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**INSIDE**

**MONEY 10**  
NEW MANUFACTURING GOLDEN AGE FOR INDIA BECKONS: TATA SONS CHIEF TO STAFF

RAIPUR, FRIDAY DECEMBER 27, 2024; PAGES 12 ₹3

www.dailypioneer.com

PUBLISHED FROM: DELHI | LUCKNOW | BHOPAL | BHUBANESWAR | RANCHI | RAIPUR | CHANDIGARH | DEHRADUN | HYDERABAD | VIJAYWADA

## ARCHITECT OF INDIAN ECONOMY PASSES AWAY

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, the architect of India's economic reforms, died on Thursday night. He was 92. Singh's death was announced by the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Delhi, where he was admitted in the Emergency ward around 8.30 PM in a critical condition. An AIIMS bulletin said "he was treated for age related medical conditions and had sudden loss of consciousness at home" on December 26. "Resuscitative measures started immediately at home. He was brought to the medical emergency at AIIMS Delhi at 8.06 pm. Despite all efforts, he could not be revived and was declared dead at 9.51 pm," said the bulletin. Singh, who was PM for two terms in the Congress-led



United Progressive Alliance (UPA) Government from 2004 to 2014, had been in poor health for the last few months. He is survived by wife Gurcharan Singh and three daughters. Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and her mother Sonia Gandhi reached the hospital as soon as the news of his hospitalisation became known. Singh, who was Finance Minister under the then PM PV Narasimha Rao, was the



architect and the brainchild of economic reforms in 1991 that pulled India from the brink of bankruptcy and ushered in an era of economic liberalisation that is widely believed to have changed the course of India's economic trajectory. Singh died as the Congress party concluded its Congress Working Committee meeting at Belagavi in Karnataka, where all top party leaders were present. Party chief Mallikarjun Kharge and



Rahul Gandhi rushed to Delhi from Belagavi followed by several top party leaders and workers from across the country. A galaxy of leaders across the political party lines condole the death of Singh with Prime Minister Narendra Modi remarking "We had extensive deliberations on various subjects relating to governance; his wisdom, humility were always visible". "With the passing of former PM Manmohan Singh, India



has lost a visionary statesman, a leader of unimpeachable integrity," said Mallikarjun Kharge. "Manmohan Singh's policy of economic liberalisation and rights-based welfare paradigm profoundly transformed lives of crores," Kharge added before leaving the CWC meet at Belagavi. "Few people in politics inspire the kind of respect that Sardar Manmohan Singh did. Manmohan Singh's honesty will always be an



inspiration for us. He remained steadfast in commitment to serve the nation despite being subjected to unfair, deeply personal attacks," Priyanka Gandhi said as her husband Robert Vadra was the first to announce on social media the demise of Dr Singh. Rahul Gandhi in his remarks said he lost a mentor and guide as millions like him admired Dr Singh who will be remembered with the utmost pride. "Manmohan Singh Ji



led India with immense wisdom and integrity. His humility and deep understanding of economics inspired the nation. My heartfelt condolences to Mrs. Kaur and the family," Rahul Gandhi said. Here is the timeline of his five-decade old career in bureaucracy and politics. 1954: Completed Master's in Economics from Panjab University 1957: Economic Tripos (3-year degree prog) from Cambridge University

1962: D.Phil in Economics from Oxford University 1971: Joins Government of India as Economic Advisor in Commerce Ministry 1972: Appointed Chief Economic Advisor in Finance Ministry 1980-82: Member, Planning Commission 1982-1985: Governor of the Reserve Bank of India 1985-87: Served as Deputy Chairman of Planning Commission 1987-90: Secretary General of South Commission in Geneva 1990: Appointed Advisor to Prime Minister on Economic Affairs March 1991: Appointed chairman of University Grants Commission 1991: Elected to Rajya Sabha from Assam, and re-elected in 1995, 2001, 2007 and 2013 1991-96: Finance Minister under P V Narasimha Rao government 1998-2004: Leader of the Opposition in Rajya Sabha 2004-2014: Prime Minister of India.

## Congress and AAP cloud over INDIA Bloc

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

In a development that could be a major setback to the India Bloc as the growing rift between the Congress and the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) has escalated into open hostility thereby putting the alliance on shaky grounds. The AAP on Thursday threatened that it would talk to other parties of the INDIA Bloc to remove the Congress from the alliance, if it didn't take action against Delhi Congress leader Ajay Maken for making derogatory remarks against party's supremo Arvind Kejriwal, calling him an 'anti national'. The AAP leaders now demanded that the Congress take disciplinary action against Maken and other party leaders within 24 hours.



Photo: Ranjan Dimri/The Pioneer



File photo

Slamming Congress for having crossed all boundaries, Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh accompanied by Chief Minister Atishi warned that the AAP has given an ultimatum to its leadership to take immediate action against Maken within 24 hours, failing which AAP will be forced to demand Congress's expulsion from the INDIA Bloc. "We will ask the other parties in the alliance to remove the Congress," Singh said. He further alleged that the Congress's Delhi unit is working with the BJP to ensure AAP's defeat in the Delhi polls due early next year. Atishi accused the Congress's candidates' list is being prepared by the BJP, and their funding is also being provided by them. This comes amidst rising tensions and accusations from both sides, further weakening the opposition bloc. The reason for the AAP's grouse is the Congress' FIR against Kejriwal on charges of fraud and forgery, accusing him of "misleading and deceiving" the

### Kejriwal may lose NDMC membership

SAUMYA SHUKLA ■ NEW DELHI

The New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) on Wednesday passed a resolution condemning former Chief Minister and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) convener Arvind Kejriwal for failing to implement the Narendra Modi-led Government's flagship scheme Ayushman Bharat. The Council is seeking legal opinion from the law department to cancel his membership as he has not been able to attend the meetings. The AAP Convener is an ex-officio member of the council, which falls under the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), since he is the MLA from the New Delhi Assembly constituency. Kejriwal has consecutively missed the meetings of the

new council for the fourth time since the first took place on November 9 and also missed the oath taking ceremony. Launching an all-out attack on the AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal from all corners ahead of the Delhi Assembly elections 2025, NDMC Vice-Chairman Kuljeet Chahal flagged the issue of him remaining absent from the council meetings, stating that the law department has been consulted in the matter and will reply by the next weekly meeting about the legality of the matter. "The matter will be raised in the next council meeting after receiving the department's response," he said while addressing the media. A condemnation resolution was also passed in the meeting against the AAP chief. The members of the Council

also passed a censure motion against Kejriwal on the fraud of 'Mukhyamantri Mahila Samman' and 'Sanjeevani Yojna'. Chahal said, "Kejriwal is not allowing the Ayushman Bharat Yojna implemented by the Prime Minister to reach the citizens of Delhi due to his personal and political reasons." New Delhi BJP Member of Parliament P Bansuri Swaraj, who is also a member of the NDMC, attended the meeting. "Today I attended the weekly meeting of NDMC with the council officials. In the meeting, a resolution condemning the neglect of public interest by former Chief Minister of Delhi Arvind Kejriwal by not implementing the Ayushman Bharat scheme in Delhi was unanimously passed," she shared in a tweet. Continued on page 2

public with promises of non-existent welfare schemes and derogatory remarks by senior Congress leaders Ajay Maken and Sandeep Dikshit on party's national convener. The tension escalated during the Winter session of Parliament when murmurs arose about changing the leadership of the INDIA Bloc, with some including Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) chief Lalu Prasad suggesting Mamata Banerjee to take over. The INDIA Bloc, comprising parties like the Samajwadi Party, Trinamool Congress (TMC), RJD, Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), Shiv Sena (UBT), and AAP, face a crucial test of unity. The AAP's decision to hold talks with its allies could deepen the ongoing crisis. Singh accused Maken, and Dikshit of targeting AAP instead of focusing on the BJP. Singh slammed Maken for allegedly calling Kejriwal "anti-national" and urged Congress to take action against him within 24 hours. "At this point, all limits have been crossed. Filing an FIR, calling someone anti-national-such audacity from Ajay Maken and his party is unacceptable. I demand that the Congress take action against Ajay Maken within 24 hours. Otherwise, we will appeal to the other constituent parties of the INDIA Bloc to expel Congress from the alliance," asserted the AAP Rajya Sabha MP. Ajay Maken reads the BJP script, makes statements at the BJP's behest, and targets AAP leaders on BJP's instructions. And yesterday, he crossed all limits and called our leader Arvind Kejriwal anti-nation," Singh said. The Congress or Ajay Maken have never called any BJP leader in Delhi "anti-national", Singh said. Continued on page 2



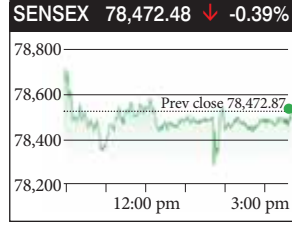
### EC makes world's largest electoral dataset public

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

The Election Commission (EC) on Thursday released the world's largest electoral dataset for 2024 Lok Sabha and four State Assembly polls held this year. The move was aimed at enhancing "public trust" in the country's electoral system at a time when the opposition has been raising doubts over its credibility after it changed its rules to restrict public access to CCTV footage of polling booths and other poll documents. Sources in the election watchdog said since the One Nation One Election (ONOE) has been tabled in the Parliament and a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) is monitoring it, this data will help the stakeholders to tread the path of ambitious simultaneous polls in the country. The EC officials asserted that such granular data is not shared by any of the election management bodies in democracies across the world. "This suo motu initiative is to enhance the public trust that constitutes the underpinning of India's electoral system," the EC said. In its 40 statistical reports related to Lok Sabha 2024 polls, released by the poll body on Thursday showed that the six national parties bagged over 63 per cent share of the total valid votes polled

in the Lok Sabha elections held this year. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Congress, Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), Communist Party of India (Marxist) [CPI(M)], Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and National People's Party (NPP) are the six national parties. Six recognised National parties, 47 State parties and 690 registered, unrecognised political parties contested the Parliamentary polls. Besides, 3,905 independent candidates forfeited the deposits. Out of the 3,921 independent candidates, 279 were women, the EC noted. The datasets cover a range of variables, such as details of PC/AC /State wise electors, number of polling stations, State/ PC wise voter turnout, Party wise vote share, gender-based voting behaviour. It also included State wise participation of women electors and much more. "This suo moto initiative, is to enhance the public trust that constitutes the underpinning of India's electoral system," it is the poll body said in the Statement. "The release of extensive data sets is also in furtherance of the Commission's policy of maximum disclosure, greater transparency and accessibility of election-related data for all stakeholders including academia, research and the general public," it added. Continued on page 2

### MARKETS



### WEATHER



### FIR registered in forged voter ID case: Delhi Police

SAUMYA SHUKLA ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police has registered a case against four individuals in connection with forgery in Voter ID card applications for the purpose of new voter registration and address shifting after the Election office flagged such suspicious cases to them in southeast Delhi's Shaheen Bagh. On Wednesday, the Election Commission flagged four such suspicious cases to the Delhi Police, following which the police registered cases under section 336 (Forgery for the purpose of cheating) and Section 340 BNS (Using forged documents as genuine). "It is to inform you that certain applicants have submitted online applications for voter registration through Form-6 and Form-8 by fraudulent means. These applicants have uploaded false documents, which have been tampered with, in support of their applications," the Election Registration Officer stated. Continued on page 2

## From deep sea, to outer space, Indian explorers will make history

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ HYDERABAD

As India is gearing up for its first space mission in 2026, plans are afoot to send a human into the deep sea the same year thereby showcasing the country's prowess in frontier scientific endeavours. Disclosing this, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science, Jitendra Singh said on Thursday "... One Indian up there, and one Indian in the deep sea. That will be once again, a record of sorts." He also emphasised the increasing importance of oceanic exploration in the country's journey toward becoming a 'Viksit Bharat'. The Centre is planning to send a human into the deep sea with the mission likely to coincide with the human space mission in early 2026, Singh said while speaking at the 'Commemoration of the 20th anniversary of the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami' at the Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS). The minister recalled that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had mentioned the Deep Sea Mission in the past Independence Day address. "We are also planning to send a human into the deep sea. I was telling Ravichandran (Secretary, Ministry of Earth Sciences) that it would be a strange coincidence-one human in space and another in the deep sea. This will



Representative photo

happen almost simultaneously," Singh said. The human space mission, initially planned for 2025, may not take place next year, but is now expected in early 2026, he added. Advocating for the sustainable exploration and conservation of India's 7,500-kilometre coastline and its abundant marine resources, the minister said the government is working to create an ecosystem to support these efforts. He told a news agency that the services and information provided by INCOIS are not only relevant to coastal communities along India's shoreline but also to people worldwide. Continued on page 2

## Beware the gangs Gurugram, 200 gangsters arrested so far

PARVESH SHARMA ■ GURUGRAM

In a major crackdown against lactive gangs involved in various crimes, the Gurugram police have arrested 200 members of 80 gangs, between January 1 to December 13 this year. While revealing the data, police said a number of 406 cases were also registered against them, and Rs 3.67 Crore were also recovered from their possession. "The arrested accused were mainly involved in robbery, house-breaking, theft, vehicle theft, snatching, ATM fraud, murder and others. The Gurugram police's crime branch teams and police station teams work hard to nab these criminals and recover huge amounts from them" Vikas Arora, Commissioner of Gurugram Police, said. Meanwhile, police said a special drive was initiated against these criminals at the direction of the Gurugram Police Commissioner. Many among the apprehended

offenders, were evading arrest for a long time. "We identified such offenders by collecting data from courts, sources and other inputs to keep an eye on the movements and activities of the criminals and anti-social elements. We believe such elements can be a threat to the city and disrupt law and order situation or execute any crime," Varun Dahiya, ACP (Crime), said. He said that such operations against the Proclaimed Offenders (POs), bail jumpers and as well as other dreaded culprits will be continued in future to further ensure a sense of security and safety among the people. Dahiya said that specific information and public cooperation are very important when it comes to tackling and preventing crime. Apart from that, he emphasised that cooperation between police and the public plays a significant role in investigating and prosecuting criminals engaged in different offences. "They were arrested after receiving information



Representative photo

from specific resources to keep an eye on the movements and activities of the criminals and anti-social elements. We believe such elements can be a threat to the city and disrupt law and order situation or execute any crime," he said. Apart from this, the Gurugram police had also recovered Rs 83.41 crores from 1,658 Cyber Fraudsters, including 22 bank officials of different banks in just 11 months from January 2024 to 30 November 2024, the Gurugram police said. Senior police officers of the Gurugram claimed that the police are closely working with other agencies and organisations to counter these

frauds. "The cyber fraudsters commit fraud by luring people with good profits, investing in the stock market, reducing electricity bills, in the name of buying/selling cheap goods online, sextortion through video calls on WhatsApp, morphing, sending links through various means, posing as a customs officer/police officer in the name of implicating false case, in the name of issuing a No-Objection Certificate, digitally arresting people by showing the fear of implicating them in a criminal case, etc," Priyanshu Divan, ACP (cybercrime), said. Cyber fraudsters call people

and pretend to be police officers and commit fraud by telling them that any of their acquaintances or relatives have broken any law or that any of their relatives or acquaintances are ill, police said. They also dupe people; when people search for customer care numbers on Google for online hotel booking, wine delivery or for taking loans, cyber fraudsters keep their numbers there so that people call cyber fraudsters, and cyber fraudsters cheat them by taking them into confidence," Divan said. "As per the instructions of the Gurugram police chief, and to create awareness about cyber crimes, officials of RWA of residential societies, schools, companies and various institutions in Gurugram are being made aware by giving information about cyber crimes. We appealed to the public to steer clear of such dubious callers and advised caution in sharing personal details to strangers stalking them online," he added.



# For school holiday, senior murders Class two student

**BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ LUCKNOW**

The gruesome murder of an 11-year-old Class 2 student, Kritarth, at DL Public School's residential hostel in Hathras has left the community in shock and raised serious questions about safety and accountability in educational institutions. The police have detained a senior student, alleging that he killed Kritarth because he wanted the school to close for holidays. However, Kritarth's family has dismissed this account, accusing the school management of negligence and misdirection.

Class 8 student from Mathura, admitted to strangling Kritarth with a towel on the night of September 22 while all the hostel students were asleep. The accused claimed during interrogation that he had seen online that schools shut down temporarily in cases of serious incidents or deaths. Believing this, he planned to kill a junior student. "I thought if I strangled a younger child, it would be quick, unnoticed, and would lead to a school closure," the boy allegedly told police. The postmortem report confirmed that Kritarth had been strangled. There were visible injury marks on his neck, corroborating the police's claims. Four days prior to the murder, the accused broke the car of the school manager, Dinesh Baghel. According to police reports, the accused, a

confessed to trying to kill two other students earlier but failing. After the murder, he threw the towel used in the crime near the henna trees behind the school. He later retrieved and discarded it again. On December 16, police recovered the towel based on the accused's statement. Kritarth's family has outrightly rejected the police's version of events. His father, Shri Krishna, a software engineer, and uncle, Ghanshyam, alleged that school manager Dinesh Baghel is primarily responsible for the murder. The family narrated their ordeal, saying that when they were informed by the school of Kritarth's alleged illness, they rushed to the hostel, only to find him missing. After confronting Baghel multiple times, the manager was eventually stopped near

Saadabad with Kritarth's lifeless body in his car. "The police are shielding the real culprits. The dead body was found in the manager's car, yet he has been acquitted of the murder charges. We will move to the High Court," said Ghanshyam. Manager Dinesh Baghel and his family have denied any involvement in the murder. His wife, Pushpa, stated, "We trust the judiciary. My husband and other staff have been granted bail because there is no evidence against them." The accused student's family also denied the allegations, calling them baseless. His father, a small-scale supplier of cakes in Mathura, claimed the police had falsely implicated his son. "My son has been made a scapegoat. Why would he commit such a crime just to get holidays?" he questioned.



# LG meets industrialists to address key issues

**STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI**

The Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena on Thursday interacted with 200 Industrialists operating in the national Capital who raised various pressing issues including exorbitant power tariffs, waterlogging and dark spots among others. "In the 'Samvaad@RajNiwas' dialogue series, engaged with nearly 200 representatives of industrial units operating in 'Industrial Areas' across Delhi, today. Having visited such areas, on many occasions in the past, this was the first structured interaction at the Raj Niwas," the Delhi LG shared in a post

on X. "During the session, industrialists from areas such as Kirti Nagar, Badli, Udyog Nagar, Wazirpur and Okhla etc., raised several pressing issues, including exorbitant power tariffs, unavailability of potable and industrial water, waterlogging, dark spots, insufficient fire stations, encroachments, lease agreements, freehold property concerns, subsidies for solar plant installations, lack of ESI health centres and inadequate DTC bus connectivity," he said. He assured the participants that Delhi Development Authority (DDA) and Delhi Police will immediately address their concerns and other agen-

cies like Delhi State Industrial and Infrastructure Development Corporation Ltd. (DSIIDC), Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD), Power and Delhi Jal Board, would be requested to address their grievances and other related long-standing issues promptly. "Reiterated my commitment to improving the Ease of Doing Business in Delhi, which in turn contributes significantly to the city's financial health and creates employment. Also urged the representatives of industries to fulfil their tax obligations on time and ensure that no activity is undertaken that causes pollution in the city," he stated.

# Kejriwal may lose NDMC membership

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Chahal also informed that on May 25, 2022, the Council had given in-principle approval to the implementation of the Centre's flagship 'Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana' (AB-PMJAY) scheme for the residents of New Delhi area in a meeting in which the then Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal himself was present. "Ayushman Bharat Yojna, launched by the Prime Minister, is one of the flagship schemes of the Government of India. This scheme was created to achieve the goal of universal health coverage under the recommendation of National Health Policy 2017. The Prime Minister had ordered to implement this scheme in all the states, but the Delhi Government has deprived the citizens of Delhi of this scheme due to political reasons," he said.

# AAP alleges BJP distributing cash in Delhi, files complaint



Delhi Chief Minister Atishi and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader Sanjay Singh address a press conference. Ranjan Dimri

**STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI**

AAP Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh on Thursday lodged a complaint with the Enforcement Directorate (ED) complaining against two BJP leaders for allegedly distributing cash to people ahead of the Delhi Assembly polls. Singh also lashed out at the ED after he failed to meet officials of the agency to lodge the complaint against former BJP MP Parvesh Verma and former MLA Manjinder Singh Sirsa. He said he sought an appointment through email to meet the ED officials at 4 pm in order to lodge a complaint on the behalf of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP).

The complaint of AAP was received by the agency but its officials did not meet the party delegation, he said. "In the constituency of AAP convener Arvind Kejriwal, Rs 1,100 each were openly given to the voters as bribe (on Wednesday). Crores of rupees would be recovered if the ED conducts raid at former MP Verma's residence," the AAP leaders told reporters. Former Delhi chief minister Kejriwal, representing the New Delhi seat since 2013 in the Assembly, is the AAP candidate for the constituency for the upcoming polls due in February. Singh rued that the ED officials refused to meet him. "The ED,

which is so active in everything, has no time to meet the AAP leaders. It means, it functions as an agency to act only at the command of the ruling party to topple governments and arrest opposition leaders including chief ministers," he alleged. The AAP MP said he will also try to meet the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), Income Tax department and Election Commission (EC) to lodge complaint against the BJP leaders. On the other hand, Verma maintained that the money was given to women by social organisation Rashtriya Swabhiman, founded by his father and former chief minister Sahib Singh Verma.

