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WORLD 8
CHINA RETALIATES, BANS EXPORT OF CHIP-MAKING MINERALS TO US

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BANGLADESH CHALLENGES INDIA Capital chaos continues

PTI ■ DHAKA

Bangladesh on Tuesday summoned Indian High Commissioner Pranay Verma to the Foreign Affairs Ministry office here, a day after Dhaka lodged a strong protest against the alleged vandalism of its mission in the Indian state of Tripura. Describing the India-Bangladesh relationship as "multifaceted" and one that cannot be reduced to a single issue or agenda, Verma told reporters after his meeting with acting foreign secretary Riaz Hamidullah that New Delhi remains interested in working with Dhaka "to fulfill our shared aspirations for peace, security and development."



Police officers stand guard outside Indian High Commission after a call for anti India protests AP/PTI

Earlier, Foreign Affairs Adviser Mohammad Touhid Hossain said the Indian envoy was asked to come to the foreign office after the Agartala incident. India on Monday described as "deeply regrettable" the incident of the breach of the premises of the Bangladesh consulate in Agartala in the northeastern state of Tripura, bordering Bangladesh, by a group of people protesting the arrest of Hindu monk Chinmoy Krishna Das here. The comments by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) came hours after the protesters reportedly barged into the assistant high commission of Bangladesh and allegedly resorted to vandalism. The envoy described the relationship as "multifaceted and wide-ranging," which could not sit with one issue or agenda and India is interested

to work with Bangladesh government to fulfill the two countries' shared aspiration for peace, security and development. "We are working across so many issues. And we really want to build a positive, stable, constructive relationship," he said. Verma also pointed out the many interdependencies and Delhi is keen to build on that "for mutual benefits." India will keep ensuring that the mutual cooperation benefits the two peoples, and the number of positive developments that have taken place in the bilateral relationship in the last few months, "whether it is trade, it is power transmission, supply of essential commodities, we

have maintained lot of positive momentum in the relationship," he added. "We are willing to engage with the interim government of Bangladesh, and we remain interested in working with the Government of Bangladesh to fulfill our shared aspirations for peace, security and development," the envoy added. Meanwhile, Bangladesh announced that all consular services at its Assistant High Commission in Agartala will remain suspended until further notice "because of security reasons" with immediate effect. Earlier in the day, terming the vandalism at Bangladesh's diplomatic mission in Agartala as India's "failure,"

Law Affairs Adviser in the interim government Asif Nazrul asked New Delhi to reassess its neighbour afresh after the toppling of the Sheikh Hasina regime. "We believe in a friendship based on equality and mutual respect. While Sheikh Hasina's government followed a pro-India policy to cling to power without elections, India must realise that this is not Sheikh Hasina's Bangladesh," he wrote in a Facebook post. Three days after Hasina fled to India following widespread protests against her Awami League-led government over a controversial job quota system, Muhammad Yunus, a Nobel laureate, took over as the Chief Adviser of the interim government. The tension between the two neighbours simmering since August 5, when deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina fled to India, aggravated further with the arrest of the Hindu monk Chinmoy Krishna Das last week. Nazrul alleged an outfit named Hindu Sangharsh Samiti was responsible for what he described as "the disgraceful act" when Bangladesh Assistant High Commission in Agartala was vandalised, and "Bangladesh's national flag was set on fire." He emphasised that Bangladesh is an independent, sovereign, and self-respecting nation driven by a "fearless and dynamic young generation."

SAUMYA SHUKLA ■ NEW DELHI

The National Capital's roads, known for their infamous traffic jams, are also notorious for rampant disregard of traffic rules, with official data revealing a massive 150 per cent jump in "wrong lane driving" violations, as compared to last year. While police credit this staggering rise in number of violations to better enforcement, the city's traffic congestion may also be pushing drivers to break rules, as they look for quicker ways to reach their destination. According to official data, till December 2, 2024, the police issued 4,662 challans on vehicle owners for not plying in designated lanes as compared to 1,732 challans in 2023 and 1,829 challans in 2022. The fine for this violation is Rs 1,000 for private vehicles and Rs 10,000 for commercial vehicles. Similarly, in the same period, 99,962 challans have been issued for driving against the flow of traffic marking a significant rise from the last year when 59,527 challans were issued in 2023 and 43,768 issued in 2022. Violations in this result in a fine of Rs 5,000 against the vehicle owners. Even for "no entry" restrictions, the city witnessed 1,37,318 challans this year while it was 1,14,646 in 2023 and 84,067 in 2022 even as a hefty fine of Rs 20,000 is slapped on drivers. According to Special Commissioner of Police



PHOTO: PTI

(Traffic) Ajay Chaudhary, the rise can be attributed to special drives conducted by the Delhi Police and coordinated efforts of the department to curb such violations on the roads. The streets of the Capital are also constantly cramped with vehicles parked improperly with a total of 4,88,602 such violations seen this year, marking a rise from 4,70,771 challans in 2023 and 3,58,067 challans in 2022. A fine of Rs 500 is issued for such violations by the police. They also towed 1,78,108 vehicles for improper parking as against 1,60,799 vehicles in 2023, and 1,33,800 vehicles in 2022. Additionally, a total of 4,56,189 vehicle owners have been slapped with challans, which amount to Rs 10,000, regarding non possession of Pollution under Control Certificate (PUCC), as against 2,32,885 in 2023 and 1,64,638 in 2022. The police have impounded 8,231 End of Life vehicles (ELVs) while only 528 were impounded in 2023 and 1,147 in 2022. In light of the air pollution in Delhi and the subsequent

pulling up of the Delhi Police by the Supreme Court for failing to implement the Graded Response Action Plan (Grap) Stage 4 restrictions, police have also intensified its drive against non destined goods vehicles trying to enter the city. The police checked 2,28,235 such vehicles this year including 2,16,028 being checked when the GRAP came into force on October 15, marking a steep rise from 23,089 checked in 2023 and 12,268 checked in 2022. Out of the checked vehicles, 26,379 were returned in this year, 10,012 in 2023 and 3,274 in 2022. Addl/CP (Traffic) Satyaveer Singh Katara added that the police will continue its drive and ensure that tough measures are implemented on the roads. "Some people think they can take shortcuts to avoid traffic but we all need to develop basic road sense. We will ensure that we curb such violations and take strict measures against these offenders," Deputy Commissioner of Police (Traffic) Shashank Jaiswal said.

Google continues to dupe its users

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ BAREILLY



In yet another mishap tied to digital navigation, a car carrying three passengers veered off the road and plunged into the Kalapur canal in Bareilly's Izzatnagar area on Pilibhit Road. The driver had been following a route suggested by Google Maps, once again raising questions about the accuracy and reliability of satellite-based navigation systems in India. The accident occurred near Barkapur Tiraaha, where erosion has left the road dangerously damaged. The vehicle, a Tata Tigor, overturned into the canal but, fortunately, all three occupants emerged unscathed. The local police, led by Izzatnagar Station Officer Dhananjay Pandey, promptly reached the scene and recovered the car with the help of a JCB machine. The passengers, including Divyanshu, son of Mahendra

Congress-led INDIA Bloc tumbling down?

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■ NEW DELHI

Fissures are visible in the Opposition's Congress led INDIA Bloc, after the grand old party's massive defeats in the recent Maharashtra and Haryana Assembly elections and not much appreciated performance in the State polls of Jharkhand and Jammu and Kashmir where the party contested with its alliance partners, Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) and National Conference (NC), respectively. Rather one of the key allies in INDIA Bloc, Trinamool Congress (TMC), on Tuesday pitched for their party supreme West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee be made the Bloc leader for all practical purposes, as the woman leader has a "100 per cent record" to take the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Partners like TMC, Samajwadi Party (SP) have raised eyebrows as the alliance could not work in the bypolls of Uttar Pradesh other States and the defeats have been shouldered on Congress. Congress found itself without its key allies, including the SP and TMC during a joint Opposition protest in the Parliament complex on Tuesday.



Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi and other Opposition MPs stage a protest during the Winter session of Parliament PTI

House to meet on weekends, make up for lost time: Speaker
Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla on Tuesday warned the members that if the business of the House is disrupted further due to adjournments, then he will have to convene the proceedings over the weekends to make up for the loss of time. "The House will convene on Saturday, December 14 at 11 am. If you continue with adjournments, then for the number of days it has been adjourned, you will have to attend the proceedings on Saturday and Sunday as well," Birla said soon after the Question Hour. Lok Sabha proceedings were washed out last week due to protests by opposition members over the Adani indictment row, recent violence in Uttar Pradesh's Sambhal and other issues.

Airport Authority lands show cause notice at Delhi International Airport

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Airport Authority of India (AAI) has issued a show cause notice to Delhi International Airport Ltd (DIAL) which operates the Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA), the country's largest airport, seeking an explanation on certain structural weaknesses detected during the study by an IIT Delhi team following the roof collapse incident at the old departure forecourt of Terminal 1 in June this year. IGI Airport is operated under a public private partnership. Following the roof collapse incident at T1 on June 28 that also killed one person, the civil aviation ministry had asked structural engineers from the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Delhi to carry out an assessment. When asked, a DIAL spokesperson said that its team of experts is currently preparing a comprehensive response to the queries raised by the Airports Authority of India (AAI). "Report of the study conducted by IITD has been shared with us. AAI wanted some clarifications on the points raised by them. Our team of experts is currently preparing a comprehensive response to these queries and they will be submitted within the stipulated timeline," he said.



FILE PHOTO: PTI

The IIT Delhi in its report found weaknesses in the part of the terminal that was not impacted by the collapse and certain strengthening of the structure is required. Till then, old T1 cannot be opened for operations, the official added. "Alternate arrangements have been made around the new T1, and T2 and T3," the official said. With the study finding certain defects, the official said AAI has issued a show cause notice to DIAL. Specific details about the show cause notice could not be immediately ascertained. "Report of the study conducted by IITD has been shared with us. AAI wanted some clarifications on the points raised by them. Our team of experts is currently preparing a comprehensive response to these queries and they will be submitted within the stipulated timeline," the DIAL spokesperson said. There was no comment from AAI.

Architect of infrastructure Nitin Gadkari irked by New Delhi air

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

Irked by increased pollution levels in Delhi, Union minister Nitin Gadkari, who is a Member of Parliament from Nagpur, on Tuesday confessed that he does not feel like visiting the National Capital as he often catches an infection due to the high pollution levels here. Addressing an event, Gadkari said the city of Delhi is such that, "I do not like to live here. I get an infection due to pollution here. Har baar Delhi me aata hua, aisa lagta hain ki (Delhi) jaana chahiye ki nahi. Itna bhayankar pollution hai" (Every time, while coming to Delhi, I think whether I should go or not because pollution levels are so high," he said. As Delhi struggles with worsening air quality, Gadkari has proposed a shift to Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) - powered transportation to combat the pollution crisis. Gadkari also

highlighted the importance of creating an "ethanol ecosystem to promote cleaner and greener alternatives. Gadkari noted that India imports fossil fuels worth Rs 22 lakh crore, which is challenging from the point of view of economy, environment and ecology. "We can reduce import of fossil fuels by encouraging alternative fuels," he said. Meanwhile, a report by the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA) highlighted that Delhi's PM2.5 concentration soared to an average of 249 micrograms per cubic metre in November 2024, the highest since 2017, despite enforcement of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) and a decrease in stubble burning incidents. Delhi's PM2.5 level in November reached its highest monthly average in eight years despite the implementation of GRAP measures, making it the most polluted city in the

world. In November 2016, the average PM2.5 level was recorded at 254 micrograms per cubic metre, the highest November reading, followed by 249 micrograms per cubic metre this year. PM2.5 are fine particles with a diameter of 2.5 micrometres or less, about the width of a human hair. These are so small that they can penetrate deep into the lungs and even enter the bloodstream, posing significant health risks. The Commission for Air Quality Management in the National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas (CAQM), a statutory body responsible for formulating strategies to combat pollution in the region, implements anti-pollution measures under the GRAP. In November 2016, the average PM2.5 level was recorded at 254 micrograms per cubic metre, the highest for the month, followed by 249 micrograms per cubic metre in 2024. In comparison,



the average was 241 micrograms per cubic metre in 2023, 181 micrograms per cubic metre in 2022, 238 micrograms per cubic metre in 2021, 214 micrograms per cubic metre in 2020, 204 micrograms per cubic metre in 2019, 200 micrograms per cubic metre in 2018, and 248 micrograms per cubic metre in 2017, the data said. These fine particles pose significant health risks as they can penetrate deep into the lungs and enter the bloodstream. The report highlights a concerning trend, with 159 out of 268 cities across India exceeding the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for PM2.5 levels in November. The NAAQS limit for PM2.5 is set at 60 µg/m³. Manoj Kumar, an analyst at CREA, said, "After 2017, this

November saw a continuous eight-day stretch in the Severe category (PM2.5 >250 µg/m³) from November 13 to November 20. This was due to the delayed implementation of stricter GRAP stages (3 and 4), despite IITM predicting a Severe AQI category on November 13." Stubble burning contributed an average of 19 per cent to Delhi's PM2.5 levels in November, with the remaining pollution originating from year-round sources. This underscores the need for a long-term, airshed-based strategy to address emissions from perennial sources, rather than relying solely on short-term GRAP measures. The report, published by CREA, an independent research organisation, further revealed that Delhi experienced 20 days in the "Very Poor" category (121-250 µg/m³) and 10 days in the "Severe" category (>250 µg/m³) in November. It added,

"GRAP's on-ground impact remained questionable, as transportation contributed over 20 per cent to the city's PM2.5 levels, mirroring pre-GRAP periods." Meanwhile, Ghaziabad, Gurgaon, Noida, and other cities in the Delhi NCR region also struggled with severe pollution, with 28 NCR cities surpassing the NAAQS threshold. Delhi residents received a respite from toxic pollution levels for the third consecutive day as the city's AQI remained in the very "poor" category on Tuesday, recording a reading of 268. In eight locations across the city, the AQI value stayed between 300 and over 400 -- 305 in Bawana, 307 in Jahangirpuri, 325 in Mundka, 304 in Nehru Nagar, 303 in RK Puram, 302 in Rohini, 342 in Shadipur, and 306 in Siri Fort. In the Delhi NCR area, Faridabad stayed at 255 points, Gurugram at 222, Ghaziabad at 181, Greater Noida at 195, and Noida at 162.

Elder brother of Arjun Munda passes away, CM expresses grief

PNS : JAMSHEDPUR

The city was shrouded in sorrow as news broke early this morning of the passing of Bhimsen Munda, elder brother of former Union Minister and former Chief Minister, Arjun Munda. Bhimsen, aged 65, succumbed to cancer after a prolonged battle. He had been under medical care at Tata Motors Hospital for the past several weeks, where he breathed his last. A simple man by nature, Bhimsen Munda chose to stay away from the limelight of

political affairs despite belonging to a family deeply entrenched in the political landscape. Known for his humility and unassuming lifestyle, he earned the respect of many across the city and beyond. His death has left a void in the hearts of those who knew him. In the forenoon, a solemn funeral procession commenced from the Mundas' residence in Ghorabandha, culminating at the Bhuiyadh crematorium. Hundreds of mourners, including dignitaries, BJP functionaries, and



local sympathizers, gathered to pay their last respects. The procession was marked by a deep sense of loss and reverence for the departed soul. A wave of grief swept through Jamshedpur as citizens expressed their condolences. Leaders from various political and social spheres joined the mourning family, underscoring the widespread respect Bhimsen commanded in the community. Chief Minister Hemant Soren expressed his sorrow through a heartfelt post on social media platform X. He

wrote, "I am saddened to receive the news of the death of Bhimsen Munda, brother of former Chief Minister of the state Arjun Munda. I express my deepest condolences to the bereaved family and pray to Marang Buru to grant peace to the departed soul." BJP leader and former Chief Minister, Raghubar Das, also conveyed his condolences. "Received the sad news of the death of Bhimsen Munda, elder brother of former Chief Minister of Jharkhand and former Union Minister Arjun Munda. May

Mahaprabhu Jagannath Ji give place to the departed soul in his personal abode and give strength to his family to bear this pain. Om Shanti," he said. Bhimsen Munda's life was a testament to simplicity and integrity. While his brother, Arjun Munda, carved a significant place in Indian politics, Bhimsen chose a quieter path, dedicating himself to personal and familial responsibilities. His humility and grounded nature endeared him to people from all walks of life.

NML: Training to enhance skills in mineral characterization

PNS : JAMSHEDPUR

The CSIR-National Metallurgical Laboratory (NML) hosted a corporate training programme for officials of the Steel Authority of India Ltd. (SAIL) today in the Lecture Hall. The event marked the inaugural session of the Mineral Characterization, Beneficiation, and Agglomeration (MCBA 2024) training programme, running from December 3 to December 5, 2024. The opening ceremony began with the traditional lamp-lighting by distinguished dignitaries, including Dr. Sandip Ghosh Chowdhury, Director, CSIR-NML; Dr. Devabrata Mishra, Head of the Mineral Processing Division; Dr. S. Sivaprasad, Chief Scientist and Head of the Human Resource Group; and Dr. Sital Kumar Pal, Head of the RPBD Division. Dr. Sandip Ghosh



Chowdhury warmly welcomed the SAIL executives and provided an overview of the programme's focus, emphasizing the importance of utilizing low-grade and fine ores or minerals for sustainable development. He introduced participants to the journey of mineral characterization and agglomeration, from laboratory experiments to pilot-scale operations. Dr. Devabrata Mishra highlighted the legacy of the

Mineral Processing Division, encouraging participants to leverage CSIR-NML's research and development facilities and expertise. He emphasized the laboratory's commitment to providing maximum learning opportunities during the training. Dr. S. Sivaprasad shared the division's pioneering contributions to mineral characterization and beneficiation since its inception. He elaborated on CSIR-NML's dedica-

tion to organizing skill-development initiatives tailored for executives in the corporate sector. Dr. Sital Kumar Pal underscored CSIR-NML's role in addressing industrial challenges and sought to foster long-term collaborations for business development and knowledge sharing. He encouraged participants to view CSIR-NML as a valuable partner in resolving complex industrial problems. Over decades, CSIR-NML has established itself as a leader in beneficiation studies for ferrous, non-ferrous, and non-metallic minerals, as well as coal. Its expertise extends beyond national boundaries, contributing to overseas projects as well. The four-day MCBA 2024 training programme is structured to include: Informative lecture series by experts. Laboratory visits to explore cutting-edge equipment. Hands-on training in mineral processing and agglomeration techniques.

Minor girl raped in Palamu, culprit goes into hiding: Police

PNS : DALTONGANJ

An acquaintance raped a minor girl in Hussainabad police station area in Palamu. The girl, aged 11, was raped by a 22 year old youth at a village under the Hussainabad police station limits. The victim girl is a non tribal girl. Officer in charge of the Hussainabad police station Sanjay Yadav said, "The incident of rape took place in the evening of Monday December 2." The mother of the victim lodged the FIR with the Hussainabad police station today Tuesday December 3 said the police officer Yadav. The mother has named accused Ravi Chouhan of the rape of her daughter in her statement to the police which the police recorded for instituting it as FIR. Ravi Chouhan is a co villager of the victim girl. Both the families knew each other. According to the FIR she was raped in a Arhar khet with mouth shut. The victim girl is undergoing treatment at a government hospital under the same Hussainabad police station limits. Her condition is stable, said sources. Police have registered the case under section 65 of the BNS along with various sections of the POCSO act. "The rape accused Ravi Chouhan did try to escape to Allahabad. This attempt of his has been foiled by the police" added police officer Yadav. However Ravi Chouhan has gone into hiding. Yadav said "We have intensified our search for the accused who is losing time and space both. He will be caught soon."

Vedanta ESL Steel Ltd holds mega Health Camps in Bokaro

PNS : BOKARO

Vedanta ESL Steel Limited recently hosted two highly successful Mega Health Camps under its Project MACE healthcare initiative. These camps, held at Bokaro's Sector 6 and Alkusha village, were tailored to address the medical needs of senior citizens. The events witnessed significant participation, reaffirming Vedanta ESL's commitment to community well-being. The Sector 6 camp, organised in partnership with Medicant Hospital, provided medical screenings for conditions like blood pressure, thyroid issues, and diabetes. Senior doctors from multiple disciplines, including orthopaedics and ophthalmology, offered their expertise. The event was graced by CISO IG Digvijay Kumar Singh, who praised Vedanta ESL's past community contributions, particularly during



the COVID-19 pandemic. Similarly, the Alkusha camp focused on the healthcare needs of elderly residents in rural Bokaro. Collaborating with institutions like Akash Hospital, Sanjeev Netralaya, and Dr Puja's Dental Clinic, the camp provided consultations and screenings, ensuring a broad spectrum of medical support. Speaking about the initiative, Kunal Daripa, Head of CSR at Vedanta ESL Steel

Limited, emphasised the importance of regular medical check-ups for the elderly and highlighted the role of prevention in addressing health issues effectively and affordably. Through projects like MACE, Vedanta ESL continues to champion initiatives that support the physical and mental well-being of senior citizens, making a meaningful impact on the local community.

CBSE Heritage India Quiz 2024 held at DPS Ranchi



PNS : RANCHI

Delhi Public School, Ranchi, hosted the Regional Level CBSE Heritage India Quiz 2024, organized by the CBSE Patna Region. The event brought together teams from

30 schools across the region in a grand celebration of intellect, culture, and heritage. The program began on an auspicious note with a soulful welcome song, setting the stage for an exciting day. The ambiance buzzed with

enthusiasm as participants, teachers, and guests gathered for a highly anticipated competition. The quiz, a hallmark event of CBSE, featured two rigorous stages. The prelims tested the participants' knowledge of history, culture, and heritage through a comprehensive written round. The second stage, an engaging and interactive session, included a variety of verbal, visual, and audio questions, challenging the teams to think on their feet and demonstrate their understanding of India's rich cultural legacy. The esteemed Quiz Master for the competition, Shri Kunal Mandal, added an engaging touch to

the proceedings with their dynamic presentation style. The event concluded with the announcement of the winner (Vidya Vihar Residential School, Purnia), who will advance to the National level, and a vote of thanks to all participants, teachers, and organizers who made the day a memorable one. Expressing his pride in hosting the event, Dr. R.K. Jha, Principal of DPS Ranchi, remarked, "It is a privilege to organize an event that celebrates the richness of India's cultural heritage. Such platforms inspire our youth to connect with their roots and develop a deeper appreciation for our traditions."

