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## GRAP-IV till Dec 2, was an abject failure: SC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Lambasting the authorities over the high level of air pollution in the National Capital and surrounding areas, the Supreme Court on Thursday termed the implementation of Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP-IV) measures as an "abject failure" saying GRAP-IV measures in Delhi will continue till Monday (December 2, 2024), except for schools and colleges. A Bench of Justices Abhay S Oka and Augustine George Masih noted that the Court Commissioners' report showed an "abject failure" on the part of authorities to control trucks and other inter-state vehicles' traffic into Delhi to implement GRAP-IV curbs in letter and spirit. Meanwhile, amid escalating pollution levels in Delhi, the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) has empowered member secretaries of pollution control bodies in Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Rajasthan and Delhi to take legal action against project proponents and agencies for gross violations of pollution control norms at construction sites. "We make it clear that all GRAP IV measures except the measures which are modified in respect of the schools will continue to operate till Monday. In the meantime, the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) will hold a meeting and come out with the suggestion about moving from GRAP IV to GRAP III



Photo: Ranjan Dimri/The Pioneer

or GRAP II. We also make it clear that it is not necessary that all measures which are provided in GRAP IV should be dispensed with," the Bench said. The SC further clarified that the entry of all trucks, except those carrying essential goods or providing essential services and LNG/CNG/electric/BS-VI-fitted trucks, were banned in the National Capital as per GRAP-IV measures. The Court also said that the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) will meet and suggest easing the easing of GRAP IV norms to GRAP III or II on December 2. The Court also said that action against officials for 'serious lapse' in implementation of GRAP-IV measures needs to be expedited.

The SC also asked the CAQM to consider implementing a "combination" of GRAP IV and III measures in New Delhi, and the measures have to be put on record for discussion on the next date of hearing on Monday. The CAQM's submission that show cause notice has been issued to authorities, including the Delhi Police Commissioner, under Section 14 of the CAQM Act, 2021 was also taken into record. The SC said it expects replies to the notice by Monday (December 2, 2024). On the issue of action against officials for a "serious lapse" in ensuring the GRAP IV curbs, Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati said notices have been issued to commissioner of police, special

(traffic), additional chief secretary, transport commissioner, commissioner (MCD) seeking their explanation by December 2. The Bench said the action against officials needed to be expedited. Bhati said the AQI was in "manageable limits" and the court should consider relaxing the norms. The Bench took note of a media report related to Punjab wherein a land record officer and president of the Sangrur Block Patwari Union, reportedly admitted to advising farmers to burn stubble after 4 pm, to avoid satellite detection. "We are not sure of the correctness of this news but if it is correct it is very serious. The (Punjab) state officials cannot permit any farmer to take advantage of the fact that

at present activities are being detected which take place during a few hours of the day. The Punjab government should immediately issue instructions to all officers not to indulge in any such activities," the Bench said. In a recent meeting, the CAQM issued strict directions to strengthen the monitoring and enforcement of orders issued for air pollution control at construction and demolition sites. The CAQM said member secretaries of pollution control boards and committees in Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Rajasthan and Delhi, as part of the statutory sub-committee on "Safeguarding and Enforcement", could take legal action against project proponents and agencies responsible for gross violations at construction sites, according to a statement. It also directed the officials to shut down non-compliant sites and recover environmental compensation charges. The CAQM also reviewed the implementation of the GRAP, which prescribes measures to tackle pollution based on air quality levels, and emphasised the need for strict enforcement. Meanwhile, pollution levels in Delhi marginally increased to 325 at 4 pm, maintaining the air quality within the 'very poor' category as the national capital recorded the season's coldest morning of the season on Thursday with the minimum temperature settling at 10.1 degrees Celsius, 0.2 notches below normal.



Security personnel conduct investigation at the site after a blast was reported near a PVR at Prashant Vihar, in New Delhi. Photo: Ranjan Dimri/The Pioneer

## Blast in Prashant Vihar, near Crime Branch office

SAUMYA SHUKLA ■ NEW DELHI

A low intensity blast occurred on Thursday near the Crime Branch office and PVR cinemas in Prashant Vihar area in Delhi's Rohini, this explosion took place about 500 meters away from the Central Reserves Police Force (CRPF) school where a bigger blast had ripped through the boundary wall. However, even though the blast on Thursday was of lower intensity, a 28-year-old driver was injured. The blast was reported by people at around 11.47 am when the residents in the vicinity heard a loud explosion. While initially they assumed it to be a gas cylinder blast, on stepping out they saw a cloud white smoke rising from the area, which had a bad chemical smell. The victim who sustained minor injuries has been identified as Chetan Kushwaha, who was talking on a phone next to a three wheeler parked near to the place where the blast took place. Kushwaha was working

as a driver for Kalpana Sharma, who told The Pioneer that he was waiting for the three-wheeler to be repaired. "When we heard the loud blast, we all immediately came out of our homes and saw Chetan injured. He had bloody red eyes, an injury on his lips and his clothes also got soiled and hence we took him to the doctor immediately. We also made a PCR call and the police came in sometime," she said, adding that ever since she inhaled the smoke from the explosion, she has had trouble in her throat. Around the crime scene, white powder marks were seen on the street. His son also said that when he rushed to the spot, he saw a white stone-like substance there. Coincidentally, this blast took place on a day when former Chief Minister and AAP supreme Arvind Kejriwal was holding a press conference on "the deteriorating condition of law and order in the Capital". The explosion took place in

front of a sweet shop near a park in the same area where a strong blast ripped through a wall of a CRPF school on October 20. The spot was near to the Crime Branch office, Fun City mall, St. Margaret's Senior Secondary school, Bansi Sweet among other residential places. The entire area was cordoned off immediately after a bomb detection team, dog squad, Special Cell, Crime Branch and Delhi Fire Services reached the spot. White powder was recovered from the spot. However, a probe is underway to ascertain more details about the explosion, officials said. A senior police officer said film screenings were underway inside the multiplex at the time of the blast. Panic ensued among visitors and residents as smoke engulfed the area. A video showing a cloud of smoke around the multiplex emerged on social media following the incident. The distance between the PVR and blast site is a few meters.

## Meet Priyanka Gandhi Vadra MP

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Holding up a copy of the Constitution, Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Thursday took oath as a Lok Sabha Member Parliament, to begin her journey as an elected representative of the people five years after she joined active politics. Dressed in a cream Kasavu saree from Kerala, Priyanka Gandhi rose to take oath amid cheers of 'Jodo Jodo, Bharat Jodo' from the Congress benches. Priyanka entered into Lok Sabha with her brother and Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi and other Congress MPs. The MP from Wayanad in Kerala held up a red and black bound copy of the Constitution, which Rahul Gandhi has been displaying at his public meetings, as she took her oath. She took the oath with Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, her mother and Congress Parliamentary Party (CPP) chief Sonia Gandhi, husband Robert Vadra, son Raihan and daughter Miraya watching from the galleries. The 52-year-old, who joins her mother Sonia and brother Rahul as an MP in what is a rare instance of three members of a family together in Parliament, took affirmation in Hindi. Congress MPs earlier met at the CPP office in the Parliament premises where Priyanka Gandhi was greeted and congratulated by leaders. After taking oath, Priyanka completed the formalities and then shared a warm hug with Rahul Gandhi. She then went



Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra takes oath as a Member of Parliament in the Lok Sabha during the Winter session of Parliament. PTI

and sat in the fourth row with fellow Congress MPs. Ravindra Chavan (Congress), who won the Nanded by-poll also took oath in Marathi in the name of God. The House was adjourned after the oaths as opposition members came to the Well of the House and raised slogans, demanding a discussion on the Adani issue and the Sambhal violence. As MPs exited the House, leaders made a beeline to congratulate Priyanka Gandhi and on the steps of the Makar Dwar. Congress MPs gathered as Rahul Gandhi clicked a photograph of Priyanka Gandhi with the Samvidhan Sadan in the background. "It will strengthen Rahul Gandhi, the party and the principles of the Constitution because we are fighting for that," she told reporters when asked about the impact of her entering Parliament. Asked about taking the oath holding up the Constitution, Priyanka Gandhi said it signifies that "nothing is above the Constitution for us and we will continue to fight for it".

## CCI directs probe against Google on real money gaming apps

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Fair trade regulator CCI on Thursday ordered a probe against Google and its affiliates for alleged unfair business practices with respect to listing of real money gaming apps on Play Store. While passing the order, CCI said the "the Commission directs the Director General ('DG') to cause an investigation to be made into the matter under the provisions of Section 26(1) of the Act". The Commission also directed the DG to complete the investigation and submit a consolidated report within 60 days. The probe follows a complaint by Winzo Games, accusing Google of abusing its dominant position and unfairly favouring select gaming categories, thereby distorting competition. In its 24-page order, the regulator noted that the selective inclusion of DFS and Rummy apps gives them an undue competitive advantage. "Direct access to end-users via the dominant Play Store provides a significant edge to DFS and Rummy apps, potentially disadvantaging other RMG applications," the Commission said in its order. The CCI also flagged concerns regarding Google's sideloaded warnings displayed when users attempt to download RMG apps. These warnings, Winzo claimed, tarnish its reputation and discourage potential users from accessing its app.

## New doors for industrial development to open in MP

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Creating an ideal cultural backdrop for investment and industrial collaboration between the two great nations under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Chief Minister Mohan Yadav on Thursday said a German language institute would soon be established in Madhya Pradesh. On the first day of his tour of the European nation, Chief Minister Yadav met Florian Herrmann, Head of the Bavarian State Chancellery and Minister of State for Federal and European Affairs and Media. The meeting focused on exploring various collaboration opportunities at the state level. During the discussion, both CM Yadav and Herrmann expressed their commitment to strengthening state-level partnerships in line with the growing Indo-German relations under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The leaders discussed potential areas of cooperation, including technological innovation, supercomputing, the automotive sector, aeronautics, and space technology. Chief Minister Yadav was deeply impressed by the German delegation's time-management skills, remarking, "Those who conquer time can conquer the world." He praised Germany's economic resilience and transformation as an inspiring model of national development and strategic progress. Both sides viewed the meeting as the beginning of a



long-lasting and mutually beneficial relationship between Madhya Pradesh and Bavaria. Chief Minister Yadav spoke of the importance of addressing climate policy challenges, promoting technological innovations, fostering higher education exchange programmes, facilitating technology transfer, and creating job opportunities for the citizens of Madhya Pradesh. The Chief Minister also discussed the plan to establish a dedicated state government liaison office in Madhya Pradesh to facilitate smoother coordination with existing German investments in the industrial areas of Mandideep and Pithampur. Chief Minister Yadav stated that the cooperation between Germany and Madhya

Pradesh would open new doors for industrial development. He said that in discussions with Herrmann, they had explored opportunities for German experts to bring technology to Madhya Pradesh. The two countries, through mutual coordination, will set new benchmarks for industrial growth in Madhya Pradesh. He noted that Germany has a long-standing relationship with India, and its civilisation is known for its unique approach to development. On his arrival in Munich, Chief Minister Yadav and the industrial delegation were warmly welcomed by India's Consul General Shatrughan Sinha, Indian Union President Rana Hargovind Singh, and other members of the Indian diaspora.