# Delhi Police boost security for New Year's Eve celebrations

**STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI**

The Delhi Police has intensified security arrangements and increased deployments in the border areas of the national Capital for new year celebrations. More than 10,000 police personnel, including traffic police, are expected to be on the ground to rein in hooliganism and traffic violations. "After Christmas, we have made a robust plan for the security arrangements for new year eve. We want everyone to welcome the new year with great zeal but no one will be allowed to breach the law. Additional pickets, barricades and personnel -- including paramilitary deployment -- will be made at the borders of the Capital to tackle nuisance by people from the adjoining states," a senior police officer said. Delhi shares borders with Haryana and Uttar Pradesh

and lies close to Rajasthan. A large number of people from these three states arrive in the national Capital for new year celebrations. The police already deployed police personnel at more than 10 locations for Christmas, but now they have intensified their security and heavy deployment has already been done on more than 15 locations from where vehicles enter the national Capital. "The traffic police has already chalked out a plan to combat motorcycle stunts and drink driving. Additional forces from different police stations will be deployed to help the traffic police," another senior police officer said. According to the police, there will be shift duties and SHO's have been ordered to be on the road with their teams to maintain law and order on new year eve. Teams will impound two or four wheeler immediately if anyone is found indulging in stunt-like activities.

# Waqf employees protest non payment of salaries

**STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI**

A group of 250 Imams and Muazzins, employed under the Delhi Waqf Board, on Thursday protested outside the residence of former Chief Minister and AAP supremo

Arvind Kejriwal to demand the release of their pending salaries for over 1.5 years. The delegation, which was led by President of the All India Imam Association Maulana Sajid Rashidi, demanded immediate action in the issue.

# From deep sea, to outer space, Indian...

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Lauding the state-of-the-art facility, he said the institute is providing services that contribute not only to the development of a 'Viksit Bharat' but also to India's significant contribution to the world. Recalling the devastation caused by the 2004 Tsunami, Singh spoke about the crucial lessons learned and the transformative policies that followed. He added that the tragedy catalysed the establishment of institutions like INCOIS, which now stands as a testament to India's commitment to safeguarding lives and livelihoods. An official release in 2023 had stated that as a part of the Samudrayaan Mission undertaken by the Union Ministry of Earth Sciences, the country aims to send three individuals 6,000 meters below sea level for exploration.

# FIR registered in forged voter ID case: Delhi Police

**From page 1**

The accused includes Md. Jamil Alam, for submitting forged Aadhar Card, and Kisunee, Mohd. Naim, and Sabana Khatoon, for submitting a tampered electricity bill. "The Delhi Police, Shaheen Bagh police station, has registered a case following a complaint received from the Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) of AC-52 (Okhla). The complaint highlights serious instances of forgery in voter ID card applications, where fake documents were

submitted by four individuals for the purpose of new voter registration and address shifting," Deputy Commissioner of Police (Southeast) Ravi Kumar Singh said. He added that the applicants attempted to misuse these documents for shifting their registered address for voting purposes and registering as new voters in the constituency. "The investigation is ongoing to identify the accused individuals and any possible accomplices or networks involved in these fraudulent

activities," the DCP added. In its letter, the ERO said, "It has been found that the applicants have attempted to deceive the authorities by tampering with documents, including Aadhar Cards and electricity bills, as proof of identity and residence." Describing it as "a serious offence", it added that the applicants have intentionally provided false information and documents to manipulate the electoral roll. "The Representation of the People Act, 1950, and other relevant laws prohibit such activities and provide for

penalties for those found guilty," it said. The ERO asked the police to take prompt action to investigate the cases and prevent such fraudulent activities in the future. "The police is requested to verify the documents and information provided by the applicants and take necessary actions against those found guilty of tampering with documents," the letter read, while also providing supporting documents as evidence. Meanwhile, the Delhi BJP welcomed the decision of

ERO to lodge a police case and take legal action against four Muslim applicants seeking registration as voters in the assembly area on the basis of tampered documents. Reacting on the issue, Delhi BJP President Virendra Sachdeva said, "A Delhi BJP delegation had met the Chief Election Commissioner of India and other Election Commissions and requested that bogus voters and bogus vote applicants need to be checked and legal action be taken to check bogus votes of Muslim Bangladeshis and Rohingyas getting registered."

# EC makes world's largest...

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The data showed Maharashtra had the highest number of women contesting candidates with 111 in the fray, followed by 80 in Uttar Pradesh and 77 in Tamil Nadu. But at the same time, out of the total 543 Lok Sabha constituencies, there were 152 where there were no women candidates. The data showed a total of over 97.97 crore citizens had registered themselves as electors as compared to over 91.19 crore in 2019, an increase of 7.43 per cent. Out of these registered electors, 64.64 crore had cast votes in 2024, compared to 61.4 crore in 2019. It also showed that 42.81 lakh postal votes were received but 5.35 lakh were rejected owing to various reasons, including late submission. The data on Lok Sabha polls, 2024 and four Assembly elections, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh, held alongside parliamentary polls comes against the backdrop of allegations of non-disclosure by the EC.

Referring to overseas Indian electors, EC said over 1,19 lakh such people were registered in the category, including 1.06 lakh men, 12,950 women and 13 third gender, compared to 99,844 registered overseas electors in 2019. Overseas Indian electors are those who are Indian citizens residing abroad due to various reasons and eligible to vote here. They have come to India to vote showing their original passport as a proof of identity.

# Congress and AAP cloud over INDIA Bloc

**From page 1**

"The audacity Ajay Maken has shown, I demand that the Congress acts against him within 24 hours. Otherwise we will approach the partners in the INDIA Bloc and seek removal of Congress from the Bloc," he said. "We had not said a single word against the Congress during the Haryana election. Yet the Congress seems to be reading out from the BJP's script. Its candidates' list looks as if it was finalised at the BJP office," Singh said. Atishi echoed similar sentiments, stating that

Congress is actively undermining AAP. Atishi said the Congress's actions and words make it clear that it has "tied up" with the BJP for the Delhi election. The Delhi CM also noted that Congress had filed an FIR against her and Arvind Kejriwal. "Why? Has Congress filed any FIR against any BJP leader ever? We have found through credible sources that Congress candidates' election expenditure is coming from the BJP. BJP is funding Congress candidates. We have heard that Sandeep Dikshit is getting funded by BJP,"

Atishi alleged. "If Congress thinks we (AAP) are anti-national, then why did they contest Lok Sabha elections in alliance with us? It is clear that Congress leaders have reached some mutual understanding with BJP to defeat AAP and make BJP win in Delhi. If there is no understanding between Congress and BJP, then they should take action against Ajay Maken within 24 hours," she said. Earlier in its complaint, the Youth Congress claimed AAP was using "false and deceptive" promises to gain voters' trust. The Congress

also accused the AAP of misappropriating public funds through deceptive advertisements. "AAP leaders, including MLAs and MCD councillors, have been actively collecting sensitive personal information such as voter ID details and phone numbers through an online registration process requiring OTP verification," the complaint alleged. Besides this, the Congress has questioned AAP and Kejriwal on two schemes, free treatment and Rs 2,100 per month to women. The schemes were announced in view of the upcoming Delhi assembly elections 2025.

Adding fuel to the fire, several Congress leaders in Delhi have openly targeted AAP convener Arvind Kejriwal. Maken accused Kejriwal of corruption and administrative failure and called him an 'anti national'. "During the pandemic, when people were dying, Arvind Kejriwal spent crores on a luxurious bungalow. Even after 11 years, ration cards have not been issued to thousands of families in Delhi," Maken said. He also claimed that funds meant for welfare schemes were wasted on advertising campaigns. Moreover, former Delhi CM Sheila Dikshit's son Sandeep

Dikshit also attacked AAP and Kejriwal. Citing the conditions set out by the Supreme Court for his release from prison in the excise policy case, Dikshit said that Kejriwal is unfit for the CM post. He explained that Kejriwal cannot sign files or go to the office, thus, the necessity of appointing Atishi as the CM. Dikshit is contesting against Arvind Kejriwal from the New Delhi assembly constituency in the upcoming state polls. This contest is not just a political one but is also being seen as a means of settling scores against Kejriwal.

Referring to women participation in the polls, EC said the number of female contesting candidates was 800, compared to 726 in 2019. The data showed that total votes polled, using EVM and postal ballot option, stood at 64,64,20,869. Votes polled on EVMs alone stood at

# Security tightened for Suwendu Adhikari in West Bengal

**SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA**

The West Bengal government has tightened security network concerning Opposition leader Suwendu Adhikari following intelligence reports that several Bangladesh fundamentalist organisations were planning attack on him. Adhikari has already been afforded Z category protection by the central government. Adhikari has been highly vocal against the attacks on the minority Hindus in Bangladesh following the change of power and ouster of former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina from that country. "The police administration is alert concerning the security of all the citizens including the Leader of Opposition ... and security apparatus are all in place," a senior police official on Thursday said adding it was "not out of ordinary for the State Government to receive security alerts from the central agencies ... from time to time." State Government sources conceded that central intelligence agencies had sent alerts mentioning that at least two fundamentalist outfits based in Bangladesh were planning to attack carry out attacks on Adhikari. Meanwhile the Trinamool Congress sources dismissed threat perception against Adhikari saying it were all devices to malign the Mamata Banerjee Government.



# CM lauds contribution of tribals in freedom struggle

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai on Thursday lauded the contribution of tribals in India's freedom struggle and appealed to youths from the community to play a role in nation building. Sai was addressing the state level convention of the Nagwanshi tribal community in village Ghughri in Bagicha block of Jashpur. Sai urged the youths to progress in the field of education and move towards entrepreneurship. Sai said the "brave sons of



the soil" — Birsa Munda, Gundadhur, Rani Durgawati and Veer Narayan Singh — played commendable roles in bringing independence for the country.

The unsung heroes, who are absent from history books, are remembered on Janjati Gaurav Diwas, he said. A museum is also under construction at Nava Raipur to remember the tribal icons of the state, Sai said. The role played in the freedom struggle by 13 tribal freedom fighters from Chhattisgarh would be on display at the museum, he added. Sai announced financial aid for various development works for the Bagicha block and fulfilled the long pending demand of community forest right Patta for Devbhumi of the tribal community at Ghughri.

# Chhattisgarh's judo player Hembati gets national award

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

The young national judo player from Chhattisgarh, Hembati Nag, was on Thursday felicitated by President Droupadi Murmu with the National Children Award - 2024 on the occasion of Veer Bal Diwas. Hembati Nag hails from Kondagaon district in Bastar region and has secured many medals in state and national level judo competitions. Keeping in view her past achievements, the Union government selected her for the National Children's Award. Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai lauded her saying she had excelled defying all odds. Sai said Hembati had made Chhattisgarh proud by



clinging medals at Khelo India National Games and other national level competitions. Her achievement was an inspiration for other girls in the state. The state government was committed to promoting such talent, he said.

# Reservation process for Mayor, Chairman put off



STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

The Chhattisgarh government has postponed the reservation process for the posts of Mayor in Municipal Corporations and Chairman in Municipal

Councils and Nagar Panchayats for elections to be held in the state. The reservation process was scheduled to held on December 27 (Friday) has been postponed and it now will be organized January 7, an official statement said.

# Two held with cannabis in Mahasamund

STAFF REPORTER ■ MAHASAMUND

Chhattisgarh Police on Thursday seized 164 kg of cannabis valued at Rs 32.80 lakh and arrested two persons for transporting it to Rajasthan from Odisha. Balbeer Kushwaha (35) and Akhilesh Ahirwar (30), both from Madhya Pradesh, have been taken into custody, Mahasamund Superintendent of Police Ashutosh Singh said. The police intercepted a truck near Sirpur check post on

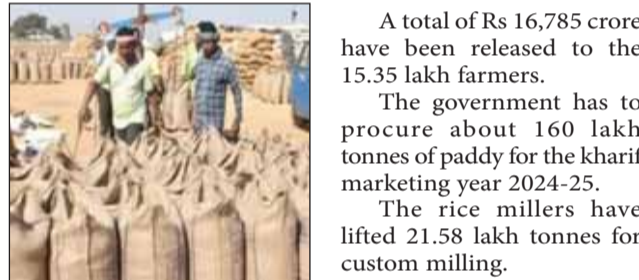


National Highway 53. The contraband was stuffed in 158 plastic bags, hidden under the sacks of cotton seed, inside a secret chamber behind the driver's seat.

# C'garh procures 74.60 lakh tonnes paddy

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

As many as 74.60 lakh tonnes of paddy have been procured in Chhattisgarh till Thursday. The procurement began on November 14 and will continue till January 31, 2025, an official statement said.



A total of Rs 16,785 crore have been released to the 15.35 lakh farmers. The government has to procure about 160 lakh tonnes of paddy for the kharif marketing year 2024-25. The rice millers have lifted 21.58 lakh tonnes for custom milling.

# Chhattisgarh to include bravery of Sahibzades in school books



STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai on Thursday announced that the bravery of Sahibzades, Zorawar Singh and Fateh Singh, would be included in the curriculum of schools in the state. He said this at a Veer Bal Diwas event held at Raipur's Medical College Auditorium to commemorate and honour the remarkable bravery of two young Sikh warriors (sons of 10th Sikh Guru) who refused to renounce their faith despite extreme pressure and chose

martyrdom over conversion. The brave sons had laid down their lives to safeguard the religion and the country, Sai said. "On this day, we remember the brave events that took place at Anandpur Sahib Fort, where Guru Gobind Singh's sons, Zorawar Singh and Fateh Singh, were captured by the Mughal forces and pressured to convert to Islam. "But the two young boys courageously refused to abandon their faith, and consequently Wazir Khan ordered them to be bricked alive around December 26, 1705," Sai recalled. The Union government has said December 26 will be marked as Veer Bal Diwas annually to honour and remember their sacrifice.



Youths cheering at an event 'Khushhaal Ek Saal' held at the Nalada Reading Zone in Raipur on completion of one year of the Vishnu Deo Sai government in Chhattisgarh.

# Maoist with Rs 8L reward surrenders



DANTEWADA: A Maoist, carrying a bounty of Rs 8 lakh, surrendered to security personnel in Dantewada district in Chhattisgarh, police on Thursday. Sudhru Kashyap (22) Dantewada Superintendent of Police Gaurav Rai said. He was a member of Company Number 6 of the outlawed Maoist organization. So far, 888 Maoists, 208 of them carrying cash rewards on their head, have quit the violence in Dantewada.

# IIT Bombay researchers develop needle-free shock syringes for painless treatments

AGENCIES ■ Researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bombay have developed a shockwave-based needle-free syringe that ensures painless and safe drug delivery with lesser damage to the skin and lower risk of infection. The novel needle-free shock syringes may help people with needle phobia, many of whom miss out on vaccinations and other medical treatments. It can also be beneficial for patients who have diabetes and require frequent insulin injections. The team, from the Department of Aerospace Engineering at IIT Bombay, explained that, unlike syringes with needles, the shock syringe doesn't rely on piercing the skin with a sharp tip. Instead, it uses high-energy pressure waves (shock waves) that can travel faster than the speed of sound to pierce the skin. These waves, when

generated, compress the surrounding medium (such as air or liquid) through which they travel, the team said in their study published in the Journal of Biomedical Materials & Devices. "The shock syringe is designed to deliver the medication rapidly. However, if a regular syringe is inserted too quickly or with excessive force, it can cause unnecessary trauma to the skin or underlying tissues," said lead author Priyanka Hankare, a research scholar at the varsity. To minimise tissue damage and ensure consistent and precise drug delivery, the pressure in the shock syringe is continuously monitored and "rigorous testing on tissue simulants (such as synthetic skin) helps to calibrate the force and speed of jet insertion, ensuring safety and comfort", Hankare said. In addition, the researchers optimised the nozzle design to have an

opening of just 125 µm (roughly the width of a human hair). "This ensures it is fine enough to reduce pain during insertion but strong enough to handle the mechanical forces needed for quick deployment of microjet," Hankare said. To test how efficiently the shock syringe delivers the medication, the researchers conducted three different tests in which they injected three different types of drugs into the rats. They measured the drug levels in the blood and tissues to monitor drug distribution and absorption in the body using the high-performance liquid chromatography (HPLC) method. When an anaesthetic (Ketamine-Xylazine) was injected through the skin of the rats for the tests, the shock syringe achieved the same effect as needles. In both cases, the anaesthetic effect started three to five minutes after

injection and lasted up to 20-30 minutes. This proves the suitability of the shock syringe for drugs that require slow and sustained release. For viscous drug formulations, such as an antifungal (Terbinafine), the shock syringe outperformed regular needles. The rat skin samples showed that the shock syringe deposited more terbinafine deeper into the skin layers than needle delivery. When insulin was administered to diabetic rats, the researchers observed that the blood sugar levels were lowered effectively and maintained at the lower level for a longer time when using a shock syringe compared to needles. Further, tissue analysis revealed that the shock syringe caused less damage to the rat's skin than syringes. As shock syringes cause less inflammation, they allow the wound at the injection spot to heal much faster.

# SOUTH EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY TENDER NOTICE

(1) Tender Notice No. E-R-T-100-24-25 Date: 23-12-2024  
Name of Work : Replacement of old dilapidated and condemned 18 nos. (Type-I quarters - 16 & Type-II quarters - 2) with new 18 units Type-II quarters at Belha, Nipania, Bhatapara & Hathbandh. Tender Value: ₹ 5,49,71,428/-, EMD: ₹ 4,24,900/-  
Submission of Tender: upto 11.00 Hrs. on 17.01.2025, Opening of Tender: 11.00 Hrs. on 17.01.2025.  
For further details/purchase of tender document, eligibility criteria & the complete details for the above work, please contact office of the Sr. DEN(Co.) Raipur or refer/download tender document which is available on our website www.ireps.gov.in.  
Sr. Divt. Engineer-PR/REngg/AN/195 S.E.C.R., Raipur  
South East Central Railway @secrail

# LIC HOUSING FINANCE LTD.

Shop No. 150-151, Chouhan Estate, Near Mourya Talkies, G.E. Road Bhilai (C.G.) Ph.:0788-4050784  
APPENDIX-(IV) RULE 8(1) POSSESSION NOTICE (IMMOVABLE PROPERTY)  
Under Rule No. 8 (1) of Securitization & Reconstruction of Financial Assets & Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002 whereas the undersigned being the Authorised Officer of the LIC Housing Finance Ltd. under the Securitization & Reconstruction of Assets and Enforcement of Security Act 2002 and exercise of power conferred Under Section 13 (12) read with rule (9) of the security interest (Enforcement) rules 2002. Issued a Demand Notice from LIC Housing Finance Ltd. Bhilai within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice as mentioned below the borrower having failed to repay the amount notice is hereby given to borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described. Herein below in exercise of power conferred on him under section 13(4) of the said act read with rule 8 of the said Rule's for property given below.  
The borrower and public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealing with property will be subject to the charge of LIC Housing Finance Ltd. Bhilai.  
S. Name of Borrower DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPERTY ON DEMAND NOTICE DATE OF THE DEMAND/ POSSESSION NOTICE AMOUNT IN DEMAND NOTICE  
1) Mr. Kamal Kumar Chhatra & Ms. Rashmi Chhatra Loan Account No. 120700002516 & 120700003575 All that part and parcel of the property consisting of Khasra no. 467/11 part, Mouza gram Khamtarai, having area 1200 sq.ft., Ph no. 108/38, Ward no. 07, Veer Shivaji ward, Shivnand Nagar, Raipur(C.G.) 492001 Bounded-North by: House of Mr. Shrinivas Rao, East by: Drainage, South by: House of Mr. Manoj Kashyap, West by: Road.  
22-10-2024  
23-12-2024  
Rs. 3127710.00  
+int. & other charges  
STATUTORY NOTICE: The borrower / guarantor hereby by notice do pay the sum mentioned above within 30 days from the date of publication of this notice failing which the aforesaid property will be auctioned and balance if any will be recovered with interest and cost from you.  
Date: 27-12-2024, Place: Bhilai Authorised Officer

# AU SMALL FINANCE BANK LIMITED (A SCHEDULED COMMERCIAL BANK)

Regd. Office: 19-A, Dhuleswar Garden, Ajmer Road, Jaipur - 302001, Rajasthan, (India). (CIN:L36911RJ1996PLC011381)  
APPENDIX-IV-A- [See proviso to rule 8(6)] Sale notice for sale of immovable properties  
E-auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.  
Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower (s)/ Co-Borrower (s)/Mortgagor (s) and Guarantor (s) that the below described immovable properties mortgaged to the Secured Creditor, the constructive/physical possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of AU Small Finance Bank Limited (A Scheduled Commercial Bank), the same shall be referred herein after as AUSFB. The Secured Assets will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" basis through E-Auction for recovery of amount mentioned in the table below along with further interest, cost, charges and expenses being due to AUSFB viz. Secured Creditor.  
It is hereby informed you that we are going to conduct public E-Auction through website https://sarfaei.auctiontiger.net  
The terms and conditions of e-auction sale:-  
(1). The E-Auction sale of Secured Asset is on "as is where is", "as is what is", "whatever there is" and "no recourse" basis for and on behalf of the Secured Creditor viz. AUSFB and there is no known encumbrance which exists on the said property.  
(2). For participating in online e-auction sale, Bid document, copies of PAN Card, Board Resolution in case of Company and photo ID, address proof are required to be submitted along with EMD, which is payable by way of RTGS/NEFT/DD in the name of MSME AUCTION POOL ACCOUNT OF AU Small Finance Bank Limited, Current account No.192120112171599 AU SMALL FINANCE BANK LIMITED Fifth and Sixth Floor Sunny Big Junction STC Khasra No. 64 to 67, Gram Sukhaipura New Atish Marg Jaipur 302020, IFSC Code: AUBL002011, Once an Online Bid is submitted, same cannot be withdrawn. Further any EMD submitted by bidder will be required to send the UTR/Ref no./DD no. of the RTGS/NEFT/DD with a copy of cancelled cheque on the following email ID: e.auctions@aubank.in  
(3). All interested participants / bidders are requested to visit the website https://sarfaei.auctiontiger.net & https://www.aubank.in/bank-auction for further details including Terms & Conditions, to take part in e-auction sale proceeding and are also advised to contact e-mail of auctions@aubank.in.  
Please Note: This is also a 15 days notice Under Rule 8(6) read with Rule 9(1) to the Borrowers/Co Borrowers/Mortgagors of the above said loan account about sale through tender / inter se bidding on the above-mentioned date. The property will be sold, if their outstanding dues are not repaid in full by the borrower in the given notice period.  
Date : 26/12/2024 Place : Chattisgarh Authorised Officer AU Small Finance Bank Limited

Loan A/c No./ Name of Borrowers/Co Borrowers/ Mortgagors/Guarantor	Date & Amount of (132) Demand Notice	Date of Possession	Description of Property	Reserve Price For Property	Earnest Money For Property	Date & Time of E-Auction	Date of Bid Submission	E-Auction Place of Tender Submission	Contact Person and Property Visit Date
(Loan A/c No.) L9001060720473445, Manmohan Giri S/O Pancham Giri (Borrower) Nitu Goswami W/O Puran Giri (Co-Borrower)	13-Jun-22 Rs. 18,55,432/- Rs. Eighteen Lac Fifty-Five Thousand Four Hundred Thirty-Two Only As On 10-Jun-22	23-Aug-24	Property Situated At Ph No 17, Kh No 267 /1/12K/1, Ward No 01, Lal Bahadur Shastri Ward, Tehsil - Bilha, Dist - Bilaspur, Chhattisgarh Admeasuring 96.8 Sqyds	Rs. 15,20,000/-	Rs. 1,52,000/- Rs. One Lakh Fifty-Two Thousand Only.	29-Jan-25 2.00 PM to 4.00 PM with unlimited extension of 5 minutes	On or Before 27-Jan-25	AU Small Finance Bank Ltd., Branch Address :- 1st Floor, Shop No. 4,5,6, Mittal Chambers, main Road, Vyapar Vihar, At & Post- Bilaspur, C.G. 495001	Gopal Das Bairagi & Deepak Jain 7610210556 9773358234 auctions@aubank.in 23-Jan-25

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# President confers Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar to 17 children for excellence in various fields

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

President Droupadi Murmu on Thursday presented the Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar to 17 children, recognizing their exceptional courage and outstanding achievements across diverse fields, including art, culture, sports and innovation. The President underlined the importance of nurturing and celebrating young talents. "Providing opportunities and recognizing children's talents has always been a part of our tradition. This tradition should be further strengthened to ensure that every child realizes their full potential," she said. The award celebrates extraordinary accomplishments in seven categories: art and culture, bravery, innovation, science and technology, social service, sports and environment. The honourees -- seven boys and ten girls selected from 14 states and Union territories -- were presented with a medal, certificate and citation booklet. Among them was Keya Hatkar, a 14-year-old author and disability advocate, recognized for her excellence in art and culture. Despite living with spinal muscular atrophy, she founded initiatives like "IM POSSIBLE" and "SMA-ART," promoting inclusivity and disability awareness.