Ex-MLA Biranchi Narayan pays tribute to Dr. Rajendra Prasad

PNS : BOKARO

On the occasion of the birth anniversary of Dr. Rajendra Prasad, India's first President and a recipient of the Bharat Ratna, former Bokaro MLA Biranchi Narayan paid heartfelt tributes by offering flowers at his statue. The ceremony was marked by a sense of reverence and admiration for the leader who played a pivotal role in shaping the nation's history. Speaking to the gathering, Narayan highlighted the immense contributions of Dr. Rajendra Prasad, both as a freedom fighter and as an



architect of independent India. "Dr. Rajendra Prasad's life is a testament to simplicity, dedication, and selfless service to the nation. He epitomized the values of honesty and integrity, which are much needed in today's times," Narayan said. The former MLA urged the youth to take inspiration from Dr. Prasad's life and work toward building a strong and united India. He also emphasized the importance of remembering and celebrating the legacies of such great leaders to instill a sense of patriotism and responsibility among citizens.

Tata Steel Foundation Jharia Division celebrates International Day for Persons with Disabilities

PANKAJ : DHANBAD

The Tata Steel Foundation marked International Day of Persons with Disabilities at SPARSH Centre, Jamadoba and Malkera Community Centre, under Baghmara block by ushering in the cultural performances and celebrating the spirit of their resilience. The theme for this year was - Amplifying the leadership of Persons with Disabilities for an inclusive and sustainable future. Keeping up with this theme, Dr Manju Das, District Leprosy Officer Dhanbad, the chief guest of the programme, recognised the efforts and resilience of Persons with Disabilities in raising awareness and distributed assistive devices to Persons with Disabilities. Outdoor leadership certificates were also distributed to 15 PwDs for exceptional work. The programme began in the morning at Sparsh Centre, Jamadoba with distribution of assistive devices and messages from the Chief Guest. In the second half cake cutting ceremony followed by the cultural programme was organized at Malkera as part of the day-long programme. 31 no. of assistive devices were distrib-

uted to help link PwDs for their day-to-day support and care. The special guests present at the occasion were, Dr Aloke, Chief Medical Officer, Tata Main Hospital, Jamadoba, Shweta Mishra, Head Administration Jharia Division Tata Steel, Santosh Kumar Mahato, Regional Secretary RCMU, Piyush Kumar, Sr Area Manager HRBP, Sijua Group and Sujit Kumar Jha, Sr Area Manager Security, Jharia Division. The objective of the programme was to raise awareness, understanding about PwDs, and foster a sense of equitable opportunities and fair treatment of all human race. Others present on the occasion were Rajesh Kumar, Unit Lead TSF Jamadoba, Ravi Jha, Sr Manager Security Vikas Kataria, Manager Security Sijua Group, Bandi Gayatri, Manager Mining Bhelatand Colliery, Bipin Choudhary, Manager, Community Development, Dr B Patra, Medical Officer, Dr Debrata Das, Manager Public Health, S.M Trigunite and Girish Mahato, Coordination Committee Member and Vinod Rajak, Mukhiya, Malkera South Panchayat, Laxmi Kumari, Ajay Paswan and Raj Kumar from Sabal team.

SARKAR YOGA ACADEMY TO HOST 'OPEN SIT AND DRAW COMPETITION'

PNS : JAMSHEDPUR

The Sarkar Yoga Academy (Kadma) is set to organize the 'Fourth Open Jharkhand Sit and Draw Competition' on December 7 at the Kerala Public School (KPS) campus in Kadma. Additionally, the Academy will host the 'Fifth Open Inter-School Avasam Yoga Championship' at the same venue, promising a day filled with creativity and health-focused activities. The event will begin at 9 a.m. with an inauguration by Chief Guest Sharat Chandran, Director of KPS, and Special Guest Satish Ganpati, Tata Steel Equipment Maintenance Head. The closing ceremony, scheduled for 6 p.m., will feature Dr. Ashok Kumar Srivastava, Vice-Chancellor of Amity University Jharkhand and Advisor of Amity University Kolkata, as the Chief Guest. Other dignitaries, including KPS Director Academics Lakshmi R and KPS Kadma Principal Sharmila Mukherjee, will also be in attendance. According to International Yoga Guru Anshu Sarkar, the founder of Sarkar Yoga Academy, the competition will be conducted across 11 groups, welcoming participants as young as four years old, as well as senior citizens. Participants can freely draw pictures of their choice. The top 10 winners in each group will be awarded, with consolation prizes and certificates for all participants. Notably, 334 awards will be distributed, including two special titles: Junior Artist of the Year (Jharkhand) and Senior Artist of the Year (Jharkhand).

The yoga championship will feature six groups, with no age restrictions for participants. Students from 20 schools and several colleges are expected to compete, showcasing their skills in various yoga disciplines.



Advocates' Day celebrated at ULC



AVINASH ANJAN : HAZARIBAG

University Law College, Vinoba Bhawe University, celebrated Advocates' Day with great enthusiasm and intellectual vigor. The theme for the event was "Recognising the Challenge of Change," reflecting the evolving dynamics of the legal profession in a rapidly transforming world. The event was inaugu-

rated by Principal-in-Charge, Prof. Rashmi Pradhan, who welcomed the gathering and spoke about the critical role of advocates in addressing contemporary challenges. She encouraged students to adapt to changes in the legal and social landscape while maintaining ethical standards and professional integrity. The first keynote address was delivered by Bhaiya

Mukesh, who emphasized the advocate's role as a guardian of constitutional rights. He discussed how advocates can uphold the principles of justice and fairness in an ever-changing legal system, urging students to focus on developing strong analytical and communication skills. Manish Chandra shared insights on the changing dynamics of legal practice. He highlighted the growing importance of staying updated with the latest legal trends and adapting to innovations in the profession. He encouraged young advocates to embrace new challenges and use their skills to ensure justice is accessible to all. Dr. Laxmi Singh stressed the importance of community service and pro bono work as integral parts of a lawyer's journey toward meaningful change. Advocate Manoj

Kumar highlighted practical aspects of legal practice, such as managing client relationships, handling workload, and maintaining a balance between professional and personal life. He urged students to develop mental resilience and adaptability to excel in the legal field. The event concluded with a vote of thanks by Dr. Urmila Kumari, who expressed her gratitude to the speakers, faculty, and students for their active participation. She commended the organizers for successfully hosting an event that inspired meaningful discussions and learning. The celebration served as a platform for future advocates to engage with experienced professionals and gain insights into the challenges and opportunities in the legal profession.

BSL distributes Battery-Operated Tricycles to differently-abled individuals

PNS : BOKARO

On the occasion of International Day of Persons with Disabilities, the CSR department of Bokaro Steel Limited (BSL), in collaboration with the Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation of India (ALIMCO), organized a special distribution camp on December 3 at the Ashalata Viklang Vikas Kendra, Bokaro. The event aimed to empower differently-abled individuals by providing them with battery-operated tricycles. The camp was graced by BSL Director-in-Charge Birendra Kumar Tiwari, who served as the chief guest. Other distinguished attendees included Executive Director (Finance & Accounts) Suresh Rangani, Executive Director-In-Charge (Human Resources) Rajan Prasad, Executive Director (HR)



Rajshree Banerjee, Chief Medical Officer Dr. B.B. Karunamay, Chief General Manager (Town Administration) Kundan Kumar, Chief General Manager (Technical) Lakshmi Das, Director of Ashalata Viklang Vikas Kendra Shri B.S. Jaiswal, ALIMCO representative Nitish Kumar, General Manager (CSR) A.S. Nandi, Senior Manager (CSR) N. Tripathi, and several other officials from BSL and Ashalata Viklang Vikas Kendra. In his address, Birendra Kumar

Tiwari emphasized the collective responsibility of society to uplift differently-abled individuals, making their lives more accessible and connecting them to the mainstream. He also commended the efforts of the Ashalata Viklang Vikas Kendra in supporting the development and welfare of differently-abled persons. During the event, battery-operated tricycles were distributed by the Director-in-Charge and other senior executives to the beneficiaries. The initiative was well-received and highlighted BSL's commitment to promoting inclusivity and enhancing the quality of life for differently-abled individuals. This CSR initiative aligns with BSL's vision of creating a more inclusive and equitable society by empowering differently-abled individuals to lead independent and dignified lives.

State Cabinet Expansion Scheduled for December 5

5 JMM MLAs, 4 Congress, one RJD legislator likely to take oath

PNS : RANCHI

The Hemant Soren-led government in Jharkhand is set to expand its Cabinet on December 5. During the ceremony, five ministers from the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM), four from the Congress, and one from the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) are expected to take the oath of office.

Supriyo Bhattacharya, the JMM's Central General Secretary, announced that the swearing-in ceremony would take place at Raj Bhawan at 12 noon on the specified date.

Bhattacharya highlighted that the new Cabinet would include a blend of experience, energy, and

diverse representation, ensuring that all five divisions of Jharkhand are represented. Additionally, he noted that the Cabinet would include representation for youth, women, and farmers.

Regarding the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) [CPI (ML)], Bhattacharya clarified that the party has chosen to support the government's policies without direct participation in governance.

The list of Congress nominees for the Cabinet has received approval from Rahul Gandhi. On Monday, Jharkhand Congress in-charge Ghulam Ahmed Mir and State Congress President Keshav Mahato

Kamlesh met with Gandhi to finalize the names.

Previously, Congress MLA Rameshwar Oraon had discussions with Chief Minister Hemant Soren, where they reached a consensus on the candidates from the Congress quota.

Prominent contenders from the Congress for Cabinet positions include Rameshwar Oraon, Irfan Ansari, Deepika Pandey Singh, Kumar Jayamangal, Pradeep Yadav, Shwetita Singh, Naman Vikas Kongadi, and Shilpi Neha Turkey.

Meanwhile, RJD MLA Suresh Paswan is likely to represent his party in the Cabinet.

Bhattacharya also said that the amount of Rs 2500



Chief Minister Hemant Soren being greeted by Tundi MLA Mathura Mahto and JMM General Secretary Supriyo Bhattacharya at his residence in Ranchi on Tuesday. PNS

of Mainiyna Samman Yojana will be sent to the accounts of women on December 11.

He attacked the BJP and Babul Marandi and said that BJP has suffered a setback after the election results. He said that in this assembly election, JMM has won 27 out of 28 reserved seats and there is very little difference in the one seat that is left. He said, after this, BJP State President Babul Marandi has become a little active after the results. He said that he has given some suggestions to the Government. Marandi has given suggestions regarding primitive tribes and in this suggestion, concern has been expressed especially about the Pahadia tribe.

Bhattacharya further said that BJP has a tribal CM in Odisha and Chhattisgarh and 15 tribes have been identified as primitive tribes there. The JMM leader has requested Babul to visit Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Odisha. He said that Marandi should study these states and he should see the condition of the primitive tribes there and their economic, social and educational condition. He said that nothing is going to happen just by shedding crocodile tears. He warned Babul Marandi and said that you should not fall into the trap of outside leaders. He asked, did you ever discuss the tree tribes working in the tea gardens of Assam.

Administration reaches Asura village after CM's order

Arrangements made for the education and nutrition of 5 destitute children after the death of their parents

PNS : RANCHI

After the order of Chief Minister Hemant Soren, arrangements for education, nutrition of five destitute children and approval for pension for the grandmother of the children have been given. In this regard, the Chief Minister had directed the Deputy Commissioner Chaiyasa to connect the victim's family with all the necessary government schemes and make arrangements for the education of the children.

In the case, the Deputy Commissioner Chaiyasa said that the Block Development Officer has visited Asura village and met the victim's family. During this, it was found that the children have neither an Aadhaar card nor birth certificate. The elderly



grandmother used to get pension earlier, which was stopped due to some reason. The pension papers have also been lost somewhere. The Block Development Officer is ensuring the arrangement of birth certificates and Aadhaar registration of all the children.

Also, a child of four months is being looked after by his aunt. On which the assistant has been asked by

the administration to provide nutritious supplements from Anganwadi and the process of enrolling three children in the local school and one child in Anganwadi and all types of documents are also being updated to link them with the social security scheme.

The Chief Minister came to know that after the death of Sahu Puri and Dukhi Puri, residents of Asura village in Jhinkpani, West Singhbhum on 24 November 2024, their five children had become helpless. Their elderly grandmother who looks after the child is deprived of social security pension. After getting information about this, the Chief Minister had ordered to connect the victim's family with government schemes and ensure the education of the children.

641 students from 24 districts to display their talent at Kala Mahotsav

PNS : RANCHI

'Kala Mahotsav' - the flagship program of the Department of School Education and Literacy, Ministry of Education, Government of India, kicked off on Tuesday at the Jharkhand Educational Research and Training Council in Ranchi. As many as 641 participants from 24 districts will showcase their art. State Education Project Director Shashi Ranjan was present as the chief guest at the inaugural ceremony of the two-day art festival to encourage the artistic talent of secondary level students. Padma Shri Madhu Mansuri Hansmukh, State Program Officer Dhirasen Soreng, Deputy Director of JCERT Pradeep Choubey, SDEO Naveen Bara also attended the program as special guests.

The event started with the music 'Mann Ki Veena' by the girl students of Giridih while Padma Shri Madhu Mansuri enthralled the audience by presenting the song 'Jharkhand Kar Kor'. Addressing the audience, State Education Project Director Shashi Ranjan encouraged the participants and advised them to hone their artistic talent and develop it as a career option in the future. Giving the example of his life, Ranjan highlighted on the importance of artistic talents in the country's toughest examination 'Union Public Service Commission' and also said that the art festival is being organized in accordance with the concept of the New Education Policy 2020 as it has an important contribution in promoting holistic and comprehensive education among children.

State Program Officer Dhirasen Soreng said that the Education Department of the State Government and Jharkhand Education Project Council are committed to promote art.

CM inspects under-construction flyover

PNS : RANCHI

Chief Minister Hemant Soren today conducted a surprise inspection of the under-construction flyover from Mecon Chowk (near Van Bhawan) to Sirmatoli Chowk in the capital Ranchi. MLA Kalpana Soren and senior officials of the state government were also present on the occasion. During the inspection, the CM took stock of the progress of the construction work of the flyover and discussed various aspects of the flyover with the concerned officials. The CM directed the officials to pay special attention to the quality and time limit of this flyover construction work.

After inspecting the flyover, the CM, while addressing the media, said that earlier also the flyover project constructed by the state government from Kantatoli to Sirmatoli Chowk has been dedicated to the residents of



the capital before the stipulated time limit. The state government officials, engineers and workers engaged in the construction of the flyover are working hard and diligently to ensure that this flyover being constructed from Mecon Chowk (near Van Bhawan) to Sirmatoli Chowk is dedicated to the people of Ranchi before the stipulated time limit.

The Chief Minister said that it is our endeavour to

inaugurate this flyover project as soon as possible so that people can get relief from traffic problems. The Chief Minister said that since this flyover is passing over the railway crossing, the points related to the movement of trains are also being taken care of. The Chief Minister said that this flyover will have a distinct identity in the country and the state. This flyover will be a unique flyover in itself.

SAIL distributes aids on World Disability Day

SAIL-RDCIS, Ranchi provided wheelchairs, wheelchair commodes, walkers, knee belts, waist belts, silicone cushions etc to 50 Divyangjans and senior citizens at Kutiatu Panchayat Bhawan of Namkum block on the occasion of International Disability Day here on Tuesday. SAIL-RDCIS organised this event in collaboration with ALIMCO under its CSR scheme. On this occasion, CGM (HR) & CSR Head SJ Jachak, DGM (C&M) Gopal Krishna, Rahul Srivastava, Laxman Kumar and Nikhil Oraon from SAIL CSR were present. Avinash Sinha and Vivek were present from ALIMCO. Kutiatu Panchayat Mukhiya Nisha Oraon along with Anjali, Jyoti, Santoshi, Kiran and other women contributed to make this event successful at their own level on this occasion.



7 members of bike thief gang arrested

Ranchi police arrested seven members of bike thief gang. The police team led by City SP Rajkumar Mehta took this action based on the information received by SP Chandan Sinha. Five stolen bikes, one scooter and one pistol have been recovered from them. The arrested thieves include Tanveer Alam, Arjun Mahato, Vasudev Das, Roshan Das Bharat Das, Gufran Khan and Aamir Ansari. City SP Raj Kumar Mehta gave information about the whole case in a press conference on Tuesday morning at Lalpur police station premises. Mehta said that the members of the thief gang have revealed to the police that they used to steal motorcycles from various places in Ranchi city. After this, they used to get the number of the old motorcycle from Google, change the number of the stolen motorcycle and send the motorcycle out of the city with the help of their associates.

Celebrating Inclusion at SBPS



Sarala Birla Public School, Ranchi hosted a friendly football tournament on its premises on the occasion of International Day of Persons with Disabilities. The match was held

among the football teams of DAV Nirja Sahay, Vivekananda Vidya Mandir, Surendranath Centenary School, Holy Cross School, Sarala Birla Public School, Ranchi and Deepshikha, an institute for child development and mental health. The event witnessed the presence of dignitaries like Sandip Kumar, Director Sports, Dept. of Sports and Youth Affairs, Jharkhand as the Chief Guest and Satbir Singh Sahota, Assistant area Director SOB, Jharkhand. The participants from different schools were grouped into teams along with the students of Deepshikha. It was a day that celebrated inclusion and made our students more responsible and respectful individuals.

Donation drive by SCS students

The Community Outreach Club of Surendranath Centenary School organised a donation drive as part of their Community Outreach Programme.



PROJECT RAAHAT. The school collected old clothes and woolens from students, teachers, and staff members. The junior wing donated them to the Jharkhand Thalassemia Foundation, which will distribute the clothes to Kishore Nagar Orphanage and Premashraya, bringing warmth and joy to the underprivileged residing there. The senior school's donation drive was held at Guru Nanak Home for Handicapped Children, coinciding with International Day for Disabled People.

Lobbying picks up pace for LoP post in BJP

PNS : RANCHI

Lobbying has intensified for the Leader of Opposition's post. According to the information, the Leader of Opposition will be selected before the special session of the Assembly begins from 9th. The names of former CM Babul Marandi, former CM Champai Soren, former Speaker CP Singh and Neera Yadav are coming up in the race for the Leader of Opposition. On this issue, BJP's state president Babul has said that let the cabinet of the Hemant government be formed, the Leader of Opposition will be selected before the session begins.

According to the information, the BJP is brainstorming on a tribal or non-tribal face for the Leader of Opposition. If the tribal face is made the Leader of Opposition, then one of Babul or Champai Soren will have to be chosen. In the non-tribal face, the name of CP Singh, seven-time MLA from Ranchi, is leading. At the same time, Neera Yadav is also in the race. She has won the Koderma seat for the third time.



Recently, after the two-day review meeting of the BJP, BJP's Jharkhand in-charge Laxmikant Vajpayee had said that the new state president will be elected by February. There is also a discussion in political circles that Babul Marandi can be made the leader of the opposition by giving the responsibility of state president to someone else. It is also being said about CP Singh that he has a long experience of parliamentary work.

After poor performance in the Assembly poll the BJP has decided to call a series of meetings from November 30 to brainstorm the reasons that led to a poor poll show in the tribal-dominated state.

In the recently concluded Assembly polls, Hemant



Soren's JMM-led alliance got a second consecutive term, winning 56 seats in the 81-member assembly, despite an all-out blitz by the BJP-led NDA, which managed only 24 seats.

According to sources, BJP's Jharkhand unit chief, Babul Marandi, will be holding one-to-one meetings with all defeated candidates to understand the reason for the defeat.

In the Assembly polls, the BJP had given the task to its eight MPs and one MP of AJSU to focus on winning the maximum number of seats from their constituencies in the assembly elections. The party leadership had also sought their opinion during the ticket distribution. MPs were also included in the list of star campaigners.

PMLA COURT REJECTS ALAM'S DISCHARGE PETITION

PNS : RANCHI

Former minister Alamgir Alam, accused of money laundering of crores of rupees through tender scam, got a big shock on Tuesday. Ranchi PMLA (Prevention of Money Laundering Act) special court has given its verdict on his discharge petition and rejected it. On Monday, after the arguments on behalf of ED and former minister Alamgir Alam were completed, the court had reserved its decision. Earlier, the court has rejected the discharge petition of other accused in this case, Jahangir Alam and Sanjeev Lal.

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) in May this year arrested Jharkhand Rural Development Minister and Congress leader Alamgir Alam on the second day of interrogation in a money

laundering case.

The agency had last week arrested Alam's Officer on Special Duty Sanjiv Kumar Lal and his domestic help Jahangir Alam after the seizure of more than Rs 36 crore in cash from a flat linked to them.

Later in June Alamgir Alam, arrested in an alleged tender scam, resigned as a Cabinet Minister from Champai Soren government. Alam on June 10 also resigned from the post of Congress legislative Party (CLP) in Jharkhand Assembly.

His resignation came after three days when Mr. Soren took all the ministerial posts from him and made him Minister without portfolio. Mr. Alam was handling four departments which included rural development, parliamentary affairs and rural works and panchayati



raj. Nisat Alam, the wife of former Jharkhand minister Alamgir Alam, who was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate in a money laundering case, won the Pakur seat by the highest margin of 86,029, officials said.

She polled 1,55,827 votes, defeating AJSU Party's Azhar Alam, they said. Several central leaders had targeted Alamgir Alam, taken into custody by the ED on May 15, during their mul-

tiplied public rallies, urging people to 'throw out corrupt forces like him.'

The Jharkhand Assembly will witness the maximum number of women MLAs. Out of 26 women candidates fielded by the INDIA bloc and NDA together, a dozen have made it to the Assembly. In 2019, the Assembly had 10 women MLAs.

Every Assembly in the state has seen an increasing number of women MLAs since Jharkhand was formed



PNS : RANCHI

Speakers from various walks of life shared their experiences at the TEDx Kanke on Sunday at MTI SAIL in Ranchi. The theme 'A New Era' had orators ranging from 16 years to 74 years of age as they explored the concept of sustainability, technology, personal growth and the future of humanity.

The event also highlighted how green energy is emerging as the only viable alternative to combat the growing challenges of climate change fueled by rising carbon emissions. At the same time, discussion on Artificial Intelligence (AI) and space research based employment showcased the dual challenges and opportunities shaping the future.

The youngest speaker, 16-year old Sharadha Sharma who is a space researcher, inspired young minds to explore the cosmos and encouraged schools to introduce space science in their curriculum to not only make it accessible but also demystify its perceived financial barriers. While 74-year old Mahesh Poddar - former MP and entrepreneur shared his wisdom on creating employment opportunities through

MSMEs by emphasising on their role as the backbone of sustainable development.

India's face in formula 4 racing Aashi Hanspal shared her journey on overcoming gender biases in motorsports whereas renowned golfer Vaani Kapoor highlighted the importance of leveraging individual strengths to achieve global success. Yoga guru Vasundhara Talware emphasised on mastering the art of controlling the senses to foster spiritual and physical well-being.

