball after 93.4 overs when the

lead was 604 and put in the hands of off-spinner Shoib Bashir who took 2-170, the most expensive bowling figures against New Zealand. Mitchell Santner took 16 runs from the first over bowled by Joe Root and was out in the same over for 49. That brought Southee to the crease for his final innings in his 107th and last test, needing two sixes to become the fourth player after Stokes, England coach and former New Zealand captain Brendon McCullum and Australian wicketkeeper Adam Gilchrist to hit 100 sixes in tests. He was welcomed by a guard of honor of England players but made only 2 as the New Zealand innings ended with wicketkeeper Tom Blundell 44 not out.

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