President Murmu highlighted the importance of honouring such talents, saying, "The tradition of recognising and nurturing children's potential has always been part of our culture. Their contributions will lead India to the pinnacle of progress." She further emphasised the Ministry of Women and Child Development's role in sharing these stories of inspiration with the wider public. The President also paid homage to the unparalleled sacrifices of Guru Gobind Singh's sons, commemorated as 'Veer Bal Diwas' on December 26, saying, "Their sacrifices for faith and self-respect continue to inspire countless generations. On this day, the nation bows in reverence to their bravery and spirit." Among the other awardees was Ayaan Sajad, a 12-year-

old Sufi singer from Kashmir, honoured for his soulful contributions to Kashmiri music, while 17-year-old Vyas Om Jignesh, who has cerebral palsy, was lauded for his dedication to Sanskrit literature, having memorised over 5,000 shlokas and performed in over 500 shows. In bravery, Saurav Kumar (9) was recognised for saving three girls from drowning, and 17-year-old Ioanna Thapa was honoured for rescuing 36 residents from a fire. "Examples of courage and patriotism in children strengthen the nation's confidence in its future. Such acts are truly commendable," President Murmu remarked as she presented the award to the two children. In the innovation category, 15-year-old Sindhoora Raja was awarded for creating self-

stabilizing devices for Parkinson's patients, and cybersecurity entrepreneur Rishiek Kumar (17) was honoured for launching Kashmir's first cybersecurity firm. "Contributions to science, technology, and innovation by children like these show their unparalleled potential to transform lives," the President observed. Hembati Nag, a judo player from a Naxal-affected area was awarded in the sports category. She overcame numerous challenges to win a silver medal at the Khelo India National Games. Mentioning Nag's story, President Murmu said, "Hembati's resilience amidst adversity is an example of unmatched courage and determination." Chess prodigy Anish Sarkar, the youngest FIDE-ranked player at just three years old, was also honoured. The President envisioned a bright future for the awardees, adding, "In 2047, when we celebrate the centenary of our independence, these award winners will be enlightened citizens of the country. Such talented boys and girls will become the builders of a developed India, shaping its destiny through their talent and efforts." "May every child of this nation have a bright and prosperous future, for in their success lies the future of India," she said.

# PM Modi pitches for equipping youngsters with skills in emerging technologies

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday stressed the need for a futuristic approach to equip youngsters with skills in emerging technologies like artificial intelligence and machine learning, as he highlighted the crucial role they play in the country's progress. Speaking at an event to mark Veer Bal Diwas, Modi underscored the need to adapt to rapid changes and challenges across various fields, emphasising the government's "youth-centric" policies and efforts to move in that direction with the start of the new education policy. With his government marking the journey of the Constitution's 75 years in a major way, Modi said the Constitution's principle of equality aligns with the teachings of gurus who advocated the welfare of all. Modi said his government is committed to supporting young talent and fostering their self-confidence. "This era has moved beyond machines to machine learning, AI is taking centre stage, and we can see its application replacing conventional software. It is essential to make our youth future ready to tackle



these challenges," he said. He urged the youth to work towards making their respective sectors, be it railways, semiconductors, travel or astronomy, the best. Remembering the "unparalleled" sacrifice of Guru Gobind Singh's sons, the Sahibzadas, he said they chose "unwavering courage and faith over submission to the Mughal Empire's oppression." He noted that Veer Bal Diwas teaches an enduring lesson: "No matter how adverse the circumstances, nothing is greater than the nation's cause. Every act done in the interest of the nation is an act of valour." "More than 300 years ago, on December 26, the Sahibzadas, despite their tender age, displayed unparalleled bravery

and sacrificed their lives. They rejected every temptation and endured unimaginable torture, showing that for them, the nation's cause was supreme," he said, urging youngsters to draw inspiration from their legacy. He said India's strong democracy was built on the bravery and sacrifice of the Sahibzadas. "The Constitution teaches us that no one is small or big in the country," he said, adding that this principle aligns with the teachings of our gurus, who advocated for the welfare of all. The prime minister also interacted with the winners of the Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar. Seventeen children from 14 states and Union Territories were honoured for their exceptional contributions in fields like art and culture,

bravery, innovation, science and technology, social service, sports, and environment. Congratulating the awardees, Modi said, "These children have demonstrated what India's youth are capable of achieving. I extend my best wishes to all the winners on behalf of the nation." He elaborated on the government's focus on empowering the youth through targeted policies. "From startups to science, sports to entrepreneurship, a new wave of transformation is happening. Our policies prioritise giving strength to the youth. Whether it is the startup ecosystem, the future of the space economy, or sports and fitness, all our initiatives are youth-centric." On the occasion, Modi launched the 'Suposhit Gram Panchayat Abhiyan', a programme aimed at improving nutritional outcomes through active community participation. The initiative aligns with the government's broader goal of ensuring the well-being of every Indian. Modi also urged young Indians to embrace the values of courage, innovation, and service to propel the nation towards greater unity and progress.

# Defence Secretary launches Rashtraparv website, mobile app

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

A website that will facilitate access to information related to the organisation of events such as Republic Day and Independence Day, host their live streaming and provide details related to tickets and seating arrangements was launched on Wednesday. Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh launched the Rashtraparv website along with its mobile app on the occasion of 'Good Governance Day' that commemorates the birth anniversary of former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, the defence ministry said. "The website will facilitate access to information related to organisation of national events such as Republic Day, Beating Retreat ceremony, Independence Day, live streaming, purchase of tickets, provide information related to seating arrangements and route-maps of events," it said in a statement. The defence secretary said the website and mobile app, developed by the ministry, "also has



a system for managing the tableaux proposals and historic data regarding events". It will host a tableau management portal to facilitate states and Union Territories, ministries and departments in designing and finalising their tableaux for the Republic Day event, the statement said. The website and mobile application have been a result of a consultative process adopted by the ministry. The states had suggested for a portal for the management of data related to the design of tableaux. Similarly, viewers of Republic Day events in the feedback had

suggested having information regarding events, parades, tableaux. The Rashtraparv website has been developed by incorporating all these inputs, it added. The website can be accessed at rashtraparv.Mod.Gov.In and the mobile app can be downloaded from the government app store (M-Seva), the ministry said. The initiative is a step further towards openness, transparency and citizen-centric governance and is a fitting tribute to the late former prime minister on Good Governance Day, the statement said.

# Delhi tutor held for protests by civil service aspirants in Patna

PTI ■ PATNA

A Delhi-based tutor was held on Thursday on the charge of instigating aspirants who tried to "storm into" the Bihar Public Service Commission (BPSC) office in Patna, demanding cancellation of its December 13 examination, an official said. Patna's District Magistrate (DM) Chandrasekar Singh told PTI that preliminary investigations into Wednesday's protests found that one Rohit, a tutor, mobilised and instigated the aspirants. Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Rajeev Mishra said, "Initial investigations have revealed that Rohit had come from Delhi and brought along a number of persons, including girls, posing as disgruntled BPSC aspirants. He is being examined by the investigators." The source of their funding is also being investigated as they seem to be part of a larger conspiracy, he said. "We are probing the larger conspiracy behind yesterday's



incident. What is the source of funding for those who came from outside the state to instigate BPSC aspirants is also the focus of our probe. Rohit seems to be the mastermind of yesterday's protest. Patna Police will send a preliminary report to the Economic Offences Unit (EOU) to investigate their source of funding," he told PTI. Alleging irregularities in the 70th Integrated Combined Competitive Examination (CCE), aspirants demonstrated outside the BPSC office and sought re-examination. The police baton-charged the aspi-

nants to bring the situation under control. The protesters claimed they were treated "like terrorists" and many of them were injured in the police action, a charge which was denied by the authorities. Popular vlogger Motiur Rahman Khan, known as Guru Rahman, also joined the protests at Gardani Bagh. "Police action against BPSC aspirants was highly condemnable. Protesting BPSC aspirants should not have been treated like this. My support is always with the students," he said.

# Home Minister Shah to embark on two-day visit to Odisha from Dec 28

PTI ■ BHUBANESWAR

Union Home Minister Amit Shah will embark on a two-day visit to Odisha from December 28, during which he will hold an interactive meeting with BJP leaders and workers and attend several other events, a senior party leader said on Thursday. BJP's Odisha in-charge Vijaypal Singh Tomar said that Shah will arrive in Bhubaneswar on December 28 night and stay till the evening of December 29. On December 29, Shah will attend a programme of Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), and interact with BJP MPs, MLAs and workers at an event in Kalinga Stadium. Shah will also virtually attend from Bhubaneswar an important meeting of BJP state unit presidents, organisational secretaries, in-charges, deputy-in-charges, and national office bearers from across the coun-



try, he said. Replying to a query, Tomar said there was no plan for Shah to visit Sambalpur though it was scheduled earlier. Shah had last visited Odisha from November 30 to December 1 to attend the DGP-IGP conference. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will also visit Odisha on January 9 to attend the Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas here. He will again visit the state on January 28 to inaugurate the 'Utkarsh Odisha: Make in Odisha' investors' meet.

# Thousands offer prayers at Sabarimala during mandala puja

PTI ■ PATHANAMTHITTA (KERALA)

Thousands of devotees offered prayers at the Sabarimala Lord Ayyappa temple on Thursday as the auspicious mandala puja was performed at the hill shrine. This marked the culmination of the 41-day-long first leg of the annual pilgrimage season. The mandala puja was conducted in a deeply devotional atmosphere between noon and 12.30 pm after the idol of Lord Ayyappa, the principal deity, was adorned with the "thanka anki," the sacred golden attire brought to the sannidhanam (temple complex) in a ceremonial proces-



sion on Wednesday evening. The temple will close for the night with the recitation of 'Harivarasanam,' temple

authorities said. They added that the Sabarimala temple will reopen at 5 pm on December 30 for the makar-

avilakku festival, which will conclude on January 14. The rituals were led by the temple's head priest, Kandararu Rajeevaru, who adorned the idol with the sacred attire. Thousands of pilgrims from Kerala and other states, who waited in queues for hours in and around the sannidhanam, attended the ceremonies. Prominent officials of the Travancore Devaswom Board were also present near the sanctum sanctorum. According to officials of the TDB, the apex temple body that manages the shrine, as of Wednesday, 32.5 lakh pilgrims had visited the shrine, an increase of 4.07 lakh compared to the same period last

year. In 2023, 28.42 lakh devotees visited the shrine during this period. Spot bookings were limited to 5,000 on December 25 and 26 as part of the arrangements for mandala puja. However, darshan was ensured for all devotees who arrived at Sabarimala, TDB officials said. On Wednesday, when the 'thanka anki' procession reached the sannidhanam, over 62,000 devotees had darshan, they said. By noon on Thursday, nearly 20,000 devotees visited the hill shrine through virtual queue and spot booking facilities before the temple closed, they added.

# Rajnath Singh to chair sixth edition of Armed Forces Flag Day CSR conclave today

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Friday here will chair the sixth edition of the Armed Forces Flag Day (AFFD) Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) conclave, defence ministry said on Thursday. Giving details, officials said the event organised by Kendriya Sainik Board under Department of Ex-Servicemen Welfare aims to highlight the measures taken towards rehabilitation, resettlement and welfare of the veterans, widows and their dependents and for mobilis-



ing the CSR support towards these efforts. The defence minister will also felicitate the prominent CSR contributors to the AFFD Fund. Minister of state for defence Sanjey Seth, Chief of Defence

Staff (CDS) General Anil Chauhan, Secretary ESW, Niten Chandra, members from the CSR fraternity, veterans, the defence service personnel and other senior officials of the ministry will also attend the conclave.

# Yogi Adityanath's 2024: A year of fiery rhetoric and political messaging

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ LUCKNOW

In a year marked by political contests and cultural debates, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's speeches in 2024 transcended electoral rallies, becoming rallying cries that resonated deeply across India. His carefully crafted remarks, blending critique of opposition parties with appeals for unity among followers of Sanatan Dharma, cemented his position as a mass leader with a vision for a unified and culturally proud India. Among his most impactful slogans was "Katenge Toh

Batenge, Ek Rahenge Toh Nek Rahenge," delivered in Agra in August. This phrase, urging unity among communities, gained traction nationwide as a symbol of his call for solidarity and shared purpose. It underscored a year where Adityanath repeatedly sought to redefine narratives on governance, culture, and justice. Throughout 2024, his speeches targeted the opposition, particularly the Samajwadi Party (SP) and Congress, accusing them of fostering division, lawlessness, and pseudo-secularism. In Etawah, he raised the issue of justice for the families of victims of mafia violence, including the widows

of slain leaders like BJP MLA Krishnanand Rai and Umesh Pal. He said: SP should give account of Mangalsutra of Alka Rai, Pooja-Jaya Pal" (April 25, Etawah). By questioning the opposition's silence on these matters, Adityanath positioned himself as a crusader for justice and law and order. In his addresses to marginalised communities, Adityanath invoked symbols like Bajrang Bali to emphasize the collective power of unity. At a BJP Backward Class Morcha meeting in Lucknow, he likened the strength of the OBC community to Bajrang Bali's might,



declaring their unity as a force capable of dismantling the divisive strategies of pseudo-secular politics. He said:

"Bajrang Bali's power in OBC society will burn Ravana's Lanka" (July 29, Lucknow) The Chief Minister's rhetoric

often combined vivid imagery with sharp criticism. Phrases like "No Sadbhavna for Mafia and Goons, only the Bullet Train of Justice" captured his administration's stance on women's safety and law enforcement, while "SP ki Topi Laal, Kaarname Kaale" evoked allegations of corruption and criminality against his political opponents. In Haryana, during an election rally, Adityanath criticized Congress leaders as "Accidental Hindus raised in Roman culture," a remark aimed at reinforcing BJP's Hindutva narrative. His comments drew sharp criticism but also bolstered his party's

ideological position among its core supporters. Adityanath's speeches also highlighted his focus on cultural pride and historical legacy. At the unveiling of Rashtreeya Durgadas Rathore's statue in Agra, he called for national unity by reflecting on the lessons of divided nations like Bangladesh. His one-liner: "Batenge to katenge, ek rahenge to nek rahenge" (August 26, Agra) became the theme of election campaign in Haryana and Maharashtra. In the Winter session of the state assembly, he reaffirmed India's cultural identity, emphasizing the legacy of

figures like Ram, Krishna, and Buddha while advocating mutual respect among religious communities. He said: "India will uphold the legacy of Ram, Krishna, and Buddha" (December 16, Lucknow). Through his speeches, Adityanath painted a narrative of a strong, unified, and culturally rooted Uttar Pradesh, countering what he described as the opposition's failures and divisive politics. As the year closes, his rhetoric has not only solidified his political standing but also ensured his voice continues to echo in the state's political and cultural discourse.



# UP Government mandates property disclosure for employee promotions

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ LUCKNOW



The Uttar Pradesh government has made it mandatory for all state employees to disclose details of their movable and immovable properties to be eligible for promotion. Employees failing to comply with this directive will not only forfeit their promotion prospects but may also face disciplinary action, officials confirmed on Thursday.

The directive issued by the state government, employees have been instructed to submit property details via the Manav Sampada portal by January 31, 2025. The information will include disclo-

(Discipline and Appeal) Rules," the government stated in its letter. Departments have been tasked with ensuring strict compliance with this directive. Officers have been instructed to monitor the updates on the Manav Sampada portal and ensure that all employees adhere to the rules. The government emphasized that transparency in property declarations is crucial for maintaining accountability and integrity among public servants. Employees who do not update their property details may face disciplinary actions, including penalties under the Uttar Pradesh Government

Servant (Discipline and Appeal) Rules. These measures aim to enforce adherence to the government's commitment to transparency and integrity in governance. This initiative underscores the state government's focus on fostering accountability among its workforce. By linking property disclosures to promotions, the administration aims to ensure that all employees adhere to ethical standards and operate transparently in their official capacities. State employees have been urged to complete the process promptly to avoid repercussions and ensure their eligibility for career advancement.

# New police recruits will undergo specialised training to handle law and order situations, says Manipur CM

PTI ■ IMPHAL



Manipur Chief Minister Biren Singh on Thursday said the newly recruited personnel of the 10th and 11th India Reserve Battalion (IRB), who recently concluded training in Assam, would undergo specialised exercise so that they can be deployed for highway protection and handling the law and order situation. During a visit to Manipur Police Training Centre at Pangei in Imphal East district, the CM said the recruits would undergo specialised training at this centre before being deployed across the state. "They will undergo specialised training at Pangei where they will be taught

how to handle law and order situation. If the personnel are deployed in various police stations now, their morale may be down. So, we decided to keep them at one place and use their services wherever and whenever needed," the CM said. "Some of them will be used for highway protection, while others will be used to tackle law and order situation," Singh added.

Singh also said many of the police personnel will undergo refresher courses, and arrangements for procuring new gear for mob control have been made. The CM said construction and maintenance work at the battalion headquarters of 10th and 11th IRB at Nungba and Saivom are also going on currently, he said. "Police are the backbone of society and cannot be demoralised. Many of them will undergo refresher courses to improve their physical fitness and mob control with full gear. Their identity needs to be protected also," Singh added. Singh also requested recruits' parents not to approach ministers and MLAs for transfers and allow them to serve the

state and nation. "Today, I visited the Manipur Police Training Centre at Pangei to inspect the newly constructed barracks, which will soon be utilised for training purposes. Given the current law and order situation in the state, the newly recruited constables will undergo specialised training. This step is essential to enhance the strength and readiness of our police force to ensure safety and security across Manipur," he posted on X. "We are committed to equipping our police personnel with the best facilities and training to meet any challenges," Singh said. He also said houses are being made for internally displaced persons (IDPs) who are staying in schools and colleges.