Pramod Aggarwal, former IAS and Chairman of Coal India highlighted the urgency to shift from fossil fuels to renewable energy like solar and wind power by citing their cost effectiveness and environmental benefits. Padma Shri Dr Ashok Rajgopal, an orthopedic surgeon with over 55000 surgeries expressed his skepticism

about the effectiveness of robotic surgeries and stressed on the importance of enhancing traditional tools to meet modern needs.

The iconic voice of Bigg Boss- Vijay Vikram Singh, an actor and motivational speaker, encouraged the audience to focus on inner strength and embrace change as the only constant in life. The event concluded with a folk fusion performance by the ETC band whose innovative renditions of popular tracks left the audience spellbound. On the occasion Sanjay Dhar, CGM, MTI SAIL, Rajeev Gupta curator TEDx Kanke and Utkarsh Kumar SDO Ranchi further underscored the event's significance in shaping Jharkhand's narrative as a hub of innovation and progress.

AFFIDAVIT

I, Balkishore Dev, Father-Late Gajhadhar Dev, Address - Village Arahansa, Post- Badla, Thana-Senha, District-Lohardaga, Jharkhand. My name in Aadhar Card is Balkishore Dev, Father-Gajhadhar Dev. My name in my Khatian is Lal Bal Kishore Dev, Father-Lal Gajhadhar Dev. By Affidavit No.- 33877, dated- 05 August 2024, I will be known by both the names Balkishore Dev and Lal Bal Kishore Dev, Father-Gajhadhar Dev, alias Lal Gajhadhar Dev.

CCL Central Coalfields Limited

"All the tenders issued by CIL and its Subsidiaries for procurement of Goods, Works and Services are available on website of Coal India Ltd. www.coalindia.in/ respective Subsidiary Company (CCL, www.centralcoalfields.in/), CIL e-procurement portal <https://coalindienders.nic.in/> and Central Public Procurement Portal <https://eprocure.gov.in/> in addition, procurement is also done through GeM portal <https://gem.gov.in/>

Committed to engaging with China for fair, mutually acceptable framework for boundary settlement: EAM

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Tuesday said here India remains committed to engaging with China to arrive at a fair and mutually acceptable framework for boundary settlement. He also said the recent developments that reflect continuous diplomatic engagements have set India-China ties in the direction of "some improvement."

His statement in Parliament came two months after India and Chinese armies disengaged from friction points in eastern Ladakh. This process came about after nearly four years of stand-off between the soldiers of the two countries there after tension flared up in May 2020 leading to clashes in the Galwan valley. Twenty Indian army personnel including the commanding officer were killed. Nearly 40 Chinese soldiers were died in the clash. On its part, Beijing had stated after disengagement that a resolution had been reached on

"relevant matters" and that it would work alongside New Delhi to implement the terms of the agreement.

Jaishankar said India-China relations cannot be normal in the absence of a clearly articulated approach. Making a statement in the Lok Sabha, the minister said India-China ties have been abnormal since 2020 when peace and tranquility in border areas were disturbed due to Chinese actions.

"The amassing of troops by China in eastern Ladakh in April-May 2020 resulted in face-offs at a number of points. After the Galwan Valley clashes, we were addressing a situation that not only saw fatalities but events that needed heavy weaponry deployment," he said.

The recent developments that reflect continuous diplomatic engagements have set India-China ties in the direction of "some improvement", he said. "We remain committed to engaging with China to arrive at a fair and mutually acceptable framework for boundary



settlement... The government has maintained that India-China relations cannot be normal in the absence of peace and tranquility in the border areas, the combination of a firm and principal stance on this situation and the border areas, as well as a clearly articulated approach to the totality of our ties," Jaishankar said.

"We have been very clear that the restoration of peace and tranquility will be the basis for the rest of the relationship to move forward," he added.

Jaishankar credited the Indian forces, saying that despite logistical challenges and the Covid pandemic, they countered the Chinese troops rapidly. He said bilateral relations between India and China were on course of some improvement after the successful disengagement along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh.

"Our (India-China) ties have been abnormal since 2020 when peace and tranquility in the border areas were disturbed as a result of Chinese

actions. Recent developments that reflect our continuous diplomatic engagement since then have set our ties in the direction of some improvement," he said while briefing the Lok Sabha on India-China ties and the border truce reached in October.

Jaishankar also said in the months following the 2020 Galwan Valley clash, "we were addressing a situation that had not only seen fatalities for the first time in 45 years but also a turn of events serious enough for heavy weaponry to be deployed in close proximity to the LAC".

"While a determined counter-deployment of adequate capability was the government's immediate response, there was also the imperative of a diplomatic effort to defuse these heightened tensions and restore peace and tranquility."

The Minister went on to list a series of agreements reached in the past between India and China, including those signed in 1991, 1993, 1996, 2003, 2005, 2012 and the last one in

2013 to reach an understanding on border defence cooperation.

"The purpose of my recalling these agreements is to underline the elaborate nature of our shared efforts to ensure peace and tranquility and to emphasise the seriousness of what its unprecedented disruption in 2020 implied for our overall relationship," he said.

The current agreement pertains to patrolling in the Depsang and Demchok areas. Earlier, the militaries of the two countries had pulled back from four of six friction points in eastern Ladakh, including the Galwan Valley, after the clash.

In November, Indian and Chinese armies completed one round of patrolling in Demchok and Depsang and also agreed to carry out one coordinated patrol every week in the areas where tensions have persisted.

In an effort to maintain ongoing stability, talks will continue at the local commanders' level, involving brigadiers and officers of similar ranks.

Recent violence in Sambhal figures in both houses of Parliament

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Recent violence in Sambhal, Uttar Pradesh figured in both house of Parliament on Tuesday. While Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav in the Lok Sabha criticized the local administration, his uncle Ram Gopal Yadav claimed in the Rajya Sabha that violence was pre-planned.

Raising the issue in the Lok Sabha, Akhilesh Yadav said violence part of a "well-planned" conspiracy and that the talk of "khudai" (digging) across the country by the BJP and its associates will end up hurting communal unity.

The former Uttar Pradesh chief minister squarely blamed the local police and administration for the recent violence in Sambhal.

He alleged that police personnel fired from official and personal weapons, killing five innocent people and injuring dozens after some locals pelted stones at them to protest their high-handedness.

The MP from Kannauj demanded the suspension of guilty officials and registration of a murder case against them to ensure that there is no such "violation" of the Constitution



again. Akhilesh Yadav, amid occasional interruptions from the treasury benches, suggested that the BJP's inner politics was also at work and claimed that it was a "battle" between Delhi and Lucknow.

Ram Gopal Yadav said in the Rajya Sabha Sambhal was converted into a police zone and people were baffled why it was being done.

At one point, water started flowing out of the mosque and people thought some mischief was happening inside. Peace was disturbed with police opening fire, in which five people were killed and several injured, he said.

Ram Gopal Yadav, however, failed to complete his speech and Chairman Jagdeep

Dhankhar said certain parts of his statement would not go on record. At this, the SP and some other opposition parties staged a walkout.

Indian Union Muslim League (IUML) MP E T Mohammed Basheer described the Sambhal incident as shocking.

"The peaceful coexistence (of different communities) in this country is becoming more and more difficult. We have to preserve our secularism," he said. Basheer alleged the government is supporting the campaign aimed at targeting mosques and demanded a comprehensive inquiry by a judicial commission. Akhilesh Yadav also spoke outside Parliament and said the Uttar Pradesh government was behind the incident.

Ensure ICC for sexual harassment at workplace in all Govt departments: SC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

With a view to ensure a nationwide compliance of the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013, the Supreme Court on Tuesday directed all states and union territories to constitute an internal complaints committee in all government departments and undertakings.

Issuing a slew of directions, a bench of Justices B V Nagarathna and N Kotiswar Singh said that the POSH Act must be uniformly implemented across the country.

The top court therefore directed the states and UTs to appoint an officer in each district by December 31, 2024, who would constitute a local complaints committee by January 31, 2025 and appoint nodal officers at taluka levels. The apex court directed the deputy commissioners/district magistrates to survey the public and private organisations for ICC compliance under Section 26 of the POSH Act and submit reports. They would engage with private sector stakeholders to ensure ICC constitution and adherence to



statutory provisions, it said. The bench granted time till March 31, 2025 for the compliance of its directions and directed chief secretaries to oversee the execution. The direction came on a petition dealing with the implementation of the court's May 2023 order directing the Centre and the state governments to undertake a time-bound exercise to verify whether panels to probe sexual harassment allegations at workplace were constituted in all ministries and departments.

The top court said it was "disquieting" to note "serious lapses" in the enforcement of the 2013 Prevention of Sexual Harassment Act despite such a long time.

Calling it a "sorry state of

affairs", the apex court said it reflected poorly on all the state functionaries, public authorities and private undertakings.

The court direction came on a plea filed by a former head of department at Goa University Aureliano Fernandes, who challenged an order of the Bombay High Court over allegations of sexual harassment against him.

The high court rejected his plea against an order of the executive council of Goa University (disciplinary authority) which dismissed him from services and disqualified him from future employment.

The top court set aside the high court order, noting procedural lapses in inquiry proceedings and violation of the principles of natural justice.

Former CBI director Vijay Shankar breathes his last on Tuesday



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Former CBI Director Vijay Shankar breathed his last on Tuesday after prolonged illness, his family said. He was 76. His mortal remains will be donated to AIIMS as per his last wish, they said. A 1969-batch IPS officer of the Uttar Pradesh cadre, Shankar headed the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) from December 12, 2005 to July 31, 2008.

During his tenure as CBI director, the agency took over the infamous Aarushi-Hemraj double murder case. As

Additional Director of CBI, he supervised the extradition of gangster Abu Salem and actor Monika Bedi from Portugal. He also supervised the investigation into the Telgi scam. Before being appointed CBI director, Shankar headed National Disaster Response Force, and Civil Defence and Home Guards.

He served as Inspector General in the BSF and was posted in Jammu and Kashmir at the peak of militancy in the 1990s. A recipient of the coveted President's police medals for distinguished and meritorious service, Shankar also served in Uttar Pradesh Police and Moscow under the Ministry of External Affairs.

President calls for empathy, inclusivity, equal opportunities for Divyangjan

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

President Droupadi Murmu, on Tuesday, underscored the importance of providing opportunities for employment, entrepreneurship, and economic empowerment for Divyangjan (people with disabilities), saying such avenues can significantly improve their lives, enabling them to live more meaningful and independent lives.

Speaking at the National Awards ceremony on World Disability Day on December 3, President Murmu highlighted the need for empathy, inclusivity, and equal opportunities for Divyangjan (persons with disabilities). She emphasised that persons with disabilities deserve empathy, not sympathy; natural affection, not special attention; and, above all, they should experience respect.

She urged society to foster an environment that treats Divyangjan with dignity and equality.

President Murmu pointed out that being differently-abled is not a limitation but a special condition that requires tailored support. "Special training, counselling, and facilities must be provided for their needs. While the government is prioritizing their welfare, society must also step forward to ensure their inclusion," she said.

The President also lauded the significant achievements of Divyangjan in various fields, especially sports and noted the remarkable improvement in India's performance in the



Paralympics. She said in 2012, India won only one medal, but by 2024, increased awareness and support for Divyangjan had led to a remarkable 29 medals.

"A truly sensitive society ensures equal opportunities and seamless access for everyone," she said. She also praised the collaboration among various ministries and departments under a whole-of-gov-

ernment approach to enhance accessibility and urged them to work more cohesively to advance the social and economic empowerment of Divyangjan.

At the ceremony, 33 individuals, institutions, and organizations were recognized for their significant contributions to the empowerment of persons with disabilities in various fields. Among the honorees were Iytha Mallikarjuna, recognized as the Sarvshreshth Divyangjan for his work in creating opportunities for persons with disabilities, and Prateek Khandelwal, a Bengaluru-based social entrepreneur, awarded for his efforts in making urban spaces accessible through his initiative Ramp My City. In a related event, the National Centre for Promotion

of Employment for Disabled People (NCPEDP) Helen Keller Awards celebrated 25 years, honoring 17 individuals and organizations for promoting the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the workforce. Notable awards included Role Model Persons with Disabilities to Basant Sahu (Chhattisgarh), Nishtha Thaker (Gujarat), Resham Talwar (Delhi), and Dilip Kumar Dahyalal (Gujarat).

Role Model Supporters of Increased Employment for Persons with Disabilities: Ashish Verma (Hyderabad), Ameesha Prabhu (Mumbai), and Ajay Govind (Dehradun) while Lifetime Achievement Award was conferred on Thilakam Rajendran, for her relentless dedication to disability inclusion.

WCD Minister slams two BJP-Opp ruled States for not enforcing women's safety measures

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

A day after Union Minister Mansukh Mandaviya rapped the Delhi and West Bengal Governments for failing to implement central flagship Ayushman Bharat health insurance scheme, Union Women and Child Development Minister Annapurna Devi pulled up the two BJP-Opposition ruled States for not enforcing crucial women's safety measures despite central funding and support.

Addressing the media, the Minister pointed out that the Delhi government had failed to pay the staff working at the One-Stop Centres (OSCs), which were set up under the Nirbhaya Fund to assist women in distress.

She emphasised that the Centre had consistently provided support through initiatives like the Nirbhaya Fund, yet state-level delays in implementation were disappointing. The Delhi High Court had recently directed the Delhi government's revenue department to streamline payment processes for OSC staff and take action against the responsible officials.

"The Centre has consistently supported states through initiatives like the Nirbhaya Fund, but it is disappointing to see delays in implementation at the state level," the Minister said. Minister Devi also took aim at the West Bengal government for its failure to operationalise Fast Track Special Courts (FTSCs) aimed at expediting cases under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO)



Act, an initiative that received central backing.

In contrast, she highlighted the success of these programs on the national level, citing the 802 OSCs across the country that have supported over 10 lakh women and the 752 FTSCs that have resolved over 2.66 lakh cases. Devi further emphasized the central government's commitment to women-led development, noting the increase in the Gender Budget from Rs 97,000 crore in 2013-14 to over Rs 3 lakh crore in 2024-25.

Devi also referred to the Nari Shakti Vandan Act, which reserves 33 percent of seats for women in Parliament and state assemblies, as a landmark step toward empowering women. She reiterated Prime Minister Narendra Modi's belief that India's progress is closely tied to the empowerment of its women. Savitri Thakur, the Minister of State for Women and Child

Development, echoed Devi's sentiments, celebrating the progress in gender equality. She highlighted the election of 74 women to the Lok Sabha in 2024 as a record and noted the successes of programs like Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao, which have improved the national sex ratio.

Thakur also pointed to the significant number of women who have benefited from housing initiatives like the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, as well as financial empowerment programs like Stand Up India and Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana.

Former Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya had on Monday vehemently criticised the Delhi and West Bengal Governments for not implementing the Ayushman Bharat health insurance scheme, saying that there should not be any politics over health schemes.

NCPEDP marks World Disability Day 2024 with the launch of a Media Toolkit

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

As one of its vital institutions, media has enormous influence on society and societal values. It's a potent tool to influence behavior and challenge stereotypes. Acknowledging the role of media in transforming societal initiatives, the National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People (NCPEDP) in collaboration with O.P. Jindal Global University and EXL launched a Media Toolkit - A Guide to Reporting Disability. This toolkit would provide journalists with guidelines on respectful language, best practices, and strategies to engage with disability issues thoughtfully, ensuring that this invis-

ibilized topic receives accurate representation in media.

"This toolkit has been developed to equip journalists with the tools to report on disability with accuracy and respect, promote the use of empowering language that highlights rights and capabilities, not just challenges, serves as a resource for understanding the socio-political and legal framework that governs disability rights in India, such as the RPWD Act 2016 and the UNCRPD. I hope this initiative will contribute to building a media landscape where persons with disabilities are portrayed not as victims or heroes but as individuals with equal rights, aspirations, and contributions to make," remarked Arman Ali, Executive Director, NCPEDP, during a panel discussion held

on the launch of the toolkit on Tuesday.

The launch of the media toolkit was followed up by a panel discussion titled "The Role of Media in Shaping the Discourse on Disability," moderated by Prof. Kishalay Bhattacharjee, Professor & Dean, Jindal School of Journalism and Communication, O.P. Jindal Global University. The panelists included Arman Ali, Executive Director, NCPEDP; Dr. Navneet Anand, Founder Director, GreyMatters Communications; Bharat Sharma, Senior Assistant Vice President - Transformation and Solutioning, EXL; and Muskan Jain, Assistant Vice President - Global Corporate Social Responsibility Lead, EXL.

PM Modi speaks to TN CM enquiring about flood situation

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke to Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin on Tuesday to enquire about the flood situation in parts of the state and assured him of all possible support from the Centre. Official sources said Modi called up Stalin regarding the flood situation.

Villupuram district in north Tamil Nadu continued to reel under unprecedented flooding on Monday following extremely heavy rainfall, virtually blocking access to villages and residential colonies as bridges and roads were



submerged and inundating huge acreage of standing crops. In Tiruvannamalai, tragedy unfolded as five bodies were recovered from a house crushed by a boulder that rolled down a hilltop following a mud slip on the night of December 1 during rains.

Maharashtra village cancels ballot-based repoll after police warning

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ SOLAPUR/MUMBAI

A section of villagers from Maharashtra's Malshiras Assembly segment seeking re-election using ballot papers gave up their plan on Tuesday after intervention by police and administration, NCP (SP) leader Uttam Jankar who won the seat said.

Nana Patole, state Congress president, alleged that officials used police to block villagers under the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) pressure, raising serious concerns about the credibility of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs). Earlier, residents of Markadwadi village under the Malshiras segment in Solapur district had put up banners claiming a repoll will be held on ballot papers on December 3.

The village is part of the Malshiras Assembly constituency, where Jankar defeated BJP's Ram Satpute by 13,147 votes in the November 20 polls.

Though Jankar won the seat, Markadwadi residents claimed the quantum of votes polled by the Nationalist Congress Party (Sharad Pawar) (NCP-SP) leader was less compared with Satpute, expressing doubt about EVMs.

The Malshiras sub-divisional magistrate on Monday imposed prohibitory orders, under section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagrik Suraksha Sanhita, from December 2 to December 5 in the area.

Tehsildar Vijaya Pangarkar

rejected the villagers' plea seeking re-poll using ballot papers.

"The Assembly elections were conducted lawfully, and no objections were raised during voting or counting. Conducting a ballot paper poll now is illegal and beyond the scope of the election process," Pangarkar said on Tuesday.

Later, Narayan Shirgavkar, deputy superintendent of police (Malshiras division), said they had a detailed meeting with the villagers and NCP (SP) leader Jankar.

"We explained the procedures in the law to them and warned them that even if one vote is cast, cases will be registered," Shirgavkar said.

Jankar said after discussions with police officials and villagers, the repoll plan was cancelled.

The Congress, which won only 16 seats in the Maharashtra Assembly polls, has questioned the election process and EVM credibility. On Tuesday, Patole claimed that the people of Maharashtra suspect that the elections were not conducted transparently.

"Markadwadi villagers took a democratic step to address these doubts through a ballot paper poll. Instead, the administration, under BJP pressure, imposed restrictions and used police force to block them. This raises serious concerns about the credibility of EVMs and the government's intent," Patole tweeted.

If there were no irregularities

why is the administration afraid of a mock poll, Patole questioned.

"This was an opportunity to restore public trust in EVMs, but instead, the BJP's influence has eroded faith in the electoral system," the Congress leader stated.

NCP (SP) MLA from Ahilyanagar district, Rohit Pawar, also criticised the administration.

"The ballot paper poll decision by Markadwadi villagers was an opportunity for the Election Commission of India (ECI) to demonstrate EVM transparency. Instead, the administration acted in fear, imposing restrictions and deploying a massive police force. This raises questions about the state of democracy," he told reporters.

Ram Satpute, who lost the electoral contest in Malshiras constituency, accused BJP MLC Ranjitsinh Mohite Patil of orchestrating the unrest among villagers. "This was not a villagers' movement," Satpute said.

"Ranjitsinh Mohite Patil created a false narrative to malign the administration at the state level while targeting EVMs. The administration has rightly dismantled his plan. For the past three days, Mohite Patil's men have been threatening villagers, trying to instigate unrest. Uttamrao Jankar is merely a pawn, while Mohite Patil is the mastermind behind this scheme," Satpute alleged.

Earlier this year, Mohite Patil's younger brother and NCP (SP) leader defeated Satpute

in the Lok Sabha elections. Jankar said a meeting was held with police officials who warned of seizing the material at the polling station and filing cases.

"After meeting police, we discussed the matter with villagers. The villagers opined if the administration does not allow polling, there will be chaos and conflict between police and residents, which will deter people at the polling station," he said.

Considering the stand of the police and the administration, the villagers decided to stop the "polling" process, Jankar said.

Earlier, a villager Ranjit Markad claimed the village had 2,000 eligible voters on the polling day, and 1,900 of them exercised their franchise.

"The village always supported Jankar in the past, but this time, as per the counting of votes through EVMs, Jankar got 843 votes while BJP candidate Satpute polled 1,003 votes. This is not possible and we do not trust these EVM numbers, that is why we decided to conduct the repoll through ballot papers," said Markad.

In the recently concluded Maharashtra polls, the Mahayuti won 230 of the state's 288 seats, with the BJP emerging victorious in 132, Shiv Sena 57 and Ajit Pawar's NCP 41.

The Maha Vikas Aghadi, comprising the Shiv Sena (UBT), Congress and Sharad Pawar's NCP (SP), managed to get just 46 seats.



Residents affected by cyclone Fengal in Villupuram block Chennai-Tiruchirappalli National Highway demanding relief from the government. PTI

Stalin announces Rs 2,000 for families affected by Fengal

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ CHENNAI

The families in Villupuram, Cuddalore and Kallakurichi districts which bore the brunt of damage caused by Cyclone Fengal would be provided a relief of Rs 2,000 each, Tamil Nadu Chief M K Stalin announced on Tuesday.

Chairing a meeting at the Secretariat here to assess the damage due to rain in the state, the chief minister directed the officials to provide a relief sum of Rs 2,000 on the basis of family ration cards to families whose livelihood was affected due to a very heavy rain in Villupuram, Cuddalore and Kallakurichi districts. These districts witnessed unprecedented rain for more than two days.

The meeting decided to extend relief assistance to the rain-hit people in Villupuram, Kallakurichi, Thiruvannamalai, Cuddalore, Dharmapuri and Krishnagiri districts, and extend Rs 5 lakh as compensation each to the families who lost their kin due to cyclone or floods.

The government has decided to provide Rs 10,000 as compensation for damaged huts, give priority to construct houses under the Kalaingar Kanavu Illam (housing scheme) for completely damaged huts, provide Rs 17,000 per hectare relief for rain-damaged paddy crops, including irrigated crops to farmers, and Rs 22,500 per hectare for perennial crops and trees damaged.