The Chief Minister highlighted that Germany, with a population of 85 million, has emerged as a global leader after World War II, setting an example of technical excellence. However, he acknowledged the language challenge for those seeking employment in Germany and announced plans to establish a "Language Institute" in Madhya Pradesh to overcome this barrier. CM Yadav noted that German technical expertise would be invaluable for enhancing industries in his state, especially in engineering, polytechnic education, and ITs. He emphasised the advanced level of German technology in the automotive sector and acknowledged the challenges that may arise in implementing this technology. Through sharing technical experiences, both states will work towards overcoming these challenges. He also announced that a Global Investors Summit would be organised in Bhopal after the foreign visit, German representatives and industrialists would be invited. Chief Minister Yadav assured that administrative challenges related to sending officials from one state to another would be resolved, which will ease the path for trade and business development. He expressed hope that this dialogue would mark the beginning of a new chapter in international and state-level cooperation focused on collaborative development, technological advancement, and economic prosperity.

## Indian players love the challenge of playing in Australia: Rohit Sharma

PTI ■ CANBERRA

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese on Thursday hosted a reception for the travelling Indian cricket team ahead of its two-day pink ball practice match against PM's XI here from November 30. The game will take place at the Manuka Oval serving as good preparation for the day-night Test in Adelaide from December 6. India recorded their biggest

win on Australia soil when they hammered the hosts by 295 runs in the opening game of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy in Perth. Following the protocol, India skipper Rohit Sharma introduced all his teammates to Albanese, who praised heroes of the first Test including Jasprit Bumrah and Virat Kohli. "Anthony Albanese @AlboMP Big challenge ahead for the PM's XI at Manuka Oval this week against an amazing Indian



Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, centre, poses for a photograph with members of the Indian cricket team during a reception at Parliament House in Canberra, Thursday, November 28, 2024. AP/PTI

side," the Prime Minister posted on X after the meeting at the Australian parliament. The PM's XI led by Jack Edwards also called on Albanese. Rohit also addressed the parliament briefly. In his speech, he highlighted the rich history of bilateral relations between India and Australia including their shared love for cricket. He also said Indian players love the challenge of playing in Australia and enjoy exploring the country and its

culture. India clinched back to back series wins Down Under and Rohit said the team is looking to build on that success and entertain both Australian and Indian fans. Cricket diplomacy is an integral part of India-Australia relations. Albanese, with his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi, had met players of both teams during a Test in Ahmedabad last year when the Australian Prime Minister was in India on an official visit.

Centre committed to combat of terror funding and money laundering

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Governor Mangubhai Patel emphasized that the 41st plenary meeting of the Eurasian Group (EAG) countries, held in Indore, will serve as a significant milestone in the fight against money laundering and terrorism financing.

Governor Patel said that special efforts were made for a transparent financial system in India through demonetization and digitalization. He said more special efforts need to be made to prevent illegal financial activities through modern technology.

combating terror funding with full strength. The Black Money Act in India has been a special effort to prevent economic crime and is continuing. Special efforts have been made under GST, Digital India for a clean and transparent financial system in India.

Holkar is a matter of pride. He said money laundering directly threatens a country's economy, but when it feeds terrorism, it poses serious challenges to world peace and harmony.

in various sessions. He said that future challenges and their prevention were also discussed in the meeting. Funding terrorism is a serious challenge in other regions of the world including Eurasian and African countries.



Madhya Pradesh Governor Mangubhai Patel inaugurated the EAG (Eurasian Group) meeting in Indore by lighting the ceremonial lamp. Pioneer photo

Cong legislator Sapre's fate in balance, both parties refuse to accept

GIRISH SHARMA ■ BHOPAL

The fate of Congress legislator from Bina, Nirmala Sapre, hangs in a precarious balance as both the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the main opposition Congress are refusing to accept her in their ranks.

Leader of the Opposition in the State Assembly, Umang Singhar, filed a petition in the Indore bench of High Court

Assembly accusing Sapre of crossing over and seeking her immediate disqualification from the House. However, the State Assembly has not yet taken any action against her.

Indore High Court against its own leader. This petition has been filed by the Leader of the Opposition, Umang Singhar, in the Indore bench of the Madhya Pradesh High Court.

Leader of the Opposition, Umang Singhar, said, "We had given a letter to the Assembly Speaker in July. The Assembly lost the papers. Even after 90 days, the Speaker did not take any decision, so we had to approach the High Court."

First arrest in 'digital arrest' case, accused nabbed from Kanpur

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Cyber crime branch made first arrest in the case of telecom engineer of Gayatri Nagar's digital arrest. Nagar of Bajarua area was digitally arrested on the night of November 12 in Bhopal, cyber crime branch has arrested the accused from Kanpur.

so afraid that they did not come out of the house even after the video call of the cyber criminals was disconnected. The thugs had asked them to remain under surveillance for 24 hours. The thugs were even aware of whose call was coming on their mobile.

online money have been transferred from your number to different bank accounts. Caller claimed that his number should not be disconnected as he is from Mumbai. In case of disconnecting the number, the arrest will be made from Bhopal.

was told that the crime he committed is punishable by a fine of Rs 3.50 lakh and two years in jail. On information from the victim's boss, the police reached his house. After this, he was taken out. The thugs talked to Pramod and got all his information from him.



Congress candidate from Vijaypur Mukesh Malhotra, who won the by-election recently, was welcomed at the Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC) headquarters in Bhopal on Thursday. Pioneer photo

Police personnel felicitated for their excellence in duty

PNS ■ GWALIOR

A felicitation ceremony was organized at the International Center of Media Excellence (ICOM), to honour the CSP and his team from Padav police station. It is to be noted that the team under the CSP caught a culprit who had stolen a bag full of gold ornaments worth lakhs of rupees within thirty minutes and returned it to the complainant.



Pandey said that honest and dedicated policemen are the backbone of the society and that it is the duty of everyone to acknowledge their hard work and honesty. He added that taking inspiration from such officers, other policemen will also perform their duties towards the society with more devotion.

incomparable. Editorial in-charge Vijay Pandey said that policemen working with honesty and devotion are not only the strong pillar of law and order, but they are also an inspiration to the society. He added that it is one's responsibility to recognize their honesty and hard work.

better. He added that people should be sensitive towards the police and those who come to the police station should also have some patience. He concluded his speech by saying that when people have a positive attitude, it increases the morale of the police personnel, which brings good results.

Rape accused Dy Collector missing, officially on leave till November 30

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Deputy Collector Rajesh Sorte who was booked for rape remains missing from office even his office opens every day; he has applied for leave till November 30. A case has been registered against Deputy Collector Sorte on November 14 at Pachor police station in Rajgarh district on the charge of rape.

responsibilities have been handed over to other officers. So, the work is not affected. Other works including public hearing were the responsibility of Sorte. The woman had released a video. It was claimed that Sorte had done shopping for her son's wedding a year ago. In this case, Sarangpur SDOP Arvind Singh said, Deputy Collector Sorte has not been arrested. A team has been dispatched.

Newborn found dead at Piplani locality

Bhopal: Body of a premature newborn was found in 40 quarters of Piplani when it was torn apart by street dogs, on Wednesday night a street dog was scratching the body. The children playing in the field chased the dog away and rescued the body. The children informed the family about the matter. After this, the police were informed. The police have recovered the body and started investigating the case.

Kolar police solve murder case, cousin of the deceased nabbed

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Kolar police have arrested two persons including a woman who killed a 40-year-old man; he was murdered by his cousin who was attracted towards the wife of the deceased. The accused had a one-sided love affair with the deceased's wife. The deceased was angry with the accused after having known about the love. The accused killed the deceased's wife by attacking her on the head and face with a sharp knife in a fight over a one-sided love affair.

deceased was identified as Rakesh Ladia of Kajlikhedhi Kolar Road. During investigation, when the cameras around the crime scene and city surveillance were seen, the deceased and an unknown person were seen fighting in the footage. On the basis of the said footage, when people around the spot were questioned, the informer identified the person with the appearance seen in the footage as Rahul Ladia, the cousin of the deceased. To verify the information, when the deceased's house in Kajlikhedhi was reached and enquired about Rahul, Rahul's family told that Rahul had gone to work from home on the morning of November 26 and had not returned and his mobile phone was also found to be switched off.

World Bank delegation reviews aided projects



STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

World Bank delegation reviewed projects assisted by the global organisation at the headquarters of the Madhya Pradesh Urban Development Company—an undertaking of the Urban Development and Housing Department—provided updated information regarding both completed and ongoing projects. Success stories related to community achieve-

ments of the projects were also shared with the team during the meeting. Additionally, the results and achievements of the Reform Support Consultants were discussed. All concerned parties, including Deputy Project Director Technical Shailendra Shukla, were present in the meeting. The meeting was coordinated by Technical Officer Kamlesh Bhatnagar.

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PAPER WITH PASSION

## One nation, one subscription

While heralded as a potential game-changer for academia, the ONOS has ignited intense debate among scholars and researchers

In the series of 'one nation' comes yet another addition and this time it is about subscription of academic journals. The Indian government's recent approval of the 'One Nation, One Subscription' (ONOS) scheme has sparked considerable debate within academic and research communities. Touted as a transformative step for Indian academia, the scheme seeks to centralise access to academic journals and publications for higher education and research institutions across the country. While the initiative promises benefits such as cost efficiency and wider access to resources, concerns about its implementation, implications for academic freedom and necessity remain significant. Under the ONOS scheme, managed by the Information and Library Network (INFLIB-NET), over 6,300 institutions will have access to 13,000 e-journals from 30 major international publishers through a unified digital portal. With a budget allocation of Rs 6,000 crore for its first three years, the government aims to empower approximately 1.8 crore students, researchers and faculty members. This move could enhance India's standing in the global research ecosystem, reducing resource disparities across institutions. The ONOS scheme could democratise access to academic knowledge.