# Yogi Govt accelerates land allocation for Mahakumbh

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ LUCKNOW



As Mahakumbh 2025 draws nearer, preparations in Prayagraj are in full swing, with the Yogi Adityanath-led Uttar Pradesh government expediting the land allocation process. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, during a recent review meeting, instructed officials to complete all allocations by December 31. Responding promptly, authorities have so far allocated land to over 4,000 organizations, with an estimated 8,000 to 10,000 participants expected to partake in the grand event. One of the event's key highlights is the establishment of Akharas, which is progressing steadily. While several Akharas have already set up their camps, the Mela Authority has successfully allocated land to most Akharas and associated organizations. Pending allocations, including for new applicants, are expected to be finalized within the stipulated deadline. According to the Mela Authority, the land allocation

process is nearly complete for Akharas and their followers, Mahamandaleshwars, Khalsa, Dandiawada, Acharyawada, and Khakachowk. Allocations for Prayagwal groups and new organizations are underway and will be concluded by December 31. Thus far, a total of 4,268 organizations have received land, including 19 allocations for Akharas and their sub-groups, 460 for

Mahamandaleshwars, 750 for Khalsa, 203 for Dandiawada, 300 for Acharyawada, 300 for Khakachowk and 1,766 for other organizations. Additionally, 450 allotments have been made to Prayagwal groups, with their allocation process, which began on December 12, scheduled to continue until month-end. Allocations for new organizations, which commenced on December 16, are pro-

gressing simultaneously. The allocated areas have turned into hubs of activity, with tents being erected and traditional decorations underway. The Jhuni area, in particular, is abuzz with representatives from Akharas, Mahamandaleshwars, Khalsa, Dandiawada, Acharyawada, Khakachowk, and other groups working tirelessly to prepare their camps in alignment with their cultural prac-

tices. To facilitate smooth navigation, the administration has installed checkered plates across the sprawling site and is rapidly putting up signages to help visitors locate their destinations. Other arrangements, including lighting and essential amenities, are also being completed at a brisk pace. The Juna Akhara, Avahan Akhara, and Agni Akhara have already established their cantonments, signaling the rapid progress on the ground. With activities picking up speed, the entire Mahakumbh Nagar is expected to be fully operational and adorned by January 1 setting the stage for one of the largest religious gatherings in the world. Mahakumbh, held every 12 years in Prayagraj, is a grand spiritual confluence attracting millions of pilgrims, saints, and tourists from across the globe. The Yogi government is leaving no stone unturned to ensure that Mahakumbh 2025 is an unparalleled success, emphasizing enhanced infrastructure, meticulous planning, and cultural vibrancy.

# Over 70 hours on, girl still stuck in borewell in Rajasthan

PTI ■ JAIPUR



Three-year-old Chetna has been stuck inside a narrow 150 feet deep borewell for over 70 hours as the rescue operations were still underway on Thursday to save the girl. Worried about her daughter's condition, Dholi Devi has not eaten anything since the tragic accident on Monday. Chetna fell into the borewell while playing in the agriculture farm of her father in Badiyali Dhani under Sarund police station of Kotputli-Behror district. With each passing moment, the hope for the girl being well is diminishing as the rescue team was not able to supply any food or water to Chetna. Dholi Devi and others are constantly praying for the well being of Chetna amid the non-stop rescue operation by NDRF and SDRF teams, assisted by the local police and administration. Initially, efforts were made to

pull the girl out of the borewell with the help of a ring but all attempts failed. After two days of repeated attempts that fetched no results, a piling was brought to the spot on Wednesday morning and a pit parallel to the borewell was dug. "... Now a horizontal tunnel will be made through which the experts will reach the girl," Sarund SHO Mohammad Imran said. He said all possible efforts were made to pull out the girl but all hard work went in vain as the borewell is narrow and

the technique could not deliver results. A team of doctors with an ambulance are at the spot. "The rescue operation is likely to conclude today," the SHO said. Kotputli-Behror District Collector Kalpana Agarwal reached the village late Wednesday night to take stock of the situation. She said that the rescue operation had been constantly going on. A lot of preparations had to be done to bring the piling machine to the farm.

# Kerala Govt declares two-day mourning as mark to respect MT Vasudevan

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI



Kerala bade a tearful farewell to M T Vasudevan Nair, the numero uno of Malayalam literature who breathed his last on late Wednesday night at a corporate hospital in Kozhikode, a city which was immortalized by his presence. He has been honored with Jnanpith Award in 1995 for his comprehensive contributions to Malayalam literature. The President of India had decorated him with Padma Bhushan in 2005. Ninety-one year old MT (as he is known) was ailing for some time due to age related issues and a team of doctors were attending to him on a round-the-clock basis. M T is rated as the last of the titans of Malayalam literature. In addition to short stories, novels, and travelogues, he left the characteristic "MT Touch" in six feature films which he directed, by walking away with the best director award (three times) in the National Film Festival). One has lost count of the number of times he bagged the Kerala State Film Awards as a director and

script writer. He has authored scripts for more than 60 films and all were run away hits. Nirmalyam (Malayalam for Yesterday's Offerings"), his first venture as a director bagged many national and international awards. P J Antony, who played the role of a village oracle was honored with Bharath award for performing the role in the movie which turned out to be a trendsetter in Malayalam movies. The novels authored by M T remain as fresh and interesting decades after they were published. Having born and brought up in a village on the banks of Nila, all his literary works feature people whom

one meet in the day-to-day life in the countryside. The theses in his novels and short stories were based on the rising, disintegration and fall of the Nair ancestral families in Malabar. His novel Randamoozham (The Second Turn) published in 1984 tells the story of Mahabharath as seen through the eyes of Bheem. There are no literary works attributed to MT which have gone unrecognized and it is said that he was the one who elevated Malayalam literature to the global arena. The multi-faceted author leaves behind his wife Saraswathi and daughter Aswathi. MT had married

Prameela Nair in 1962 but they were separated in 1978. The couple has a daughter Sitara born out of this marriage. Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed his sorrow over the passing away of the celebrated writer and movie maker. "Saddened by the passing away of Shri MT Vasudevan Nair Ji, one of the most respected figures in Malayalam cinema and literature. His works, with their profound exploration of human emotions, have shaped generations and will continue to inspire many more. He also gave voice to the silent and marginalised. My thoughts are with his family and admirers. Om Shanti," the PM wrote in X. The Kerala Government has declared a two-day mourning as a mark of respect to MT. The last rites were performed at Smrithi Path, the Kozhikode corporation owned crematorium on Thursday evening in the presence of thousands of fans and well wishers of the last of the Titans in Malayalam literature.

# Chhattisgarh Govt cancels constable recruitment in Rajnandgaon, sets up SIT to probe irregularities

PTI ■ RAJNANDGAON

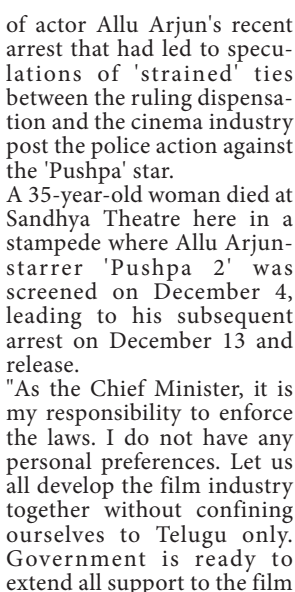
The Chhattisgarh government has cancelled the process of recruitment of police constables in Rajnandgaon district amid allegations of irregularities and set up an SIT for a probe into it, an official said. State Deputy Chief Minister Vijay Sharma, who holds the home portfolio, gave an order to this effect on Wednesday afternoon, he said. "Irregularities came to light in the ongoing recruitment process in the 8th battalion of Rajnandgaon and a case was registered in this connection at Lal Bagh police station on December 17," the official said. Since November 16, candidates from Rajnandgaon, Khairagarh-Chhuikhadan-Gandai, Kabirdham (Kawardha) and Mohla-Manpur-Ambagadh Chowki districts have been participating in the recruitment process here, he said. The police have so far arrested seven persons -- four police constables, two employees of

the event management company and one female candidate -- in connection with the alleged irregularities in the recruitment process, the official said. During the investigation in the case, constable Anil Ratnakar allegedly committed suicide. A note written with a pen was found on his left palm, which stated employees were being targeted in alleged irregularities in recruitment and officers were being protected, he said. Rajnandgaon (Range) Inspector General of Police Deepak Jha has set up a Special Investigation Team (SIT) for a probe into Ratnakar's suicide and sought a report in 10 days, he said. Meanwhile, Superintendent of Police Mohit Garg has handed over the investigation of the alleged irregularities in the recruitment process to the Rajnandgaon City Superintendent of Police Puspendra Nayak, the official said. Garg on Wednesday said the

order to cancel the recruitment process for District Police Force Constable Cadre Selection Examination 2023-24 has not been received from the state government so far. Former chief minister and assembly speaker Raman Singh welcomed the state government's decision to cancel the recruitment process. "Today, on the occasion of Good Governance Day, under the leadership of Hon'ble Chief Minister Shri @vishnuhsai, Home Minister Shri @vijaysharmacg took a commendable decision to cancel the entire recruitment by taking immediate cognizance of the Rajnandgaon Police Recruitment case," Singh said on X. The CM has directed formation of an SIT for an impartial investigation into the entire matter, he said. "No kind of negligence or corruption will be tolerated in this government of good governance," Singh added. During the recruitment process, the marks obtained by

# Full support to Telugu film industry but no compromise on law and order: Telangana CM

PTI ■ HYDERABAD



Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy on Thursday made it clear to a visiting Telugu cinema industry delegation that there would be no compromise on law and order in the state and that it applies to everyone including the film fraternity. The CM also conveyed to the delegation of Telugu film personalities led by ace producer and Telangana Film Development Corporation (FDC) Chairman Venkata Ramana Reddy, that a Cabinet Sub-Committee will be constituted to resolve the problems of the film industry and suggested to them to set up an in-house panel as well. The meeting between the CM and the film personalities was held at the Police Integrated Command Control Centre here, and in the wake

of actor Allu Arjun's recent arrest that had led to speculations of 'strained' ties between the ruling dispensation and the cinema industry post the police action against the 'Pushpa' star. A 35-year-old woman died at Sandhya Theatre here in a stampede where Allu Arjun-starrer 'Pushpa 2' was screened on December 4, leading to his subsequent arrest on December 13 and release. "As the Chief Minister, it is my responsibility to enforce the laws. I do not have any personal preferences. Let us all develop the film industry together without confining ourselves to Telugu only. Government is ready to extend all support to the film industry, official sources quoted the CM as saying. Asserting that the cinema industry is as important to the



government as the IT and pharma sectors, Reddy said a Cabinet Sub-Committee will be constituted to resolve the

problems of the film industry. The government is considering organising a major convention to encourage other

film industries to come to the city, he said. "Our intention is to take the (Telugu movie) industry to

the next level," the sources quoted the CM as saying. He also pointed out that the film industry should remember its social responsibility and join the efforts to check drugs and other societal problems. Venkata Ramana Reddy, popularly known as Dil Raju, said besides Telugu movies, shooting of movies of other languages, including Hindi, Tamil and Kannada, are also happening in the city. "So, the view of the CM is that the film industry should give suggestions to government to see that, not just Indian films but Hollywood films are also shot in Hyderabad," he told reporters after the meeting. Asked for the government's stance on allowing benefit shows and hiking ticket prices on special occasions, Dil Raju said they are only a "small part" of the issue and that the

bigger vision is how to take Telugu cinema to the international level and to make Hyderabad city an "international hub". "Time would throw light on all that," he said. When contacted, producer Daggubati Suresh who was part of the delegation which called on Revanth Reddy, told PTI that permission for benefit shows and ticket price hike during the initial days of film release is not a necessary requirement for all filmmakers, but an individual production house. The delegation included actors Nagarjuna, Venkatesh, Murali Mohan and directors Trivikram Srinivas, K Raghavendra Rao and producers Daggubati Suresh, Allu Aravind (father of Allu Arjun) and C Kalyan. Asserting that there would not be any benefit shows

(special shows), Cinematography minister Komatireddi Venkat Reddy recently said the state government, in future, may consider ticket price hike only for certain categories such as films made on history, freedom struggle or others like those with messages against the use of drugs. The minister's statement, if implemented, will have a huge impact on the high budget films such as Ram Charan's "Game Changer", Nandamuri Balakrishna's "Daaku Maharaj" and Venkatesh's "Sankranthiki Vasthunnam" which are slated for release during Sankranti in three weeks from now. Directed by popular Director S Shankar, Game Changer is produced by Dil Raju. The film is reportedly made with a budget of nearly Rs 400 crore.





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PAPER WITH PASSION

## A blow to regional peace

The fragile peace of South Asia faced a severe setback when Pakistan conducted airstrikes in Afghanistan

On the night of December 24, 2024, a series of airstrikes conducted by Pakistan in Afghanistan's Barmal district of Paktika province claimed the lives of at least 15 civilians, including women and children. The strikes targeted seven villages, causing significant destruction, particularly in areas like Murg Bazaar and Laman, where an entire family of five was killed. This incident has further strained relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan, raising serious concerns about the stability of South Asia. The airstrikes appear to be a direct response to Pakistan's growing concerns over the activities of the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). Pakistan has justified the strikes as a necessary measure to eliminate TTP hideouts and secure its borders. However, the Afghan Taliban strongly denies these allegations, claiming instead that the airstrikes targeted civilians, including Waziristani refugees who had previously fled military operations in Pakistan's tribal areas. The implications of this attack extend far beyond the immediate violence, casting a shadow over peace and security in South Asia. The airstrikes, coupled with the Taliban's vow to retaliate, risk escalating into a broader conflict between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Such hostilities could destabilise the region, which is already grappling with insurgencies, cross-border terrorism, and long-standing disputes.



In addition to the geopolitical ramifications, the humanitarian impact is profound. Afghanistan, a nation still recovering from decades of war, now faces further devastation. Civilian populations, particularly refugees, are bearing the brunt of this violence, with villages like Murg Bazaar reduced to rubble and countless families displaced. The destruction exacerbates an already dire humanitarian crisis, highlighting the urgent need for international aid and support. This conflict also undermines ongoing peace efforts in the region. Dialogues involving Afghanistan, Pakistan, and other stakeholders, essential for fostering stability, risk being derailed by such incidents. Additionally, it hinders cooperative initiatives against terrorism, a shared threat that requires coordinated regional action. The situation further complicates geopolitics in South Asia, prompting countries like India, China and Iran to reassess their strategies. Pakistan's actions, though driven by immediate security concerns, may strain its relationships with traditional allies and global powers advocating for peace in the region. To address this growing crisis, both countries must prioritise dialogue and cooperation. Constructive bilateral engagement is crucial to resolving mutual concerns, particularly regarding the TTP and border security. Neutral mediators, such as the United Nations, could play a vital role in facilitating these discussions. Beyond bilateral efforts, regional cooperation is essential. A unified initiative led by organisations like the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) could encourage collective action against terrorism and promote economic interdependence, reducing the incentives for conflict.

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### PICTALK



The Badrinath Dham covered with snow during fresh snowfall, in Chamoli

# Jordan's ambivalent stance on Palestine



BHOPIINDER SINGH

While maintaining a façade of solidarity, Jordan's actions often reveal a pragmatic, if controversial, approach to safeguarding its own interests in a volatile region

Jordanian reality towards the Palestinians) Jordanians have had a wounded, complicated, and manipulative history. House of Hashim or the Hashemite dynasty rules Jordan with the current King Abdullah II, as the 41st generation of the direct descendants of Prophet Muhammad. While Hashemites were the Sharif and Emir of Mecca with rule over larger Hejaz, they were violently ousted from the control over the same by the rival Saud family. This military loss led to the loss of the symbolically vital title of the "Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques" to the Saud family, of modern-day Saudi Arabia. Hashemites were also to lose monarchical claim of rule on lands of Syria, Lebanon, Palestine and Iraq and were left with only the Jordanian swathes - which unlike other Arab lands was bereft of oil, natural resources, ports, or any other meaningful lever of power. They had to be creative in dealing with the situation and remaining relevant and protected. Geographical contiguity to Palestinian lands led to Jordan demonstrating fluctuating concern that oscillated from supporting the Palestinian cause to willy-nilly, acting against the same. During the Arab-Israeli War of 1948, Jordan occupied the West Bank and East Jerusalem (which it annexed in 1950), only to lose the same to Israel in the Six-Day War of 1967. Historians often note the unique culture of "back channels" (facilitating clandestine meetings) between the Jordanians and Israelis that led to counterintuitive accommodations, even amid war. In the subsequent Arab-Israel War of 1973 (Yom Kippur War), Jordan had curiously avoided joining Arab ranks against Israel. Jordanian King Hussein had secretly flown to Tel Aviv to warn Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir of the impending Arab plans to attack Israel. Ultimately when Jordan was morally forced to support the war against Israel, declassified accounts confirm that it was only to preserve Jordan's image in the Arab world and that it had already entered into a tacit agreement with Israel that it would not attack Israeli elements.



It wasn't the first time the Jordanians had worked duplicitously against the Arab or Palestinian cause, as just a couple of years earlier, the infamous and bloody "Black September" (Sep 1970 - July 1971) had occurred. Jordanian Army had surrounded camps and townships with Palestinians fideyeen of various groups and brutally cut them down to size. Nearly 3500 were killed in the purge and the PLO (Palestinian Liberation Organisation) fighters were expelled to neighbouring Lebanon. Again, the Jordanians had aligned with Israel before commencing this attack. Importantly Syrian forces that had intervened on behalf of Palestinian fighters were repulsed leaving 600 Syrians dead and a loss of 120 tanks. Interestingly, like the historically insincere support of Jordanians towards the Palestinians, one important figure who participated along the Jordanian forces in massacring the Palestinians was a then Pakistani Brigadier (later dictator) Zia-ul-Haq, who was on deputation! In 1987 Jordanian King Hussein and Israeli foreign affairs minister (later President) Shimon Peres met secretly to work on a peace treaty which was followed up with Jordanians forsaking their claim on the West Bank, the subsequent year. By 1994 the two countries



IN THE SUBSEQUENT ARAB-ISRAEL WAR OF 1973 (YOM KIPPUR WAR), JORDAN HAD CURIOUSLY AVOIDED JOINING ARAB RANKS AGAINST ISRAEL

signed a formal Peace Treaty (the second Arab nation after Egypt) and normalised relations with Israel. Odd public bickering on issues like Al Aqsa Mosque aside, the top leadership of both countries kept meeting discretely, whilst Jordan kept maintaining the façade of support towards Palestine. Practically, they engaged and operated as allies. Post the Hamas terror attack (7th Oct 2023) on Israel and the subsequent and disproportionate budgeoning of the Gaza Strip, the Jordanians had no choice but to expel the Israeli ambassador to maintain face in the Arab world. However, as it was only Iran and its proxies like the Syrian Bashar Al Assad government and the Lebanese Hezbollah who were offering any meaningful resistance to the Israelis - then the Jordanians did the unthinkable in favour of the Israelis when they shot down Iranian drones attacking Israel. Practically, the Jordanians weighed in favour of the Israeli military (all perfunctory concerns towards the beleaguered Palestinians, notwithstanding). Jordanians watched silently as Southern Lebanon was attacked and as the Syrian regime was overrun by forces born out of Al Qaeda, ending the last possible faction that had taken on the Israelis in favour of the Palestinians. For

a long, Jordanian King Abdullah had warned against the spectre of a rising "Shia Crescent" (assertion of Shiite rule in Iran, Iraq, Syria and Lebanon). He therefore would be presumably pleased to see the decimation of the sectarian rivals, which coincidentally also ended the last modicum of challenge to the Israelis. Beyond vacuous words, the practical conduct of the Jordanians has been suspiciously two-faced on the ostensible redlines as defined by King Abdullah i.e., "No to abandoning the guardianship of Jerusalem and the holy sites, no to the one-state solution, and no for Jordan to be an alternative homeland for the Palestinians". The picture has perhaps never been further from the so-called Jordanian redlines, as now, the fate of Palestinians, Jerusalem, and the possibility of a two-state solution, is at its lowest. History will judge the conduct of Arab monarchies and their lip-serving commitment towards Palestine, but perhaps none as ambidextrously as the Jordanians, who often fancy themselves to be of the highest order. (The writer, a military veteran, is a former Lt Governor of Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Puducherry. The views expressed are personal)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### SOLVING INDIA'S WATER CRISIS

Madam — Recently, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has laid the foundation stone of the Ken-Betwa river linking project, the first initiative under the national river linking policy, at Khajuraho in Madhya Pradesh. It is really a welcome step in solving the water crisis in India. Nearly 65 lakh people of Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh will get drinking water, and more than 7 lakh farmer families of 2000 villages will benefit from the project. Also, it has been proposed to generate 103 MW of hydropower. The project aims to transfer surplus water from the Ken River in Madhya Pradesh to Betwa in UP to irrigate the drought-prone Bundelkhand region. Under the project, a 77 m high and 2.13 km long Daudhan dam and two tunnels will be constructed on the Ken River. Interlinking rivers can control both floods and droughts. This river linking project can have significant ecological consequences, can impact the biodiversity of the region, and can affect Panna Tiger Reserve too. Even then the project will create many employment opportunities as well as boost the rural economy. Ken-Betwa is the first river linking project under the National Perspective Plan (NPP) for the linking of rivers. The National Water Development Agency should identify a few more river linking projects to avoid floods and to cultivate more lands in drought-prone areas in India.

P Victor Selvaraj | Tirunelveli

### DEBATE ON CONSTITUTION

Madam — The recent debate commemorating 75 years of the Constitution's adoption left the citizens highly disappointed. The expectation from our parliamentarians was of a healthy debate and an academic discussion. Instead what we saw was a brownie point scoring match between our parliamentarians, who decided to nitpick on what our founding fathers had said and when without providing the context in which it was said.

## One Nation, One Subscription



The Government of India's One Nation-One Subscription (ONOS) initiative aims to transform education, research, and innovation by ensuring equitable access to academic resources. Announced in 2022 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, it aligns with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 to create a knowledge-based society. With a Rs 6,000 crore budget allocated for 2025-2027, ONOS will provide subscriptions to international research

journals, academic databases, and other resources, addressing disparities in education and research. The initiative will empower students and researchers, especially from rural and smaller institutions, by granting them access to resources previously limited to well-funded universities. This inclusivity will bridge the rural-urban divide and foster innovation by enabling access to global advancements. Additionally, its focus on digital platforms reduces dependency on physical materials, supporting environmental sustainability and the objectives of the Digital India campaign. Despite its promise, ONOS faces challenges, including concerns over its high cost and limited digital infrastructure in rural areas, which could restrict access. Critics caution that without transparent implementation, the initiative may primarily benefit larger institutions.