It also decided to give Rs 8,500 per hectare for rain-damaged (rain-fed) crops, Rs 37,500 as

compensation for the loss of cattle including oxen and cows, Rs 4,000 for the loss of goats and sheep and a relief of Rs 100 for the loss of chicken. Special camps would be conducted in the rain-affected areas for issuing certificates, voter's ID and other documents lost or damaged due to floods, the government said in a release here.

Textbooks and notebooks damaged due to rain would be provided for the affected students.

The chief minister himself visited Chengalpattu and Villupuram districts to assess the damage due to rain and to supervise the relief and restoration work, while Deputy Chief Minister Udhayanidhi Stalin and state ministers supervised the relief work in various other districts in the state.

New laws protecting rights of citizens, claims PM

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ CHENNAI

Chandigarh has become the country's first administrative unit where 100 per cent implementation of the three criminal laws has been done with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday saying these new legislations are becoming protector of citizen's rights and the basis of ease of justice. The laws -- Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, Bharatiya Nagrik Suraksha Sanhita and Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam - came into effect on July 1, replacing the British-era Indian Penal Code, Code of Criminal Procedure and the Indian Evidence Act, respectively.

Chandigarh has become the country's first administrative unit where 100 per cent implementation of the three laws has been done. Speaking on the occasion, the prime minister said the new criminal laws represent a concrete step towards realising the ideals enshrined in the Constitution for the benefit of all citizens.

He said the new laws came into effect at a time when country is moving ahead with the pledge of "Viksit Bharat" and 75 years of adoption of Constitution have been completed, thus the launch of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, rooted in constitutional values, is a significant occasion.



Members of the United Zou Organization (UZO) stage demonstration against the decision to scrap the Free Movement Regime and fence the India-Myanmar border. PTI

Zou group protest border fencing, FMR

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ CHURACHANDPUR

A demonstration was held in Manipur on Tuesday to protest the government's decision to scrap the India-Myanmar Free Movement Regime (FMR). Demonstration, led by the United Zou Organisation, started at the 'Wall of Remembrance' around 11.30 am. The demonstrators raised slogans against the government's decision to scrap FMR and fence the international border.

Meity groups urge Center to secure Indo-Myanmar border

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ IMPHAL

Coordinating Committee on Manipur Integrity (COCOMI), an umbrella body of Meitei civil society organisations, on Tuesday asked the central government to secure the Indo-Myanmar border and dismantle the infrastructure of armed militant groups. COCOMI also called for transparent investigations into allegations of collusion between security forces and Kuki armed groups. The Centre needs to take

"decisive action to secure the Indo-Myanmar border and to dismantle the infrastructure of armed militant groups within the state in a stipulated time," COCOMI said in a statement.

A comprehensive strategy is required to address infiltration, illegal poppy cultivation, illegal arms smuggling and trafficking of drugs and also to restore the demographic balance in Manipur, it said.

COCOMI also alleged that the crisis in the northeastern state resulted from "Kuki aggression" and that the

India-Myanmar border has been "mismanaged deliberately".

Both the central and state governments have repeatedly claimed that infiltration from Myanmar is the root cause behind the violence between Imphal valley-based Meiteis and Kukis based in hill districts.

Manipur has remained gripped by recurring bouts of violence since ethnic clashes between the two communities first erupted in May last year. At least 258 people have been killed and thousands rendered homeless since then.

Newborn's body found in a box at Lucknow airport

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ LUCKNOW

A shocking incident unfolded at Lucknow's Amausi Airport on Tuesday morning when the body of a newborn was discovered in a courier box during routine cargo scanning.

The package, booked for Indigo flight 6E 2238 to Mumbai, triggered a security alert, prompting immediate action by the airport's cargo staff and authorities.

The discovery occurred when a scanning machine beeped unusually during the inspection of cargo items.

Upon opening the box, staff found the lifeless body of a month-old infant inside a plastic container. The matter was promptly reported to the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), which is responsible for airport security.

The courier agent who booked the parcel, identified as Shiv Baran Yadav, was detained and handed over to the CISF for questioning. However, Yadav reportedly failed to provide any explanation or documentation regarding the presence of the newborn's body in the courier package.

According to airport sources,

the cargo team, led by staff member Ankit Kumar, was conducting routine scans of goods booked for air cargo. The scanning machine flagged the package, and upon manual inspection, the body of the newborn was found. Shocked by the discovery, the cargo team immediately informed the CISF and local police, who took charge of the situation.

"We were shocked to find the infant's body inside," Kumar said.

The airport police confirmed the recovery of the body from the cargo premises and are probing the circumstances surrounding the incident. "It

appears that the body was being sent to Mumbai, possibly for some examination," said the airport post-in-charge. Authorities are investigating whether the courier company or the agent was aware of the box's contents. As of now, no official documents have been presented to justify the transportation of the body. The identity of the newborn and the circumstances of their death remain unknown, and police are working to uncover more details.

The incident has raised serious concerns over the misuse of courier services and airport security measures.

Engineering seats scam, 10 arrested

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ BENGALURU

Ten people, including a staff member of the Karnataka Examinations Authority (KEA), have been arrested for their alleged involvement in an engineering seat-blocking scam, police said on Tuesday.

According to police, the matter came to light on November 13 when KEA officials lodged a complaint at the Malleswaram police station, reporting a suspected seat-blocking scheme during the 2024-2025 undergraduate engineering admissions.

A senior police officer said that during the investigation, three private engineering college managers were questioned based on the complaint, which led to the collection of evidence. "We have arrested 10 people, including a KEA staffer. The others include middlemen and staff members from some engineering colleges," the officer said. The arrests were made over some time, with three suspects apprehended on Monday.

Students protest Waqf claim, chant Hanuman Chalisa in Varanasi College

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ LUCKNOW

Tensions flared at Uday Pratap College (UP College) in Varanasi as students staged a protest on Tuesday, reciting the Hanuman Chalisa near a campus shrine in defiance of police efforts to maintain order.

The demonstration was a direct response to the Uttar Pradesh Sunni Central Waqf Board's contentious claim over the college premises. Hundreds of students gathered, raising slogans of "Jai Shri Ram" and breaking through police barricades. A heavy police presence, led by Additional Police Commissioner (Law and Order) Dr. S. Channappa, was deployed to contain the unrest, but the students remained resolute in their demands.

Protesting students alleged that an increase in religious activities on campus was affecting the academic atmosphere. "The rise in such activities is spoiling the study environment. We cannot allow

this to continue," said one of the agitators.

The situation escalated further when a group of individuals attempted to offer namaz at the campus mosque. Police intervened, detaining one individual, identified as Mukhtar, for allegedly inciting religious gatherings.

Authorities clarified that no religious activity would be permitted on campus until ongoing exams were concluded.

Despite efforts by the police to prevent further demonstrations, students managed to breach barricades and continue their protest near the shrine.

The unrest stems from a 2018 notice issued by the Sunni Central Waqf Board, claiming the college land as its property. This notice, which has recently resurfaced, has sparked outrage among students and staff, who see it as an infringement on the institution's autonomy.

UP College spans over 100 acres and includes a mosque built by Nawab Tonk, along with the tomb of Kachnar Shah, occupying three biswas

of land. While the mosque has historically been frequented by four to five daily worshippers, over 500 people reportedly gathered for Friday prayers last week—an unusual surge that coincided with Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's visit to the college. During the event, the CM announced plans to upgrade the institution to university status. The land dispute dates back to 2008, when Wasim Ahmed, a resident of Varanasi, filed a claim with the Waqf Board, alleging that the college administration had encroached on Waqf property. In 2018, the board issued a notice warning that the land would be registered as Waqf property if the college failed to respond.

Founded in 1909 by Maharaja Rajarshi Singh Judeo, Uday Pratap College is an educational hub comprising multiple institutions, including Uday Pratap Inter College, Rani Murar Balika Inter College, Uday Pratap Public School, a management college, and an autonomous college, catering to over 15,000 students.

Fighting for justice, 40 years past midnight in Bhopal



Survivors of the 1984 Bhopal gas tragedy take out a torch rally to mark the 40th anniversary of the disaster. PTI

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ IMPHAL

Organisations representing survivors of the Bhopal gas tragedy on Tuesday took out a protest march to mark the 40th anniversary of one of the biggest industrial disasters in the world and demanded an end to the "injustice" faced by them.

The rally participants, carrying an effigy of "corporate crime" at the now defunct Union Carbide factory site, denounced various regional, national and international leaders and relief organisations for their

continued involvement in the "denial" of justice and a life of dignity to survivors of the catastrophe.

A large number of women and men, holding placards, marched towards the abandoned factory site while raising the slogan "Bhopal Ka Insaaf Karo".

On the intervening night of December 2-3, 1984, the highly toxic gas methyl isocyanate (MIC) leaked from Union Carbide's pesticide plant, killing 5,479 persons and maiming more than five lakh others.

Bhopal Gas Peedit Mahila Stationery Karmchari Sangh

president Rashida Bee, alleged that successive US presidents have actively protected Union Carbide and Dow Chemical from prosecution in India. "We wish that US President-designate Donald Trump puts an end to the long history of injustice in Bhopal in his effort to make America great again. We hope Trump will take action against Union Carbide Corporation and the Dow Chemical company," she said.

Balkrishna Namdeo, from the Bhopal Gas Peedit Nirashrit Pensionbhogee Sangharsh Morcha, claimed all scientific studies were now pointing out

the ongoing illnesses and continuing deaths among the half-a-million survivors and health impacts on their children.

Bhopal Group for Information and Action representative Rachna Dhingra claimed the Union Carbide-owned Dow Chemical's business in India has increased more than 10 times under the present regime at the Centre.

In 10 years, the groundwater in Bhopal, which should have been cleaned up by Dow Chemical according to the polluter pays principle, has moved 3 kilometres into the city, she further claimed.

Over 400 workers from Odisha died across India in last decade

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ BHUBANESWAR

Over 400 migrant workers from Odisha died outside the state in the last 10 years, the assembly was informed on Tuesday. Replying to a question by BJP MLA Tankadhar Tripathy, Labour Minister Ganesh Ram Singhkhuntia said 403 migrant workers from Odisha died in other states between 2015 and November 27. The highest number of 59 migrant workers from Ganjam district died while working outside

the state during the period. It was followed by Kalahandi, 39, Bolangir, 35, Kandhamal, 32, and Rayagada, 28, districts. Singhkhuntia said the government issued 388 licenses to labour contractors under the Inter-State Migrant Workmen, Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service, Act for the migration of 26. In 2024, he said, Singhkhuntia said his government has set up a high-level task force led by Deputy CM KV Singh Deo to address the issue of distress migration.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Junta under siege

Myanmar's Junta is losing grip as rebel gains mount, raising fears of a balkanised future

After years of oppressive rule, human rights abuses, and atrocities against its own people, Myanmar's military rulers are now on the defensive. Their grip on power appears increasingly fragile as armed rebels gain significant ground. A year-long offensive has allowed anti-junta forces to seize much of the 480-km National Highway 3, connecting Mandalay to China, a critical route cutting through northern Myanmar's rugged terrain. This victory denies the military lucrative taxes, threatens its strongholds in the central plains, and boosts rebel morale as the civil war enters its fourth year. Myanmar is teetering on the edge of disintegration as the military junta, which seized power in a 2021 coup, confronts increasingly severe attacks from armed rebel groups across the country. Over the past year, ethnic armed organisations and local militias have intensified their offensives, capturing key regions and heightening the risk of Myanmar splintering into fragmented zones of control. The most biggest challenge to the junta has come from the alliance between the Arakan Army (AA), the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA), and the Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA). Operating primarily in Shan State along the border with China, these groups have launched strategic, synchronised assaults, undermining the junta's control in this crucial region.



The Arakan Army's offensives in Rakhine and Chin States have yielded significant territorial gains, placing vast swathes of land and critical townships under their control. These advances threaten the junta's ability to project authority in regions vital for natural resources and strategic positioning. China, a key stakeholder with significant economic interests in Myanmar, has sought to balance its influence between the junta and rebel groups. As rebel forces secure near-total control over regions such as Rakhine and parts of Shan State, the junta's ability to govern the country as a unified entity is waning fast. This fragmentation could pave the way for the de facto partition of Myanmar into autonomous zones controlled by various factions. The war within has not been easy and the common people are paying the price. Entire communities have been displaced, particularly in the Rohingya-majority regions, where people face violence from multiple fronts. Basic services are scarce, and the humanitarian crisis is deepening. Prolonged conflict has devastated Myanmar's economy, deterring foreign investment and crippling key sectors. Infrastructure projects backed by China and other countries are at risk, compounding economic instability. The instability in Myanmar has broader implications for Southeast Asia, particularly for neighboring countries like Thailand and India. Cross-border violence, refugee flows, and the potential for illicit activities such as drug trafficking pose significant challenges for regional stability. The coming days will be critical in determining whether Myanmar can salvage its unity or succumb to a spiral of fragmentation and perpetual conflict.

holder with significant economic interests in Myanmar, has sought to balance its influence between the junta and rebel groups. As rebel forces secure near-total control over regions such as Rakhine and parts of Shan State, the junta's ability to govern the country as a unified entity is waning fast. This fragmentation could pave the way for the de facto partition of Myanmar into autonomous zones controlled by various factions. The war within has not been easy and the common people are paying the price. Entire communities have been displaced, particularly in the Rohingya-majority regions, where people face violence from multiple fronts. Basic services are scarce, and the humanitarian crisis is deepening. Prolonged conflict has devastated Myanmar's economy, deterring foreign investment and crippling key sectors. Infrastructure projects backed by China and other countries are at risk, compounding economic instability. The instability in Myanmar has broader implications for Southeast Asia, particularly for neighboring countries like Thailand and India. Cross-border violence, refugee flows, and the potential for illicit activities such as drug trafficking pose significant challenges for regional stability. The coming days will be critical in determining whether Myanmar can salvage its unity or succumb to a spiral of fragmentation and perpetual conflict.

PICTALK



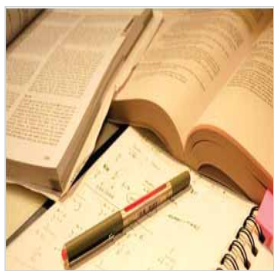
Bullock carts loaded with sugarcane head towards the Sugar Factory for crushing, in Karad

PTI

One nation one subscription as a catalyst for equitable education

Access to quality academic resources remains a significant challenge for students and researchers, especially in India's remote regions

Access to quality resource materials remains a critical challenge for students and research scholars, particularly in the remote corners of India. While the digital age has transformed the way information is disseminated, physical libraries continue to be the cornerstone of academic excellence.



address this disparity and revitalize the educational landscape. Despite technological advancements, access to quality academic resources has not been democratised in India till now. Libraries in most colleges and universities face an alarming decline for various reasons. The lack of interest among younger generations in visiting libraries and shrinking funds has exacerbated this crisis. Unfortunately, in many public institutions, mainly in visiting libraries and shrinking funds has exacerbated this crisis. Libraries in most colleges and universities face an alarming decline for various reasons. The lack of interest among younger generations in visiting libraries and shrinking funds has exacerbated this crisis. Unfortunately, in many public institutions, mainly in visiting libraries and shrinking funds has exacerbated this crisis.

lack of support and an uninviting atmosphere can deter students and researchers from making libraries their go-to space for academic and intellectual pursuits, further eroding the library culture that is already under threat. The One Nation One Subscription initiative aims to address these challenges by providing nationwide access to high-quality academic resources through a centralized system. By negotiating bulk subscriptions to international and national journals, databases, and e-books, the initiative can ensure that every student has the same knowledge regardless of geographic or economic constraints.

What a student or scholar gets in a national institute will be available to a student in a university situated in a remote corner of the country. It's democratising the knowledge resource. However, the success of this initiative depends on more than just access. India needs a parallel effort to rejuvenate its library ecosystem. Even in the digital age, physical libraries are irreplaceable as spaces for reflection and collaboration.

The Government should provide adequate funds to modernise the libraries and also take steps to recruit skilled, motivated librarians who understand the evolving needs of readers and can effectively manage digital and physical resources. To ensure inclusivity, the One Nation One Subscription must provide individual login credentials to every registered student and scholar, enabling direct access to resources anytime, anywhere. This would bypass traditional institutional gatekeeping and foster a more reader-friendly environment. Policymakers must ensure this ambitious plan does not falter due to a lack of implementation or neglect of complementary measures. Knowledge is the cornerstone of progress, and access to it must be recognised as a fundamental right, not a privilege. To fully realise the potential of this initiative, it is essential that the government ensures access to these resources for every student.

(The writer is an adjunct faculty at the National Institute of Advanced Studies; views are personal)



BIJU DHARAMPALAN

access to these resources for every student.

(The writer is an adjunct faculty at the National Institute of Advanced Studies; views are personal)

How Nehru targeted his opponents

Nehru targeted Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee and Dr B R Ambedkar, leaders who had shaped India's Constitution but differed with his vision for the nation



ANIRBAN GANGULY

As the campaign for the first general elections in 1951-1952 played out, the Congress led by Nehru fiercely targeted two leaders. For the fledgling Jana Sangh and Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee, Nehru came out in open abuse, vowing to 'crush Jana Sangh'. For Dr Ambedkar and the Scheduled Caste Federation, the Congress adopted a ruse.

Nehru deputed his trusted communist friends to ensure Babasaheb's defeat. Jawaharlal was essentially a petty man when it came to his political and intellectual opponents. It did not matter to him that they were his colleagues in the Constituent Assembly till the other day and had contributed to erecting the constitutional edifice of free India. He wanted both Ambedkar and Syama Prasad defeated. He was allergic to their parliamentary skills and to their vocal advocacy of a new polity for India. He wanted a new Parliament shorn of opponents, except communists, who, in any case, were his ideological co-travellers. Nehru did not put up a candidate against A K Gopalan in Kannur. This camaraderie overflowed especially after Sardar Patel's death. Despite Nehru's flame-throwing blitzkrieg Dr Mookerjee won his Calcutta south seat, with his Jana Sangh just about managing to stay afloat as a national party. Babasaheb lost from Bombay North seat, primarily because of the machinations of the communists who were outsourced by Nehru to carry out the hit-job against him.

It did not matter to Nehru that Dr Ambedkar's health was failing restricting his mobility. It did not matter to him that Dr Ambedkar had completely exhausted himself in the gargantuan task of putting together the Constitution and was therefore worthy of a noble gesture of support. Speaking of his defeat, Dr Ambedkar, one of his most authentic biographers Dhananjay Keer tells us, felt that it 'was due to the machinations of S.A. Dange'.

During the campaign Dange had given out a vicious slogan, he said, 'Spoil your votes but don't vote Dr Ambedkar'. To Dr Ambedkar,



Communism, was 'like a forest fire; it goes on burning and consuming anything and everything that comes in its way'. Nehru deftly fanned that forest fire. Dr Savita Ambedkar, in her reminiscences of her life with Dr Ambedkar, recalling this first election writes how Nehru was 'keeping a sharp eye on the constituency' and of how 'S K Patil (Mumbai boss of the Congress) and S A Dange of the Communist Party had agreed'.

It emerged, writes Savita Ambedkar, that 'Nehru, S K Patil and Dange had decided that they would do all that was required, use whatever strategy suited the occasion, but they were determined not to let Dr Ambedkar win'. The Congress-Communist conspiracy, as Savita Ambedkar describes it, left 'the Constitution-making Doctor Saheb defeated'. It was a terrible psychological blow for Saheb...

It was Congress's manipulation that caused the defeat of the maker of the Indian Constitution. This first defeat, deliberately inflicted on Dr Ambedkar, deeply disappointed him since he was looking forward to returning to Parliament. Parliament, he felt, was his natural arena of work, a forum standing on which he



NEHRU AND CONGRESS ENGINEERED A SECOND ELECTORAL DEFEAT WHEN BABASAHEB LOST THE BY-ELECTIONS TO LOK SABHA FROM THE BHANDARA SEAT

could give his best to his country's regeneration in his remaining years. 'This horrendous defeat in the elections,' writes Savita Ambedkar, 'had an extremely harmful impact on his already debilitated health, melancholy, disappointment, depression and disability returned.'

Nehru and Congress engineered a second electoral defeat when Babasaheb lost the by-elections to Lok Sabha from the Bhandara seat. For this election, Babasaheb chose a young RSS pracharak Dattopant Thengadi as his election convener.

Thengadi would closely work as Babasaheb's understudy for the next two years and would go on to found the world's largest trade union movement Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh. The Bhandara by-elections were a chance for the Congress to make amends and to give up its pettiness, but Nehru stuck to his blind opposition to Babasaheb.

Dr Savita Ambedkar, ruefully writes that the Congress 'should have displayed the largeness of heart to re-invite [to Parliament] the sculptor of the Constitution with due honour. For the sake of the welfare of the nation, if not for anything else, Nehru should have left the way open for Saheb to be elected to the Lok

Sabha. But quite to the contrary, the Congress shook hands with a person like Dange and applied all its strength and got into all kinds of machinations to defeat Saheb, which proves that Congress cared more for the party than for the welfare of the country.'

During the Bhandara elections, Dr Ambedkar writes Keer, was scathing of Nehru and Congress. He was fighting the elections, he said, 'so that he might give the people the other point of view from the Opposition. It would not have been difficult, he said, for him to be in Parliament if he was prepared to make a compromise with the Congress'. Babasaheb firmly chose not to compromise or succumb before Congress and thus faced political humiliation and insult in his last years.

When Nehru's heirs, thus, comically wield the Constitution today, they must be greeted with loud guffaws. Their action needs to be dismissed as the irrelevant and desperate posturing of the managers of a defeated political cartel.

(The writer is chairman Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee Research Foundation and member National Executive Committee, BJP; views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POPULATION GROWTH RATE DECLINES

Madam—The Rashtriya Swayamsevak (RSS) Sarsanghachalak (chief) Mohan Bhagwat raised concerns about declining birth rates, emphasising the importance of maintaining a birth rate of at least 2.1 to ensure the existence of social groups. He underscored unity despite differences and highlighted the inclusivity of Indian culture without caste discrimination. It is, however, true that birth rates are falling in every nation and in the developed West, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and China.

Population is shrinking because of decreasing incidence of marriages among eligible young bachelors and spinsters and traditional marriages for life are fast getting replaced by live-ins, same-sex marriages, increasing rates of incidence of divorces, consensual/temporary affairs, and above all, spreading birth control measures irrespective of religious opposition to the same due to loosening of popular restraints or fear of religious tenets and prescriptions in all faiths. In India, Middle-class families are finding it difficult to provide better education for even two children and the value of rupees is decreasing and the purchasing power of rupees is going down. No educated person would like to have a third child. Just see how high the inflation is, GDP (gross domestic product) is down, the rupee is weak against the dollar, and we are having more children-who will feed them? Moreover, does Bhagwat have any solutions for real problems like poverty, jobs, and inflation? I feel this statement from Mohan Bhagwat is absurd and illogical.

Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee | Faridabad

CONTROVERSY OVER EVM

Madam—The growing controversy over the performance of EVM shows the dire need for a thorough study of its tamper-proof quality. Only when one loses, finds fault with EVMs is it acceptable? Definitely, it is the loser who seeks

Earth suffers from plastic pollution



Plastic has become the biggest headache for all living beings on the earth. Because of the chemicals present in it, this garbage is not only polluting the earth and water, but it is also causing problems for the animals in the sea. The talks held in the South Korean city of Busan to find a solution to plastic waste ended inconclusively on Monday. It has been said that all the countries will meet again next year i.e. in 2025. But the way the world has been divided into two parts on this subject in this meeting itself, it does

not seem that there is any scope for any kind of agreement after this. It is estimated that since 1950, more than eight billion tonnes of plastic have been produced worldwide, but less than 10 per cent has been recycled. Due to this, millions of tonnes of plastic have reached the oceans around the world, posing a serious threat to aquatic life and their environment.

While developed countries want a complete ban on its production. A group of 95 countries, including the UK, the European Union, the African Group and many South American countries, has emerged, calling for making Article 6 a legally binding pledge to reduce production levels. But a group of oil-producing countries, including Saudi Arabia, Iran, Kuwait and Russia, strongly opposed it. India too has expressed its concern about including any commitment to cut plastic production, as it could impact its right to development.

Jang Bahadur Singh | Jamshedpur

COP29 FALLS SHORT OF EXPECTATIONS

Madam—The COP29 conference held at Baku was disappointing to say the least. It would be an understatement to say that it has delivered a deadly blow to international efforts to restrict global warming and put extra pressure on developing nations that are already struggling to emerge from the economic slowdown due to ongoing wars in West Asia and Europe.

How can they put developed nations and developing nations at par and expect the latter to do the heavy lifting? And to make matters worse, we have US President-elect Donald Trump, who has completely different ideas on this critical issue. With developed nations shying away from their responsibilities of helping developing nations to fight climate change, the future outlook for global climate mitigation looks grim. Developed nations will have to stop behaving like big brothers now and accept the reality and responsibility.

Bal Govind | Noida

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

A G Rajmohan | Anantapur



FIRST COLUMN

THE ETERNAL JOURNEY OF THE SOUL

Life and death are interwoven in an eternal cycle of renewal, granting the soul opportunities for growth



RAJYOGI BRAHMA KUMAR NIKUNJ JI

Very few humans know when death will come, how it will occur and where it will lead because death is inevitable and it keeps no calendar. Life may not be fair to all, but death deals equally with all, whether rich or poor, mighty or meek, deity or demon, saint or a sinner. Death has many shades to it. Dying for a noble cause such as for patriotism, or a social cause brings glory to the dead. Such deaths win over a lot of sympathy and goodwill for the soul.

Then some die a silent death without suffering much illness or pain. Such deaths happen to fortunate souls who perform good actions. There are also violent deaths such as accidents, murders, suicides, executions etc. Such deaths are preceded by suffering and bitterness and followed by more agony for the soul. So! Are there any happy deaths or can death be a rewarding experience? Well!!

To understand this, we have to first understand life. For this, we need to ask a few questions to ourselves as to what is it that lives when a human being is alive. What is it that ceases to exist when death occurs? On one hand, we say that a person has died and on the other hand, we talk of the body as the mortal remains. So what is mortal? The person or the body? In essence, life is a phenomenon that unfolds when a soul enters a body and death is simply a state when a soul leaves one body and enters a new one. Hence the person who passes away is the soul



that was living in the body. So, what is a soul? A soul is a sentient energy that manifests itself in three levels, the mind, intellect and sanskaras. A common saying goes that when you die the world is dead for you. Hence, what ends with death is the soul's connection or attachment to the limited world that it is related to whilst in the body, such as relationships, possessions, roles, etc. However, an amazing trait of the soul is that it carries over the karmic debts and sanskaras into the next life.

We all know that everyone has to die one day yet we never think about our death. This may be because as souls, we have been living in different bodies birth after birth for ages. Our attachment to the body is so strong that even in old age people buy bigger and better properties and continue to invest for the future so that they can live in comfort. Death is not the end of everything but it marks a major turning point in the journey of the soul in the human world.

Death also means newness. It fills the soul with freshness and renewed zest for life and broadens the scope for the soul to enrich itself and evolve with new experiences with different souls in different roles, bodies and places. This renewal is what makes the concept of eternity meaningful. The cycle of life and world drama could not go on eternally if there were no death. For a spiritually enlightened soul, death means final liberation from earthly bondages; it's an ascension to a higher realm of existence where the soul can experience total freedom and bliss because an enlightened soul takes rebirth in a golden age where it will not suffer untimely or painful death.

So, how does one get over the fear of death? For that, we need to understand that the root cause of our fear that leads us to sin & suffering is the consciousness and attachment of the body. Hence the awareness that we are eternal souls is the key to conquering the fear of death. Immortality is the awareness of our eternity and mastery over the body. It does not imply that we will go on existing in the same body forever. NO. A spiritually empowered soul becomes immortal by practising soul consciousness whilst living in the body. On the other hand, for sinful souls life itself is a living death for they die every day out of fear, remorse and suffering but those who die alive i.e. those who live in the world with no attachment to worldly matters are indeed liberated even in life.

(Writer is a spiritual educator and popular columnist; views are personal)

Delhi's pollution crisis: A call for sustainable solutions



RAJDEEP PATHAK

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



As India aspires to emerge as the world's third-largest economy, it continues to grapple with the challenge of crafting a robust policy framework to combat the persistent environmental crises (read pollution) in its capital city, Delhi. Thankfully, the stubble-burning season officially concluded on November 30, 2024, and it is perceived as the end of the annual apocalypse of Delhi's air pollution. But, it needs to be seen that although the practice was outlawed in 2015, it continues unabated, contributing to approximately 35 per cent of Delhi's pollution. However, the core issue extends far beyond stubble burning, encompassing broader atmospheric and industrial factors. Decisive action in addressing these deeper challenges – and not prolonged silence – is the need of the hour.

After weeks of smog and burning eyes and a high Air Quality Index (AQI), on December 2, 2024, Delhi's air quality showed marginal improvement for the second consecutive day, with the AQI that was recorded at 273 in the morning – though still within the 'poor' category. According to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), the city's 24-hour average AQI on December 1 stood at 285, providing a modest reprieve after 32 consecutive days of 'very poor' and 'severe' air quality (AQI levels exceeding 400). However, despite these minor improvements, the Supreme Court on December 2, 2024, refused to ease emergency restrictions under Stage 4 of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) for air pollution in Delhi. The Court emphasised that any relaxation of measures would depend on a consistent and substantial downward trend in AQI levels. The schools have nevertheless opened giving a fresh breath to the students from the online or hybrid mode. Although experts caution that pollution levels could potentially worsen, the past three days have seen clear skies and sustained, stronger winds from the northwest, which have facilitated the dispersion of pollutants. One of the most contributing factors of pol-



THE STATE OF PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION IN DELHI REMAINS DEEPLY INADEQUATE. ACCORDING TO A REPORT DELHI CURRENTLY HAS APPROXIMATELY 45 BUSES PER 100,000 RESIDENTS, BASED ON DATA FROM THE 2011 CENSUS

lution, according to the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), is 'vehicular pollution' which remains the most significant contributor to Delhi's air pollution, accounting for 51.1 per cent of emissions from all local sources, despite technical interventions aimed at reducing emissions. CSE's analysis highlights a persistent 'mobility crisis' in the city, characterised by systemic shortcomings in the public transport infrastructure despite years of investment. This crisis has driven a sharp increase in the number of private vehicles, which now play a substantial role in fuelling winter air pollution. Notably, even during periods of reduced stubble burning, Delhi's air quality frequently remains in the 'poor' or 'very poor' categories. CSE's report draws attention to several critical issues undermining public transportation, including its lack of reliability. For instance, instances of buses breaking down during transit rose significantly, from 781 in 2018-19 to 1,259 in 2022-23. Furthermore, high waiting times at bus stops reveal a fundamental inefficiency in the system: less than 1 per cent of bus stops offer waiting times of less than 10 minutes, while approximately 50 per cent require passengers to wait over 15 minutes. The state of public transportation in Delhi remains deeply inadequate. According to a report Delhi currently has approximately 45 buses per 100,000 residents, based on data from the 2011 census.

This figure is significantly below the benchmark set by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, which recommends a ratio of 60 buses per lakh of the population. In comparison, major global cities such as London, Hong Kong, Shanghai, and Seoul exhibit considerably higher ratios, ranging from 69 to 90 buses per 100,000

residents, highlighting a significant disparity in Delhi's public transportation infrastructure. While the Delhi Metro has been championed as a cornerstone of urban mobility, its impact remains constrained. With an average daily ridership of only 2,700 passengers per train, the Metro's limited capacity – that poor labourers aren't able to afford – and reach is evident, failing to address the broader needs of the city's commuters. According to The Economic Times, an unskilled daily-wage labourer in Delhi spend approximately 8 per cent of their income on travel via non-air-conditioned buses, 14 per cent on air-conditioned buses, and an alarming 22 per cent on the Metro. These figures underscore the economic burden placed on vulnerable sections of the population. The challenge is addressing the issue of 'affordability'. Data from the 'Economic Survey of Delhi 2023-24' further paints a stark picture of the city's growing vehicle population. Delhi currently has 7.9 million registered vehicles, with an additional 650,000 vehicles added in 2023-24, a figure that surpasses the pre-pandemic (COVID) annual average of 610,000. Moreover, the city experiences a daily influx and outflow of 1.1 million vehicles. The annual growth rate of two-wheelers and cars stands at 15 per cent, contributing significantly to transport-related pollution. Notably, according to the CSE, the transport sector accounts for 81 per cent of nitrogen oxide (NOx) emissions in the capital, further worsening its air quality challenges.

There is a reports that the number of vehicles in the capital doesn't correspond to the size of its population, showing how a small proportion of the population has an outsized contribution to the air pollution crisis. According to data obtained in

the latest cycle of the National Family Health Survey, only a small proportion of families residing in Delhi own cars – 19 per cent in its rural areas and 28 per cent in its urban centers. Yet, Delhi streets are often congested by this small proportion of car-owners." However, an equally concerning factor lies in the extensive proliferation of industries across Delhi and the National Capital Region (NCR), which persist as major and consistent sources of pollutants. These industrial emissions subject the residents of Delhi to a form of 'slow violence' (read poison). Therefore, enhancing public transportation systems is a pivotal strategy for addressing the challenges posed by urban mobility and environmental sustainability in Delhi. Key measures such as improving last-mile connectivity, reducing fares to ensure affordability for a broader demographic, and expanding the public transport fleet to accommodate the city's growing population are essential for reducing the dependence on private vehicles. By prioritising these initiatives, it is believed that a significant decrease in traffic congestion and vehicular emissions can be achieved, contributing to a cleaner and healthier urban environment. Moreover, such measures would improve the inclusivity and accessibility of the city, enabling individuals without personal vehicles to navigate Delhi more efficiently. In the long term, a robust and affordable public transport network would not only promote environmental sustainability but also enhance the overall quality of life for all residents by fostering greater equity and mobility within the city.

(The writer is Programme Executive, Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti; views are personal)

The impact of COVID-19 and lessons for preventing future pandemics

By strengthening healthcare systems and fostering global collaboration, we can minimise the risk of future pandemics write SUMER SINGH AHLUWALIA and SAISHA ANAND

COVID-19 has caused over 7,000,000 deaths worldwide, with countless others affected. These statistics barely begin to convey the immense impact of the pandemic, which brought loss to almost everyone. Wearing masks became the norm, schools transformed into virtual classrooms, and homes turned into makeshift workspaces. For a time, the world seemed to turn into a vast cemetery. Addressing and preventing future pandemics requires both personal behavioural changes and strict government regulations. These efforts can significantly reduce the risk of COVID-19 and similar health crises in the future.

Origins and Ethical Considerations

The origin of COVID-19 remains controversial, though it is widely believed to have stemmed from an animal sold at the Huanan Seafood Market in China. The consumption of meat, normalised for centuries, has often been linked to the emergence of infectious diseases. Diseases arising from the butchering of animals highlight the need for dietary shifts. Vegetarianism, for instance, is a proactive step that could reduce the likelihood of zoonotic spillovers and the spread of diseases like COVID-19. This also raises an ethical question: is it justifiable to kill animals merely to satisfy human taste preferences?

The Role of Vaccination

Vaccination has long been a topic of debate, and the

COVID-19 vaccines faced significant backlash. Many were hesitant due to concerns about the intentions of pharmaceutical companies and the fact that the vaccines did not provide sterilising immunity. However, vaccinations remain essential to eradicating diseases. According to the National Center for Immunisation and Respiratory Diseases, individuals who received the COVID-19 vaccine were 54 per cent less likely to contract SARS-CoV-2. Achieving herd immunity is crucial, requiring the transmission rate (Rt) to fall below 1, meaning each infected individual transmits the virus to less than one other person. The concept of the "socialism of the microbe" emphasises our responsibility to protect

others by safeguarding ourselves from infectious diseases. For instance, self-isolation, mask-wearing, and vaccination not only protect individuals but also shield vulnerable populations who cannot be vaccinated.

Preventative Measures

Personal precautions, such as wearing masks, self-isolating, and following hygiene protocols, are critical in containing the spread of viruses like SARS-CoV-2. A study in Bangladesh revealed that mask usage significantly reduced COVID-19 infections. As an RNA virus, SARS-CoV-2 evolves quickly, facilitating asymptomatic transmission. Research by Wang and Tong, published in the 'National Library of Medicine,' stresses the importance of strict quar-



antine measures for asymptomatic individuals to control the pandemic.

Government Interventions

Not everyone maintains the same hygiene standards, underscoring the need for government intervention. Investments in research and healthcare infrastructure are essential for pandemic preparedness. Projects like the

Global Virome Project and DEEP VZN aim to identify high-risk regions, animals, and viruses, enabling better predictions and preventive measures.

India's 2021 healthcare crisis serves as a stark example of unpreparedness. A lack of oxygen, hospital beds, and essential facilities led to thousands of deaths daily. Despite this, the country still faces a deficit in healthcare infrastructure, highlighting the urgent need for increased healthcare budgets. Economic barriers also prevent many from accessing necessary care. A study published in the 'National Library of Medicine' found that one in six adults avoids healthcare due to cost. Governments could address this by subsidising

basic health insurance, covering vaccines, health check-ups, and screenings. This would ensure equitable access to healthcare and encourage public participation in disease eradication efforts.

Education as a Tool for Change

Education plays a vital role in fostering behaviour change. Courses like "Global Change and Infectious Disease," offered at Wesleyan University, teach valuable skills for reducing infection risks. Such courses should be mandatory to instill a lifelong sense of personal and social responsibility. Teaching hygiene practices, such as proper handwashing, should start at a young age, while mass educational campaigns can raise awareness about infectious diseases across all age

groups. Social media can amplify these messages, encouraging responsible behaviours and helping curb the spread of future diseases.

Conclusion

Minimizing the spread of COVID-19 and preventing future pandemics requires a combination of personal behavioural changes and robust government interventions. These pandemics are a wake-up call, reminding us of the harmful impacts of human activities on the planet. By promoting practices like vegetarianism, personal hygiene, and social responsibility, we can mitigate the dangers of pandemics and build a hopeful future.

(Ahluwalia & Saisha are studying economics at Wesleyan University; views are personal)

China retaliates, bans export of chip-making minerals to US

AP ■ BANGKOK

China announced Tuesday it is banning exports to the United States of gallium, germanium, antimony and other key high-tech materials with potential military applications, as a general principle, lashing back at US limits on semiconductor-related exports.

The Chinese Commerce Ministry announced the move after the Washington expanded its list of Chinese companies subject to export controls on computer chip-making equipment, software and high-bandwidth memory chips. Such chips are needed for advanced applications. The ratcheting up of trade

restrictions comes as President-elect Donald Trump has been threatening to sharply raise tariffs on imports from China and other countries, potentially intensifying simmering tensions over trade and technology.

China's Foreign Ministry also issued a vehement reproof. "China has lodged stern protests with the US for its update of the semiconductor export control measures, sanctions against Chinese companies, and malicious suppression of China's technological progress," Lin Jian, a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson, said in a routine briefing Tuesday.

"I want to reiterate that China firmly opposes the US over-

stretching the concept of national security, abuse of export control measures, and illegal unilateral sanctions and long-arm jurisdiction against Chinese companies," Lin said. The minerals sourced in China are used in computer chips, cars and other products China said in July 2023 it would require exporters to apply for licenses to send to the US the strategically important materials such as gallium and germanium. In August, the Chinese Commerce Ministry said it would restrict exports of antimony, which is used in a wide range of products from batteries to weapons, and impose tighter controls on exports of graphite.

Such minerals are considered critical for national security. China is a major producer of antimony, which is used in flame retardants, batteries, night-vision goggles and nuclear weapon production, according to a 2021 US International Trade Commission report. The limits announced by Beijing on Tuesday also include exports of super-hard materials, such as diamonds and other synthetic materials that are not compressible and extremely dense. They are used in many industrial areas such as cutting tools, disc brakes and protective coatings. The licensing requirements that China announced in August also covered smelt-

ing and separation technology and machinery and other items related to such super-hard materials.

China is the biggest global source of gallium and germanium, which are produced in small amounts but are needed to make computer chips for mobile phones, cars and other products, as well as solar panels and military technology. China says it's protecting itself from US trade restrictions. After the US side announced it was adding 140 companies to a so-called "entity list" subject to strict export controls, China's Commerce Ministry protested and said it would act to protect China's "rights and interests." Nearly all of the companies affected by

Washington's latest trade restrictions are based in China, though some are Chinese-owned businesses in Japan, South Korea and Singapore.

Both governments say their respective export controls are needed for national security. China's government has been frustrated by US curbs on access to advanced processor chips and other technology on security grounds but had been cautious in retaliating, possibly to avoid disrupting China's fledgling developers of chips, artificial intelligence and other technology. Various Chinese industry associations issued statements protesting the US move to limit access to advanced chip-making tech-

nology. The China Association of Automobile Manufacturers said it opposed using national security as a grounds for export controls, "abuse of export control measures, and the malicious blockade and suppression of China." "Such behaviour seriously violates the laws of the market economy and the principle of fair competition, undermines the international economic and trade order, disrupts the stability of the global industrial chain, and ultimately harms the interests of all countries," it said in a statement.

The China Semiconductor Industry Association issued a similar statement, adding that such restrictions were dis-

rupting supply chains and inflating costs for American companies.

"US chip products are no longer safe and reliable. China's related industries will have to be cautious in purchasing US chips," it said.

The US gets about half its supply of both gallium and germanium metals directly from China, according to the US Geological Survey. China exported about 23 metric tonnes (25 tonnes) of gallium in 2022 and produces about 600 metric tonnes (660 tonnes) of germanium per year. The US has deposits of such minerals but has not been mining them, though some projects underway are exploring ways to tap those resources.

Hezbollah attack draws Israeli strikes on Lebanon, 11 killed

AP ■ JERUSALEM

Israel unleashed its largest wave of airstrikes across Lebanon since agreeing to a ceasefire with Hezbollah last week, killing at least 11 people on Monday after the Lebanese militant group fired a volley of projectiles as a warning over what it said were Israeli truce violations.

The projectiles were apparently the first time that Hezbollah took aim at Israeli forces after the 60-day ceasefire went into effect last Wednesday. The increasingly fragile truce aimed to end more than a year of war between Hezbollah and Israel — part of a wider regional conflict sparked by the devastating Israel-Hamas war in Gaza.

In the United States, President-elect Donald Trump demanded the immediate release of Israeli hostages held by the Palestinian militant Hamas group in Gaza, saying on social media that if they are not freed

before he takes office in January there would be "HELL TO PAY."

It was not immediately clear whether Trump was threatening to directly involve the U.S. military in Israel's ongoing war in Gaza. The US has given Israel crucial military and diplomatic support throughout the nearly 15-month conflict.

A new exchange of fire threatens Lebanon ceasefire: Lebanon's Health Ministry said an Israeli airstrike on the southern village of Haris killed five people and wounded two while another airstrike on the village of Tallousa killed four and also wounded two. Israel's military carried out a string of airstrikes late Monday against what it said were Hezbollah fighters, infrastructure and rocket launchers across Lebanon, in response to Hezbollah firing two projectiles toward Mount Dov — a disputed Israeli-held territory known as Shebaa Farms in Lebanon where the borders of

Lebanon, Syria, and Israel meet. Israel said the projectiles fell in open areas and no injuries were reported. Hezbollah said in a statement that it fired on an Israeli military position in the area as a "defensive and warning response" after what it called "repeated violations" of the ceasefire deal by Israel. It said complaints to mediators tasked with monitoring the ceasefire "were futile in stopping these violations."

Before the Hezbollah projectiles, Israel carried out at least four airstrikes and an artillery barrage in southern Lebanon, including a drone strike that killed a person on a motorcycle, according to Lebanese state media.

Another strike killed a corporal in the Lebanese security services. Israel has said its strikes are in response to unspecified Hezbollah violations, and that under the ceasefire deal it reserves the right to retaliate. Lebanon's parliament speaker,

Nabih Berri, accused Israel of violating the truce more than 50 times in recent days by launching airstrikes, demolishing homes near the border and violating Lebanon's airspace.

Officials in the US — which along with France helped broker the truce and heads a commission meant to monitor adherence to the deal — played down the significance of Israeli strikes. White House national security spokesman John Kirby said, "Largely speaking, the ceasefire is holding."

"We've gone from dozens of strikes down to one a day maybe two a day," Kirby told reporters, referring to Israeli strikes. "We're going to keep trying and see what we can do to get it down to zero."

Under the deal, Iran-backed Hezbollah has 60 days to withdraw its fighters and infrastructure from southern Lebanon. During that time, Israeli troops are also to withdraw to their side of the border.

Plea to ban Indian TV channels in B'desh

PTI ■ DHAKA

A writ petition has been filed in the Bangladesh High Court seeking a ban on the broadcast of all Indian TV channels in the country citing provocative news aired on them, according to a media report.

Lawyer Ekhlas Uddin Bhuiyan filed the petition and confirmed the matter on Monday, the Dhaka Tribune reported.

Bhuiyan said a hearing on the application may take place on the High Court bench, which will consist of Justice Fatema Najib and Justice Sikder Mahmudur Razi.

The writ petition was filed in the High Court seeking a ban on the broadcast of all Indian TV channels in Bangladesh, the report added.