Smaller institutions, often constrained by limited budgets, could benefit immensely from comprehensive access to high-quality publications. Students and researchers in remote or underfunded regions may now have the same access as those in premier institutions, fostering equity in education and research. Centralising subscriptions could also significantly reduce costs. A unified portal ensures that these resources are optimised, potentially freeing budgets for other academic priorities. This could encourage more efficient and effective research practices. Despite its potential benefits, the ONOS scheme has raised several concerns. One major issue is the lack of clarity on how journals will be selected. Academic needs are diverse, varying by discipline, institution and research focus. Centralising the decision-making process risks overlooking specific requirements, leading to an inadequate or unbalanced collection of resources. Critics argue that the government could limit access to publications or perspectives it disagrees with, thereby influencing academic discourse. Another critique is that the scheme might disrupt established systems that currently work well. Many institutions already have mechanisms to access journals through collaborations, institutional networks like the Developing Library Network (DELNET), and platforms like JSTOR. Moreover, the scheme's centralised approach risks reducing the autonomy of academic institutions. Faculty members, who currently play a significant role in determining which journals their institutions need, might find themselves sidelined. This loss of autonomy could hinder academic innovation and responsiveness to emerging research trends. It would be hasty to implement the scheme which has advantages for sure, but the concerns of academicians must be addressed.

While India and Nigeria have 'a strategic partnership', the African nation and China elevated their ties to 'a comprehensive strategic partnership' this year. The courting of Nigeria as well as dozens of other African countries was done bilaterally as well collectively at the ninth Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) Summit in early September in Beijing. These summits have been held regularly since the first one in 2006, with one even being held virtually during the Covid-19 pandemic. India, however, has floundered in not being able to organise an African summit since the last one in 2015, ostensibly due to the pandemic and geopolitical tensions, but amounts to a lack of strategic foresight. China is making deeper inroads into the African continent for both strategic as well as economic reasons. Strategically, it can project itself as a geopolitical force countering arch foe US. Moreover, strengthening its foothold in the world's second most populous continent comes with the lucrative advantage of having access to the huge market as well as the rich mineral resources there. For many cash-strapped African nations, China has been a pivotal lender of loans for much-needed infrastructure construction, but it comes with the perils of running up huge debts. Africa is a vital part of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), with 53 nations having signed onto the endeavour that India views with deep suspicion given Beijing's hegemonic intentions. Under the BRI, China is assist-



PICTALK

Visitors at the Istanbul stall on the last day of the India International Trade Fair, in New Delhi

## Countering China's African influence

Prime Minister Modi's visit to Nigeria highlights India's bid to rejuvenate ties with the African nation and counter China's growing influence through partnerships



PARUL CHANDRA

While India and Nigeria have 'a strategic partnership', the African nation and China elevated their ties to 'a comprehensive strategic partnership' this year. The courting of Nigeria as well as dozens of other African countries was done bilaterally as well collectively at the ninth Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) Summit in early September in Beijing. These summits have been held regularly since the first one in 2006, with one even being held virtually during the Covid-19 pandemic. India, however, has floundered in not being able to organise an African summit since the last one in 2015, ostensibly due to the pandemic and geopolitical tensions, but amounts to a lack of strategic foresight. China is making deeper inroads into the African continent for both strategic as well as economic reasons. Strategically, it can project itself as a geopolitical force countering arch foe US. Moreover, strengthening its foothold in the world's second most populous continent comes with the lucrative advantage of having access to the huge market as well as the rich mineral resources there. For many cash-strapped African nations, China has been a pivotal lender of loans for much-needed infrastructure construction, but it comes with the perils of running up huge debts. Africa is a vital part of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), with 53 nations having signed onto the endeavour that India views with deep suspicion given Beijing's hegemonic intentions. Under the BRI, China is assist-

ing Nigeria in its connectivity efforts by building railway lines and a deep sea port in Lagos. China is also Nigeria's biggest bilateral lender and the two sides decided to forge close economic ties when Chinese President Xi Jinping and Nigerian President Bola Ahmed Tinubu met in Beijing ahead of the FOCAC Summit. It's in the backdrop of all this that PM Modi's recent visit to Nigeria assumes even greater significance. While he made it clear that India gives "high priority" to its strategic partnership with Nigeria, the visit yielded only three pacts - on survey cooperation, cooperation in customs matters and culture exchange programmes. India will have to do some real heavy lifting in the coming years if the 14 areas of bilateral cooperation identified in the joint statement are to come to fruition. Among these are the Bilateral Investment Treaty, the Double Taxation Avoidance Treaty and the Agreement on repurposed Line of Credits. India's outreach to Nigeria at the highest level was required given that Africa's most populous nation enjoys much heft in the region and beyond. It's a founding member of the



AFRICA IS A VITAL PART OF CHINA'S BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE (BRI), WITH 53 NATIONS HAVING SIGNED ONTO THE ENDEAVOUR THAT INDIA VIEWS WITH DEEP SUSPICION GIVEN BEIJING'S HEGEMONIC INTENTIONS

African Union (AU), which India helped bring into the G-20's fold last year. Nigeria is now also a BRICS partner state. The country is also a member of OPEC, with President Tinubu also being the current chair of ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States). A fresh push to boost bilateral trade and investments by Indian companies in Nigeria is imperative. There are already over 200 Indian companies in the manufacturing sector with investments worth \$27 billion in Nigeria. While India remains among the top 5 trading partners of Nigeria, bilateral trade unfortunately decreased to \$7.89 billion in 2023-24 from \$14.95 billion in 2021-22. This is attributed to a reduction in Indian oil imports from Nigeria as it chose to import oil from Russia, taking advantage of the cheaper rates being offered due to the conflict with Ukraine. With the joint statement with Nigeria talking about India's willingness to go in for long-term contracts for crude and LNG purchases, bilateral trade might pick up once again. Significantly, India has also evinced interest in investing in Nigeria's oil and gas sector. Terrorism and piracy also

figured as areas of cooperation in the joint statement. Nigeria for many years has been battling the Islamic radical group Boko Haram, which has also been attacking oil and gas infrastructure in the country. India, interestingly, has offered technical know-how on security for pipelines in Nigeria. Maritime domain cooperation is also of crucial importance to combat piracy. Nigeria abuts the Gulf of Guinea which passes crucial sea lanes for transporting crude oil. India had deployed at least two warships, INS Sumedha in 2023 and INS Tarkash in 2022, in the piracy-prone Gulf of Guinea. With Chinese vessels on the prowl across the oceans, these deployments were not without strategic significance. Overall, India needs to move and move fast, delivering on its promises made during PM Modi's visit to Nigeria. It has no time to lose in majorly upscaling its traditional robust ties with African nations, especially with China increasingly grabbing strategic space in the continent. The writer is a senior journalist who writes on foreign affairs. (*The writer is a senior journalist who writes on strategic affairs; views are personal*)

terrorism and piracy also

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### SIDHU SPARKS CONTROVERSY

Madam — The former cricketer and commentator Navjot Singh Sidhu, whose wife is suffering from cancer has come out with propaganda on social media that neem leaves, lemon juice, turmeric, and cinnamon helped cure his wife's breast cancer and started advocating it as a simple remedy for those who have been suffering from it. As a celebrity, Sidhu should have advised the people to ensure good health with a periodical medical checkup since the dreaded disease affects lakhs every year in India. His irresponsible statement, while taking into account the false claims that celebrities used to promote wrong products by endorsing commercials for their self-promotion, as well as to claim the fat check, calls for a stringent warning. Sidhu's experience on his wife's issue shouldn't deviate people who are already suffering and availing treatment in their case.

Tall claims in social media need strong rebuttal with penalisation for their unemotional behaviour. In 2019 the BJP leader Pragya Singh Thakur had similarly claimed that Gau Mutra (cow urine) had cured her of cancer, whereas she was operated on for tumour removal in 2008 at JJ Hospital in Mumbai as reported by Dr Rajput. When the flashback runs like this, Sidhu's claim at these advanced medical times has been thoroughly misled while the global research has not yet found anything concrete to counter cancer to date is the reality. Controlling the growth and extending longevity by itself can be considered to be a miracle and we can only seek blessings for the safe health of Sidhu's wife and thousands in the need of this hour.

A P Thiruvadi | Chennai

### MINORITIES RAISE CONCERNS

Madam — Minorities are making so much noise ever since the NDA came to power for the third time running. They could not digest the defeat of the forces working against the government. Enjoying all benefits as an Indian citizen while still blaming the government is the order of the

### Protecting mental health of Children



Australia will ban children from using social media with a minimum age limit as high as 16 to get kids off their devices and onto the foxy fields. The initiative is taken to make kids play in the grounds and experience the loss and victory in the field and have real experiences with real people and teammates

day. Without knowing the ins and outs of the political formula, they pass hate comments against the government. They get solace by abusing the government after losing the elections in Maharashtra. The myth of the model minority is based in stereotypes. It perpetuates a narrative in which they want to get prominence. In reality, the twenty-first century has so far been one of bewildering change accompanied by the destruction of certainties, among them that of the inevitable rise of human rights. It is clear that gains that were once thought permanent can quickly be lost. A real danger of lack of certainty is that the resultant fear leads to a backlash, which is likely to be directed against those seen as a threat or who are easily used as scapegoats.

Jayanthy Subramaniam | Mumbai

### GANGA UNSAFE FOR BATHING

Madam — The water in the holy Ganga is unsuitable for bathing. A few days ago, an exasperated Justice Arun Kumar Tyagi of the National Green Tribunal, while hearing a case related to the tributaries Assi and Varuna, told the Varanasi District

Magistrate to "just put up a sign" and "make it clear the Ganga here isn't for a holy splash." The river flows for about 2500 kilometres from the southern great Himalayas before it empties into the Bay of Bengal. The Namami Gange Programme (NGP), launched in 2014-15 to cleanse the Ganga and its tributaries, was originally scheduled to be completed by March 2021. It has now been extended until March 2026. The Central Government has released ₹16,012 crore from FY2014-15 until October 2023 under the NGP-I of ₹20,000 crore and NGP-II of ₹22,500 crore. In the 30 years prior to the launch of the NGP, various governments had spent ₹4000 crore to clean the river. Despite spending more than ₹20,000 crore, the water in the Ganga is still not clean enough to take a dip. One is compelled to conclude the NGP is equally polluted with corruption and inefficiency.