RK Jain | Barwani

Our parliamentarians decided to cherry-pick the words of our founding fathers, like B R Ambedkar, J L Nehru, K M Munshi, etc., to suit their own narrative. The constituent assembly had various members with varying views. Each motion was debated and voted in favour of or against, and ultimately the majority carried, but to now selectively pick up each and every sentence and comma from their speeches to paint a narrative is a disservice to the memory of our founding fathers. It is necessary to remember the words of two members of the Constituent Assembly who went on to forge different paths later in life - one Mino Masani, a parsi who joined Sawtantarta Party and became Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha who said, "Where the state belongs to the people, the state is subordinate to the people and only then does the state serve the people" and Shyama Prasad Mukherjee, a devout hindu who served in Nehru's cabinet who said, "We shall go ahead with our work in spite of all obstacles and help to create that great India, united and strong

which will be the motherland of not this community and that, not of this class Or that but of every person, man, woman and child inhabiting this country. " May these words of our founding fathers guide our parliamentarians in securing a bright future for India, and may their sacred constituent be their conscious keeper. Gurnoor Grewal | Chandigarh

### KHEL RATNA CONTROVERSY

Madam — It is baffling that Manu Bhaker, who made history by bagging two medals in a single Olympics in Paris, is absent from the list of Major Dhyana Chand Khel Ratna awardees. If any athlete deserves to be given this award this year, it is Manu Bhaker. Her father is absolutely right: Manu has done her part by giving huge laurels to the country where we have only a handful of individual medal winners; now it is up to the GoI to recognise her feat and reward it.

Bal Govind | Noida

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

## India's hidden crisis: Battling malnutrition for a healthier future

Malnutrition among children in India stands as a pressing public health challenge, intricately linked to poverty, systemic inequalities and environmental hurdles

Malnutrition among children remains a critical public health issue in India, deeply intertwined with poverty, systemic inequalities, and environmental challenges. Despite the nation's economic progress, the persistent issues of undernutrition and micronutrient deficiencies continue to hinder India's overall growth and development, casting a shadow over its aspirations for a healthier future. The 2023 Global Hunger Index paints a grim picture, with India ranked 111th out of 125 countries and a score of 28.7, indicating a "serious" hunger situation. Although there has been marginal improvement from a score of 29.2 in 2015, the pace of progress lags behind peer economies. Disturbingly, India records the world's highest rate of child wasting at 18.7 per cent, while 35.5 per cent of children under five are stunted. These figures highlight the long-term health and developmental implications of malnutrition. Several interconnected challenges exacerbate this issue.



Poverty remains a significant factor, with India contributing nearly 40 per cent to the global poverty rate and 389 million people living in poverty across South Asia. Millions of children are left vulnerable to malnutrition due to limited resources. Compounding this is inadequate nutrition and sanitation, as poor dietary intake, restricted access to clean water, and insufficient healthcare facilities worsen the situation. The health and cognitive impacts of malnutrition are profound, weakening immune systems, increasing susceptibility to diseases, and impairing cognitive development. These effects

ripple through to academic performance and future opportunities, trapping many in a cycle of poverty. Regional disparities further intensify the problem, with states like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh shouldering a disproportionate burden of malnourished children. Higher poverty rates and systemic challenges in these regions make addressing the issue even more complex. To combat malnutrition, the Government of India has implemented various programs. POSHAN Abhiyaan aims to enhance the nutritional status of children, pregnant women, and lactating mothers. The Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) program offers supplementary nutrition, education, immunisation, and health check-ups. The Mid-Day Meal Scheme addresses hunger and malnutrition among school-going children, while the National Food Security Act (NFSA) provides subsidised food grains to economically vulnerable populations. Other initiatives, such as the Pradhan Mantri Matru

Vandana Yojana (PMMVY) and the National Health Mission (NHM), include financial incentives for pregnant women and specialised care through Nutrition Rehabilitation and Lactation Management Centres. While these efforts have yielded positive outcomes, more comprehensive strategies are needed to address the root causes of malnutrition. Tackling poverty, improving education, expanding healthcare access, and ensuring sanitation are critical steps toward sustainable progress. Collaborative efforts among policymakers, non-governmental organisations, and local communities are essential to create meaningful change. True progress is reflected in the wellbeing of every individual, especially the youngest members of society. By prioritising nutrition and equity, India can foster a healthier, well-nourished generation and pave the way for sustainable development. (The writer is Kapeel Barsaiyan, President, Buddh Jyoti Foundation; views are personal)



KAPEEL BARSAIYAN





FIRST COLUMN

ACHIEVERS NEVER QUIT

Achievers are not born but forged by their ability to ignite their natural talents over time



KUMARDEEP BANARJEE

Jack Croushore was a charismatic leader, a successful steel magnate and an achiever, who never called it quits, regardless of the situation that confronted him. He was also equally adept in adopting the strategy of using kid gloves when situations so required. Over a period, his mind learnt that situational factors influence leadership effectiveness. Successful leaders are high-end achievers, those who do not quit. They are blessed with halcyon days in life, which provide them with joyful moments, and there may be woebe-gone incidences that fortuitously do not cripple their passion to climb the ladder of prosperity. Nancy Gibbs says, "High achievers, we imagine, were wired for greatness from birth. But then you must wonder why, over time, natural talent seems to ignite in some people and dim in others." Recall the talismanic movie 3 Idiots. Aamir Khan, Sharman Joshi and R. Madhavan essayed the principal roles.

They were euphemistically called the 3 idiots by the director of the institute. Among them, Rancho (Aamir Khan) was an achiever blessed with natural talent, out-of-the-box thinking and revolutionary ideas. There is a poignant scene in the movie where Ali Fazal, who played the role of Joy Lobo, snuffs out his life as he was unable to meet the deadline for completing the assigned project work and thus became a laggard. He was working on a battery-operated 'flying machine', which could capture various events through its magical eyes and features. Alas, his attempts were abortive, while the consummate Rancho was successful in designing the machine. ...and during a test flight, he and the entire college were witnesses to the shocking tragedy of Joy Lobo taking his life. Dismayed at the turn of events, Lobo prominently wrote on the walls of his room - I QUIT.



The scene graphically recorded the miscarriage of the project and the abject subjugation of the character who was not an achiever. Once, some superiors decided to cashier an employee for a lacklustre performance. He decided to quit all relationships and his spirituality, and in sheer desperation informed God that he had decided to abandon his life. God asked him to look around in a forest for ferns and bamboo. When God planted ferns and bamboo seeds, he took special care of them and protected them from all the vagaries of weather. Within a year the ferns became resplendent and indescent, covering the entire floor space, while the bamboo seeds showed no growth.

Over the following four years, the forest became verdant with the ever-expanding ferns and yet there was no sign of the bamboo growing or developing into a tree. In the fifth year, the bamboo seeds began to sprout. Within the next six months, the bamboo shoots rose to a height of a hundred feet, lording over the fern plantation. God smiled at the man and said that he never gave up on the bamboo seeds over five years. During this timeframe, the roots of the bamboo tree were growing. Our period of struggle is akin to the development of the roots of the bamboo tree. Both the fern and the bamboo grew at their own pace, as willed by the universe and nature. They complemented each other's growth and were not competitors. Happiness makes us sweet and trials fortify us; sorrows when encountered should make us strong and success ought to make us grateful and radiant. In the ultimate analysis, it is only a positive disposition and thoughts that keep us ticking so that achievers do not lower their guard and thereby do not quit.

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

The key to shaping inclusive future

As automation, artificial intelligence and globalisation reshape industries, lifelong learning and adaptability are essential to staying competitive



DINESH SOOD

In an era of rapid technological advancements and shifting economic landscapes, the conversation around skill development has never been more relevant. Skills are no longer just tools for employment; they are the chisels and hammers that sculpt our collective future, shaping individuals and nations. Historically, skills were tied to tradition and geography. A farmer learned the trade from generations before, and an artisan honed their craft through years of apprenticeship. But the 21st century has shattered these boundaries. Today, the Advent of automation, artificial intelligence, and globalisation demands a workforce that can continuously adapt, innovate, and learn. Skills are not static; they evolve, and the pace of this evolution is accelerating. At the heart of this transformation lies the understanding that skill development is no longer a one-time event but a lifelong journey. The future belongs to those who embrace this mindset. A software engineer may need to transition to being a data analyst tomorrow. A marketer should delve into behavioural psychology or artificial intelligence. The world is moving toward a gig economy, where flexibility, creativity, and adaptability are not just assets but necessities. Those who rest on their laurels risk being left behind in a world where change is the only constant. India has the brain power needed to rise in the skilled world. Governments, educational institutions, and private enterprises all play a role in fostering a skill development culture.

Traditional education systems, built to serve industrial-era needs, must undergo a radical shift. The focus should be more than rote learning or degree acquisition, fostering critical thinking, problem-solving, and technical competencies. Initiatives like coding boot camps, vocational training, and online learning platforms have already begun to disrupt the status quo, democratising access to quality education. But more must be done to ensure inclusivity and widespread reach. When we talk of skills, we mean making one employable to earn a livelihood quickly and decently. As per the National Policy of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship 2015, We had the target to impart various skills to 40 crore people by the end of 2022. However, around 4 crore people have been trained. Still, there is a massive opportunity for varied stakeholders to come forward and arm our men and women with employable skills. It is nothing but aligning the entire skilling ecosystem with the demands of employers. Today, a considerable gap exists between the demand for a skilled workforce and their availability in the market.

Among 150 million young people in developing countries, around 33 per cent are skilled but unemployed, as their employability quotient could be better. Government policy interventions can bridge the gap between demand and supply in the workforce market. Incentivising employable skill development through subsidies, tax benefits, or public-private partnerships can empower citizens to upskill or reskill. Furthermore, governments must create frameworks encouraging lifelong learning, such as subsidised courses or learning credits for professionals looking to update their skills. Meanwhile, industries must recognise their role in creating agile workforces.



AMONG 150 MILLION YOUNG PEOPLE IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, AROUND 33 PER CENT ARE SKILLED BUT UNEMPLOYED, AS THEIR EMPLOYABILITY QUOTIENT COULD BE BETTER. GOVERNMENT POLICY INTERVENTIONS CAN BRIDGE THE GAP BETWEEN DEMAND AND SUPPLY IN THE WORKFORCE MARKET

Corporate training programs, mentorship initiatives, and collaborations with educational institutions are not just investments in employees but investments in the future of the business itself. Companies that foster a culture of continuous learning often enjoy higher productivity, better employee retention, and a competitive edge in their industries. Moreover, the private sector can lead the way in identifying future skills by analysing market trends and technological advancements, ensuring training programmes remain relevant and forward-looking. However, skill development is not just about economic progress but also a tool for social empowerment. In many developing nations, lack of access to education and skills has perpetuated cycles of poverty. Equipping marginalised communities with in-demand skills can uplift entire populations, ensuring more inclusive growth. A young woman in a rural village learning coding or a displaced worker mastering digital marketing are potent examples of how skills can change lives. These stories highlight the transformative potential of skill development, turning adversity into opportunity and fostering hope where it is needed most. This empowerment extends beyond individuals to communities and entire societies. Skilled populations are better equipped to address local challenges, from improving infrastructure to boosting small businesses.

In this way, skill development catalyses innovation and self-reliance, reducing dependency on external aid and fostering sustainable growth. Communities investing in their human capital often see a ripple effect, where increased productivity and prosperity lead to better healthcare, education, and quality of life. As we champion skill development, addressing the challenges it pre-

sents is also critical. The digital divide, for instance, threatens to exclude those who lack access to technology or internet connectivity. Rural areas and underserved regions often bear the brunt of this inequity, leaving millions without the tools to participate in the modern economy. Bridging this gap requires a concerted effort from the public and private sectors, including infrastructure investments, affordable technology, and localised training programs catering to specific regional needs. Similarly, a one-size-fits-all approach to skills training is likely to fail. Each individual's journey is unique, shaped by their aspirations, context, and potential. Personalised, learner-centric approaches must become the norm. Adaptive learning technologies powered by artificial intelligence can significantly tailor educational content to suit individual needs and learning styles. This ensures that skill development is essential, practical, engaging, and relevant. Moreover, we must shift the narrative around failure in skill acquisition. Learning a new skill often involves trial and error, and creating an environment where individuals feel encouraged to experiment and grow without fear of judgment is essential. Employers and educators must foster a culture that values resilience and continuous improvement over perfection. The metaphor of skill as a sculptor is apt. Like marble, raw talent has limitless potential. But becoming something remarkable requires the right tools, guidance, and effort. Skill development chisels away ignorance carves out opportunities and polishes the rough edges of human potential. It bridges the gap between dreams and reality, between where we are and where we aspire to be. As we look to the future, let us remember the power

of skills to redefine what is possible. Whether combating climate change, revolutionising healthcare and wellness, or exploring the frontiers of space, skilled individuals will be at the helm of every breakthrough. By investing in skill development today, we are not just preparing for tomorrow but shaping it. The urgency of this investment cannot be overstated. The COVID-19 pandemic served as a wake-up call, highlighting the vulnerabilities of unskilled or under-skilled workers in a volatile economy. Millions faced job losses, and industries struggled to adapt to new remote work and digital operations norms. Yet, it also demonstrated the resilience of those equipped with the right skills to pivot and thrive in uncertain times. The lessons learned must guide our approach, emphasising the importance of resilience, adaptability, and future-proof skills. Furthermore, as technology evolves, ethical considerations must be integrated into skill development. Understanding the implications of artificial intelligence, data privacy, and sustainability is as crucial as mastering technical competencies. This holistic approach ensures rapid and responsible progress, fostering a future where innovation aligns with human values and societal well-being. In conclusion, skill development is more than a response to economic demands; it is a transformative force that shapes our world. It empowers individuals, drives innovation, and fosters inclusive growth. By investing in skills, we invest in people, and by investing in people, we invest in the future. (The writer is co-founder and MD of Orane International, a training partner of the National Skill Development Corporation and a network Member of India International Skills Centres. The views expressed are personal)

Witch-hunting in India: A persistent plague claiming women's lives

Despite legal interventions, witch-hunting remains a grim reality in parts of India, targeting marginalised women

In 2014, Partners for Law in Development (PLD), a legal resource group working on social justice and women's rights, carried out a study to understand the reasons behind rising violence against women in the name of witch hunting in Bihar, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand. They found that women were blamed for illness, death and even a bad crop and branded as witches.



SWAPNA MAJUMDAR

there was complicity in the community. Their study also revealed that although laws in Bihar, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh criminalising acts/offences particular to witch hunting, such as 'identifying' any person as a witch along with the mental and physical torture accompanying such identification existed, the apathy of the state led to the continuation of witch hunting prac-

tices. Ten years later, nothing seems to have changed. Witch hunting continues to claim women's lives even in 2024. Over 663 were killed for allegedly practising witchcraft during 2015 and 2021 according to the National Crime Research Bureau (NCRB). Worryingly, the main perpetrators of this violence also remain the same, says Nirantar Trust, a NGO working on gender and education. Findings of the Trust's recent survey on witch hunting in 114 villages across 10 districts in Bihar showed 43 per cent of the victims were targeted by members from their own family. Their study, released earlier this month, also found a significant proportion of the

women victimised as witches were between the age group 45 to 60. Moreover, 73 per cent of the victims had never been to school. Nirantar also found that more than single women or widows, it was married women who were branded as witches, corroborating the findings of the 2014 PLD study. In many instances, perpetrators were related to the male kin of the husband and thus negated the traditional belief that married women were safer than single women. Another grave concern raised in the 2024 study is the targeting of women from marginalised backgrounds who have shown agency and the courage to raise their voices against the



deeply entrenched patriarchy. The inability of the government to sensitise men while pushing for women's empowerment has endan-

gered many women in leadership roles. One of the easiest ways to show the woman her place has been to brand her as a witch. Of the 44 per cent of women who faced

accusations of witchcraft from castes other than their own, the majority were from the upper caste. Nirantar found that most women preferred not to report this mental and physical assault as they were afraid it would lead to increased violence, greater social ostracisation and humiliation. They also lacked trust in the sincerity and efficacy of law enforcement agencies. The inability to provide timely justice can be fatal was found by Action Aid Association. The NGO, which detailed 102 case studies from Odisha's 12 districts reporting maximum witch-hunting incidents in 2021, found that despite the law, more than 30 per cent of the total cases had led to the death of the

woman branded as a witch. Chhnuti Mahto, the fire-brand social activist from Jharkhand, who received the Padma Shri in 2021 for her role in rescuing over 100 women accused of witchcraft, knows the pain because she too, was targeted as a witch. She survived and embarked on a mission to help others. But why is the onus only on survivors? NCRB data shows that since 2000, over 2,500 women have been killed for being witches. How many more women need to die before action against such inhuman acts is given the priority it deserves? (The author is a journalist writing on development and gender. The views expressed are personal)



**SUKHO KHALSA SR. SEC. SCHOOL**  
**JAIL ROAD, JANAKPURI, NEW DELHI-110058**  
**A GOVT. AIDED MINORITY SCHOOL**

**CORRIGENDUM**

Reference previous advertisement dated 11.10.2024 published in two newspapers "The Pioneer" Delhi NCR (English + Hindi), following changes are being made in two vacancies only.

\* The post of TGT Social Science is deleted due to some administrative reasons.

\* The post of TGT English is reserved for PwBD.

All other contents of previous advertisement dated 11/10/2024 remain same and the candidates who previously applied for other posts (except the above 2 posts) in response to Advertisement dated 11/10/2024 need not apply afresh .

Age, Qualification etc. are as per Recruitment Rules applicable for Govt. Aided Minority Schools of the Directorate of Education Govt. of NCT of Delhi.

Blank application form (to apply for the post of TGT English reserved for PwBD) to be collected from school office on all working days between 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. The blank application forms will be provided free of cost.

Application form duly completed in all respect along with self attested copies of testimonials should reach through speed post/registered post to the Chairman/Manager Sukho Khalsa Senior Secondary School, Jail Road, Janak Puri, New Delhi-58 within 10 days from the date of this advertisement. Thereafter no application will be accepted. No application will be received by hand.

**STORES E-PROCUREMENT**

E-procurement Tender Notice No. S/30/2024-25 Dated: 24-12-2024. E-tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following works.

**SN.1. Tender No. 30/24/5105/OT/252/2024-25**

Closing/Opening date: 31-12-2024

**Brief Description:** NG Carriage Bogie Components (AS PER ANNEXURE-1 (CONSISTING 32 ITEMS except SN- 24) & DRAWINGS ARE ATTACHED). [Warranty Period: 30 Months after the date of delivery] [Inspection Agency: CONSG, Stage Insp.: NA, Stages: 0] [U/VAM Linking:] Item Type: Goods Qty- 10 Set for SSE/WS/Tindharia, NFR (West Bengal), P.L. No.- 300003620016.

**SN.2. Tender No. 70/24/0895/OT/253/2024-25**

Closing/Opening date: 06-01-2025

**Brief Description:** PVC in Roll Size- 2 mm x 1.62 m x 14 m including PVC electrode dia 2 mm = 50 m per roll, Shades & patterns -RDSO sample NAC FLG 02, Colour - Blue. RDSO Spec. No. RDSO/2006/CG-12 (Rev.1) with amend. 5 of July 2019 [Warranty Period: 30 Months after the date of delivery] 1) Qty- 10000.00 Metre for Dibragurh Town/WORKSHOP/DEPOT, NFR (Assam), 2) Qty- 12800.00 Metre for New Bongaigaon/WORKSHOP/DEPOT, NFR (Assam), P.L. No. 75613839.

**SN.3. Tender No. 37/24/0551A/OT/254/2024-25**

Closing/Opening date: 08-01-2025

**Brief Description:** Constant contact polyurethane slide bearing pad assembly. Drg No.: RDSO Approved drawing No. AAL-021101, alt-8. Mat. Spec.: WD-38-MISC-2004 REV-2 of Nov'2022 [Warranty Period- 30 Months after the date of delivery] [Inspection Agency: TPI, Stage Insp.: No, Stages: 0] [U/VAM Linking:] Item Type: Goods, 1) Qty- 1391 Set for New Bongaigaon/WORKSHOP/DEPOT, NFR (Assam), ii) Qty- 347 Set for New Jalpaiguri/GSD, NFR (West Bengal), P.L. No. - 38106528.

**SN.4. Tender No. 40/24/0597D/OT/255/2024-25**

Closing/Opening date: 06-01-2025

**Brief Description:** Coupling socket assembly complete as per RDSO drawing No. RDSO/PE/SPEC/AC/0177(Rev.1) 2013 and RCF drawing No LW71300 as per Drg. No. N/A spec no. EDTS-105(Rev/E) Amndt-1, 2 and 3. [Warranty Period: 30 Months after the date of delivery] [Inspection Agency: TPI, Stage Insp.: No, Stages: 0] [U/VAM Linking:] Item Type: Goods, Qty- 45 Nos for Dibragurh Town/WORKSHOP/DEPOT, NFR (Assam), ii) Qty: 15 Nos for New Bongaigaon/WORKSHOP/DEPOT, NFR (Assam) P.L. No.- 45150242.

**SN.5. Tender No. 61/24/5325/OT/256/2024-25**

Closing/Opening date: 08-01-2025

**Brief Description:** Manufacture and supply of Mono Block Pre-Stressed concrete Line Sleeper (Pre-tensioned type) conforming to RDSO Drg.No. T-8746 and IRS specification No T-39 (as amended up to date of tender opening) duly loaded in to Wagons/road vehicles. [Warranty Period: 30 Months after the date of delivery] [Inspection Agency: CONSG, Stage Insp. NA, Stages: 0] U/VAM Linking: Item Type: Goods i) Qty- 137742 Nos for Sr. DEN/C/Kathihar, NFR (Bihar), ii) Qty: 422329 Nos. for DRM/W/Alipurduar Jn., NFR (West Bengal). iii) Qty: 69449 Nos for Sr. DEN/C/Lumdung, NFR (Assam). iv) Qty: 171412 Nos for DRM/W/Tinsukia, NFR (Assam). v) Qty: 95086 Nos for CH.OS/G/ENGG/Rangiya, NFR (Assam). P.L. No.- 601600900143.