It further claims that these channels are not adhering to any

regulations. The secretaries of the Information Ministry and the Home Ministry, the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC), and others are named as respondents in the petition.

The relations between India and Bangladesh came under strain after the interim government headed by Muhammad Yunus came to power following the ouster of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in August.

India has been expressing concerns over attacks on minorities, especially Hindus, in that country.

There has been a rise in violent attacks against Hindus in Bangladesh. Hindu minority groups have been frequently reporting atrocities against their

community members in different parts of Bangladesh, even after Yunus took charge.

The diplomatic row erupted between India and Bangladesh after Hindu priest Chinmoy Krishna Das, a former member of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), was arrested from Dhaka's Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport on November 25.

Das, the spokesperson for the Bangladesh Sammilita Sanatani Jagran Jote, was denied bail and sent to jail by the Chattogram's Sixth Metropolitan Magistrate court in a seditious case on November 26.

It triggered clashes between his supporters and the security personnel that led to the killing of a lawyer.

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The relations between India and Bangladesh came under strain after the interim government headed by Muhammad Yunus came to power following the ouster of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in August.

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There has been a rise in violent attacks against Hindus in Bangladesh. Hindu minority groups have been frequently reporting atrocities against their

THE PIONEER CLASSIFIEDS

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Tarannum Ara Wife of Maroof Raza R/o. 198, Tilak Khand, Giri Nagar, Kalkaji, New Delhi-110019 have changed my name to Saba Tarannum Ara for all future purposes.

PD(1009)A

I, Kusum Devi, Mother of- No.18004558F Hav Yogesh Chander Kholia, R/o- D-199, Punjabi Basti, Baljeet Nagar, New Delhi - 110008, have changed my name from Kusum Devi to Kusum, vide affidavit dated 03/12/2024 before Notary Public Delhi.

PD(1011)C

I, Mahesh Chand Kholia, Father of- No.18004558F Hav Yogesh Chander Kholia, R/o- D-199, Punjabi Basti, Baljeet Nagar, New Delhi - 110008, have changed my name from Mahesh Chand Kholia to Mahesh Chander, vide affidavit dated 03/12/2024 before Notary Public Delhi.

PD(1012)C

I, Hairsh Chandra, S/o Sh. Lal Muni Fulara & F/o Komal, R/o A-40 Gali No.-6, East Vinod Nagar, Delhi-110091 solemnly affirm and declare that Harish Chander & Harish Chandra is one and same person.

PD(1013)C

I, Shama Bhatam W/o Rajan Bhatam R/o House No. 50, Anup Nagar, Uttam Nagar, West Delhi-110059 have Changed my Name Shama for all future purposes.

PD(1014)A

I, Rahisuddin, S/o, Farmuddin, House Number - 1118 , Gali Number, 18/5, Nehru Vihar, Dayalpur Delhi - 94 , That, I, have Changed My Name From Rahisuddin To Aryan, For All Purposes.

PD(1015)C

THANKSGIVING

Thank you holly spirit for all the blessings Celine .

PD(1010)C



President Joe Biden is greeted by Angolan Foreign Minister Tete Antonio as he arrives at Quatro de Fevereiro international airport in the capital Luanda, Angola long-promised visit to Africa. AP/PTI

Thanks to peace, luxury housing most sought after in Kabul

AP ■ KABUL

In a town that has been through it all and is clawing its way back, a man named Omidullah is looking to hit paydirt.

The Kabul real estate agent is selling a nine-bedroom, nine-bath, white-and-gold villa in the Afghan capital. On the roof's gable, glittering Arabic script tempts buyers and brokers with the word "mashallah" — "God has willed it."

The villa is listed at \$450,000, a startling number in a country where more than half of the population relies on humanitarian aid to survive, most Afghans don't have bank accounts, and mortgages are rare. Yet the offers are coming in.

"It's a myth that Afghans don't have money," Omidullah said. "We have very big businessmen who have big businesses abroad. There are houses here worth millions of dollars."

In Kabul, a curious thing is happening to fuel the high-end real estate market. Peace, it seems, is driving up property prices.

Many are coming home: People who spent years living

and working abroad are returning home, keen to take advantage of the country's much-improved security and stability after decades of war, destruction and infrastructure decay. They include Afghans escaping deportation campaigns in Iran and Pakistan who are taking their cash with them.

Mortgages are rare because banks don't have the deposits to facilitate lending. Afghans buy in cash or use the "geerawi option" — when someone provides a fixed sum to a landlord in return for living on his property and staying there until the landlord returns the money. People were afraid to invest in Kabul before the Taliban takeover, according to another real estate agent, Ghulam Mohammed Haqdoost. But the country's rulers have created better conditions for the property market in more ways than one.

The city is less violent since the Taliban transitioned from insurgency to authority and foreign forces withdrew, although armored vehicles, checkpoints and militarized compounds remain common sights.

The Taliban, sticklers for an

intricate bureaucracy, have pledged to stamp out corruption and regulate legal and commercial matters. That means no more dealing with warlords or bribing local officials for land purchases or construction projects.

Haqdoost is happy with how easily and quickly things are getting done under the new administration.

"House prices have risen by almost 40%," he said. "In the last three years, we have sold almost 400 properties. It wasn't like that before."

For builders, times are good: Business is good for Haqdoost, who employs 200 people in administration, including women who deal exclusively with female customers, and then some 1,000 in the construction arm of his company. He said most customers bring their wives along to viewings. That's because it's women who call the shots when it comes to real estate purchases — even in a nation that critics say oppresses and disempowers women. "The power and authority of the house is in the hands of the women," Haqdoost said.

PTI ■ LONDON

The British government continues to monitor the situation in Bangladesh as members of Parliament raised concerns over recent attacks on the minority Hindu community there and arrest of religious leaders, a senior minister said here.

During an urgent question tabled in the House of Commons by Labour MP Barry Gardiner on Monday, the Foreign Office Minister in charge of the Indo-Pacific, Catherine West said that she had been given assurances by the interim government in Bangladesh that support was available for minority com-

munities during her visit to Bangladesh last month. She stressed that the UK was one of the first countries with ministerial support to arrive in Dhaka to speak with Chief Adviser Professor Yunus and be "vocal" in support of minorities.

"We are aware of the statement of concern from the Indian government following the arrest of Chinmoy Krishna Das, a well-known Hindu leader, on sedition charges. The UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) desk is closely monitoring those developments," said West. "The UK government will continue to monitor the situation,

including making representations from this House, and will engage with the interim government in Bangladesh on the importance of freedom of religion or belief specifically as it affects the Hindu community," she said.

Tension between India and Bangladesh has been simmering since August 5, when deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina fled to India. The situation aggravated further with Das' arrest last week. The Hindu community in Bangladesh has regularly faced attacks on its members and places of worship during the widespread protests against Hasina's Awami League-led government over a controver-

sial job quota system. The attacks have continued even after Muhammad Yunus, a Nobel laureate, took over as the Chief Adviser of the interim government on August 8.

Gardiner, MP for Brent West in London with a large British Hindu population, described the situation as being "clearly on a knife edge" and raised concerns on behalf of the "large diaspora populations in the UK and large Hindu communities with strong links to the community in Bangladesh".

The shadow foreign secretary, Conservative MP Priti Patel, noted that the degree of escalation in the violence is "deeply, deeply concerning".

Nepal, China sign nine-point pact during Oli's visit to Beijing

PTI ■ KATHMANDU/BEIJING

Nepal and China on Tuesday signed a nine-point agreement as Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli met President Xi Jinping in Beijing when the two leaders discussed connectivity, industrial development, infrastructure development and trade and tourism among other issues.

Earlier, Oli — who is on a four-day official visit — held a bilateral meeting with his Chinese counterpart Li Qiang in Beijing, the Prime Minister's Secretariat said.

The bilateral meeting with the Chinese president, at the

State Hall in Beijing, mainly dwelt on matters related to connectivity, industrial development, infrastructural development, medical cooperation, agricultural development, trade and tourism, investment, science and technology, sports, disaster management, people-to-people contact and poverty alleviation, Krishna Prasad Dhakal, spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said in Kathmandu.

Dhakal said that a nine-point agreement was also signed during the visit, including several memorandums of understanding (MoUs).

Agreements that were signed include an exchange of

letters regarding the construction of the Tokha-Chhahari tunnel road near Kathmandu; an MoU on Nepal-China trade promotion, and an exchange of certificates of completion of the renovation of the historic nine-storey palace situated in Basantapur in Kathmandu.

Also, MoUs on protocol relating to the export of thermally processed buffalo meat to China; on development and construction works; on economic and technical assistance; on Chinese language education, and on cooperation in communication technology between Nepal Television and China Media Group were signed. There was also an

exchange of letters relating to aid in cash, he said.

Prime Minister Oli is on a four-day official visit to China starting Sunday. He will return on December 5.

On Sunday, the Nepal government announced that it has accepted projects worth USD 20 million as grant assistance from China ahead of Prime Minister Oli's first official visit to that country after assuming office for the fourth time.

Besides, the Nepali Cabinet also decided to accept 300 million Chinese Yuan (USD 4.13 million approximately) worth projects proposed by the government of China, the government spokesperson said.

Zimbabwe court allows abortion rights to marital rape victims, girls below 18

AP ■ HARARE

A law prohibiting abortion services for women raped by their husbands and girls under the age of 18 is unconstitutional, Zimbabwe's High Court has ruled. In his ruling handed down on November 22 and made public this week, Judge Maxwell Takuva said since Zimbabwe's laws already criminalise marital rape and sex with a minor, victims should be allowed to abort if they become pregnant.

The ruling is significant, given Zimbabwe's restrictive abortion laws that often lead women and girls into illegal and unsafe backstreet abortions that in many cases turn fatal.

Abortion is allowed in very few

circumstances in Zimbabwe, including such as if the pregnancy endangers the life of a woman, or if there is a risk of a physical or mental defect "of such a nature that (the child) will permanently be seriously handicapped." Women can also access legal abortion services in cases of unlawful sex such as incest.

Zimbabwe criminalised sex with any person below 18 in September following an earlier constitutional court ruling ordering parliament to raise the legal age of consent for sex to 18 from 16. But the highly restrictive Termination of Pregnancy Act still denied abortion services for girls under 18.

"There is no doubt that it is torture, cruel and degrading treat-

ment for a child to carry another child, for a child to give birth to another child or for a child to be forced to illegally abort because of cruel circumstances," said the judge. The government did not mount any opposition to the case, which was brought by a women's rights group, although the ruling must still be approved by the Constitutional Court to become effective.

The judge said providing access to safe and legal abortion services for underage girls "is significant in light of the massive instances of teenage pregnancies in Zimbabwe, and consequently illegal teen abortions and teenage mortalities."

The country of 15 million people records about 77,000 unsafe

abortions annually, but many others go unreported. Many girls and women die from abortion complications each year, according to the United Nations children's agency, UNICEF.

Teen pregnancies are rife in the southern African country because of lax enforcement of laws, cultural and religious practices and widespread poverty that also make it difficult for girls and women to access contraceptives and clinics.

Almost one of every four girls falls pregnant between the ages of 10 and 19, according to figures by the government and UNICEF. One of every three girls is wed before age 18 in the deeply conservative southern African country.

Palestinians say Hamas, Fatah close to agreement on committee to administer post-war Gaza

PALESTINIAN officials say Fatah and Hamas are closing in on an agreement to appoint a committee of politically independent technocrats to administer the Gaza Strip after the war. It would effectively end Hamas' rule and could help advance ceasefire talks with Israel.

There was no immediate comment from Israel. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has vowed to continue the war until Hamas is dismantled and scores of hostages are returned.

reputedly discussing a postwar plan with the United Arab Emirates, which normalised relations with Israel in 2020 and backs a rival Fatah faction. The Hamas official said the emerging Palestinian agreement would fulfil one of Israel's war goals by ending Hamas' rule in Gaza.

Floods wreak havoc in Malaysia, southern Thailand; over 30 dead



Severe floods caused by monsoon rains killed more than 30 people and displaced tens of thousands in Malaysia and southern Thailand, officials said Tuesday.

South Korean declares emergency martial law

South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol declared an "emergency martial law" Tuesday, accusing the country's opposition of controlling the parliament, sympathising with North Korea and paralysing the government with anti-state activities.

Three climbers missing on New Zealand's highest peak

Three mountain climbers from the US and Canada are missing after they failed to return from a planned ascent of New Zealand's highest peak, Aoraki, authorities said Tuesday.

The Americans — Kurt Blair, 56, from Colorado and Carlos Romero, 50, of California — are certified alpine guides, according to the website of the American Mountain Guides Association.

Public Notice

Be it known to all concerned that my client KAPOOR CHAND S/O DEVI RAM R/O 13/290, BLOCK-13, KALYANPURI, DELHI-110091 and his entire family members have severed all his relations with his son Hemraj and debarred him from all his immovable and movable properties...

Public Notice

My client Mrs. Geeta W/o Mr. Balraj owner of built-up Property of Plot no. 86, area measuring 233 sq. yds. i.e. 194.818 sq. mtrs. Signal Storey with roof rights, out of Khirsa no. 109 min. situated in the area of Village Mayur Vihar, Delhi. Through registered gift deed dated 28.11.2024 executed by Mr. Balraj S/o Mr. Shripal in favour of Mrs. Geeta W/o Mr. Balraj Vide Reg. no. 2024/4/11784, at SR-VII Delhi the above-mentioned property is going to be mortgaged with Federal Bank Financial Services Limited.

Paradip Port Authority Marine Department

Notice of Tender for supply of 01 No. Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) (Drone) System for Paradip Port Authority including Installation, Commissioning, Certification, Test, Trial and Training for a period of five years.

कार्यालय नगर पालिका परिषद, दमोह (म.प्र.)

Table with 6 columns: क्र., टेंडर नं., कार्य का नाम एवं विवरण, अनुमानित लागत, निविदा प्रपत्र का मूल्य, अमानत राशि, समयावधि. It lists tender details for various works.

निम्नलिखित कार्य हेतु केन्द्रीयकृत प्रणाली में पंजीकृत टेन्डरों से ऑनलाइन निविदाये आमंत्रित की जाती है। निविदा का विस्तृत विवरण वेबसाइट https://mptenders.gov.in पर देखा जा सकता है।

Public Notice

It is to inform to the public at large that Mrs. Seema had acquired Property bearing No. H-23/2, area measuring 23 sq. yards, Khirsa No. 665, situated at Village Chondia Gujran Khadar, in the abadi of H-Block, Gali No. 27, Jai Prakash Nagar, Ghonda, Ilaqa- Shadara, Delhi vide G.P.A Dt. 19.03.2024 along with AT&S &amp; will be executed by Mr. Ved Prakash and Now Mrs. Seema is the undisputed owner of the said property.

कार्यालय नगर निगम, भोपाल

प्रथम तल, आई.एस.बी.टी. भवन, होशंगाबाद रोड, हवेलीगंज, भोपाल-462023 निविदा आमंत्रण घोषणा-पत्र

Table with 6 columns: क्र., ऑनलाइन टेंडर नं., कार्य स्थल का नाम, निविदा अवधि, अनुमानित राशि, प्रपत्र की कीमत, कार्य हेतु का प्रकार, कार्य व अवधि. It lists tender details for metering infrastructure.

निम्नलिखित कार्य हेतु दो लिफाफा पद्धति के अनुसार मोहरबंद निविदाये निर्धारित प्रपत्र पर ऑनलाइन आमंत्रित की जाती है।

प्र. कार्यपालन चंरी (विद्युत) नगर निगम भोपाल नि.क्र. 871/024/025

Public Notice

This is for notice of the general public that a political party is proposed to be registered by the name of JANTA PRITI NIDHI MANDAL. The office of the party is located at G1-48, G-7, Karnal Road Industrial Area, Delhi-110033.

CONSTRUCTION OF PCEE CONFERENCE HALL AT GROUND FLOOR

E-Tender Notice No. 36 of 2024 Dated: 29-11-2024. E-Tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following works: Tender No. DCESTMLG-25-2024. Name of work & Location: At Maligaon (HQ): (1) Construction of PCEE Conference hall at Ground floor of West block (ii) At Nambari-Construction of CCTV control room at Nambari officer's colony.

1 09/Manager System/Jal-Billing/2023-24, AMC of Water Billing Software/System and Facility Management. Cost Rs. 56.12 Lacs Inclusive of GST @18%

महत्त्वपूर्ण सूचना- नवीन ओखला औद्योगिक विकास प्राधिकरण के अधिसूचित क्षेत्र में शासन से स्वीकृत मास्टर प्लान एवं उत्तर प्रदेश औद्योगिक क्षेत्र विकास अधिनियम, 1976 के विपरित प्लॉटिंग या किसी भी प्रकार का अन्य निर्माण पूरी तरह अथैव है।

शुद्धता एवं पारदर्शिता के लिए इस प्रकार की अथैव कॉलोनीयों एवं अथैव निर्मित भवनों में भूखण्डों/अपार्टमेंट/दुकान/गोड्डाऊन/फार्माहाउस की खरीद-फरोख्त से पूर्णतः सखेत रहे तथा कॉलोनीजर्जर के लुभावने एवं भ्रामक विज्ञानों से बचे। साथ ही नौएडा अधिसूचित क्षेत्र के हिण्डन एवं यमुना नदियों के डूब क्षेत्र (Flood Plain Zone) में अतिक्रमण/अथैव प्लॉट एवं फार्म हाऊसों के कारोबार में संलिप्त भूमिकाओं के चंगुल में न फंसे।

CLEAN, GREEN, SAFE & SECURE NOIDA

Baba Farid University of Health Sciences Faridkot Sadiq Road, Faridkot -151203 Ph. 01639-256232, 256236

VACANCIES Online applications are invited w.e.f. 05-12-2024 to 24-12-2024 from eligible candidates through University website i.e www.bfuhis.ac.in to the recruitment of 02-Professor, 04-Associate Professor and 16-Assistant Professor on regular basis at Tertiary Cancer Care Centre, Fazilka constituent institute of Baba Farid University of Health Sciences, Faridkot.

Baba Farid University of Health Sciences Faridkot Sadiq Road, Faridkot -151203 Ph. 01639-256232, 256236

VACANCIES Online applications are invited w.e.f. 09-12-2024 to 31-12-2024 from eligible candidates through University website i.e www.bfuhis.ac.in to the recruitment of Professor (Physiotherapy)-01 (UR) on regular basis at constituent colleges/ institute of Baba Farid University of Health Sciences, Faridkot.

CONSTRUCTION OF ETP WASTE WATER RECYCLING PLANT

E-TENDER NOTICE NO. KYQ-CDO-ETP-02-24-25; dated: 30-11-2024. E-Tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following work: Tender No. KYQ-CDO-ETP-02-24-25. Name of work: Construction of ETP waste water recycling plant for reuse of discharge water of mechanized laundry/Kamakhya at Coach Maintenance Depot Kamakhya.

INTRODUCTION OF AUTOMATIC BLOCK SIGNALLING SYSTEM

E-Tender Notice No. S&T/APDJ/18; dated: 29-11-2024. E-tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following work: SN.1. E-Tender No.: AP-ST-18-2024-25. Name of Work: Introduction of Automatic Block Signalling System for trainees at Operating Model Room at MDZT1 / Alipurduar Jn. Advertised Tender Value: ₹59,82,635/-; Bid Security: ₹1,19,700/-

ADITYA BIRLA CAPITAL

ADITYA BIRLA FINANCE LIMITED Registered Office: Indian Rayon Compound, Veraval, Gujarat-362266. Branch Office: First Floor, Vijaya Bank Building, 17, Barakhamba Road, New Delhi-110001

ADITYA BIRLA FINANCE LIMITED You the below mentioned borrower has availed loan by mortgaging the schedule mentioned property and you the below mention has acted as borrower / Co-borrower / Mortgagor for the loan agreement.

ADITYA BIRLA FINANCE LIMITED You are hereby called upon to pay Aditya Birla Finance Limited within the period of 60 days from the date of publication of this Notice the aforesaid amount with interest and cost falling which Aditya Birla Finance Limited will take necessary action under the Provisions of the said Act against all or any one or more of the secured assets including taking possession of secured assets of the borrower / Co-borrower / Mortgagor.

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

EOI Notice No. : C1470/AP/OSOP/2023-VIII dated : 29-11-2024. Applications are invited by the undersigned for the following work: Scope of work: Participation in One Station One Product Scheme by showcasing/selling indigenous/ local products at 37 Nos. Station over Alipurduar Division. Selected station of the project & commencement date: (1) Alipurduar Jn. (APDJ)=03 units, (2) New Alipurduar (NOQ)=04 units, (3) New Coochbehar (NCB)= 04 units, (4) Dhpuguri (DQG)=02 units, (5) New Mal Jn. (NMZ)=2 units, (6) Kokrajhar (KOJ)=02 units, (7) Hasimara (HSA)= 01 unit, (8) Falakata (FLK)= 02 units, (9) New Maynaguri (NMX)=01 unit, (10) Kamakhya (KAMG)=01 unit, (11) Gulma (GLMA)=01 unit, (12) Fakiragram (FKM)= 01 unit, (13) Binnaguri (BNV)= 01 unit, (14) Dalgao (DLO)=01 unit, (15) Dinhat (DHH)=01 unit, (16) Chalsa (CLD)= 01 unit, (17) Nagrakata (NKB)=01 unit, (18) Banarhat (BNQ)=01 unit, (19) Coochbehar (COB)=01 unit, (20) Bamanhat (BXT)=01 unit, (21) Tufanganj (TFGN) = 01 unit, (22) Mathabhanga (MHA)= 01 unit, (23) Gossaigaon Hat (GOGH)=01 unit, (24) Oodlabari (ODB)= 01 unit, (25) Hamiltanganj (HOJ)= 01 unit, (26) Golakganj (GKJ)=01 unit, (27) Bagrakot (BRQ)= 01 unit, (28) Madarihat (MDT)= 01 unit, (29) Rajabhatkhawa (RVK)= 01 unit, (30) Dewanhat (DWT)=01 unit, (31) Dhubi (DDB) =01 unit, (32) Altagram (ATM)=01 unit, (33) Salbari (SXX)=01 unit, (34) New Changrabandha (NCBD)=01 unit, (35) Ghokasadanga (GDG)=01 unit, (36) Salakati (SLKX)=01 unit, (37) Basugaon (BSGN)=01 unit total 49 units at 37 stations. Date of commencement of issue of EOI forms : 03-12-2024; EOI box will be available for dropping of applications at office of the Divisional Railway Manager (Commercial) Office/Sr.DCM/Chamber, Alipurduar Jn. at 15.00 hrs. of 26-12-2024 and EOI box will be opened at 16.00 hrs. of 26-12-2024. The EOI documents will also be available in N.F. Railway website www.nfr.indianrailways.gov.in during the above mentioned period.