Dimple Wadhawan | Kanpur Nagar

Haridasan Rajan | Kozhikode

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

## Unpaid care workers: The neglected workforce

These workers, predominantly women, form the invisible backbone of families and communities, shouldering critical responsibilities without recognition or compensation



SHAHNAZ RAFIQUE

Unpaid care workers play a crucial yet often overlooked role in sustaining families and communities. These individuals, typically family members and predominantly women, take on essential caregiving and household tasks without formal salaries or wages. Their contributions range from managing daily domestic duties to supporting vulnerable family members and even volunteering in community-based activities. Despite the significant value they provide, their work remains largely unrecognised, unregulated, and uncompensated, often leaving them economically insecure and lacking social protections. This group includes several key roles. Household caregivers provide daily care for children, elderly relatives, or family members with disabilities, handling tasks like cooking, cleaning and offering emotional support. Childcare providers, especially in low-income families, often include mothers or grandmothers who look after young children, offering informal education and



supervision. In some communities, individuals volunteer for communal care tasks such as organising child care or assisting with health-related services out of a sense of responsibility rather than financial motivation. Family health caregivers manage tasks such as administering medication, assisting with mobility, and caring for chronically ill relatives. In rural areas, unpaid care work often extends to agricultural labor, including farming, collecting water, and gathering firewood, which are essential for household survival but remain uncompensated. The economic contributions of unpaid care work are immense, supporting families and enabling formal economic activities by ensuring the wellbeing of individuals. However, the lack of formal recognition and compensation leaves these workers vulnerable to financial instability and limits access to social protections. A related but distinct category includes 'Anganwadi' workers, who occupy a middle ground between unpaid and paid care work. Employed under the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) programme, they receive a modest honorari-

um rather than a formal wage. This compensation is often irregular, lacks benefits like retirement or health insurance and fails to provide the stability of formal employment. Consequently, while Anganwadi workers are technically paid, their financial insecurity mirrors the challenges faced by unpaid care workers. Despite their critical contributions to the care economy, Anganwadi workers remain undervalued and under-compensated. Many are forced to take on additional jobs to make ends meet. Their situation highlights the broader societal neglect of care work, where contributions—paid or unpaid—are undervalued and often relegated to the margins of economic discourse. Addressing these issues requires recognising care work's essential role in social and economic systems and implementing policies that ensure fair compensation and protection for all care workers.

(The writer is Secretary, Indian Trade Union Congress (INTUC); views are personal)



**FIRST COLUMN**

**TRUMP 2.0: STEEP TARIFFS ON CARDS**

Trump's policies are likely to create ripples across economies, including India



KUMARDEEP BANARJEE

The fireworks have started, even before people across the globe have ushered in Christmas and New Year's festivities. The Trump presidency 2.0 could be a game changer, potentially recalibrating several global geopolitical and economic partnerships. First, the Biden era days of strategic partnership with nations worldwide would be replaced with a more transactional approach which President Trump in his second stint is likely to institutionalise. Even before taking charge, President-elect Donald Trump has vociferously spelt out his tariff-based external affairs policy.

He had during campaigning talked about imposing nearly 60 per cent tariffs on China imports. Recently he has said that one of the first executive orders, he is likely to sign after assuming office on January 20, would be to impose tariffs on Canada, Mexico and China imports. Of course, the caveat is, unless, they stop sending illegal immigrants and ban drugs across to the US. Donald Trump knows his tariff-based foreign policy approach has bipartisan support among Democrats and Republicans. It feeds well into his Made in America, local job creation narrative which catapulted him back to the White House in a non-consecutive term. India is overseeing this space, as it knows very well that even though the first tariff bullets may not be fired at India, eventually many will. Mr Trump has already spoken about India's high tariffs in his election rallies and notwithstanding the amount of good, the Indian IT services sector has done for the US, he needs to send home hard messages. The only saving grace in the upcoming US-India bilateral relationship, under President Trump 2.0 would be the personal equation, the



relationship between President-elect Trump and Prime Minister Modi. Knowing each other for a long period and having observed each other's style of governing, can be an initial advantage but not a long-term solution. Key Indian trade interlocutors are in high demand, especially those who have been in government during Trump's first presidency.

At some point in time, the issue of tariffs would come up in the bilateral conversations, where hard-nosed negotiations may be required. India and US under the Biden administration managed to establish a formal institutional framework for settling trade and tariff issues in the form of a Trade Policy Forum (TPF). The TPF platform provides trade representatives from the US and India to meet regularly to discuss and find solutions to mutual areas of concern. To be sure the TPF mechanism existed even under the Trump administration, but with one meeting and a new Indian government under Prime Minister Modi (with less focus on trade and external affairs policy), it served little purpose. Chances are, given Donald Trump's style of functioning, the TPF may be relegated to the background and several transactional bilateral meetings would be formatted to, minimise the friction in the trade relations.

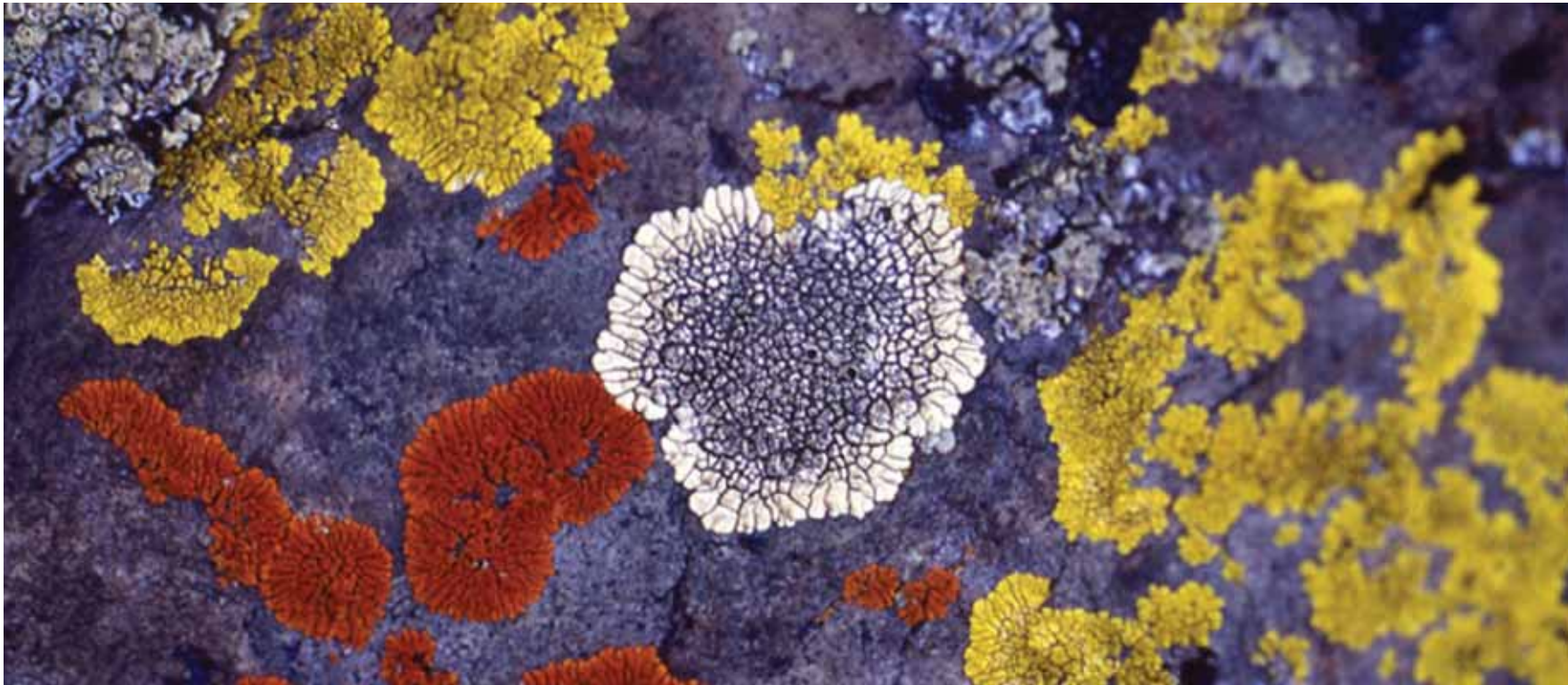
It may be worth noting that India has a trade surplus with the US, a point Mr Trump will keep in mind to extract his side of the deal. Meanwhile, the expected tightening of the trade environment between the US and China would have a significant impact on the global economy. China would have to find newer markets to push some of the goods, which could be too expensive to export to the US. India and its neighbouring nations would have to brace up. Prices of items in the US, most of which are imported from China could add an extra burden on household budgets, which in turn could push rate hikes.

These global headwinds will shape, the narratives for a long time to come. It could have an inflationary impact on global oil prices and growth of the several global economies. India's Reserve Bank has already cautioned that the slowdown in the global economy, protectionism, and tariffs are three key factors that will shape India's economy next year. It would be another tightrope with clever hands of the juggler on rope which can carry India for the next few years.

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

# Climate change and Lichens: The tiny titans of nature

Lichens, the silent guardians of our ecosystem, are under threat from climate change and need to be saved, write BKP SINHA and ARVIND KUMAR JHA



Vibrant patches of colour adorning some tree trunks and rocks may draw your attention as you move in the forest. Although they appear as mere stains or growths; they are intricate organisms called lichens, a product of a mutualistic alliance between fungus and algae. Making it a unique creation of nature, the fungus absorbs water and nutrients from the air while an organic compound is generated by the photosynthetic partner. Thus while fungi build a house; its algal partner supplies food as the breadwinner. Similarly, if fungi did not provide a secure structure, the algae would die homeless in harsh places.

The absence of cuticles and roots and their direct reliance on the atmosphere for nutrients, however, makes lichens highly vulnerable to pollutants. Found in a variety of shapes and colours, ranging from delicate leafy structures to crusty patches, they thrive in diverse habitats, from rocky mountainsides to rain forests and deserts. They can grow on soil, humus, stones, rocks, bricks, plaster, leaves, tree trunks, decaying wood and even on glass. Overtly so simple and insignificant in the face of the dominant bias of human beings that often considers a forest just as an assemblage of trees and vegetation mix, lichens play an extremely vital role in ecosystems. Lichens are known to play a crucial role in soil formation, breaking down rocks through biogeochemical and biochemical weathering and creating nutrient-rich soil paving the way for other plants to grow. They produce unique compounds with potential medicinal properties, such as antibiotics and antifungals. They are used in medicine, food, fodder, perfume, spices, and dyes. Researchers are exploring these compounds to develop new drugs and sustainable materials. By understanding the adaptations and biochemical properties of lichens, one can unlock new possibilities and contribute to a more sustainable future. Lichens can survive at extreme temperatures and altitudes in which no creatures can survive. One can see more lichen on



**LICHENS ARE KNOWN TO PLAY A CRUCIAL ROLE IN SOIL FORMATION, BREAKING DOWN ROCKS THROUGH BIOGEOCHEMICAL AND BIOCHEMICAL WEATHERING AND CREATING NUTRIENT-RICH SOIL PAVING THE WAY FOR OTHER PLANTS TO GROW**

the edge of the forest than deep in the forest. They will be lesser near the towns as the air quality deteriorates. Many lichens are incredibly sensitive to air pollution, particularly due to sulphur dioxide and nitrogen oxides, as also to the level of heavy metal pollution. All lichens, however, are not equally sensitive to air pollutants. Different lichen species exhibit different sensitivity to specific air pollutants. Consequently, lichens are well-suited as biological indicators for monitoring environmental quality.