**SN.6. Tender No. 70/24/0003A/OT/257/2024-25**

Closing/Opening date: 10-01-2025

**Brief Description:** Decorative Thermosetting Synthetic Resin Bonded Laminated sheets with fir worthiness property Size: 2440 mm x 1220 mm x 3 mm. thickness. As per RDSO Spec. No C-K514 (Rev-0 of Dec 2005) with 7 Amendments. Last Amendment No 7 of August 2016 and with corrigendum No 1 of June 2015.As per RDSO Approved Sample CODE AC\_SP02 [Warranty Period: 30 Months after the date of delivery] [Inspection Agency: TPI, Stage Insp.: No, Stages: 0] [U/VAM Linking:] Item Type: Goods, i) Qty- 309 Nos for Dibragurh Town/WORKSHOP/DEPOT, NFR (Assam), (ii) Qty: 2875 Nos. for New Bongaigaon/WORKSHOP/DEPOT, NFR (Assam) P.L. No.- 75400250.

**SN.7. Tender No. 37/24/0636/OT/258/2024-25**

Closing/Opening date: 13-01-2025

**Brief Description:** Poly Rihngs-3 for side Bearer Pad Assembly. Drawing-AAL-021101. Item-5mAlt-8. Mat. Spec.-RDSO Spec.No. WD-38-Misc-2004 (Rev.2). [Warranty Period: 30 Months after the date of delivery] [Inspection Agency: TPI, Stage Insp.: No, Stages: 0] [U/VAM Linking:] Item Type: Goods, i) Qty: 5991 Nos for New Bongaigaon WORKSHOP DEPOT, NFR (Assam). ii) Qty: 706 Nos. for New Jalpaiguri GSD, NFR (West Bengal), P.L. No-38106530.

**SN.8. Tender No. 40/24/5427/OT/259/2024-25**

Closing/Opening date: 13-01-2025

**Brief Description:** Supply of Self-locking Spring inserted steel nut single piece reusable of size M-27 for 28 mm dia hook bolt as per RDSO spec. No 1773549/2023/O/O ED/BnS/RDSO. including 01 no. appropriate box Wrench/50 nos nuts.Spec.details.Ln-37.5 mm, Sn-41.0 mm, Hn-22.0 mm, Bn-41.0 mm, Cn-47.3 mm, Plating-Electro-galvanized or Hot-dip galvanized or nickel alloy. NAS3350 Vibration test certificate required with proper OEM/authorization certificate. Make- SAPER LOCK or similar. [Warranty Period: 30 Months after the date of delivery] [Inspection Agency: TPI, Stage Insp: No, Stages: 0] [U/VAM Linking] Item Type: Goods i) Qty: 500 Nos for SSE/P/WAY/Dalkhola, NFR(West Bengal), ii) Qty-1500 Nos for SSE/P-WAY/Samsi, NFR (West Bengal) P.L. No. 731301690012.

**SN.9. Tender No. 70/24/0476/OT/260/2024-25**

Closing/Opening date: 16-01-2025

**Brief Description:** "Bolt MS Hex Head M16 X 50 with Nut as per Specn. BIS Specification No: Steel, IS-1363, pt-1-2002 for Bolt and IS: 1363-PII-III-2002 for Nut.Property Class 4.6 [four point six] [for Bolt and 5 (Five) for Nut] [Warranty Period: 30 Months after the date of delivery] [Inspection Agency: TPI, Stage Insp.: No, Stages: 0] [U/VAM Linking:] Item Type: Goods i) Qty-11000 Kgs for New Bongaigaon/WORKSHOP/DEPOT, NFR (Assam). ii)6000 Kgs for Dibragurh Town/WORKSHOP/DEPOT.NFR (Assam) iii) Qty: 400 Kgs for Pandu/GSD, NFR (Assam) iv) Qty-19000 Kgs for New Jalpaiguri/GSD, NFR (West Bengal) P.L. No.-73031379.

**Note:** For full details of tender notice and tender documents, tenderer may log on to the website ([www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in)). Prospective bidder who intend to participate in above tender are required to log on themselves with the above website and submit their offer electronically, if they are already registered with IREPS. In Case they are not registered with IREPS, they are advised to obtain class-III Digital Signature Certificate from the certifying agencies under Govt. of India IT Act 2000 and participate in the above tenders.

PCMM, Maligaon

**NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY**

Serving Customers With A Smile

**China approves world's largest dam over Brahmaputra river**

PTI ■ BEIJING

China has approved the construction of the world's largest dam, stated to be the planet's biggest infra project costing USD 1.37 billion, on the Brahmaputra River in Tibet close to the Indian border, raising concerns in riparian states — India and Bangladesh. The Chinese government has approved the construction of a hydropower project in the lower reaches of the Yarlung Zangbo River, the Tibetan name for the

Brahmaputra, according to an official statement quoted by state-run Xinhua news agency on Wednesday. The dam is to be built at a huge gorge in the Himalayan reaches where the Brahmaputra river makes a huge U-turn to flow into Arunachal Pradesh and then to Bangladesh. The total investment in the dam could exceed one trillion yuan (USD 137 billion), which would dwarf any other single infrastructure project on the planet including China's own

Three Gorges Dam, regarded as the largest in the world, the Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post reported on Thursday. China has already Operationalised the USD 1.5 billion Zam Hydropower Station, the largest in Tibet in 2015. The Brahmaputra dam was part of the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-2025) and National Economic and Social Development and the Long-Range Objectives Through the

Year 2035 adopted by Plenum, a key policy body of the ruling Communist Party of China (CPC) in 2020. Concerns arose in India as the dam besides empowering China to control the water flow, the size and scale of it could also enable Beijing to release large amounts of water flooding border areas in times of hostilities. India too is building a dam over Brahmaputra in Arunachal Pradesh. India and China established the Expert Level Mechanism (ELM) in 2006 to discuss various issues related to trans-border rivers under which China

provides India with hydrological information on the Brahmaputra river and Sutlej river during the flood seasons. Data sharing of trans-border rivers figured in the talks between India, China Special Representatives (SRs) for border question, NSA Ajit Doval and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, held here on December 18. The SRs "provided positive directions for cross-border cooperation and exchanges" including data sharing on trans-border rivers, a statement by the Ministry of External Affairs said.

The Brahmaputra Dam presents enormous engineering challenges as the project site is located along a tectonic plate boundary where earthquakes occur. The Tibetan plateau, regarded as the roof of the world, frequently experiences earthquakes as it is located over the tectonic plates.

The official statement on Wednesday sought to allay concerns about earthquakes, saying that the hydropower project is safe and prioritises ecological protection. Through extensive geological explorations and technical advancements, a solid foundation has been laid for the science-based, secure, and high-quality development of the project, it said.

**THE KANGRA CO-OPERATIVE BANK LTD.**  
Head office at: C-29, Community Centre, Pankhia Road, Janak Puri, New Delhi - 110058. Phone: 911-25611942, 25611943, 25611944. E-mail: legal@kangrabank.com, legal1@kangrabank.com, Website: www.kangrabank.com

**APPENDIX IV**  
(See rule 8(1))  
**POSSESSION NOTICE**  
(For immovable property)

Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorised officer of "The Kangra Co-operative Bank Ltd.", Head office at, C-29, Community Centre, Pankhia Road, Janak Puri, New Delhi - 110058, under The Securitisation and Reconstruction of the Financial Assets & Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002. (54 of 2002) and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with rule [3] of The Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, the Bank had issued a demand notice on dated 16-07-2024, calling upon the borrower Smt. Shalini Yaduvanshi W/o. Sh. Deepak H.No.R-62, Phase-2, Street No.6, Shiv Vihar Karwal Nagar, Delhi-110094 also at Smt. Shalini Yaduvanshi W/o. Sh. Deepak, C/o. M/s. Engineer Dheeraj Sharma Computer, Training Institute, Khasra No.175, Ashok Nagar, Delhi-110094, and Smt. Shalini Yaduvanshi W/o. Sh. Deepak C/o. M/s. Deep Computer Education Institute, B-96, S/F No. 710, Sadat Pur Extn., Main Road, Karawal Nagar, Delhi-110094 and calling upon the mortgagor & surety and Smt. Sarvesh W/o. Sh. Nanhe Singh H.No.R-62, Phase-2, Street No.6, Shiv Vihar Karwal Nagar, Delhi-110094, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being Rs.14,63,766/- (Rupees Fourteen Lakhs Sixty Three Thousand Seven Hundred and Sixty Six Only), together with further interest, penal interest and other charges as are applicable to this Loan account from time to time, from the date of the notice till the date of payment, with in 60 days from the date of receipt of the notice. The above mentioned borrower, mortgagor & surety having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower, mortgagor & surety and the public in general that the Bank has taken Symbolic Possession of the property described here in below in exercise of powers conferred under sub-section (4) of section 13 of The Securitisation and Reconstruction of the Financial Assets & Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002, read with rule [8] of The Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, on this 24th day of December 2024.

The borrower, mortgagor & surety in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the mortgaged property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of "The Kangra Co-operative Bank Ltd.", for an amount of Rs.14,63,766/- together with further interest, penal interest and other charges as are applicable to this Loan account from time to time, from the date of notice till the date of realization together with all the costs incurred by the Bank in realizing the said amount.

The borrower, mortgagor & surety attention is also been invited towards provisions of Sub-section (8) of Section 13 of The Securitisation and Reconstruction of the Financial Assets & Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002, in respect of time available, to redeem the above mentioned mortgaged property/Secured Asset.

**DISCUSSION OF THE PROPERTY**  
The property under consideration is Built up ground floor area measuring 41.80 Sq. Mtrs. All that part and parcel of the HOUSE NO.R-62, (KHASRA NO.20/13), OLD NO.250/2 & 38-C, PLOT NO.38-C, STREET NO.6, PHASE-II, GIS ID NO.GEO-COORDINATES FILE DDA/GIS/07122020054511/ 227001 & MEASURING 41.80 SQ.MTRS. HAVING FLOOR 01, SITUATED COLONY SHIV VIHAR PHASE-II, KARAWAL NAGAR, DELHI-110094. Falling under the Registration of Sub-Registrar IV, Delhi.

Which is bounded under - NORTH - OTHERS PLOT, EAST - PLOT NO.38-B, SOUTH OTHER PLOT, WEST - PASSAGE 10 FT.

(HARISH SHARMA)  
AUTHORISED OFFICER  
THE KANGRA CO-OPERATIVE BANK LTD.  
HEAD OFFICE AT: C-29, COMMUNITY CENTRE,  
PANKHIA ROAD, JANAKPURI, NEW DELHI-58.  
Phone:91135684018, 9113568419, 9810487548

Place: DELHI  
DATED: 24-12-2024

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
To be known to all that I, Pushpa Taneja W/o Late V. P Taneja R/o R-9/300, Raj Nagar, Ghaziabad, UP-201002, lost Documents In respect of ODA Janta Flat No. 469, Madipur (Paschim Puri) Delhi-110063 Vide File No.-25 (140)1972/HB/LAB(H) has applied for conversion of the above Flat from lease hold to free hold in DDA. The original documents, 1.Demand Letter 2.DDA Possession in Letter 3. NOC (water&Electric) 4.Site Possession of the above flat has been lost. An NCR (NRI) of this effect has been lodged in police station Nirvana Country, Sector-50, Gurugram-120018, vide NCR App.No.: 13271032400657dt: 07/09/2024 time :11:00. I/Myself any person(s) claiming any right, interest, any objection or found any/all documents of original documents, may write/contact with named person at above address/phone No. 0995875222 within 15 days from the dt.of publication of this notice. The person claiming any right, interest, objections with respect to this property can personally inform or write to: Dy. Director LAB (H) DDA, Vikas Sadan, INA, New Delhi

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
Known to all that my client Smt. Reshma Kulkreja owner of the FIRST FLOOR WITH/OUT ROOF PROPERTY NO-WZ-93/94, (NEW NO-J-5 [AREA 50SQ YARDS] KHASRA NO-1575, VILLAGE TIHAR NEW DELHI-110018 and Smt. Reshma Kulkreja/Have Not Originals 1. Probate of Will executed by Smt. Bimla Devi Sapra in favour of Smt. Reshma Kulkreja, 2. Death and Survivor Certificate of Sh. Kishan Lal, And it is informed that any deal with said documents by any person except my said client and said institution regarding said property, shall be deemed as null and void. If any person having any claim, right in said property then he may contact and handover the same and apprise his claim to undersigned within 8 days of this publication.

**FORM LEGAL SOLUTION**  
Ch. No. 762 Dwarka Court Sector-10, Dwarka, New Delhi-75  
Mobile - 9899013918

**LEASING OF SLR OF VARIOUS TRAINS OVER ALIPURDUAR DIVISION**

E-Auction is invited for leasing of SLR of Various trains over Alipurduar division. Auction Catalogue No.: C-AP-PCL-LEASE. Description: Parcel Space in SLR Coach (Single Compartment); Rate Unit: Per Trip Licensing Fee. Auction Start Date & Time : 11:00 hrs. on 07-01-2025.

Seq No.	Lot No./Category	Lot End Date & Time
AA/1	15769-SLR-F2-APDJ-MXN-24-1 (Parcel-SLR)	At 11:30 hrs. on 07-01-2025
AA/2	13150-SLR-F1-APDJ-SDAH-24-1 (Parcel-SLR)	At 11:40 hrs. on 07-01-2025
AA/3	13148-SLR-F1-BXT-SDAH-24-1 (Parcel-SLR)	At 11:50 hrs. on 07-01-2025
AA/4	12378-SLR-F1-NOQ-SDAH-22-1 (Parcel-SLR)	At 12:00 hrs. on 07-01-2025
AA/5	15417-SLR-R1-APDJ-SHTT-22-1 (Parcel-SLR)	At 12:10 hrs. on 07-01-2025
AA/6	13142-SLR-R1-NOQ-SDAH-22-1 (Parcel-SLR)	At 12:20 hrs. on 07-01-2025
AA/7	15769-SLR-R1-APDJ-MXN-24-1 (Parcel-SLR)	At 12:30 hrs. on 07-01-2025
AA/8	15769-SLR-F1-APDJ-MXN-24-1 (Parcel-SLR)	At 12:40 hrs. on 07-01-2025

Initial Cooling off period is 30 minutes. Successive lots closing interval 10 minutes. Note : Prospective bidder are requested to visit e-Auction leasing module on IREPS website [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in) for more details.

Sr. DCM, Alipurduar Jn.

**NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY**  
Serving Customers With A Smile

**AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROJECT UNDER THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING POLICY 2013 OF THE GOVERNMENT OF HARYANA**

Applications are invited from the general public for booking of Residential Apartments in the Affordable Housing Project proposed to be developed as per terms and conditions of the policy prescribed by the Town & Country Planning Department, Government of Haryana vide Notification No.PF-27/48921 dated 19.08.2013 (Details available at the Department website i.e. [www.tcp.haryana.gov.in](http://www.tcp.haryana.gov.in)).

1	Project Approvals	Colonizer/Developer: Sriflex Projects Private Limited. Licence No./Year :133 of 2023 dated 26.06.2023. Building plans approved on 19.03.2024 vide Memo No. ZP-1862/JD/(RA)/2024/10267 & RERA Registration No. RC/REP/HARERA/GGM/814/546/2024/41 dated 15.04.2024.
2	Location	Sector 4, Sohna, District – Gurugram, Haryana.
3	Provisions	Project land is 8.76875 Acre. However the same is developed phase-wise as per DTCP Phasing Approval ZP-1862/JD/(RA)/2023/41092 dated 05/12/2023. Under the Phase I there were 1105 residential units however land measuring 1.9875 acre comprising 270 residential units was mortgaged with DTCP hence 835 units were allotted vide Draw of Lot held on 28/06/2024. Now balance 270 units are de-mortgaged vide release of mortgage deed dated 20.11.2024 bearing document no 11392 hence the present offer is for balance 270 units under Phase I, in the present offer of 270 units, 5% (13 units) are reserved for Management Quota and balance 95% (257 Units) are for general public. Community Facility - One Community Hall of more than 2000 sq. ft. and one Anganwadi-cum-croche of more than 2000 sq. ft.
4	Apartment Details	Type I: 2 BHK -108 no. of apartments of 644.65sq.ft. carpet area and balcony with an aggregated area of 99.67sq.ft. with a two-wheeler parking. Type II: 2 BHK - 95 no. of apartments of 644.85sq.ft. carpet area and balcony with an aggregated area of 145.74sq.ft. with a two-wheeler parking. Type III: 2 BHK - 54 no. of apartments of 637sq.ft. carpet area and balcony with an aggregated area of 93sq.ft. with a two-wheeler parking. Type II: MQ -2 BHK - 13 no. of apartments of 644.65sq.ft. carpet area and balcony with an aggregated area of 145.74sq.ft. with a two-wheeler parking.
5	Allotment Rate of Apartment (All inclusive)* Taxes & other charges as applicable will be extra	Type I: Rs.30,20,533/- per apartment + Taxes as applicable extra. Type II: Rs.30,20,925/- per apartment + Taxes as applicable extra. Type III: Rs.29,78,100/- per apartment + Taxes as applicable extra.  The above rates are as per the rates prescribed under the Affordable Housing Policy, 2013 of the Government of Haryana vide Notification No. PF-27/48921 dated 19.08.2013 including the amendments thereof (Details available at Department website i.e. <a href="http://www.tcp.haryana.gov.in">www.tcp.haryana.gov.in</a> ). However, possession charges and registration fees etc. are extra.
6	Payment Terms	i. With Application: Booking amount i.e. 5% of Carpet area of apartment: Type I: Total amount of Rs. 1,45,046/- Type II: Total amount of Rs. 1,45,046/- Type III: Total amount of Rs. 1,43,325/-  ii. 20% of total cost shall be payable on Allotment and the balance consideration amount shall be paid according to the construction-linked payment plan of the project duly approved by HARERA, as applicable in terms of construction stages at the relevant point in time. No interest shall accrue before the due date of payment. Any default in payment shall attract interest at the rate specified in Rule 15 of the Rules 2017 by HARERA.
7	Board Specifications of the Apartment	<b>Drawing Room/ Lobby Flooring:</b> Tiles / IPS   <b>Drawing Room/ Lobby Wall Ceiling finish:</b> OBD / Color Wash   <b>Bedrooms Flooring:</b> Tiles / IPS   <b>Bedroom Wall Ceiling finish:</b> OBD / Color Wash   <b>Toilet Walls Finish:</b> Tiles up to 4 feet and OBD/ Color wash in balance area   <b>Toilet Flooring:</b> Tiles / IPS   <b>Kitchen Flooring:</b> Tiles / IPS   <b>Kitchen Wall Finish:</b> Tiles up to 2 feet high above stone/ Tile Counter and OBD / Color wash in balance area   <b>Fixture &amp; Fittings:</b> Single bowl steel sink & CP / PVC/ PTMT Fittings   <b>Balcony Flooring:</b> Tiles / IPS   Windows: MS-Z-section & Glass / Alu steels & Glass   <b>Door Frame / Doors:</b> MS/ Fiber Door frames with flush Door/ Fiber Door   <b>Common Area Flooring:</b> Stone / Tiles / IPS   <b>Lift Lobby:</b> Stone / Tiles / IPS   <b>Chinaware:</b> Standard Fittings   <b>Electrical:</b> ISI marked products for wiring, Switches and circuits   <b>Security:</b> Gated Complex
8	Applications Timelines	i. Application form will be filled online by Registration on <a href="http://edraw.tcp.haryana.gov.in/tcp-dms/home">http://edraw.tcp.haryana.gov.in/tcp-dms/home</a> ii. Booking start from 14/12/2024 00:01 iii. Payment closure date 28/12/2024 23:59 iv. Last date of submission of application form is 30/12/2024 23:59

**Eligibility:**

- The applicant should not be debarred from entering into legally binding contract under any prevailing law.
- Any person can apply; however, preference will be given to PMAY beneficiaries, including their spouse or dependent children, identified by the Urban Local Bodies Department, Haryana, under the "Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojna for All" program. First priority shall be given to the identified beneficiaries of the state of Haryana. Thereafter, for the remaining flats, preference will be given to persons, including their spouse or dependent children, who do not own any flat/plot in any HUDDA developed Colony/sector or any licensed colony in the urban areas in Haryana. UT of Chandigarh, and NCT.
- Any applicant can submit only one application. A successful applicant under this policy shall not be eligible for the allotment of any other flat under this policy in another colony. In the event that he/she is successful in more than one colony, he/she will have the choice to retain only one flat. Supportive affidavits and certificates suggesting eligibility are mandatory to be uploaded on the TCP website while submitting the application for allotment.

**Allotment Criteria:**

- The allotment of apartments shall be done through e-draw of lots in the presence of a committee consisting of Deputy Commissioner or his representative (at least of the cadre of Haryana Civil Services), Senior Town Planner (Circle office), DTP of the concerned district and the representative of colonizer concerned.
- After fixation of date for draw of lots, an advertisement shall be issued by the Developer informing the applicants about the details regarding date/time and venue of the draw of lots in the same newspapers on which the original advertisement was issued.
- For detailed criteria and time-frame to be adopted for scrutiny and allotment, the applicants may also refer to the details in the Affordable Housing Policy, 2013 including the amendments thereof notified vide No.PF-27/48921 dated 19.08.2013 (Available at the Department website i.e. [www.tcp.haryana.gov.in](http://www.tcp.haryana.gov.in)).