Office of the Superintending Engineer 1st Circle, Public Works Department, Almora

Letter No. : 5461(i) Nivida-01/2024-25 NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING (E-Tendering) Short Term E-TENDER NOTICE

The Superintending Engineer, 1st Circle, PWD Almora invites tender through E-Tendering (Two Bid System) on behalf of Honourable Governor of Uttarakhand for following works. All other information will be available from dated 04/12/2024 & onwards on website http://www.uktenders.gov.in

Table with 7 columns: Sl. No., Name of Work, Cost of Tender Form, Earnest Money (Rupee in Lakh), Validity of Tender, Time of Completion, Contractor's Category of Registration for tendering. It lists two tender items: CD PWD Ranikhet and PD PWD Bageshwar.

Dharavi redevelopment project revolutionises slum mapping with drones and LiDAR technology

PTI ■ MUMBAI
In a first for any slum rehabilitation project in India, the Dharavi Redevelopment Project (DRP) has embraced cutting-edge technologies to survey and document Asia's largest slum, officials said. Drones and remote sensing technology Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) are being used to map the 620 acres densely populated Dharavi slums. This is to ensure accuracy, transparency, and efficiency in a redevelopment project of this scale and complexity. The Dharavi Redevelopment Project Pvt Ltd, in which the Adani Group holds an 80 per cent stake along with the state government, plans to turn 620 acres of prime land, about three-quarters of the size of New York's Central Park, into a glitzy urban hub. About 7 lakh living in rickety shanties with open sewers and shared toilets in the densely populated slums, close to Mumbai's international airport, are to be given flats up to 350 square feet free of cost. Officials said advanced digital tools are being used to map the entire area and



identify the beneficiaries. Traditionally, surveys for Slum Rehabilitation Authority (SRA) projects relied on conventional methods such as total station surveys and manual collection of physical documents. However, the modern tools such as drones, LiDAR technology, and mobile applications has been implemented to collect and evaluate data digitally. These tools are being used to create a 'digital twin' of Dharavi - a virtual replica that facilitates better data analysis and decision-making, a Dharavi Redevelopment Project-Slum Rehabilitation Authority (DRP-SRA) official said. LiDAR is an active remote sensing technology which plays a pivotal role in this project. Known for its ability to rapidly capture geospatial data, LiDAR uses laser light to measure distances and create highly accurate 3D representations of terrain, buildings, and objects. A portable LiDAR system, such as a backpack-mounted scanner, is being used to navigate the narrow and congested lanes of Dharavi. Drone technology supplements this by capturing aerial images of the area, providing an overhead perspective that aids in mapping and planning. On the ground, survey teams use mobile applications for door-to-door data collection. These apps ensure that information is gathered at the actual location of each slum dweller, with all data stored and evaluated digitally. This not only improves

accuracy but also reduces the scope for errors or data loss. "The creation of a digital twin - a virtual representation of Dharavi - marks a significant step forward," the official said. According to him, this is the first time such advanced technologies are being used in a slum rehabilitation scheme in India. The digital model will allow authorities to evaluate data more effectively, especially when determining the eligibility of residents for rehabilitation at the end of the survey. It also enables faster resolution of disputes and reduces the chances of oversight. While an estimated one million (10 lakh) reside in Dharavi, about 7,00,000 are thought to be eligible because of the resident definition of one having proof of living in the area prior to January 1, 2000. The Maharashtra govt had recently approved the acquisition of 256 acres of salt-pan land for the Dharavi redevelopment. The land will be used to build low-cost and affordable housing for residents of Dharavi. A survey of existing residents and businesses is being done to determine who would be rehoused in Dharavi or be relocated. The survey process, however, is not without challenges. To address concerns of Dharavikars like fear of fraud or misuse of data, the P-SRA is conducting extensive information, education, and communication (IEC) activities. These include meetings, pamphlet distribution, and the establishment of call centres to inform residents about the survey process. Most importantly, the residents are explained about P/SRA which is a government entity overseeing the implementation and monitoring of the project, including the smooth execution of the survey. The field supervisors help residents by ensuring they provide the right documents. If the documents are complete, residents get an acknowledgement slip signed by the P-SRA officer and details about the next steps. Residents, who fail to furnish the correct documents at the time of the survey, are explained about the importance of the survey and are helped in retrieving them.

Domestic air traffic to rise to 164-170 million in FY25: Ica

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
Domestic air traffic is projected to rise 7-10 per cent to 164-170 million in the current fiscal year, while the aviation industry's loss is pegged at Rs 2,000-3,000 crore during the same period, according to rating agency Ica. In the first half of 2024-25, Ica said domestic air passenger traffic stood at 79.3 million, marking a 5.3 per cent annual growth that was partly impacted by the severe heat wave and other weather-related disruptions. The international passenger traffic growth for Indian carriers increased and stood at 16.2 per cent in the first half of the current financial year. On Tuesday, the rating agency said domestic air traffic is expected to jump 7-10 per cent on an annual basis to 164-170 million in FY25. Ica maintained a 'stable' outlook on the Indian aviation industry, amidst continued growth in domestic and international air passenger traffic. Kinjal Shah, Senior Vice President & Co-Group Head at Ica, said the industry is expected to report a net loss of Rs 20-30 billion in FY25 and FY2026 each, significantly lower than the losses witnessed in the past supported by improved pricing power of the airlines. "The spread between revenue per available seat kilometre and cost per available seat kilometre saw some moderation in H1 FY2025 over FY2024 due to higher fuel prices and overall increased costs amid grounding of aircraft, while yields moderated marginally as airlines strove to maintain adequate passenger load factors. "Nonetheless, the same is expected to pick up in H2 FY2025, amid healthy passenger traffic," Shah said. Airlines' cost structure is typically driven by two key components - Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) prices and the INR-USD movement. On a year-on-year basis, Ica said average ATF prices eased by 6.8 per cent to Rs 96,192/KL in the first eight months of FY2025, though exceeding the levels seen during pre-Covid period (first eight months of FY2020) of Rs 65,261/KL. Fuel costs account for around 30 to 40 per cent of an airline's costs, while about 35-50 per cent of the operating expenses, including aircraft lease payments, fuel expenses and a significant portion of aircraft and engine maintenance expenses are denominated in dollar terms.

Tata Power-DDL and THDCIL sign MoU to develop skilled professionals for energy sector

PNS ■ NEW DELHI
Tata Power Delhi Distribution Limited (Tata Power-DDL) and THDC India Limited (THDCIL) has recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to develop a robust pool of skilled and qualified professionals to meet the needs of both the domestic energy sector and international markets. The MoU was signed by Praveen Agrawal, Chief - Human Resource, Industrial Relations, Facility Management & Health Services of Tata Power-DDL and Dr. A.N. Tripathy, General Manager (HR & A) of THDCIL in the presence of Anoop Nandi, Head (BD & Collaboration), Tata Power-DDL, Ravi Budhlakoti (HRD-THDCIL) and other senior officials from both the organisations. The MoU aims to establish a mutually beneficial framework for collaboration between Tata Power-DDL and THDCIL to organize leadership, wellness & other training programs, workshops, seminars, research initiatives and consultancy projects with a focus on enhancing skills and knowledge in the energy sector. This strategic partnership will leverage the infrastructure facilities of the HRD Takshshila - SLDC in Rishikesh and the Learning Centre of Tata Power-DDL in Delhi to develop and deliver advanced training programs in cutting-edge domains such as smart grids, grid automation, and complementary technologies.

Speaking about the partnership, Praveen Agrawal, Chief - Human Resources, Industrial Relations, FM and Health Services, Tata Power Delhi Distribution Limited said, "This privileged partnership with THDCIL - an institution of national importance, is indeed a landmark collaboration in the area of cutting-edge training programs for the energy sector. Given the changing landscape of energy sector worldwide, we aim to prepare a highly trained and qualified resource pool both for India and international stakeholders. This initiative also underscores our commitment to enhancing skill development, empowering individuals to meet the dynamic demands of the industry effectively."

Imposition of additional duty on steel imports to hit exports by MSMEs says Exporters

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
MSME exporters from the engineering sector on Tuesday said that any move to impose additional duties on steel imports would make domestic products uncompetitive and impact the country's outbound shipments from the sector. Hand Tool Association Chairman S C Ralhan said that the MSME engineering exporters are already facing problems on the liquidity front and high prices of steel in the domestic market. "Increasing prices of steel by domestic steel makers are hurting us and now we have seen in the media reports that the government is planning to impose a 25 per cent safeguard duty. This will severely impact MSME exporters," Ralhan said. Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) Director General Ajay Sahai said that if the government imposes additional duty, they should ensure that the domestic steel companies do not increase the prices of the inputs. "Increase in input prices will impact exports of value-added steel products," Sahai said. The steel ministry has proposed for a 25 per cent safeguard duty on import of certain steel items into the country. The proposal came at a meeting between Union Minister of Steel H D Kumaraswamy and Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal here on December 2. Domestic steel players are raising concerns over rising cheap steel imports from select nations like China. Think tank Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) in its report has claimed that thousands of containers carrying imported steel remain stranded at JNPT and other ports due to complex clearance procedures imposed by the Ministry of Steel (MOS). "The Customs clearance delays have disrupted production lines and

tarnished India's global reputation, with even countries like Japan formally requesting the government to release stranded shipments," GTRI said. India's steel imports are neither excessive nor unwarranted, GTRI Founder Ajay Srivastava said, adding half of these imports are critical raw materials for domestic production, while 40 per cent consist of specialised items that India does not produce in sufficient quantities. He said that steel imports are just 6 per cent of domestic production and an estimated over 70 per cent imports are done by large steel firms. An impression has been created that India's steel imports are high, lack quality and supplied at below market prices and hence need iron clad controls and data does not support high import theory, Srivastava said. "In FY2024, domestic production met 94 per cent of India's steel demand, with imports contributing just 6 per cent. Over half of these imports consist of steel scrap (33.8 per cent) and semi-finished steel (17.3 per cent), both of which support domestic steel production. Such imports are made by large steel producers," he added. The remaining 43.4 per cent imports are of high-end flat-rolled steel products used in critical industries like automotive, construction, and household appliances. "Domestic stainless steel prices are 25-30 per cent higher than comparable imported steel for certain thicknesses, even after accounting for duties. This price disparity, driven by import restrictions, significantly boosts the profit margins of large steel firms while small and medium enterprises (SMEs) bear the brunt," the think tank said.

Hyundai Motor Group ties up with IITs to advance battery

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
Hyundai Motor Group on Tuesday said it has tied up with three IITs to establish a collaborative research system in the fields of batteries and electrification entailing an investment of USD 7 million over five years. The South Korean group, which has presence across multiple segments including mobility, has tied up with IIT Delhi, IIT Bombay and IIT Madras. Hyundai Motor Group plans to invest around USD 7 million over five years, from 2025 to 2029, to jointly conduct battery and electrification-related research with the IITs. As part of the collaboration, Hyundai Center of Excellence (CoE), will be set up within IIT Delhi and would operate through sponsorships from Hyundai Motor Group, the group said in a statement. The primary objective of the Hyundai CoE is to take the lead in driving advancements in batteries and electrification, specifically designed to meet the unique requirements of the Indian market, it added. "We believe that Hyundai CoE will cultivate a strong network of talented individuals from India's academic landscape, driving innovation and future growth," Hyundai Motor Group Head of Research and Development (R&D) Planning & Coordination Center Naksup Sung said. The Hyundai CoE will not only conduct joint research on a c a d e m i c - i n d u s t r i a l cooperation tasks but also facilitate technical and human exchanges between battery and electrification experts from Korea and India, the group said.

Govt should leverage sports industry for economic growth: Report

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
The government should focus on developing a model to leverage the sports industry for economic growth and frame policies to encourage more investment in sports infrastructure, events, and related goods and services, according to a report. The Nangia Nxt- FICCI Knowledge Report, titled 'Future of Sports in India', also suggested that the government could provide incentives to the private sector to fund large-scale, holistic sports programmes to support talent development as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities. CSR contributions could be leveraged to establish and run high-performance training centres with facilities,

including international coaches, nutritionists, and mental and physical trainers. It said that the government may formulate policies to establish and support comprehensive skill development programmes for sports coaching, sports management, and sports-related ancillary industries to boost employment generation through sports, especially in tier-2 and rural areas. While the sports industry has seen remarkable advancements, challenges such as financial insecurity for athletes, underutilised infrastructure, and the need for greater inclusivity persist. Expanding financial aid programmes, developing robust career transition pathways, and fostering a culture of inclusivity can address these issues, the report said. "The Indian government should focus on developing a model to leverage the sports industry for economic growth, in addition to developing the capacity of Indian athletes to compete at higher levels," said the Future of Sports in India report. The report also suggested that the government must actively bid for and host international competitions and sporting events. It may also diversify sports offerings in multiple states by promoting winter and traditional sports, thereby also encouraging sports tourism. The Nangia Nxt- FICCI Knowledge Report also said that the Indian sports industry is experiencing a period of dynamic growth, with projections to expand from USD 27 billion in 2020 to USD 100 billion by 2027. This transformation is driven by various factors, including the commercialisation of sports leagues, technological advancements, and a growing emphasis on diverse sporting disciplines. Sectors such as sports goods, apparel, and media rights are contributing significantly to this growth, with the sports media market alone expected to grow from USD 1 billion in 2020 to USD 13.4 billion by 2027. Additionally, landmark achievements by Indian athletes at the 2023 Asian Games and the 2024 Paris Olympics highlight the nation's increasing competitiveness on the global stage, it added.

Japanese firms keen to set up semiconductor units in India

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
Japanese firms are keen to set up semiconductor units in India and they have all the expertise and specialisation to partner with domestic firms, Deloitte has said. It also said that skilled workforce, funds and continuation of support measures are key to push growth of the semiconductor sector in India. Japanese firms are "super enthusiastic" about India, Shingo Kamaya, Deloitte AP and SRT Leader, Deloitte Japan said. In July, Japan became the second Quad partner after the US to sign an agreement with India for the joint development of the semiconductor ecosystem and maintain the resilience of its global supply chain. The two countries signed the memorandum for semiconductor design, manufacturing, equipment research, talent development and to bring resilience in the semiconductor supply chain. With around 100 semiconductor manufacturing plants, Japan is among the top five countries to have a semiconductor ecosystem. Japan houses companies that are global leaders in raw form of semiconductor wafers, chemical and gases, lenses that are used in chip manufacturing equipment, and display technologies. India aspires to have 10 semiconductor manufacturing plants in 10 years. "Given the technology, given the specialization, there is no better partner to get on to developing such an ambitious and a critical ecosystem of semiconductor than Japan," Rohit Berry, President - Strategy, Risk and Transactions, Deloitte India, said. He said that the semiconductor story in the country is not just about setting up one factory, but it is about that entire ecosystem. "And that is where many Japanese companies who have set up such ecosystems in Japan or in any other places are going to be absolutely critical to set it up (in India). So this is the vision. This is a grand plan. This is the investment. This is the commitment," he added. Berry also said that developing the right kind of partnerships between Indian and Japanese firms are fundamental for the growth of the sector. "This is not a one year game, it's not a two year game. This will basically benefit us and Japan for generations," he noted. He also emphasised that the government incentive program on a sustained basis will also be a key factor for the sector's growth in India. When asked if Japanese firms are looking for any specific support measures from states, he said that a "centre-state partnership, together with the private and Japanese partnership, all four of them coming together will be a prerequisite to create a once in a lifetime setup".

Mother Dairy to market co-operative society NCOL's organic products in Delhi-NCR



PTI ■ NEW DELHI
Mother Dairy on Tuesday said it has signed an agreement with the National Cooperative Organics Ltd (NCOL) to exclusively distribute the latter's organic products under the 'Bharat Organics' brand in Delhi-NCR. In a statement, Mother Dairy said it has "signed up with 'Bharat Organics' as the exclusive distribution partner for their range of organic

staples to the Delhi NCR market." Under the initiative, Mother Dairy will ensure distribution of packed and certified brand 'Bharat Organics' produce for consumers across NCR through its network of booths across the region. The collaboration marks the launch of 'Bharat Organics Atta' and 'Bharat Organics Sweetener (Jaggery)' in the NCR market. "With this partnership, Mother Dairy aims to build a healthier and more sustainable India. By combining NCOL's expertise in organic farming with our extensive distribution

network and deep consumer trust, we are uniquely positioned to bridge the gap between premium organic products and affordability," Mother Dairy Managing Director Manish Bandish said. Mother Dairy has entered into a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with NCOL to distribute the 'Bharat Organics' brand across multiple channels and geographies. The Bharat Organics range will be made available at 300 Safal stores and around 10,000 general trade outlets in Delhi NCR, as well as through modern trade and e-commerce platforms. Vipul Mittal, Managing Director of NCOL, said "Atta is just the beginning. Our vision is to offer an entire basket of organic staples that cater to the daily needs, while ensuring fair returns for organic farmers." Mother Dairy was commissioned in 1974. It is now a wholly-owned subsidiary of the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB). Mother Dairy is a leading dairy player which manufactures, markets & sells milk and milk products including cultured products, ice creams, paneer, ghee, etc.

Under the 'Mother Dairy' brand. The company also has a diversified portfolio with products in edible oils under the 'Dhara' brand and fresh fruits & vegetables, frozen vegetables & snacks, unpolished pulses, pulps & concentrates, etc. Under the 'Safal' brand. NCOL is a multistate cooperative society, supported by NDDB, NAFED, NCDC, GCMF Ltd, and NCCF. It has been formed to promote organic farming through the cooperative model, creating organic clusters, and ensuring fair trade practices.

India to host first ever women's T20 World Cup for Blind in 2025

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Pakistan will play its share of matches in next year's inaugural blind women's T20 World Cup in either Nepal or Sri Lanka after a hybrid model for the event was finalised at the World Blind Cricket Council's (WBCC) Annual General Meeting in Multan. The development comes a few weeks after India withdrew from the men's T20 Blind Cricket World Cup in Pakistan owing to security concerns. The hosting rights for the women's event were awarded to India last year and affirmed at the AGM on Monday in which 11 member countries were present. India, England and New Zealand joined the meeting virtually. "The hosting rights of the tournament was awarded to India last year (2023) only. It was also decided back then that in case there is visa issue with the Pakistan team's coming to India, the tournament will be held in Hybrid Model. Pakistan will play all its matches at a neutral venue," GK Mahantesh, president of the Cricket Association of Blind in India (CABI), told PTI. Asked where would Pakistan's



matches be held, Mahantesh informed that they have zeroed in on two countries. "Pakistan's visually challenged women's team will be based either in Nepal or in Sri Lanka for the entire duration of the tournament," he stated. "The Indian team will travel to Nepal or Sri Lanka to play against them. The cost of the entire event will be borne by our cricket board. We will pay for Pakistan team's entire stay in either of these two countries," he added.

The CABI is neither affiliated to BCCI, nor the ICC. Several other key decisions were also taken at the AGM, including the appointment of India's Rajanish Henry and Chandrasekhar KN as the Secretary General and Director Finance respectively, for a two-year period. Henry, who previously served as Vice President of WBCC, is also the President of the Cricket Association for the Blind in Kerala. While Chandrasekhar, a founder member of the CABI, has previously served as its Treasurer. It was confirmed that the next men's T20 World Cup will be held in 2027, the date and venue for which will be finalised during the AGM in 2025. The members also decided that all international tournaments for cricket for the blind will now adhere to the International Blind Sports Federation (IBSA) Sight Classification rules, ensuring uniformity and inclusivity across the sport. It was also decided that CABI will lead efforts to promote cricket for the blind in the USA and UAE, facilitating the formation of men's and women's teams in these regions.



World No. 4 Indian Arjun Erigaisi to compete at Norway Chess 2025

PTI ■ STAVANGER

Grandmaster Arjun Erigaisi, who recently became the second Indian after the legendary Viswanathan Anand to reach the gold-standard ELO rating of 2800, will make his debut at the prestigious Norway Chess tournament next year. Norway Chess 2025 will take place from May 26 to June 6. At just 21 years old and ranked world No. 4, Arjun is expected to bring youthful ambition and exceptional talent to one of the most premier tournaments in the chess calendar. Reflecting on his style and growth, Arjun remarked, "I used to lose games because of over-ambition and a lack of objectivity, but now I strive to channel my ambition in a balanced way." As anticipation builds up for the tournament, Arjun expressed his enthusiasm about the event's innovative format. "There are a lot of exciting things about Norway Chess, but for me, I would say the time control and Armageddon format stand out the most to me," he said. Arjun's journey to the top has been nothing short of phenomenal, with 2022 being his breakout year, when he claimed several high-profile victories. In January, he won the prestigious Tata Steel Chess Challengers, and by March he was crowned the national champion. That summer, he dominated the 28th Abu Dhabi International Chess Festival, showcasing his

ability to thrive in various formats. To cap off the year, Arjun claimed victory at the Tata Steel Chess India Blitz, strengthening his reputation as a rising star. He continued in same vein in 2023 and emerged as the outright winner of the Sharjah Masters, and later in the year he reached the quarterfinals of the World Cup. This year, Arjun reached new heights as he began with victories at the Menorca Open A, the Stepan Avagyan Memorial, and the WR Chess Masters Cup in London, proving his consistency and dominance in competitive play. In September, Arjun led Team India to gold at the Chess Olympiad, delivering a standout performance on board three with a breathtaking rating performance of 2968. The remarkable performance also earned him an individual gold medal. The same month, Arjun became India's top-rated player, reaching a career-high live rating of 2801 in December. By crossing the prestigious 2800 threshold, joining an elite club of players. The Norway tournament brings together the top male and female players in a distinctive six-player double round-robin format. The introduction of Norway Chess Women in 2024, with equal prize funds for men and women, underscores the event's commitment to gender equality and innovation in the sport.