More than seventeen thousand species of lichens are reported to cover around seven per cent of the world's surface. India, a land of diverse landscapes and climatic conditions, is home to rich biodiversity and harbours about 3,000 fascinating species of lichens. Some European countries like Germany, Italy, Portugal and Slovenia; considering lichen's response to pollution; have positioned them as bio-monitors and bio-indicators and included them in their air-pollution-related policy documents. Much of India's lichen diversity, however, remains relatively unexplored as regards their ecological significance and potential applications. Yet another crucial issue in the Indian context is the undervaluation of lichens in India.

When the diversion of forest land for rainforest purposes is proposed, the net present value (NPV) of the forest is calculated and the amount is recovered from the project proponents. Calculation of NPV does not consider the aspect of the immense value that lichens have from ecological as well as economic points of view. This is evident from the fact that the per hectare NPV of forests of Eco-class-I and Eco-class-II categories that have

forests of types Tropical Wet Evergreen / Semi-Evergreen/Moist-Deciduous/Littoral and Swamp have been assigned the same value. It is essential that realistic values are assigned to the forests of different types and the monetised value of lichens and their services are duly incorporated therein. Climate change has serious implications for the lichens. Higher temperatures can disrupt the delicate balance between the fungal and algal partners. Extreme heat can lead to desiccation and reduced growth rates. Altered rainfall patterns can affect the availability of water, which is crucial for lichen growth and reproduction. Further, climate change can exacerbate air pollution, harming lichens.

A rise in pollution load in the air breaks the lichen cell resulting in bleaching of the organism, and the same is followed by its demise. Again, acid rain, caused by releasing sulphur dioxide and nitrogen oxides, can damage lichen tissues. Climate change-induced alterations in habitats may result in the loss of suitable environments for their growth while fragmentation of habitats can critically limit dispersal and gene flow. The importance of exploring the roles of different organisms involved in the complex eco-processes in the context of global changes cannot be overestimated.

In this context, lichen is increasingly being recognised globally as a bio-indicator of 'Global Change Drivers' that are seen as interconnected stressors like climate change, pollution, land use change, and loss of biodiversity contributing to large-scale environmental impacts. The mapping of epiphytic lichen diversity to assess ecological changes has emerged as a popular bio-moni-

toring approach in Europe and a European standard has been adopted under the Committee European Normalisation (CEN) framework. It aims to provide Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) to ensure reliability, consistency and objectivity while simultaneously improving data quality and comparability across space and time.

Needless to say, it is high time that India, possessing almost eighteen per cent of the world's lichen species and being globally the third-highest air-polluted country only after Bangla Desh and Pakistan, prioritises her efforts in this direction. Detailed exploration and study of lichens can also yield many more useful species for an unexpectedly wide variety of ecological as well as human needs and pursuits including their widespread use as bio-prospecting agents.

An extremely valuable natural resource the lichens are, they are reportedly in a losing evolutionary race against climate change. A 2022 study reveals that it could need more than one million years to adjust to the ecological crisis created due to just one degree Celsius of warming.

With the unabated pace of global warming, lichens, considered one of the most unique and hardy species and a bio-monitoring tool, are facing the danger of getting obliterated from the face of our planet. Well, the next time you encounter a tree or rock adorned with colourful lichens, take a moment to appreciate these remarkable organisms. Let us work towards their conservation as their beauty and ecological significance make them an integral part of our natural world.

*(The writers are Former PCCFs of UP and Maharashtra; views are personal)*

# Educate. Advocate. Act Now: Confronting antimicrobial resistance

Awareness is crucial to stop misuse of antibiotics to stop antimicrobial resistance and its harmful side-effects

As we observe 'World Antimicrobial Awareness Week (WAAW) 2024' under the theme 'Educate. Advocate. Act Now', we are reminded of both the remarkable achievements of antimicrobial medicine and the escalating threat posed by antimicrobial resistance (AMR). This year's theme serves as a clarion call for individuals, healthcare providers and policymakers to unite in protecting these life-saving drugs. Through education, advocacy and immediate action, we can address the growing crisis and secure a healthier future for all.

**Life Before Antibiotics: A Fragile Existence**  
For much of human history,



SANGEETA SHARMA

infections posed a dire threat to survival. Minor injuries, routine childbirth, or surgical procedures often led to fatal outcomes due to the lack of effective treatments. Ancient civilisations turned to natural remedies such as herbs, honey and garlic, but these measures were often inadequate. The concept of microbes and the role of hygiene were poorly understood, enabling infectious

diseases to spread rapidly with devastating results.

**The Antibiotic Revolution: A New Era of Medicine**  
The discovery of penicillin by Alexander Fleming in 1928 marked a turning point in medical history. By the 1940s, penicillin was widely used to treat infections during World War II, saving countless lives. This success ushered in the "golden age" of antibiotics, spanning the 1940s to the 1960s, with groundbreaking drugs like streptomycin and tetracycline offering solutions to diseases once thought incurable.

These "miracle drugs" revolutionised healthcare, enabling complex surgeries, cancer therapies, and organ transplants that depended

on effective infection control. Antibiotics became synonymous with progress and hope, reshaping our approach to health and longevity.

**AMR: A Global Crisis in the Making**  
While antimicrobials transformed healthcare, their misuse and overuse have driven the global crisis of antimicrobial resistance. Mismanagement of these drugs has undermined their effectiveness, allowing resistant strains of bacteria to flourish.

**Misuse and Overuse :** Antibiotics are frequently prescribed for conditions like viral infections (e.g., the common cold), where they have no effect. In agriculture, antimicrobials are



used excessively, often to promote animal growth rather than treat illness. This practice creates resistant bacteria that can transfer to humans through the food chain.

**Underuse :** Failing to complete prescribed antibiotic courses, skipping doses, or using leftover medications allows bacteria to survive and develop resistance.

Examples such as Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) highlight the danger of resistance. Once easily treatable, infections like MRSA now require last-resort drugs, which are often more toxic, expensive, and less effective.

**The Innovation Gap:** Despite the urgent need for new treatments, the development of antibiotics has stagnated. No new classes of antibiotics have been discovered in recent decades, leaving humanity vulnerable to resistant pathogens. Developing antibiotics is an expensive and time-consuming process and limited financial incentives deter pharmaceutical companies from pursuing research in

this field. As a result, existing drugs are our most critical line of defense, underscoring the need to use them responsibly.

**Educate:** Public education is a powerful tool in combating AMR. Raising awareness about the proper use of antibiotics is crucial to reducing unnecessary prescriptions. Antibiotics are effective only against bacterial infections, not viruses. Simple practices, such as completing prescribed courses and avoiding sharing or stockpiling antibiotics, can significantly reduce resistance. Community outreach programs and health campaigns are essential in promoting a deeper understanding of AMR and fostering respon-

sible antimicrobial use.

**Advocate:** Governments, healthcare organisations, and advocacy groups play a pivotal role in addressing AMR. Policies that regulate antimicrobial use in agriculture, improve prescribing practices, and promote the use of diagnostics can help mitigate resistance. Antimicrobial Stewardship Programmes in hospitals encourage responsible antibiotic use, ensuring patients receive appropriate treatment while minimising unnecessary exposure.

*(The writer is Neuropsychopharmacology Institute of Human Behaviour & Allied Sciences & President, DSPRUD; views are personal)*







NSE, Meghalaya Government ink pact for youth in BFSI sector



The National Stock Exchange (NSE) on Thursday said it has collaborated with the Meghalaya government for a skill building program for the youth of the state in the BFSI sector.

er the youth of Meghalaya with essential skills and knowledge in the BFSI sector, bridging the skill gap and enhancing their employment opportunities for the future.

“With financial literacy at the heart of NSE’s mission, we aim to transform young people from job seekers into job creators,” Ashishkumar Chauhan, MD and CEO at NSE, said.

Government collects ₹1.44 lakh crore in toll tax since 2000

The government has collected Rs 1.44 lakh crore as toll tax at fee plazas presently operational under Public Private Partnerships (PPP) model on National Highways since December 2000, Parliament was informed on Thursday.

WEST CENTRAL RAILWAY E-tenders are invited from reputed, experienced contractors, Qualifies Minimum Eligibility Criteria and having Electrical Contractor license by Chief Workshop Manager Coach Rehabilitation Workshop, West Central Railway Nishatpura Bhopal for and on behalf of President of India for the under mentioned works.

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY E-Tender Notice Open Tender No.: JHS-RCNK-M-BDC-24-25-12 Chief Workshop Manager Rail Coach Naveenikaran Karkhana, Jhansi for experienced or interested contractors on behalf of the President of India for the under mentioned work.

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY E-TENDER NOTICE Tender Notice No.: T\_24-25\_AB-Buffer-CBC\_RT/Notice Date: 27.11.2024 Chief Workshop Manager, Coach MLR Workshop, Jhansi for and on behalf of the President of India invites open e-tender from reputed contractors for following work:-

Indian Bank Zonal Office, Civil Lines, Jabalpur, M.P. 482001 Ph: 0761-2624977, 4014376, 2629376 Email: zojabalpur@indianbank.co.in

Bank of Baroda E-AUCTION SALE NOTICE Jyendraganj Branch, Lashkar, Gwalior (M.P.) - 474001 Mob. 7247716428

SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES "APPENDIX- IV-A [See proviso to Rule 6 (2) & 8 (6)] E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 6 (2) & 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

HINDUJA HOUSING FINANCE LIMITED Corporate Office: 167-169, 2nd floor, Near Little Mount Metro Station, Saipet, Chennai - 600115

Appendix IV : Possession NOTICE (for immovable property) Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorized Officer of Hinduja Housing Finance Limited (HHFL) under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002 and in exercise of power conferred under section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, Demand Notice (s) issued by Authorized Officer of the Company to the Borrower(s) / Guarantor(s) mentioned herein below to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

PUBLIC NOTICE ICI Home Finance Registered office: ICI Bank Towers, Bandra-Kurla Complex, Bandra (East), Mumbai- 400051

PUBLIC NOTICE ICI Home Finance Registered office: ICI Bank Towers, Bandra-Kurla Complex, Bandra (East), Mumbai- 400051

PUBLIC NOTICE ICI Home Finance Registered office: ICI Bank Towers, Bandra-Kurla Complex, Bandra (East), Mumbai- 400051

Aadhar Housing Finance Ltd. Corporate Office: Unit No. 802, Natraj Rustomjee, Western Express Highway and M.V. Road, Andheri (East), Mumbai - 400069

STATUTORY NOTICE TO BORROWERS/GUARANTORS Borrower(s)/Guarantor(s) are hereby put to caution that the property may be sold at any time herein after by way of public auction/tenders and as such this may also be treated as a notice under Rule 6, 8 & 9 of Security (interest) Enforcement Rules, 2002.