**Disclaimer:**

- The Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act 2016 and the rules made thereunder have brought significant changes to the real estate sector. The Promoter/Developer is fully committed to comply with the provisions laid down under RERA. The promoter/developer urges every applicant to inspect the site where the project is proposed to be constructed and not merely rely upon or be influenced by any architectural impression, plan, or sales brochure. Therefore, applicants are requested to exercise personal judgment prior to submitting an application for booking.
- The images shown on TCP Site / offer of Application are indicative designs and for illustrative purposes only. Further designs may vary in form and finish for the above project details. Specifications can also be accessed at the Haryana Real Estate Regulatory Authority website, i.e., <https://haryanarera.gov.in>.

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

Notice is hereby given on behalf of ANUBHAV JAIN who is purchasing PROPERTY No. K.I.120, AREA MEASURING 284.87 SQ.YDS. SITUATED AT RESIDENTIAL COLONY G.P. KAVI NAGAR, TEHSIL AND DISTRICT-GHAZIABAD, UTTAR PRADESH from M/s. Syndicate Builders Private Limited who had purchased the subject property by virtue of Sale Deed executed by Mr. Raj Kumar Tomar, Mr. Sameer Tomar, Mrs. Om Lala Tomar and Mrs. Manju Devi, bearing Regn./Document no.4327. Book no.1, Volume no. 20906, on pages 235-264, dated 04.08.2024 (SFO-1 GHZABAD), and ANUBHAV JAIN intend to mortgage the subject property against the financial assistance from Aartiya Birla Housing Finance Limited. To comply the requirements of BANK/NBFC, we give this public notice that if any Person having any type of claim/right/title/interest/mortgage over the said property, may inform in writing, at the address mentioned below, stating his objections, within 7 days from today, failing which it shall be presumed that the said property is free from all type of Encumbrances. lien etc. **Lucem Legal LLP** Plot No.13, Sector-10, Dwarka, New Delhi-110049, Contact No. 011-40463136

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

Information is given to general public at large that Smt. Sahajani Khatoon w/o Md. Tanamara and Smt. Fatema Khatun w/o Smt. Sabir are now purchasing the







# RBI sets up eight-member panel on ethical use of AI

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank on Thursday announced the setting up of an eight-member committee to develop a framework for responsible and ethical enablement of artificial intelligence (FREE-AI) in the financial sector.

Headed by IIT Bombay professor Pushpak Bhattacharyya (Department of Computer Science and Engineering), the panel will assess the current level of adoption of AI in financial services, globally as well as in India.

It will also review regulatory and supervisory approaches on AI with focus on the financial sector globally. The panel will also identify potential risks associated



with AI, if any, and recommend an evaluation, mitigation and monitoring framework and consequent compliance requirements for financial institutions,

including banks, NBFCs, FinTechs, PSOs, etc. The committee will recommend a framework including governance aspects for responsible, ethical

adoption of AI models / applications in the Indian financial sector, the RBI said. The other members of the panel are: Debjani Ghosh (Independent Director,

Reserve Bank Innovation Hub); Balaraman Ravindran (Professor and Head, Wadhvani School of Data Science and AI, IIT Madras), Abhishek Singh (Additional Secretary; Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology), Rahul Matthan (Partner, Trilegal); Anjali Rathor (Group Head and Chief Digital Experience Officer, HDFC Bank); Sree Hari Nagaralu (Head of Security AI Research, Microsoft India); and Suvendu Pati (CGM, FinTech Department, RBI). The Committee will submit its report within six months from the date of its first meeting, the RBI said. The central bank had made the announcement regarding the panel in its December monetary policy meeting.

# Rupee plunges 12 paise to close at 85.27 against US dollar

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee stayed weak for the third straight session and fell 12 paise to settle at a fresh all-time low of 85.27 (provisional) against the US dollar on Thursday, amid a strong greenback and rising crude oil prices. Forex traders said, increased month-end as well as year-end dollar demand from importers and fear of an aggressive import tariff by the Donald Trump administration lifted the American currency. At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened weak at 85.23 and touched the lowest-ever level of 85.28 against the greenback during intraday trade. The unit finally ended the session at its lifetime low closing level of 85.27 (provisional) against the dollar, registering a loss of 12 paise from its previous close. The rupee fell 4 paise to settle



at 85.15 against the US dollar on Tuesday, a day after losing 9 paise on Monday. The forex market was closed on Wednesday for Christmas. According to Anuj Choudhary, Research Analyst at Mirae Asset Sharekhan, the rupee fell to a fresh all-time low on strong dollar and rising US treasury yields that are at the highest levels in seven months. Also, he said the surge in crude oil prices, month-end/year-end dollar demand and FII outflows may also weigh on the rupee.

“However, any intervention by the RBI may support the rupee at lower levels. Traders may take cues from weekly unemployment claims data from the US. USD-INR spot price is expected to trade in a range of 85.10 to 85.45,” Choudhary added. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading marginally lower by 0.09 per cent but remained elevated at 107.93, amid soaring US Treasury yields (4.61 per cent) and the fear of delayed interest rate cuts by the US Federal Reserve. Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, rose 0.56 per cent to USD 73.99 per barrel in futures trade. In the domestic equity market, the 30-share BSE Sensex closed almost flat at 78,472.48 points, while Nifty inched up 22.55 points, or 0.10 per cent to close at 23,750.20 points.

# West Bengal's 2024 economy: Story of growth amid challenges

PTI ■ KOLKATA

West Bengal's economic narrative in 2024 was one of striking contrasts - steady growth and fresh investments juxtaposed with fiscal concerns and a worrying trend of industry flight from a perceptively “non-investor friendly” state. The state demonstrated a significant economic expansion outlook, with its Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) projected to surge by 10.5 per cent in the 2024-25 fiscal, significantly outpacing the national average of 7.32 per cent and reinforcing its position as the fourth-largest economy in India, according to state industries minister Shashi Panja. The manufacturing sector played a crucial role in this upward trajectory during the year, achieving a robust growth rate of 7.8 per cent, exceeding the national average. This growth was further propelled by substantial investments across various sectors. Infosys inaugurated a Rs 426 crore development centre, spread over 3,20,000 sq ft, in New Town. It is set to house over 4,000 employees and focus on cloud computing and digital services. Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, calling it “A New Year gift to



West Bengal”, expressed hope for increased IT investments in the state. The manufacturing sector's strong performance was underscored by the inauguration of two major projects with investments totalling Rs 2,100 crore - Shyam Steel's integrated steel facility and Dhunseri Polyl Films venture. These projects are expected to create over 5,000 jobs, providing a significant boost to the state's industrial health. The state government is developing a 200-acre Silicon Valley project in New Town, aiming to attract Rs 27,000 crore in investments and create 75,000 jobs, positioning Bengal as a key IT hub. In terms of data infrastructure, NTT completed the first phase of

its data centre campus in Kolkata which began operations in March 2024, with an initial capacity of 6 mw and a potential expansion of up to 25 mw. CtrlS Datacenters also announced an investment of Rs 2,200 crore (about USD 264 million) to develop a data centre in Kolkata, to be implemented in four phases, with the first phase, a 16 mw facility, expected to go live shortly. The Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME) sector also displayed resilience, with the state looking to exceed its credit target of Rs 1.53 lakh crore for the fiscal year 2024-25, building upon the previous year's achievement of Rs 1.42 lakh crore and representing a 7.7 per cent increase.

# New manufacturing golden age for India beckons: Tata Sons chief to staff

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

With global supply chains continuing to shift in India's favour as the world's largest businesses strike a new balance between resilience and efficiency, manufacturing has the potential to transform the country's economy, Tata Sons Chairman N Chandrasekaran said on Thursday. In his New Year message to employees of the salt-to-software conglomerate, Chandrasekaran termed it as “a new manufacturing golden age for India” and said he was looking ahead to 2025 “with a sense of hope and optimism” after 2024, a year marked by the loss of Tata Group Chairman Emeritus Ratan Tata. “While AI-led breakthroughs in healthcare and mobility can help the whole of humanity, manufacturing has the potential to transform our economy in India,” he wrote. Elaborating, he said, “Global supply chains continue to shift in India's favour as the world's largest businesses strike a new balance between resilience and efficiency. What might have seemed like a short-term reaction to the pandemic has proved much more enduring.” Amid relentless geopolitical instability, Chandrasekaran said, “The equation has tilted

firmly toward resilience and India, with our vast talent pool and growing manufacturing capacity, is poised to benefit.” Reiterating Tata Group's plans to create 5 lakh manufacturing jobs over the next half decade, he said these will come in part from investments in facilities across India's “factories and projects that will produce batteries, semiconductors, electric vehicles, solar equipment and other critical hardware destined to play a central role in the economy of tomorrow”. He said ground-breaking ceremonies and construction began at over seven new manufacturing plants, including India's first semiconductor fab in Dholar, Gujarat, and a brand new semiconductor OSAT plant in Assam. “There is the electronics assembly plant in Narasapura, Karnataka, an automotive plant in Panapakkam, Tamil Nadu, and new MRO facilities in Bengaluru, Karnataka,” Chandrasekaran said. He further said, “We also have new battery cell manufacturing factories in Sanand, Gujarat, and in Somerset, UK. We inaugurated the C295 final assembly line (FAL) in Vadodra, Gujarat, and began solar module production in Tirunelveli, Tamil Nadu.”

# AI, machine learning to help Indian pharma industry to pivot on innovation



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

As technological advancements like AI, machine learning and precision medicine revolutionise drug discovery, manufacturing and patient care, Indian pharmaceutical industry is set for a ‘profound transformation’ in 2025 with innovation, wider global access and improvement in quality becoming key themes for the future. The industry, which is expected to grow nearly twofold to around USD 130 billion in size by 2030, is looking to take advantage of conducive policies, demographic and digital talent, in making India play a pivotal role in advancing global health for all. Currently accounting for around 20 per cent of the overall generic drug sales globally, the Indian pharma industry is focussing on research excellence and innovation in order to position the country as a global hub for high-quality,

affordable pharmaceuticals. “The Indian pharma market is expected to move up to USD 120-130 billion by 2030 from the current size of USD 58 billion. Initiatives in terms of quality, innovation and wider global reach will help the Indian pharma sector to realise the potential,” according to Indian Pharmaceutical Alliance (IPA) Secretary General Sudarshan Jain. Given the conducive policies and the advantage of demographic and digital talent, India will play a pivotal role in advancing global health for all in years to come, he added. IPA represents 23 leading research-based Indian pharmaceutical companies like Sun Pharma, Cipla, and Dr Reddy's Laboratories, among others. Jain said innovation will continue to be a major focus for the industry going forward. He noted that the government is expected to soon announce the operational details of the Promotion of Research & Innovation Programme which would also spur innovation. Elaborating on the initiatives lined up in the private sector, he said that leading companies are increasing their focus on specialty portfolios and diversifying into higher-value drugs. “Additionally, the industry is set to make notable progress

in areas such as CAR-T cell therapy, mRNA vaccines, and the development of complex molecules, which hold immense potential for driving future growth,” Jain said. Besides, the patent expiries of blockbuster biologics by 2025 present a significant growth avenue in the global biosimilars market, he stated. Similarly, Organisation of Pharmaceutical Producers of India (OPPI) Director General Anil Matai said the industry is set for a profound transformation in 2025. Technological advancements like AI, machine learning and precision medicine are set to revolutionise drug discovery, manufacturing and patient care, he said. OPPI represents research-based pharmaceutical companies, including AstraZeneca, Novartis and Merck, in India. Besides, strengthened regulatory frameworks will enable the swift adoption of innovative therapies while prioritising patient safety, Matai said. “A focus on research excellence and innovation will position India as a global hub for high-quality, affordable pharmaceuticals. Collaboration between policymakers, academia and industry stakeholders will address unmet medical needs, particularly in underserved regions,” he stated.

# Branded hotels to log 13 to 14 per cent growth: Report

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Branded hotels in the country are likely to see double-digit revenue growth of 13-14 per cent in 2024-25, and 11-12 per cent in the next financial year on demand surge, report said on Thursday. While domestic leisure and business travel will continue to be the primary demand drivers, growing traction in MICE (meetings, incentives, conventions and exhibitions) segment and pickup in foreign tourist arrivals will provide additional fillip, Crisil Ratings said in a report.

# Gold rises ₹250 to ₹78,850 per 10 grams, silver climbs ₹300

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Gold prices increased Rs 250 to Rs 78,850 per 10 grams in the national capital on Thursday amid a firm global trend, according to the All India Sarafa Association. The yellow metal had settled at Rs 78,600 per 10 grams on Tuesday. Silver extended its rally for the third straight session by climbing Rs 300 to Rs 90,800 per kg on Thursday. The metal had ended at Rs 90,500 per kg in the previous close. The commodities market was closed on Wednesday on the occasion of Christmas.

The price of 99.5 per cent purity advanced Rs 250 to Rs 78,450 per 10 grams from the previous close of Rs 78,200 per 10 grams. Traders attributed the climb in gold prices to firm trends in the overseas markets which aided in bullion prices. In futures trade on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), gold contracts for February delivery advanced Rs 442 or 0.58 per cent to Rs 76,712 per 10 grams. “Gold prices edged higher on Thursday, supported by a slightly weaker dollar as markets resumed trading post-Christmas.

# CCPA fines three coaching institutes for misleading UPSC exam claims

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) has imposed penalties totalling Rs 15 lakh on three coaching institutes for making misleading advertisements about their success rates in civil services examinations, the government said on Thursday. Vajirao & Reddy Institute and StudyIQ IAS were each fined Rs 700,000, while Edge IAS was penalised Rs 100,000 for deceptive claims regarding their results in the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) Civil Services Examinations of 2022 and

2023, an official statement said. The CCPA, led by Chief Commissioner Nidhi Khare, found that the institutes deliberately concealed that most of their successful candidates had only enrolled in Interview Guidance Programs, creating a misleading impression about the effectiveness of their other courses. Vajirao & Reddy Institute claimed “617 selections out of 933” in the 2022 examination, while StudyIQ IAS advertised “120+ selections” in 2023. Investigations revealed that the majority of successful candidates at both institutes had only taken interview preparation courses. StudyIQ

IAS was also unable to substantiate its “Success Pakka Offer” and “Selection Pakka Offer” promotions, failing to provide enrolment forms and fee receipts for its claimed successful candidates. The institute advertised over 60 courses but did not disclose that its Interview Guidance Programme, which most successful candidates took, was not among the advertised offerings. The consumer protection body has issued 45 notices to various coaching institutes for misleading advertisements and has collected total penalties of Rs 71.6 lakh from 22 institutes to date.

# FORE International Management Conference 2024: redefining AI, business, and work

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

FORE School of Management celebrated the grand success of the FORE International Management Conference (FIMC) 2024, held from November 28-30 at its New Delhi campus. Themed “AI, Business Models, and Future of Work,” the conference brought together global leaders, scholars, and industry experts to explore AI's transformative impact. The event opened with workshops by renowned academicians, including Prof. Keng-Boon Ooi and Prof.

Swanand J. Deodhar. The inaugural session featured visionary speeches by Dr. B.B.L. Madhukar, Mr. Sanjeev Bikhchandani, and Dr. Vinayshil Gautam. Key highlights included insightful paper presentations, dynamic plenary sessions on AI applications and ethics, and engaging discussions on India's global role. Networking events, a Qutub Minar heritage walk, and the prestigious Billimoria Session added cultural and professional depth. FIMC 2024 underscored FSM's commitment to innovation, collaboration, and academic excellence.

# Tata Power-DDL recognised with the North India Best Employer Brand Award 2024

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Tata Power Delhi Distribution Limited (Tata Power-DDL) has been honoured with the “North India Best Employer Brand Award 2024” at a ceremony held on December 20, 2024. The award recognises discom's exceptional efforts in HR practices, talent management, employee engagement, and its overall contribution to creating a sustainable, inclusive work environment, and a positive work culture, setting an inspiring example for the future of the power



sector. The award was conferred at the North India Best Employer Brand Awards, a prestigious platform that celebrates organizations excelling in human resources and corporate sustainability and was received by Mr.

Praveen Agrawal, Chief - Human Resource, Industrial Relations, Facility Management & Health Services and Ms. Sonal Trehan, AGM, CEO Cell & HoG Facility Management of Tata Power-DDL.

# Lohia Global launches EV ‘Youdha’ to honor India’s real warriors

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Lohia Global has unveiled its new electric vehicle brand, Youdha, at the EV Expo, New Delhi, marking a significant milestone in India's electric mobility journey. Derived from the word “warrior,” Youdha celebrates the unsung heroes driving progress through hard work and determination. Youdha's initial lineup includes the E5 Passenger and E5 Cargo models, designed to meet urban



commuting and logistics needs. Aiming for a production goal of 300,000 units by 2027, Lohia has pledged ₹ 200 crore towards the

brand's expansion. Ayush Lohia, CEO, emphasized Youdha's mission to empower families and communities through sustainable mobility solutions. “This launch reflects our commitment to innovation and honoring those who shape India's future,” he stated. Backed by Lohia's Kashipur plant with a 100,000-unit capacity, Youdha is poised to lead India's electric three-wheeler segment, embodying resilience, strength, and progress.

# INBRIEF

## VC PROF. KARAMJEET SINGH INTERACTS WITH TEACHING AND NON-TEACHING STAFF

AMRITSAR: Prof. Karamjeet Singh, Vice Chancellor of Guru Nanak Dev University, addressed the teaching and non-teaching staff of the university in separate sessions held at the Golden Jubilee Convention Centre today.

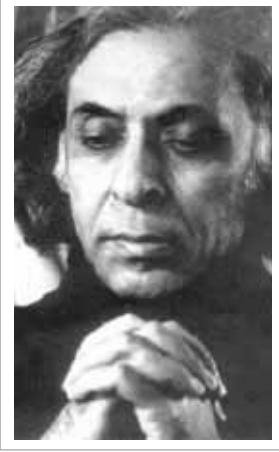


## GNDU VICE-CHANCELLOR PROF. KARAMJEET SINGH ENCOURAGES RESEARCH FOR SOCIETAL WELFARE

AMRITSAR: Guru Nanak Dev University witnessed a significant moment as its newly appointed Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Karamjeet Singh, addressed research scholars at the Golden Jubilee Convention Hall of the University.







# 2025 ushers in lot of hope in literary world

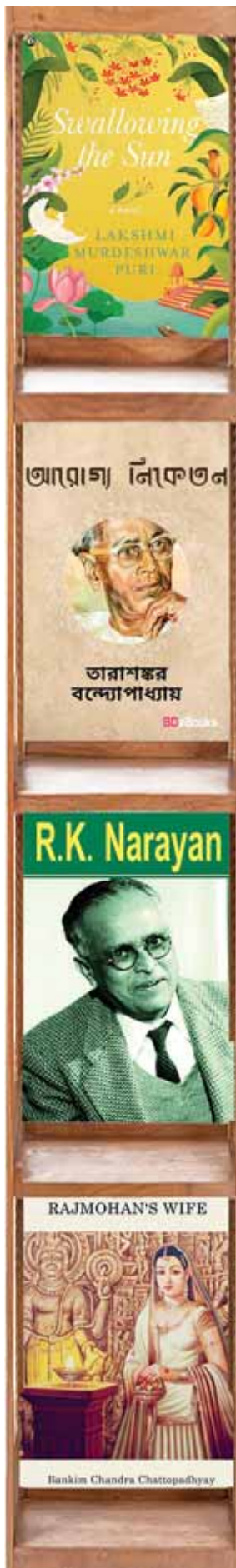
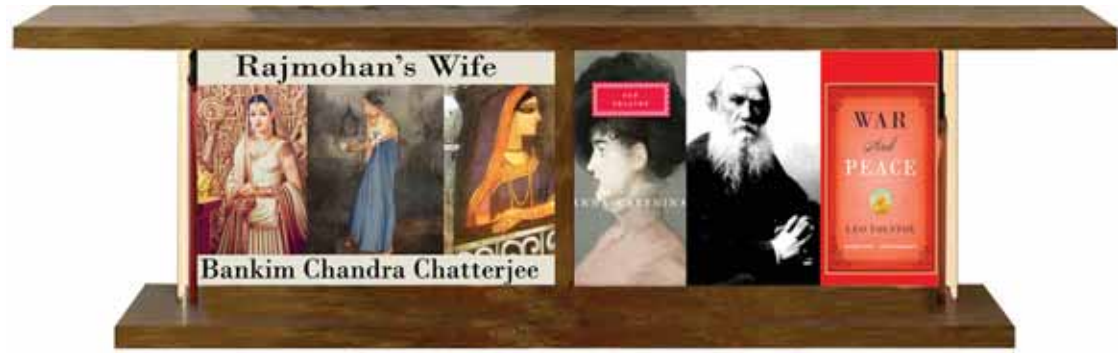
EXPLORING THE TIMELESS CHARM OF NOVELS, THEIR UNIQUE STORYTELLING AND THE PROMISING VOICES SHAPING INDIA'S LITERARY LANDSCAPE IN 2024, SAYS **KUMAR CHELLAPPAN**



It is not without reason that the word novel has been assigned two meanings. Although the English language can often be amusing with its many words having multiple meanings, the term novel has a significant connection to its different interpretations. The dictionary defines novel as "an invented prose narrative that is usually long and complex and deals especially with human experience through a usually connected sequence of events." The word also has another meaning - something that is new, original, and never seen, used, or even thought of before. A novel, as a literary form, tells a story and features multiple characters interconnected through a sequence of events. Each novel offers a new, fresh and unprecedented experience. What makes a novel truly special is its readability and the ease with which it allows readers to identify with the characters it presents. Let us reflect on the novels of the past. Timeless classics like *War and Peace*, *Anna Karenina* (Leo Tolstoy), *The Mother* (Maxim Gorky), *Gone with the Wind* (Margaret Mitchell), *The Far Pavilions* (M. M. Kaye), and *Crime and Punishment* (Fyodor Dostoevsky) continue to resonate with readers. These masterpieces transport us to a different world through their narrative, characters, and the time and space they depict. It is rare to encounter someone who feels these novels fall short of their expectations. The first novel to grace bookshelves in India was *Rajmohan's Wife* by Bankimchandra Chatterjee in 1864. This makes the novel as a literary genre relatively new in this region. India has produced remarkable writers like *Tarasankar*

*Bandyopadhyay*, whose works include *Ganadevata* and *Arogya Niketan*, the latter being particularly popular. *Bankimchandra Chatterjee's Anandamath* (1882), set against the backdrop of the *Great Bengal Famine of 1770*, is widely regarded as the finest novel ever written in the subcontinent. During my school days, our language teacher, *P. U. Madhavan*, emphasised the importance of reading these classics. He was our gateway to the world of literature. Years later, at university, we studied a prose piece by *A. J. Cronin*, the renowned Scottish novelist, about the art of writing a novel. *Cronin* often told his wife that he would write a novel loved by all. During a period of recovery from illness, *Cronin* wrote *Hatter's Castle*, a landmark in English literature. He abandoned his medical career to pursue writing full-time. *Cronin's* success, along with that of other novelists, lies in their ability to tell compelling stories. *Ponniyin Selvan* (Son of Ponnai) by *Kalki Krishnamurthy*, for instance, is based on the life of *Arulmozhiarman*, a 10th-century *Chola prince*. Reading this book is akin to watching a film projected on a Vistarama screen, the most advanced film projection system I've ever seen. Novels, poems and stories resemble rivers and streams flowing from mountains, meandering through valleys, plains and plateaus. A well-written novel provides the sensation of sailing smoothly down a serene river. Conversely, a poorly written one feels like driving on a pothole-filled road. Unfortunately, contemporary Indian literature in English often lacks the quality we once enjoyed with authors like *R. K. Narayan*, *Raja Rao* and *Shobhaa De*.