Australian Tennis Legend Neale Fraser Passes Away At 91

AP ■ MELBOURNE

Neale Fraser, who won three Grand Slam singles titles and guided Australia to four Davis Cup titles during a 24-year career as team captain, has died at 91. Tennis Australia released a statement Tuesday saying the sport "has lost one of its giants." Fraser beat Australian tennis great Rod Laver to win Wimbledon in 1960, in between sweeps at the U.S. Open where he won the singles, men's doubles and mixed titles in 1959 and '60. He won 11 major men's doubles titles, including at least two at each of the four Grand Slam tournaments. Laver, the only man to twice win all four singles majors in a calendar year, posted a tribute to his "dear mate and fellow lefty" on X, formerly known as Twitter. Fraser "was a true gem in a golden era of Australian tennis legends -- an incredible World No. 1, a Grand Slam

Al-Sadd clinches Asian Champions League playoffs spot after beating Al-Nassr

AP ■ RIYADH

Cristiano Ronaldo was absent when Al-Nassr lost for the first time in the AFC Champions League Elite, to Al-Sadd of Qatar 2-1 on Monday. Al-Nassr was already guaranteed a place in the round of 16 so Ronaldo, who has five goals in his last three matches, was rested. He watched from the sidelines. Al-Sadd took the lead through Akram Afif, named the Asian player of the year in November, eight minutes after the break. While Sadio Mane and Anderson Talisca went close for Al-Nassr, an own goal from close range by Romain Saiss made it 1-1 with 10 minutes remaining. However, Afif was brought down in the area and, in the ninth minute of added time, Algeria's Adam Ounas converted the penalty. The win ensured 2011 champion Al-Sadd booked a place in the round of 16, moving into fourth in the 12-team group, a point behind Al-Nassr in third. The top eight from each of the two groups progress to the knockout stage. "It was a tough and close game," Al-Sadd coach Felix Sanchez said. "We worked hard to stop Al-Nassr having the ball, and to win at their home stadium. The players showed their character." Al-Ahli was first in the group after the Saudi Arabian side was held by Esteghlal of Iran to 2-2. Ivan Toney scored both goals for the host in Jeddah. Raphael Silva opened the scoring for the Tehran team after 42 minutes but Toney made it 1-1 just before the break from the spot. Mohammad Hossein Eslami restored Esteghlal's lead six minutes after the restart but Toney scored his second penalty four minutes from the end, a fourth goal in Asia for the England striker in the space of a week. Elsewhere, Persepolis of Iran beat Al-Shorta of Iraq 2-1, while Al-Wasl of the United Arab Emirates drew with Al-Rayyan of Qatar 1-1.



Mollie Marcoux Samaan stepping down as LPGA commissioner

AP ■ FLORIDA

Mollie Marcoux Samaan is resigning in January as LPGA commissioner, a surprise announcement Monday after record growth in prize money along with criticism the LPGA wasn't gaining in popularity during the surge in women's sports. Marcoux Samaan is leaving on Jan. 9, three weeks before the LPGA begins its 75th season. Liz Moore, the chief legal and technology officer, will be interim commissioner until a search committee hires a new one. Marcoux Samaan did not cite a specific reason for resigning except to mention spending more time with her three children. She will serve the third-shortest stint among nine LPGA commissioners dating to 1975, behind only Jim Ritts (1996-99) and Bill Blue (1988-90). "With the LPGA positioned for continued growth, it's time for me to have more time to cheer on our three amazing children as they live their dreams while I continue to pursue my passion for building leaders, uniting communities and creating value through sports, particularly women's sports," Marcoux Samaan said in a statement. The LPGA said prize money increased by more than 90% under Marcoux Samaan, a big part of that the major championships. The five majors had a combined prize fund of \$23.4 million in 2021. Next year, the majors combine to offer at least \$47.8 million in prize money. She announced the end of her tenure a week after the season-ending CME Group Tour Championship awarded \$4 million to the winner, Jeeno Thitikul, from an \$11 million purse. "Since joining the LPGA in 2021, Mollie has been instrumental in solidifying our position as the global leader in women's professional golf, realizing record growth in player earnings and fan engagement," said John B. Veihmeyer, chairman of the LPGA board. "Mollie has been a steadfast advocate for equity in the sport and has worked tirelessly to expand opportunities for women and girls through the game." The LPGA said the average earnings for the top 100 players topped \$1 million this year, compared with an average of just over \$570,000 in 2021. Women's sports across the



landscape has seen a spike in money and interest, though Marcoux Samaan was criticized for the LPGA not getting enough attention behind remarkable story lines this year. Nelly Korda tied an LPGA record with five straight wins, and Lydia Ko won Olympic gold to qualify for the LPGA Hall of Fame, and then won another major at the Women's British Open at St. Andrews. The Americans also won the Solheim Cup, but not without a transportation mess on the opening day at the Robert

Arne Slot aims cheeky dig at Manchester City

AP ■ LIVERPOOL

Days after leading Liverpool to a convincing win over Manchester City, Arne Slot aimed a cheeky dig at the beleaguered English Premier League champion over its charges for allegedly breaching financial rules. Slot was asked at a news conference on Tuesday for the latest news about the future of Mohamed Salah, who is out of contract at the end of the season and said on Sunday that the 2-0 victory over City might be his last game against Pep Guardiola's team at Anfield. Smiling, Slot replied: "Maybe Mo knows more about the 115 (charges) that are done, so he expects them not to be in the Premier League next season." He immediately emphasized that was a joke. City faces more than 100 charges, ranging over the period from 2009-18, for financial breaches allegedly committed when the club was trying to establish itself as the biggest force in English soccer. Punishment could be as extreme as expulsion from the league.



City denies the charges and a closed-door hearing is taking place. A verdict is not expected until early next year. Slot has kicked City while it is down. The champion has lost four straight games in the Premier League amid a seven-match winless run, easily its worst streak in Guardiola's tenure that started in 2016. Slot was speaking ahead of Liverpool's match at Newcastle on Wednesday. The Reds hold a nine-point lead in the league after 13 games, and are 11 clear of fifth-placed City.

India women's team heads to Oman for Junior Asia Cup title defence

PTI ■ BENGALURU

The Indian junior women's hockey team departed for Muscat on Tuesday to defend its Asia Cup title which would also help the side qualify for next year's FIH Junior World Cup. The Junior Asia Cup is scheduled to be held from December 7 to 15 and India will begin their campaign against Bangladesh on Sunday. The top three teams in the showpiece will make the cut for the World Cup scheduled in Santiago, Chile. India will be up against China, Malaysia, Thailand, and Bangladesh in Pool A while Pool B will feature South Korea, Japan, Chinese Taipei, Hong Kong and Sri Lanka. India's campaign will be spearheaded by captain Jyoti Singh along with vice captain Sakshi Rana and the squad also features players who have had the experience of playing with the senior side. These players are Vaishnavi Vitthal Phalke, Sunelita Toppo, Mumtaz Khan, Deepika and Beauty Dungdung. The team is being coached by former India captain Tushar Khandker. "We are very confident and upbeat about our campaign. We have a good, experienced team. We have worked hard



over the past few months and the team is quite eager to do our best in Muscat, Oman," Jyoti said ahead of the team's departure. "It's heartening to see the men's team enter the knockout stage and they are cruising towards the title. We have been following their matches and we will be there to cheer for them in the remaining matches," added Sakshi, referring to the men's continental event currently being held in Muscat.

Carey backs Australia's 'world-class' batters to counter Bumrah threat

PTI ■ ADELAIDE
Alex Carey on Tuesday maintained Australia are a "united group", confident that their "world-class" batters will come up with better plans to counter India's pace threat Jasprit Bumrah in the upcoming pink-ball Test here.

With their backs against the wall, India came out all guns blazing in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy series opener at Perth to win by a massive 295 runs with Bumrah (5/30 and 3/42) ripping apart Australia's batting in each innings.

The heavy margin of defeat left Australia looking for answers as their batters flopped collectively, leaving their famed bowling attack with a lot to do.

"He's obviously a fantastic bowler; (he) has been for a number of years. Our batters are world class as well and always find ways to come up with

solutions," Carey told the media. "We've had a look at him now. Hopefully we can combat that first, second spell. Get him bowling a little bit deeper in the innings with an older ball."

"We saw Travis (Head) sort of counterpunch a bit (in the second innings). I trust our batters, we'll find a way not only (against) Bumrah. They played a couple of other debutantes who bowled well as well," Carey said.

After Australia were set an improbable 534 to win, Josh Hazlewood had invited the media to ask their batters how they planned to go about in the second innings, sparking rumours of a rift between the batting and bowling groups.

Carey, however, declined there was any tensions in the dressing room.

"If you ask the batters, we all want to perform better and (as) cricketers, you go out there to score a hundred and if you don't



do that, I think you're at times disappointed," Carey said. "But we're a very united group. We all do get the opportunity to bat and we're all keen to continue to put those big runs on the board and I trust the guys to do that," he added.

Carey said Australia's resounding loss at Perth sparked a "big reaction externally" but maintained that the team will stick to its processes.

"It's quite a big reaction externally for one Test loss. Internally, we don't feel that. We didn't play the way we would have liked to have played."

"We know (that) over four or five Test matches, (if) we keep rocking up and playing our style of cricket we will have the success. We've had that success to, I guess, call upon the method does work."

"We're calm internally, we're excited to get back out and play a better style of cricket and we've

got that opportunity come Friday."

Carey did not want to draw much attention to the last contest here in which India were shot out for their lowest-ever Test total of 36.

"There are obviously amazing days in cricketing history but we don't expect to go out there and do that again. We have a process and a plan that we try to execute and whatever happens, happens. I was not here for that Test match."

Australia have never lost a pink ball Test in Adelaide, in fact they have only lost once in day and night fixture.

"We are excited. We take a lot of confidence for our record in pink-ball cricket — it doesn't mean we will have the success but (with) our methods, our style of play and the experience we have in this group we'll bounce back from Perth," he added.

The two teams will take on each other in the second Test, starting here from Friday.



Gilchrist advises Australian batters to stay longer at crease

PTI ■ ADELAIDE
The legendary Adam Gilchrist has advised the beleaguered Australian batters to stay longer at the crease to nullify the threat posed by the Jasprit Bumrah-led Indian bowling attack in the pink-ball second Test here.

The swashbuckling former keeper-batter also backed the out-of-form Marnus Labuschagne to regain form. After Bumrah scythed through the Australian batting line-up, taking eight wickets including a five-for in the first innings at Perth, Gilchrist advised the hosts to "weather the storm".

Steve Smith and Labuschagne, the team's two batting mainstays, flopped in the series opener and that did not help Australia's cause.

"Marnus had the onus to do that (stay at crease) and tried at good effect to nullify 50-odd deliveries. So, if you face an average of 50 deliveries every Test innings, you're probably going to be on the right side of the ledger more than you're on the wrong side of it," Gilchrist was quoted as saying by Nine's Wide World of Sports.

"He just couldn't find a way to score and maybe that's what (the Australians) as a collective will look to try and do.

"It will bring with it risk, for sure, but it is a risk for reward."

Queenslander Labuschagne has been struggling for runs in recent months and now finds himself under immense pressure to retain his place in the side.

Gilchrist attributed Labuschagne's poor run of form to conditions and the quality of bowlers in the opposition camp, and didn't see it as a technical issue.

"I'm sure the people around him are already doing this but he needs to be reminded that he is a class act," Gilchrist said of Labuschagne.

"He's got a game that has been able to tolerate and withstand everything that the cricketing world has presented, and he's dominated for a number of years."

The former star added, "Most players that have played long enough will have been in this situation at some point in time and it's about not letting any self-doubt creep in and understanding you don't lose that skill — you don't lose that edge — (and) certainly not in a short space of time."

Gilchrist urged Labuschagne to "trust your training, get out there, see the ball and play it."

The second Test, a day/night affair, will begin on Friday at Adelaide Oval.

India lead the five-match series following their 295-run victory in the opener at Perth last week.

New Zealand penalised WTC points, drop to fifth in table

PTI ■ DUBAI
New Zealand's aspirations of qualifying for the World Test Championship Final suffered a setback after they were docked three penalty points due to slow over-rate against England leading to a drop in the ranking table, the ICC stated on Tuesday.

The deduction is a welcome news for India, who enjoy pole position with 61.11 percentage points.

New Zealand now have a points percentage of 47.92 percent and can only move as high as 55.36 per cent with victories from their remaining two fixtures against England, South Africa (59.26), Australia (57.26) and Sri Lanka (50) are placed second, third and fourth respectively.

"The race to feature at next year's ICC World Test Championship Final at Lord's has taken a twist with



off Test in June 2025, with two wins against England and several other results also needing to go their way if they are to reach the Lord's decider.

New Zealand and England were both found to have three overs short of the target after time allowances were taken into consideration, with sides penalised one point for each over they were found to be short.

Both captains - Tom Latham of New Zealand and Ben Stokes of England - pleaded guilty to the offence and accepted the proposed sanction, so there was no need for a formal hearing.

On-field umpires Ahsan Raza and Rod Tucker, third umpire Adrian Holdstock and fourth official Kim Cotton levelled the charges, with David Boon of the Emirates ICC Elite Panel of Match Referees imposing the sanctions.

While England are already out of contention of reaching next year's final despite the impressive eight-wicket triumph at Hagley Oval, the loss in competition points is a major blow to New Zealand who drop from equal fourth to outright fifth on the standings as a result. It means the inaugural World Test Championship winners face a tough ask to qualify for next year's one-

off Test in June 2025, with two wins against England and several other results also needing to go their way if they are to reach the Lord's decider.

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World Chess Championship: Gukesh squanders advantage to settle for draw in Game 7

PTI ■ SINGAPORE
The youngest-ever challenger to the world crown, D Gukesh let go of a very promising position and had to settle for a fourth consecutive draw against defending champion Ding Liren of China in a marathon seventh game of the World Chess Championship here on Tuesday.

The stalemate, which came after five hours and 22 minutes of nerve-racking play, left both players on an identical tally of 3.5 points each, still shy of four more points in order to win the championship.

The two players signed peace after 72 moves.

It turned out to be a tough day in office again for Liren, who was staring at a losing position for a long time, till Gukesh blundered. The Indian, playing white, got a huge advantage but miscalculated to let the Chinese off the hook in what was the longest game of the match thus far.

It was a miraculous save by Liren after getting into what the chess pundits termed as a lost rook and minor piece endgame.

Earlier in the day, Gukesh yet again tightened the noose in the opening. He has clearly been the better player when it's come to springing opening surprises.

Moving his knight forward on the first move, the Indian faced

the Neo Grunfeld defense from Liren, and as early as on the seventh turn, Gukesh came up with a surprise idea.

Liren, who seemed to have solved his opening problems in the last couple of games, was at the receiving end on Tuesday, and even though he chose normal continuation, white's position remained preferable.

Gukesh exerted pressure through the centre and got a dangerous-looking passed pawn in the early stages of the middle game, with the advantage of the bishop pair only adding to Liren's woes.

The middle game saw inaccuracies from both sides, and it seemed that Liren was close to obtaining equality. However, the process had yet again eaten up most of Liren's available time as the players are required to make the first 40 moves in two hours without any increment.

Gukesh went for the trade of queens after fracturing black's pawn structure on the king side as the Indian got an indisputable advantage.

As has happened so many times in the past, the 40th move proved to be jinxed yet again as Liren lost a pawn. The Chinese either underestimated Gukesh's chances or it was an oversight. Despite the advantage, Gukesh still had to go through the technicalities, which has not been his forte here.

Todd Greenberg appointed new Cricket Australia CEO

PTI ■ MELBOURNE
Former National Rugby League boss Todd Greenberg will succeed Nick Hockley as the chief executive officer of Cricket Australia next year, the governing body announced on Tuesday.

Green, who is the current chief executive officer of the Australian Cricketers' Association, will assume the role from March.

Hockley, who was appointed in 2020 initially on an interim basis, had announced in August that he would step down from the post at the end of the current domestic season.

Greenberg has previously worked with Cricket New South Wales. A top-order batter, he played 10 seasons for Randwick CC in Sydney.

Apart from serving as the CEO of NRL, Greenberg also worked with NRL club Canterbury-Bankstown Bulldogs before joining the ACA in January 2021.

"This is an extremely exciting time for cricket with the rapid growth of the



game across the globe creating fantastic opportunities, while also presenting some challenges to ensure Australian cricket retains its position at the very peak of the game," Greenberg was quoted as saying by cricket.Com.Au.

"Thanks to the work of the current administration the game has strong fundamentals in place. I want to ensure we build on this momentum so Australian cricket continues to thrive -

from local parks to the nation's biggest stadiums," he added.

As CEO of the ACA, Greenberg worked closely with Hockley and the two reached an amicable agreement on the current Memorandum of Understanding for cricket, which outlines the distribution of wealth within the game and resulted in a significant increase in women's remuneration.

"We are entering a period of great opportunity and the recruitment panel and CA Board was enormously impressed by Todd's passion for cricket and his vision to build on the achievements of the past few years and continue the game's growth," CA chairman Mike Baird said.

"I would like to thank Nick Hockley who will leave the game in a position of great strength at the end of the season with important foundations including our broadcast rights deal, MOU and seven-year content strategy in place," he added.

PTI ■ LONDON
Opting to go in without a proven performer like R Ashwin and batting first in an opening Test of a high-pressure series in Australia are reflections of an Indian team that is brave and supremely confident in its ability to win from any situation, feels England's all-time great Alastair Cook.

Cook, a former captain and the first England batter to make 10,000 runs in Test cricket, praised India for their remarkable comeback after getting bowled out for just 150 in the first Test at Perth.

"I thought India was so brave. I thought that first, you know, they win the toss and bat on that wicket, you look there, even though there's only 150 they got, the thought process to say, 'we're going to take Australia on there. We know it's going to be hard, but we think

Former England captain Alastair Cook Praises India for being 'Brave' in Perth Test

it's going to be hard for both sides only, and then it'll be a one-innings game," Cook said on TNT Sports.

He added, "I think most captains would have bowled first, certainly would have done and probably got the end of a bad result, like normally in Australia. But India took it on brilliantly. It was just an all-round fantastic performance."

"You think... Bowled out for 150, you think we're struggling here, but to bounce back when you've got Boomer (Jasprit Bumrah) up with the new ball on those kinds of wickets, he's always going to be outstanding and backed up by team."

Captaining the team in the



absence of Rohit Sharma, pace spearhead Bumrah came up with a magnificent performance to grab eight wickets, including a first-innings five-for, to lead India to a memo-

table win. Speaking about India's move to exclude the senior off-spinner Ashwin from the playing XI, Cook said, "... Just think of how brave they were? They didn't bother playing Ashwin who has got 500 Test wickets. They've kind of played a couple of like, not makes you spinners, but you know, I thought Ashwin would have been outstanding, but you know, great thinking by them."

"And isn't it nice to see Australia get thrashed?" Cook lauded the "classy" Yashasvi Jaiswal for the manner in which he dominated the formidable Australian pace attack and said he wouldn't have told the menacing Mitchell Starc he is bowling too slow even if he was.

After failing to open his account in the first innings of the series opener, Jaiswal adapt-

ed to the conditions beautifully and played a brilliant 161-run knock in the second essay, his maiden century on Australian soil.

During the second day of the match, Jaiswal told Starc, "It's coming too slow", with his confidence attracting the attention of many in the cricket world, including the former England captain, who had been a prolific scorer in Tests for a prolonged period.

"We've seen his celebration enough here, but it's more enjoyable against Australia than England, certainly," Cook said, referring to Jaiswal's phenomenal run in the Test series against England, when he amassed over 700 runs.

He added, "And sledging Mitchell Starc, saying at a certain stage, I think he wasn't on 100, he wasn't on anything on a major score, but he's telling him you're bowling slow.

केनरा बँक Canara Bank

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SALE NOTICE

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Properties under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with provision 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) and Guarantor(s) that the below described immovable properties mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the Possession of which has been taken by the Authorized Officer of Canara Bank, will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", "Whatever There is" and "without recourse" basis on 26.12.2024 for recovery of **Rs.228,17,01,765.43- (Rupees Two hundred Twenty Eight crores Seventeen lacs One thousand Seven hundred sixty Five and paise Forty Three only)** (as on 31.03.2024 plus further interest and charges from 01.04.2024 till the date of realization) due to the Stressed Asset Management Branch (erstwhile E-Syndicate Bank) Mumbai of Canara Bank from M/s. Juthi Industries Private Limited situated at Villi: Tirulidhi, P.O. Ghatdulmi, P.S.: Chandoli District: Serakella- Kharsawan, Jharkhand- 832401.

| Description of property |
|---|
| 1.All that part and parcel of the property - 7142 sq.ft built up area of an office premises/ commercial premises bearing office premises No. U.G.C.H.-6(upper ground central hall-6) on the upper ground floor front face hall in a multi storied residential cum commercial complex called "KAVERI" with one car parking space in basement floor along with 1400 sq. ft. undivided proportionate share of land in RS Khata No.107, Plot No. 309 situated at village Dumardaga, P. S. Ranchi, Present P. S.-Sadar, Thana no. 181, District-Ranchi, State Jharkhand, owned by Smt.Nutan Pandey.(Under Symbolic Possession) |
| Reserve Price:- Rs. 2,39,00,000/- (Rupees Two Crores Thirty Nine Lakhs Only) |
| Earnest Money Deposit:- Rs.23,90,000/- (Rupees Twenty Three lakhs Ninety Thousand only) |
| 2.All that part and parcel of the property-3480 sq. ft. super built up area of an office premises bearing office premises No. G.L.S.-33(Ground Large Shop-33) on the ground floor in a multi storied residential cum commercial complex called "KAVERI" with one car parking space in basement floor along with 800 sq. ft. undivided proportionate share of land in RS Khata No.107, Plot No. 309 situated at village Dumardaga, P. S. Ranchi, Present P. S.-Sadar, Thana no. 181, District-Ranchi, State Jharkhand, owned by Smt. Nutan Pandey.(Under Symbolic Possession) |
| Reserve Price:- Rs.1,18,00,000/- (Rupees One crores Eighteen lakhs only) |
| Earnest Money Deposit:- Rs. 11,80,000/- (Rupees Eleven Lakhs Eighty Thousand Only) |

The Earnest Money Deposit shall be deposited on or before **24.12.2024 up to 5 p.m.**
 Details of EMD and other documents to be submitted to service provider on or before **24.12.2024 upto 5.00 pm.**
 Date of inspection of properties with prior appointment with Authorized Officer as below:

Date And Time Of Inspection :- 23.12.2024 between 11.00 AM TO 2.00 PM (with prior appointment)

Date up to which documents can be deposited with Bank is **24.12.2024 up to 5:00 p.m.**
 "Any Person Who Brings A Successful Bidder Shall Be Entitled To 1% Of Sale Value Of The Property Or Contractual Liability Whichever Is Less."

For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer the link "E-Auction" provided in Canara Bank's website (www.canarabank.com) or may contact **Mr. Anchu Chacko, Authorized Officer/Chief Manager, Canara Bank, Stressed Asset Management Branch, Mumbai (Mob.No:9387797990) or Mrs. Dolly Ahirwar, Manager (Mob.No:8889098781)** e-mail id: cb15550@canarabank.com during office hours on any working day; or the service provider **M/s PSB Alliance Pvt.Ltd., Contact No. 91-022-6902 9800, 82912 20220, Email: support.ebkray@psballiance.com or Email : avp.projectmanager2@psballiance.com, website : https://ebkray.in/**

Date : 02.12.2024
Place : Mumbai

Authorized Officer
CANARA BANK
 Stressed Asset Management Branch Mumbai