Veteran journalist Rajdeep Sardesai launched his latest book, *2024: The Election That Surprised India*, on Constitution Day at a packed auditorium in Teen Murti Bhavan. Non-fiction books dealing with politics and politicians generally evoke significant interest, especially when penned by a journalist with extensive experience in covering politics and elections. Sardesai's latest work was eagerly anticipated, and the wait proved worthwhile. The book offers a compelling exploration of one of India's most dramatic and unpredictable general elections, held just a few months ago.

This is Sardesai's third book on elections, following his analyses of the 2014 and 2019 general elections. In this new volume, he delves into the missteps of pollsters and pundits, who failed to predict the outcome accurately, and critiques the mainstream media for its perceived one-sided narratives. Sardesai examines why the BJP's "Char Sau Paar" campaign slogan, intended to project overwhelming confidence, failed to resonate with voters as expected. He also sheds light on Rahul Gandhi's Congress, which mounted a surprising comeback after years of setbacks.

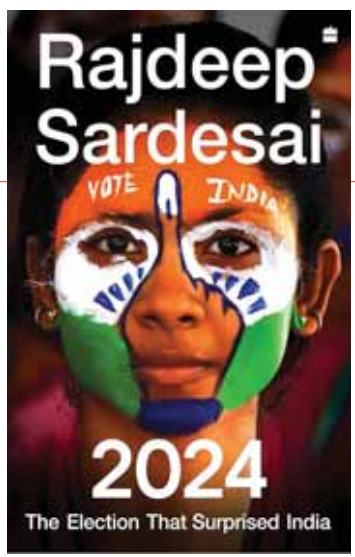
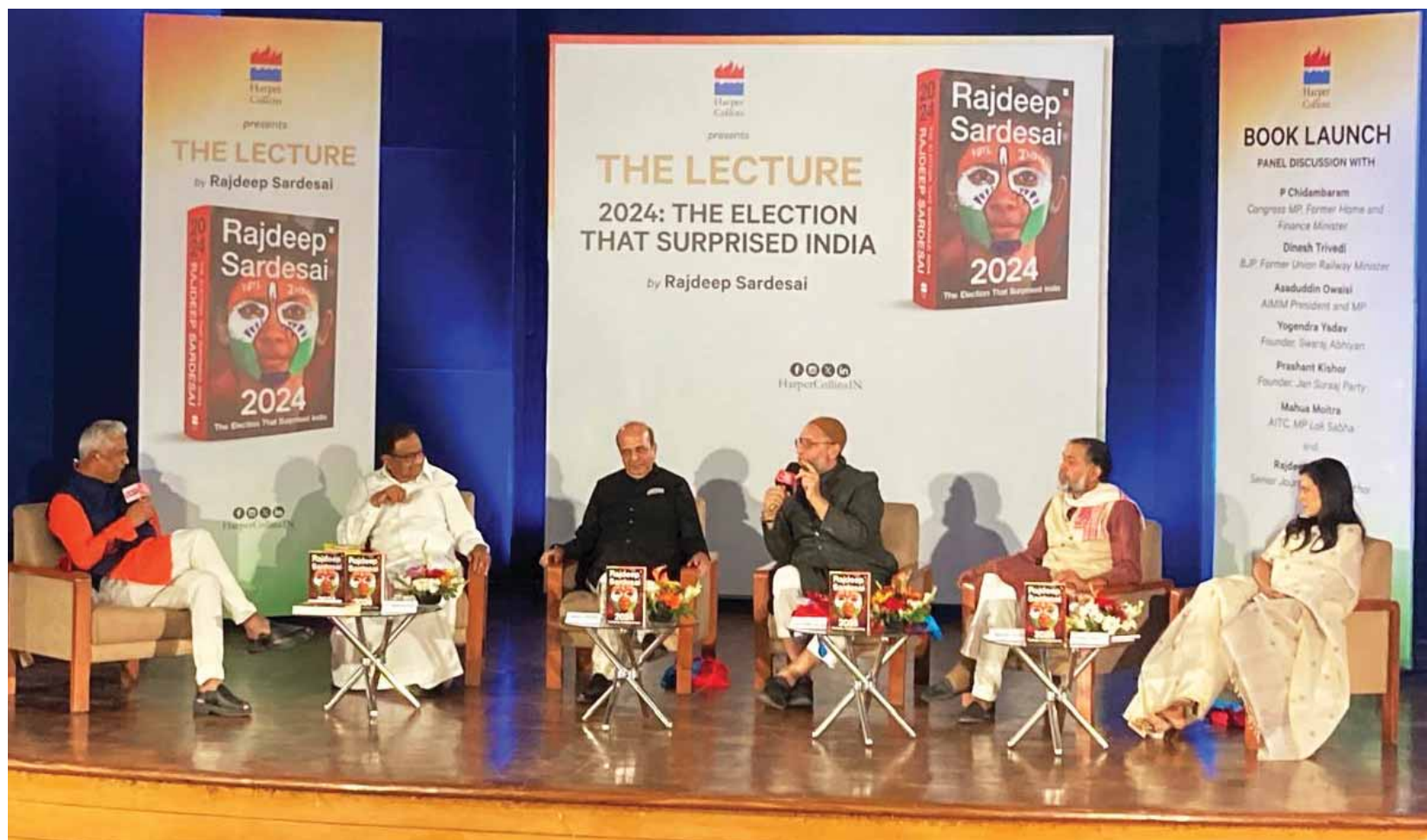
The narrative explores the operational strategies of the Modi-Shah political team, the role of enforcement agencies during the elections, and the controversies surrounding the fairness of the electoral process. Sardesai highlights the fierce battles in state elections and provides nuanced insights into who truly emerged victorious—and who faltered—in India's increasingly polarised political landscape.

In his characteristic unsparing and incisive style, Sardesai charts the dramatic changes in Indian politics over the last five years, offering readers an insider's perspective on the personalities, strategies, and events that defined the 2024 elections. Building on his bestselling accounts of the 2014 and 2019 elections, this book is a must-read for anyone seeking to understand the shifting sands of power and politics in India. One may agree or disagree with his interpretation and insights, especially since he is not the same as he once was, but the book is a good read and definitely has a shelf life.

**A LIVELY LAUNCH EVENT**

The book launch was more than a literary occasion; it featured a panel discussion moderated by Sardesai himself, with luminaries from various political parties in attendance. The event, held in a packed auditorium, was marked by engaging debates that delved into the key questions surrounding the electoral verdict that stunned the nation.

The distinguished panel included prominent political figures such as P. Chidambaram, senior Congress leader; Mahua Moitra, the fiery Trinamool Congress MP; Dinesh Trivedi, former Railway Minister; and Asaduddin

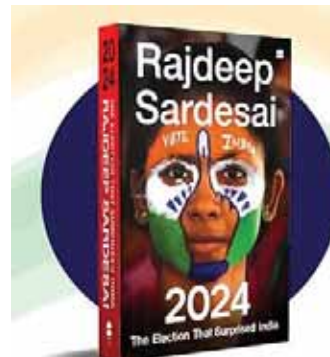


**ABOUT THE BOOK**  
**Book:** 2024: The Election That Surprised India  
**by** Rajdeep Sardesai  
**Publisher:** HarperCollins  
**Price:** ₹799

# BOOK LAUNCH SPARKS INSIGHTFUL DEBATE

*2024: The Election That Surprised India*, the latest book by **RAJDEEP SARDESAI**, captures the myriad nuances of the recently held general elections, presenting an unflinching narrative of power, ambition, and the changing aspirations of the electorate, writes **GYANESHWAR DAYAL**

Owaisi, leader of the All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM). True to expectations, the discussion was animated and insightful. Adding a unique twist, the panellists took playful potshots at Sardesai himself, "roasting" him in a rare and humorous turn of events. Sardesai, clad in an orange kurta (perhaps making a statement), took the jabs in stride with a smile and humour. On a more serious note, the discussion was refreshingly candid. P. Chidambaram painted a picture of optimism for the Congress, emphasising the growing disillusionment with the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) under Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He highlighted issues such as unemployment, inflation, and the perceived erosion of democratic



**RAJDEEP SARDESAI**  
**ANSWERS THE BIGGEST QUESTIONS ABOUT INDIA'S MOST BRUISING AND POLARIZED POLITICAL ELECTION.**

institutions, arguing that these factors could shift voter sentiment. Chidambaram asserted that the Congress was ready to lead the country back to a path of inclusive growth and

social justice. On the other hand, Mahua Moitra critiqued the centralisation of power under the BJP and the stifling of dissent. She warned that India's diversity was

under threat due to rising authoritarianism and religious polarisation. Moitra argued that regional parties like the TMC were better equipped to challenge the BJP's

dominance because they understood the electorate's pulse more effectively than the Delhi-centric political establishment. Asaduddin Owaisi was humorous yet thought-provoking, raising concerns about the marginalisation of Muslims and other minority communities under the current regime. He criticised the BJP's focus on religious polarisation, warning that it was detrimental to India's secular fabric. Owaisi also called for greater unity among Muslim voters and reiterated his party's commitment to representing marginalised voices while building alliances with like-minded regional players.

Yogendra Yadav, a psephologist-turned-politician, countered Dinesh Trivedi's assertion that there were no minorities in India and that "all are Indians." Yadav argued that while leveraging community votes was not new, the BJP had spearheaded campaigns that effectively rendered Muslims second-class citizens. Throughout the discussion, Sardesai kept the conversation dynamic, challenging panellists with incisive questions that encouraged them to think beyond the obvious.

The debate was intense, often bordering on contentious, as the political heavyweights offered divergent perspectives on the state of the nation. From discussions on the BJP's electoral strategies to the role of opposition unity, caste politics, and the influence of social media, the conversation reflected the multifaceted nature of Indian politics. The panellists, despite their differing ideological positions, agreed on one point: the 2024 elections marked a watershed moment in Indian politics and that the rightward shift in Indian politics is real and here to stay. While this shift might not be irreversible, it is the reality of the day, nevertheless!