These authors wrote straight from the heart. Today, however, publishers often dictate the content to maximise sales. In India, literary works that criticise certain religions or spiritual figures tend to attract significant attention and awards. While we lack the likes of *Mitchell*, *Tolstoy* and *Kaye*, a few noteworthy works of fiction emerged in 2024, offering hope for the novel genre. *Swallowing the Sun*, the debut novel by *Lakshmi Murdeshwar Puri*, was a breath of fresh air. *Puri* masterfully narrates India's freedom struggle and the emancipation of women from societal constraints. The protagonist, *Malati*, guides readers through a vivid journey across the Konkan region and Bombay, where she and her sister *Kamala* break into a male-dominated world. Thrilling and vibrant, *Swallowing the Sun* feels like a long-awaited monsoon, refreshing and full of intensity. Another standout author is *Harinder S. Sikka*, a former Indian Navy commander known for *Gobind*, *Vichhoda* and *Calling Sehmat*. Drawing on his naval experiences, *Sikka* crafts authentic stories, earning him the title of "India's Jeffrey Archer." Readers eagerly await more from writers like *Puri* and *Sikka*, who draw inspiration from real life. As Malayalam literary rebel *Keshava Dev* once said, "You will understand life only if you learn how to live. That experience will guide you in writing novels and stories. No university can teach you this." Thank you, *Lakshmi Puri* and *Harinder S. Sikka*, for giving us hope. And thank you, 2024, for these promising voices in literature.



## 2024 HIGHLIGHTS By HARPERCOLLINS

**GOLDEN SPORTSPERSONS** by *Tanushree Podder*

A compelling compilation of India's legendary athletes like Neeraj Chopra, Mary Kom, and P.V. Sindhu. These stories of grit, discipline and resilience showcase how they overcame barriers to achieve greatness in sports such as athletics, boxing and chess. A must-read for sports enthusiasts and dreamers alike.

**THE BOY WITH A HUNDRED QUESTIONS** by *Nalini Ramchandran*

Follow Shunya, a curious nine-year-old, on an enchanting adventure as he uncovers profound philosophies and the true meaning of his name. Through mystical tales and intriguing beliefs, this book celebrates the magic of curiosity and the wonder of exploring life's big questions.

**Zardozi** by *Debasmita Dasgupta*

Zi, a ten-year-old embroidery enthusiast, struggles against societal expectations. This heartwarming tale weaves themes of history, identity, and courage as Zi embarks on a journey of self-discovery. A beautiful story about embracing one's true self amidst life's challenges.

**ROYAL-ISH** by *Amrita Gandhi*

Join Lily Ray, an awkward tween and nature vlogger, on a royal adventure in Bagradoo. With quirky companions and thrilling twists, Lily unravels a mystery threatening the kingdom's secrets. A delightful, action-packed tale filled with humour and heart.

**HOW TO BE HAPPY** by *Ruskin Bond*

In this heartfelt book, *Ruskin Bond* shares nuggets of wisdom on leading a contented and fulfilling life. From embracing simplicity to finding joy in small moments, his advice is relatable, warm and timeless. A guide to happiness from a literary legend.

**INDIA IN SCIENCE**

Discover India's incredible journey in science, featuring pioneers like J.C. Bose and Asima Chatterjee. With engaging illustrations, Nobel laureate highlights, and hands-on activities, this book is perfect for young science enthusiasts eager to learn and experiment.

## YEAR-END BESTSELLERS

As we bid farewell to another year. Here's a curated list of books that have been the year's most talked-about and cherished reads, brought to you by the publisher, Niyogi Books

<p><b>MYTH, MEMORY &amp; FOLKTALE OF THE WANCHO TRIBE OF ARUNACHAL PRADESH</b></p> <p>Authors: Tara Douglas &amp; Jatwang Wangsa Price: ₹595/-</p>	<p><b>WORLDS WITHIN WORLDS</b></p> <p>Author: Ajay Navaria Translator: Nita Kumar Price: ₹495/-</p>	<p><b>HARRY HOBBS OF KOLKATA AND OTHER FORGOTTEN LIVES</b></p> <p>Author: Devasis Chattopadhyay Price: ₹595/-</p>	<p><b>CHARLES CORREA: CITIZEN CHARLES</b></p> <p>Author: Mustansir Dalvi Price: ₹299/-</p>	<p><b>DELHI HERITAGE TOP 10 FORTS</b></p> <p>Author: Vikramjit Singh Roorprai Price: ₹499/-</p>	<p><b>THE MANY LIVES OF PAULOMA CHATTOPADHYAY</b></p> <p>Author: Devangi Bhatt Translator: Mudra Joshi Price: ₹350/-</p>
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**REVOLUTIONARIES** by *Sanjeev Sanyal*

An abridged tale of India's armed resistance, this book chronicles the bravery of revolutionaries like Subhas Chandra Bose and Bhagat Singh. With intrigue, espionage, and adventure, it reveals the untold story of their fight for freedom. An inspiring read for young history buffs.



# Top order hepls Australia score 311/6, Bumrah keeps battle alive

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Jasprit Bumrah's knack of coming up with magic deliveries in crunch situations kept India alive after Australia's top-order, headed by teen debutant Sam Konstas' stroke-filled half-century, guided the hosts to 311 for 6 on the opening day of the fourth Test here on Thursday.

If Konstas' audacious 60 off 65 balls enthralled the near sell-out crowd of over 80,000 at the MCG during a humid morning session, Bumrah's (3/75 in 21 overs) deception of length to dismiss Travis Head (0) also had its takers as chants of 'Boom, Boom, B o o o o m r a a a a a h' reverberated through the stands.

Coming into the Test with back-to-back hundreds, Head couldn't judge the length of a Bumrah delivery that was pitched slightly fuller than what the batter expected. He shouldered his arms trusting the bounce but the 66.2 overs old Kookaburra nipped back to clip the off-ball.

In the next over, he removed an out-of-form Mitchell Marsh (4), having got Usman Khawaja (57 off 121 balls)

with the half-tracker in the post-lunch session. The first two sessions, however, belonged to Australia with senior players Khawaja, Marnus Labuschagne (72 off 145 balls) and Steve Smith (68 batting, 111 balls) scoring half-centuries.

The final session was all about Bumrah magic. The Indian spearhead didn't let the hosts completely walk away with the game which they threatened to do at one stage.

He now has 24 wickets in the series. With Mohammed Siraj (0/69 in 15 overs) off-colour, Bumrah didn't have much support save off-spinner Washington Sundar (1/37 in 12 overs), who bowled a containing line.

Akash Deep (1/59 in 19 overs) though got Alex Carey with the second new ball at the fag end of the day. Even Ravindra Jadeja (1/54 in 14 overs) leaked runs despite getting Konstas out and Nitish Reddy, the batting all-rounder, was only used before the second new ball was taken.

'Sam Jams at the G'  
The morning was owned by the precocious 19-year-old



from New South Wales. Konstas didn't show any nerves during his scintillating knock, which comprised of two sixes off Bumrah. He also didn't mind a good scrap with India's superstar Virat Kohli, whose shoulder

brush with the 19-year-old led to a brief confrontation. In fact, Bumrah was hit for a six for the first time in a Test since Cameron Green hit him for one back in 2021. The gap between Konstas' first six, which was a lap scoop, and

the one that Green hit three years ago was 4000 legal Test match deliveries. After a conventional lap scoop for maximum, Konstas also hit a reverse lap scoop towards third man for another boundary. The

second six was pummelled over mid-on. The way he attacked the Indian bowling with gusto gave his veteran opening partner Khawaja a chance to get back to form with a patient half-century.

But Khawaja would be really annoyed with himself as he couldn't time a pull shot off a Bumrah half-tracker, which went straight into KL Rahul's hands in the post-lunch session.

The duo added 89 runs in such quick time that Labuschagne and last match's centurion Smith didn't need to show any urgency. For Konstas, it all began with a few play and misses off Bumrah's opening over but as soon as the teenager got his first couple of runs, things changed dramatically.

The fearlessness of youth stood out on the big stage as Konstas pulled off the lap-scoop against Bumrah before smashing him over mid-on for another maximum.

The fans and experts alike were forced to think the last time Bumrah (1/50 in 15 overs) was hit for two sixes in his first spell of a Test match. They couldn't because it never happened in a first spell.

The stump mic caught Bumrah saying "Beginner's Luck" but Konstas seemed to have enough wares to answer his probing queries. And it was laced with a lot of spunk as he got into a verbal duel

with Kohli after their shoulders brushed while crossing each other. He often shuffled towards leg-stump to make room and on one occasion, crunched Bumrah past cover. Mohammed Siraj was welcomed into the attack with a loud round of boos as he sledged the youngster due to his unconventional hitting style.

In all, Konstas hit six fours apart from the two maximums. Only Akash bowled a good channel among the pacers as Siraj was guilty of going too full or too short.

As Australia scored at more than a fair clip, skipper Rohit Sharma had to introduce Ravindra Jadeja (1/33 in 11 overs) in the 16th over to at least stem the flow of runs before it went out of hand. The decision did pay dividends as the seasoned spinner got an arm ball to skid through with the angle to trap Konstas in front. Khawaja and Labuschagne then added 65 for the second wicket with the Pakistan-born opener hitting Akash for a couple of boundaries to complete his first fifty of the series.



## Indian women on course for clean sweep against West Indies

PTI ■ VADODARA

India would aim to push their boundaries in the batting department when they face a down-and-out West Indies in the third and final Women's ODI here on Friday.

Following another series loss against the mighty Australia, India have been able to dominate the West Indies in home conditions.

What has stood out is their ability to put scores in excess of 300 consistently in the series, something they must do against the likes of Australia to get themselves out of the doldrums.

Pratika Rawal, who has been opening the innings alongside Smriti Mandhana, did not set the stage on fire in her maiden international appearance but improved her play considerably in the second ODI to raise hopes for the future.

The Delhi-based cricketer was able to clear the ropes once, which is expected considering she has replaced Shafali Verma in the team.

Harleen Deol has been around for a long time but it was only in the previous game that she was able to record her maiden ODI hundred. She stuck at a 100 plus strike rate batting at number three and she would like to carry the momentum in the final game of the series.

Skipper Harmanpreet Kaur has looked good since regaining full fitness but is yet to get a big knock. With series in the bag, the skipper will have another reason to play freely and get a substantial knock under her belt.

On the bowling front, Renuka Thakur has once again led the pace attack well with the young Titas Sadhu also chipping in with the wickets.

Leg-spinner Priya Mishra has impressed in her fledgling career and would be eyeing another productive outing.

With the game being a dead rubber, India can also afford to test a few fringe players including Tanuja Kanwar

and Tejal Hasanbis. West Indies will need to pull something out of the bag to upset India. Having conceded 300 plus run in both the games, the Hayley Matthews-led side needs to improve on all fronts.

Matthews is the lone West Indies batter who has made an impact. That will need to change on Friday.

**Squads:**  
**India:** Smriti Mandhana, Pratika Rawal, Harleen Deol, Harmanpreet Kaur (c), Jemimah Rodrigues, Richa Ghosh (wk), Deepti Sharma, Saima Thakor, Titas Sadhu, Renuka Thakur Singh, Priya Mishra, Uma Chetry, Minnu Mani, Tejal Hasanbis, Tanuja Kanwar.  
**West Indies:** Hayley Matthews (c), Qiana Joseph, Rashada Williams, Deandra Dottin, Nerissa Crafton, Shemaine Campbelle (wk), Aaliyah Alleyne, Zaida James, Karishma Ramharack, Fletcher, Afy Shabika Gajnabi, Chinelle Henry, Mandy Mangru, Ashmini Munisar.

## Arjun Erigaise looking to qualify for next Candidates through World Rapid and Blitz

PTI ■ NEW YORK

Grandmaster Arjun Erigaise will have to tackle obstacles to retain his chances of becoming the first Indian to enter the 2026 Candidates' tournament when he opens his campaign at the World Rapid and Blitz chess tournament here.

Erigaise, who currently trails Fabiano Caruana of the United States in the list of players slated to qualify from 2024, will have a tall order to win the World Rapid chess championship that gets underway here.

It may be noted here that the last time an Indian won the crown here was in 2019 when Koneru Humpy triumphed and in 2017 Viswanathan Anand had defied all odds to win the



title. World's top rated Magnus Carlsen will be back to defend his title in the faster version of the game as the top seed in both rapid and blitz and he will certainly be the most formidable rival for anyone in the fray.

For Erigaise to eclipse Carlsen as well as Caruana and Hikaru Nakamura of the

United States is easier said than done, given the proficiency of the trio in quick chess.

The participants list is a virtually who's who of the chess world and the only big name missing is D Gukesh, who withdrew after winning an exhausting world championship match against Ding Liren of China just a

couple of weeks back in Singapore. From India, much can be expected from R Praggnanandhaa as well. He is well rested and must be looking for this event to end the year on a high note.

Apart from Erigaise and Praggnanandhaa, Raunak Sadhwani and Aravindh Chithambaram are the other two Indians to take note of in the open section.

In the women's section, Humpy will start yet again as favourite amongst the Indians. R Vaishali and Divya Deshmukh are the two emerging stars and have been doing pretty well in the last one year.

Vaishali, in fact, had taken the chess world by surprise by qualifying for the Women's Candidates in 2023.



## Andy Pycroft completes 100 Tests as match referee

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Former Zimbabwe captain Andy Pycroft on Thursday became only the fourth official in the history of men's Test cricket to complete 100 games as a match referee with the Boxing Day contest between India and Australia that began here on Thursday.

The exclusive list is led by former Sri Lanka player Ranjan Madugalle as the most experienced match referee with 225 Tests, followed by New Zealand's Jeff Crowe (125) and England's Chris Broad (123). The 68-year-old Pycroft played three Tests and 20 ODIs for Zimbabwe from 1983-1992.

"Pycroft, who has also officiated in 238 men's ODIs, 174 men's T20Is and 21 women's T20Is since 2009, said he has enjoyed every minute of the journey to 100 matches as a match referee," the ICC said on its website.

Pycroft said touching the mark is a great honour and he is thankful to have been afforded the opportunity to officiate all over the world, "embracing different cultures."

"It has been a rewarding journey and I have treasured every moment of it," he added.

## India needed Rohit to open, Washington's variation at MCG, says Nayar on axing Gill

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

India's assistant coach Abhishek Nayar on Thursday defended axing Shubman Gill from the Boxing Day Test, saying it was in team's best interest to not only have Rohit Sharma back to his usual opening slot but also add some sting to the attack by drafting in spin all-rounder Washington Sundar.

Gill, who missed the first Test due to a finger injury, scored 31 and 28 in the Pink Ball Test and looked the most assured among Indian batters. He, however, got out for a duck in Brisbane. With Rohit Sharma opening the innings and KL Rahul coming at No. 3, Gill had to make way for a third specialist all-rounder in Washington.

"Yes, Rohit will come up in the order and more likely than not, he will open the innings. That was the thought process. Unfortunately for Gill, just how things



spanned out, he had to miss out," Nayar said at the end of the day's play. "I just feel for a young player in a position like that, a big day, he wants to make his mark. He understands it's the team's requirement and it's unfortunate, but I wouldn't say that he's been dropped per se. It's just unfortunate that he couldn't find

his place in this game," the former Mumbai stalwart said but the explanation lacked conviction.

He elaborately explained why playing Washington at the MCG made sense ahead of Gill.

"A lot of the decisions when they are made, and the process of it being made, the communication is always there and transparency is there. It's pretty obvious that we felt in these conditions, looking at the pitch, having Washy in the bowling attack will give us that variation, especially towards the end once the ball gets old," he said.

"Post the 50 overs, we felt that was an area that we wanted to get better at. We felt Washy could give us that solidarity with Jaddu (Ravindra Jadeja), especially the way Travis Head and Alex Carey were getting runs lower down. So we felt having an offie in the ranks will provide us with that."

## Virat Kohli fined 20 per cent match fees for altercation with Sam Konstas

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Virat Kohli and Australian youngster Sam Konstas were on Thursday involved in a physical altercation because of which the Indian superstar was fined 20 per cent of his match fee and handed a demerit point even though it was played down as an accidental bump by the 19-year-old debutant.

The brief showdown took place after the 10th over of the Australian innings on the opening day of the fourth Test here when the players were crossing over. Kohli and Konstas bumped shoulders while moving across the pitch in the face off that was initiated by the travelling star.

Kohli was eventually charged with breaching Level 1 of the ICC Code of Conduct by on-field umpires Joel Wilson and Michael Gough, third umpire Sharfuddoula Ibne Shahid and fourth umpire Shawn Craig.

He accepted the sanctions

proposed by match referee Andy Pycroft at the end of day's play.

"Virat Kohli has been fined 20 percent of his match fee and awarded one demerit point for breaching Level 1 of the ICC Code of Conduct," the ICC said in a statement.

"No formal hearing was needed as Kohli accepted the sanctions proposed by Match Referee Andy Pycroft," it added.

After the physical contact, both players quickly turned around to glance at each other and engage in a heated exchange of words before Konstas' teammate Usman Khawaja stepped in to separate them. The on-field umpires also had a word with the two and things cooled down rather quickly.

Speaking to reporters after stumps, Konstas said Kohli bumped into him but it wasn't deliberate.

"I was just doing my gloves and I think he accidentally bumped me. I think that's just



cricket and can happen with tension," said the teenager. "I think the emotions got to both of us," Konstas had told 'Channel 7' during the second session.

The ICC's Code of Conduct states that "any form of inappropriate physical

contact is prohibited in cricket. Without limitation, players will breach this regulation if they deliberately, recklessly and/or negligently walk or run into or shoulder another player or umpire". Kohli's match fee for the game was to be Rs 15 lakh but that

amount would be reduced to Rs 12 lakh owing to the fine. This is the first demerit point that Kohli has logged since 2019. Four demerit points over a period of two years lead to a suspension of one Test.

Konstas, who was batting on

27 at the time, went on to hit Jasprit Bumrah for two boundaries and a six in the next over. The teenager scored a stunning fifty on debut before Ravindra Jadeja trapped him leg before wicket.

India assistant coach Abhishek Nayar, who addressed the media in the end-of-day press conference, also brushed aside the incident as nothing big.

"When you play a game, there will be emotions but it is not as big as it seems. I wasn't aware of what happened and don't know what was said," he said in response to queries.

Kohli criticised for his actions Konstas might have dismissed it as routine but former Australian skipper Ricky Ponting blamed Kohli for instigating the exchange. He went to the extent of saying that Kohli could face disciplinary action for it.

"Have a look where Virat walks. Virat's walked one whole pitch over to his right

and instigated that confrontation. No doubt in my mind whatsoever," Ponting said on Channel 7 while watching the replay of the incident.

"I have no doubt that the umpires and the referee will have a good look at that. Fielders should be nowhere near the batsman at that stage. It looked to me that Konstas looked up really late, wouldn't even know anyone is in front of him. That man on-screen

there (Kohli) might have a few questions to answer," Ponting added.

Former India head coach Ravi Shastri, who was at the helm during Kohli's captaincy, said the run-in was unnecessary. "There is a line and you don't want to overstep that line. That's unnecessary, totally unnecessary. You don't want to see that. You know Virat is a senior player, he has been captain of the side," he said on 'Fox Sports'.

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Advt.No.CSB/03/2024 Date: 27.12.2024

**EXTENSION NOTICE**

Central Silk Board has published the Notification No.CSB/03/2024 dated 12.10.2024 which appeared in the Employment News of 12-18 October, 2024 for filling various posts on deputation basis. It is for information to the applicants that the last date for the receipt of application against various posts has been extended upto 27.01.2025.

For details, refer CSB website: www.csb.gov.in  
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