## November Reads!

By Rupa Publications



**The Wife and the Dancing Girl**  
 By ANUJA CHANDRAMOULI  
 (PRICE: ₹395, PAGES: 272)

In *The Wife and the Dancing Girl*, Anuja Chandramouli weaves a tale of searing passion and heartbreak inspired by Silapathikaram, the timeless Tamil classic by Ilango Adigal. This story explores the intricate love triangle between Kannagi, the devoted wife, Madhavi, the enchanting dancing girl, and the man they both loved fiercely. Through moments of breathtaking passion and harrowing despair, Kannagi and Madhavi navigate the depths of love and loss, armed with fragile hope and the bitter truth that exquisite pleasure often comes at the cost of endless pain. Chandramouli's retelling is both tender and tragic, delivering a romance that transcends time and leaves an indelible mark.

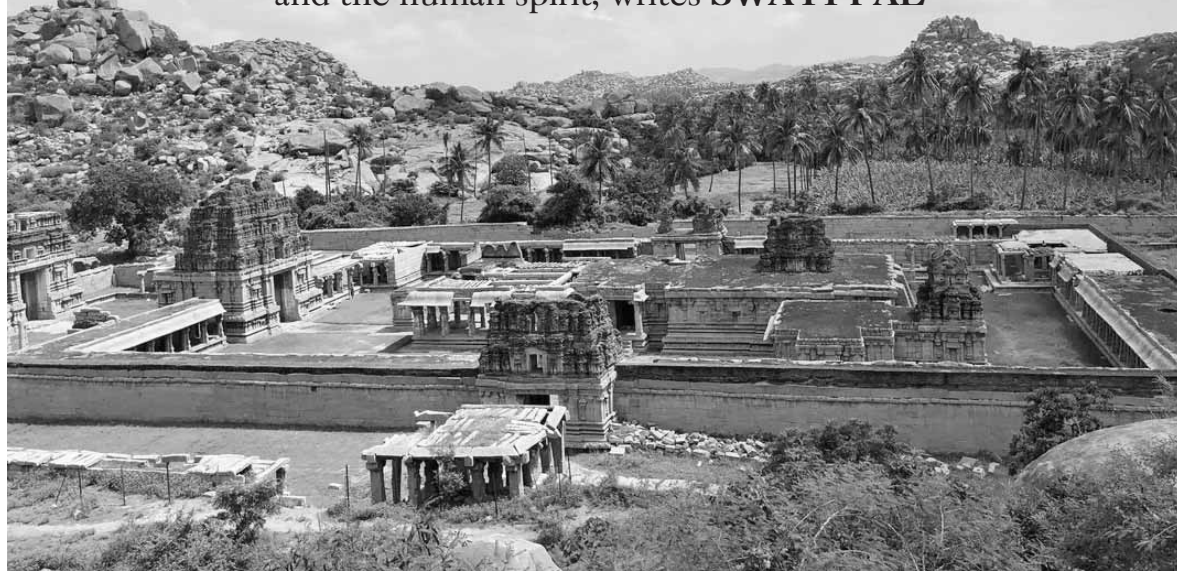
**Unpolitically Correct: The Politics and Economics of Governance**  
 By SATYA MOHANTY  
 (Price: ₹595, Pages: 232)

In *Unpolitically Correct*, Satya Mohanty, a former senior bureaucrat, delivers a provocative critique of India's governance and economic policies. With growing inequality and 1% of the population holding a disproportionate share of wealth, the book questions whether this disparity is inevitable or the result of a pro-rich policy bias. Challenging conventional beliefs, Mohanty examines issues like inequality, health, education, employment, and privatisation from a refreshingly radical perspective. He deconstructs the narratives of governments, media, and academia, exposing myths about wealth creators and economic progress. The book warns of the dangers posed by fiscal stress, economic slowdowns, and unchecked privatisation without ensuring efficiency and equity. Offering a bold and insightful perspective,

We've all heard the adage: never judge a book by its cover. While this is sound advice, there are exceptions. *One Foot in the Ruin and Other Poems* by Janhwi Sharma is one such exception where the cover perfectly mirrors the book's essence. The image—a lone wayfarer treading an uneven, weathered path amidst ruins, with distant figures barely visible—evokes a sense of solitude and introspection. Towering hills frame the background, while trees and bushes border the ruins in the foreground. Rendered in shades of black, white, and grey, the photograph conjures an atmosphere steeped in history, timelessness, and philosophy. It invites the reader to reflect: What is life if not a journey, and what are we if not wayfarers navigating an unpredictable path? This evocative cover sets the tone for the meditative and poignant journey that unfolds within the book. The title poem, "One Foot in the Ruin," found on page 166, epitomises this theme. Accompanied by a photograph of an abandoned street in Hampi, the poem reads:  
*One foot in the ruins...  
 I walk on the weather-beaten path  
 setting one foot in the ruin  
 I may wander  
 wander aimlessly  
 carelessly ceaselessly  
 but never to get lost  
 but maybe at times to  
 find new paths, new goals  
 embark on a new journey  
 or simply to return home.*  
 Traditionally, ruins evoke somberness, loss, and mystery. Sharma, however, takes a refreshingly different approach. He portrays the ruins not as dead relics but as sites of exploration, learning, and renewal. The poet walks through them not to lose himself but to discover new meanings, new paths, and, ultimately, a way home. In these lines, Sharma shares a hopeful philosophy: life, no matter how unpredictable or transient, holds potential for growth and return. This hopeful outlook resonates in another short poem, "Silent Spaces," on page 41, paired with a photograph of the Red Fort's barracks in Delhi:  
*Silent spaces  
 haunting...  
 filtering rays of hope  
 for the ruin.*  
 Here, Sharma's ruins filter light,

# Whispers of Ruins

JANHWIJ SHARMA'S *One Foot in the Ruin and Other Poems* is a captivating blend of evocative photography and reflective poetry that explores the intersection of history, memory, and the human spirit, writes **SWATI PAL**



**ABOUT THE BOOK**  
**Book:** 'One foot in the ruin and other poems' - The poem book by Janhwi Sharma, Dev  
**Publisher:** Dev  
**Price:** ₹2,495 **Pages:** 218

offering glimpses of hope rather than despair. Similarly, in "Is There a Way" (p. 77), paired with a photograph from Fatehpur Sikri, the poet muses on the stories ruins whisper:  
*Is there a way to hear the ruins  
 still telling tales of its  
 proud past with all  
 moments it lived  
 cherished and felt...  
 Time feels alive  
 within these ruins...  
 all that will one day remain  
 will be the ruins' whispering tales*

to those who could hear. Sharma's ability to hear and convey this "whispering tales" makes this collection profound. Of the book's five sections—North, West, Central, South, and East—each rooted in different regions of India, the Central section lingers in memory. For example, the poem "Excavated" (p. 159), paired with a photograph of Sarnath, explores time and its interplay with history:  
*Unearthed remains brought to fore  
 testaments of the era silent long back...  
 Time unwinds and time unwraps  
 bringing ruins to another life  
 time now stands still...*  
 Similarly, "In His Shelter" (p. 162), set against an image of a shrine in Hampi, reflects on the timeless pursuit of divine shelter:  
*In perpetual obeisance  
 prostrations before the divine  
 seeking His shelter and blessings  
 humbly forever...*  
 Sharma's poems often delve beneath the surface of ruins to unearth

enduring values, faith, and hope. This sentiment finds expression in "Stones Speak" (p. 120), inspired by the Ellora Caves:  
*Hewn out of rock/sculpted over time/lasting forever.  
 Stones speak/louder than words/echoing memories/with ceaseless gaze.*  
 The poet also captures spiritual and surreal elements, as in "The Other World" (p. 203), paired with an evocative photograph from Assam:  
*Passage for the ultimate departure  
 there is deathly silence around...  
 one never dies as they say  
 no need to ever mourn those who leave...*  
 Balanced against these profound reflections are moments of lightheartedness, as in "Craftsman's Prank" (p. 112), inspired by a seemingly purposeless carved handle on a wall at Adalaj Vav, Gujarat:  
*Why is it there/I ponder  
 what purpose does it serve/makes me think harder...  
 Surely he is having a good laugh/even in his grave.*  
 This blend of spirituality, history, and human touch showcases Sharma's ability to see both the solemn and the whimsical in his subjects. Whether contemplating eternity or musing on a craftsman's playful detail, his poems bridge past and present, light and shadow, permanence and impermanence. The book's concluding poem, "Through the Ruin" (p. 32), paired with a photograph from Sarai Amanat Khan in Amritsar, encapsulates the collection's overarching message:  
*Through the ruin...  
 And I walk alone/framed through the ruin  
 ravaged by time...  
 And I walk ahead/through the voids of the ruin  
 reaching the destination/where my future will be.*  
 As we reflect on the book's title and its solemn promise, we find that *One Foot in the Ruin* does not burden readers with heaviness. Instead, it uplifts, offering hope and perspective. Sharma's work reminds us that ruins, like life, hold stories worth hearing and lessons worth cherishing. Both the poetry and photographs take readers on an evocative journey across India, making this book a treasure worth exploring.

# Hybrid model for Champions Trophy not acceptable: PCB tells ICC

PTI ■ KARACHI

The Pakistan Cricket Board informed the International Cricket Council on Thursday that it will not accept the Hybrid model for the Champions Trophy, and asked the global governing body not to discuss the option in Friday's board meeting. The ICC has convened a meeting of the executive members virtually to resolve the scheduling imbroglio surrounding the marquee event after India's refusal to send the team across the border. "I can confirm that PCB has a few hours back told the ICC that a Hybrid Model is not acceptable to them," a source told PTI. The PCB has been rigid in its opposition to the hybrid model and had advised the ICC to look at other options to stage the Champions Trophy. The Pakistan board



maintained that having a Hybrid model would mean giving preferential treatment to India.

"I can confirm initially the PCB had looked at the possibility of a Hybrid model on the condition that if India

can't play in Pakistan, then in future there would be Hybrid models in all ICC events in India right until 2031 (ODI

World Cup in India and Bangladesh) as Pakistan would not go and play in India," the source said.

Another source confirmed that PCB has also reminded the ICC to inform whether the BCCI had submitted a letter in writing from their government stating that clearance was not given to the Indian team to play in Pakistan. "Under ICC regulations if any team says its government is not allowing it to play in another nation on whatever grounds that board has to submit their government's directives in writing which we have not seen so far," the source said. He said the PCB had acknowledged the contribution of the BCCI and Indian market in ICC's income generation but reminded the ICC that as per numbers from the last few global events Pakistan also played a major part in ensuring the revenues through their matches against India. He said the ICC has yet to confirm the timing of the virtual meeting.



## East Bengal seek first win of season in clash against NorthEast United

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Bottom-placed East Bengal FC will make one more attempt to notch their first win of the season when they take on NorthEast United FC in their eighth match of the Indian Super League (ISL) season here on Friday. After losing six straight matches, East Bengal opened their account with a goalless draw against Mohammedan Sporting on November 9 in a Kolkata Derby. They will now want to take one step forward and clinch all three points in front of their home crowd at the Yuba Bharati Krirangan.

NorthEast United have been on an unbelievable run recently, winning thrice and drawing once in their previous four encounters. Avoiding a defeat in Friday's clash will make it their longest-ever unbeaten sequence since going 11 matches without a loss from January-March 2021. East Bengal FC head coach Oscar Bruzon acknowledged that NorthEast United will play on the frontfoot in this fixture, but assured that the home team has done its homework properly. "I don't think NorthEast United FC is going to come here to neutralise our attacking power, but they are coming to try and score more goals themselves," Bruzon said. "That's what I know from what they have been doing in the last games with their frontline. We will try to play our best game, and win the match," he added.

The Highlanders, on the other hand, have been in an impressive form this season, as they are currently placed at third with 15 points from nine games, thanks to four wins and three draws. They have scored 21 goals, conceding only 15, and have lost merely once in their previous five matches. They trail the top-placed Bengaluru FC (20) by five points -- a gap they will be confident of bridging, given how they have been managing to put the pieces of their jigsaw together of late. The two sides have faced each other eight times, with NorthEast United and East Bengal FC emerging victorious in four and two matches respectively. A couple of fixtures have resulted in a draw.

NorthEast United head coach Juan Pedro Benali mentioned that maintaining a fine balance between their offensive instincts and defensive discipline will be critical in this match. "Each game is a different story. We need to make big chances to score and at the same time make it equally difficult for them to do so. That's our objective, because we know we can score and that's a very important part (of our gameplay)," Benali said.

## India can reach top-50 of FIFA rankings in next 10 years: Mandaviya



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India can break into the top-50 in the FIFA rankings, Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya said on Thursday, according to a release issued by All India Football Federation (AIFF). The top brass of the AIFF, including its president Kalyan Chaubey, met Mandaviya on Thursday to brief him on the existing AIFF-FIFA Academy in Odisha and the plan to build additional four such facilities in different zones. "An elaborate plan has to be chalked out and put in place for execution so that India can reach a FIFA ranking below 50 in the next ten years," Mandaviya was quoted as saying in the AIFF release. "India boasts one of the largest pools of young talent globally. The focus should be on grassroots, talent identification. They should be nurtured along with coach development which will be pivotal for the sports growth." The FIFA rankings began in 1992 and the Indian men's football team's best ranking has been 94, achieved in February 1996. The team has broken into the top-100 on a very few occasions. In the latest FIFA chart issued on Thursday, the Indian football team is ranked 127th, two spots down from the earlier October list. Japan, Iran, Korea and Australia, the regular Asian countries in the World Cup, are ranked at 15th,

18th, 23rd and 26th respectively in the latest rankings. After the meeting, which also discussed the importance of coach development, the minister assured the AIFF of all possible support for the development of the sport in India. "Rapid economic growth and an expanding middle class are reshaping attitudes towards sports. Parents are now encouraging children to balance academics with sports unlike earlier times," the minister pointed out. "The Government is committed to providing comprehensive support for sports development in India. Initiatives like new training centres and partnerships with international bodies will drive progress." Chaubey said the AIFF has presented a detailed plan to Mandaviya. "Given the size and population of a vast country like India, one AIFF-FIFA academy in Odisha is not enough. So, we proposed to have four more regional academies with the same technical supports from FIFA." "Presently in India, there are 25 fully professional clubs in the ISL and the I-League. In addition to that, there are 80 AIFF-accredited academies, all these teams are having under-13 age group category teams, the details have been presented to the ministry." FIFA Talent Development Scheme (TDS) Project Director Ged Roddy, who is currently on a visit to India, was also present at the meeting, along with AIFF Secretary General Anilkumar. The AIFF-FIFA Academy was launched in Bhubaneswar, Odisha, after a visit of world renowned coach Arsene Wenger, who is the FIFA Chief of Global Football Development.

## Australia add uncapped all-rounder Beau Webster to squad as cover for Mitchell Marsh

PTI ■ SYDNEY

Australia have added uncapped all-rounder Beau Webster to their squad for the second Test against India as cover for Mitchell Marsh, whose fitness remains a concern. Marsh had pulled up "sore" following Australia's 295-run hammering in the series opener in Perth earlier this week. Webster, also a right-hand pace all-rounder like Marsh, has been the stand out performer in the Sheffield Shield over the past two years. The 30-year-old has collected 1788 runs including five hundreds and nine fifties. He starred in Tasmania's Sheffield Shield match against New South Wales earlier this week, striking a 61 and 49 besides taking five wickets.



He also impressed in the A series against India earlier this month, becoming the second highest run-getter for Australia behind compatriot Nathan McSweeney, collecting 145 runs across four innings at an impressive average of 72.50. With the ball, he became the joint-leading wicket-taker alongside Brendan Doggett

both taking seven scalps each. "To get a few runs and wickets (for Australia A) was pleasing against a strong Indian side," Webster was quoted as saying by cricket.Com.Au ahead of the announcement on Thursday. "Any time you're playing 'A' cricket, it's the one step below Test level, so it does hold you in good stead. To get the call

from 'Bails' (men's selection chair George Bailey) at the end of the NSW game was a really proud moment and I can't wait to get stuck in." Webster will join the Australian squad in Adelaide next week. "There's a tight turnaround between the Adelaide and Gabba Test so I think (I'm there) just to have some cover there for that middle-order role, whichever way they go," Webster added. Apart from his explosive batting, Webster has added seam-bowling to his abilities, a skill he added to his repertoire just four years ago. Despite the disappointing show in the series-opener, coach Andrew McDonald had asserted that there will be no changes in the home team for the pink ball Test in Adelaide, starting on December 6.

## India to send 68-member team for Asia-Pacific Deaf Games



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A 68-member Indian team will take part in the Asia-Pacific Deaf Games to be held in Kuala Lumpur from December 1 to 8. The tournament is at par with the Asian Games for individuals with speech and hearing impairment and also serves as a precursor to the Deaflympics, which will be held in Japan next year. The India will have representation in seven disciplines including athletics, badminton, chess, judo, table tennis, taekwondo and wrestling. A send-off ceremony was organised for the touring party by the Sports Authority of

India here at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium ahead of their departure on Friday. National camps were organised by SAI in Sonapat for wrestling and in the national capital for badminton and judo from November 15 to 30. The camps for chess, athletics and table tennis were held at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, while the SAI regional centre in Lucknow conducted the taekwondo camp on the same dates. India's overall contingent is of 92 members including 24 coaches, support staff and officials and SAI has spent close to Rs 3 crore for travel, accommodation, training, equipment and team kits etc. The Asia-Pacific Games were held last in 2015 at Taiwan where Indian athletes won three gold and two silver medals. Among those who are expected to clinch medals include double Deaflympics gold medalist Abhinav Sharma, 2022 Deaflympics champion shuttler Jerlin Anika and Amit, who won the bronze in 86kg category wrestling. Chess has been included in the program for the first time. Mallika Handa will lead the seven-member Indian team.

## Sri Lanka all out for record-low 42 in Durban cricket test

AP ■ DURBAN

Sri Lanka was bowled out by South Africa for 42 at Kingsmead on Thursday, its lowest total in test cricket. Sri Lanka's previous worst was 71 just over 20 years ago in Kandy against Pakistan. South Africa needed only 83 legal deliveries — 13.5 overs — to rout the Sri Lankans in their first innings. That's the lowest number of deliveries in 100 years. England routed South Africa in 75 balls in 1924. The 42 was also a record low for a test at Kingsmead, and the record low against South Africa, eclipsing New Zealand's 45 in 2013 in Cape Town. The pitch was considered batting friendly on day two of the first test, as South



Africa scored 111 runs in an extended morning session, resuming on 80-4 and being dismissed for 191. Kamindu Mendis top-scored with 13 in a Sri Lanka lineup which featured four ducks. Medium-pace Marco Jansen

took a career-best 7-13 in 6.5 overs. Jansen was only the second player after Hugh Trumble of Australia, in 1904 against England, to take seven wickets inside seven overs of a test innings.

## Mbappe needs 'support' Real Madrid coach Ancelotti says after 2-0 loss to Liverpool

AP ■ LIVERPOOL

Kylian Mbappe hoped his move to Real Madrid would finally end his wait to win the Champions League. That felt a long way off on Wednesday after a 2-0 defeat to Liverpool left the defending champion in danger of being eliminated from European club soccer's elite tournament at the first stage and in a fight just to make the playoffs for the next round. If Madrid does make an early exit, Mbappe may look back on a miserable night at Anfield where he was humbled by a young defender and then missed a penalty that would have leveled the score. Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti said afterward the star forward was going through a "difficult moment"

just months after he joined the record 15-time European champion. "We've got to give him our support and love and he will soon be fine," Ancelotti said as he faced multiple questions from Spanish reporters about Mbappe's form. "It could be lack of confidence maybe. Sometimes when moments in the game and things are not working out, the idea is to keep things simple. Don't complicate things. He's going through that moment now. You get through them. Don't blame him for missing a penalty. People miss penalties. We can't put too much grief on him for that." World Cup winner Mbappe looked a shadow of himself against a Liverpool team that leads the way in the Premier League and the Champions



League this season. He was brought crashing down by a crunching tackle

from 21-year-old right back Conor Bradley when threatening to burst through

on goal in the first half — sparking a huge cheer from the home crowd.

And it got worse for Mbappe in the second half when he had the chance to make it 1-

1 from the penalty spot after Alexis Mac Allister had given six-time European champion Liverpool the lead. But with Caoimhin Kelleher to beat, he saw his effort pushed away by Liverpool's back-up goalkeeper. Mbappe has scored nine goals in 18 appearances for Madrid since leaving Paris Saint-Germain as a free agent at the end of last season. But he has only one goal in the Champions League for his new club, which has lost three of its five games in the revamped competition. "Things are not running for him. We've got to be patient. He is an extraordinary player — a fantastic player," Ancelotti said. Madrid is 24th in the new-look 36-team league phase of the competition. The top eight teams advance

to the round of 16, while those ranked ninth to 24th go into a playoff. Mbappe wasn't the only player to fail to score a penalty in the match, with Mohamed Salah also missing a spot kick of his own. But substitute Cody Gakpo doubled Liverpool's advantage. Victory saw new Liverpool head coach Arne Slot manage something his predecessor Jurgen Klopp never could by beating Real in the Champions League. Klopp lost five and drew once in six games against Madrid — including two defeats in the final. Liverpool extended its perfect record in the Champions League this season and is top of the standings after five games. Each team plays eight games in the opening phase.