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Vigilance raid From 12 ACs to remote-controlled gate

IDCO Junior Manager's lavish lifestyle, property detected

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR
From 12 air-conditioners to remote-controlled main gate, from 20 ATM cards to baths using mineral water: the lavish lifestyle of IDCO Junior Manager Bijay Kumar Udaysingh has left Vigilance officials stunned.



The luxurious amenities in his house spread over 7000 sqft valued worth Rs 3.22 crore can even leave Bollywood actors, industrialists and politi-

cians far behind. Even his monthly electric bill is way more than an average Indian's monthly salary. Moreover, the central geyser and water purifier installed at the house of Udaysingh ensures that every tap in his home releases mineral water, even the one in the bathroom. His dressing room

are all imported and can hardly be found in Odisha. The 'jhumars' and lights in his house are eye-goggling. He also owns a fish aquarium worth lakhs. His vehicle parking spot has eight fans. All the doors are electronically-controlled and no one can enter his house without his consent. Interestingly, there is a room in the house that is electronically locked and can only be opened by him. Even the Vigilance is failing to break open the door. Vigilance officials suspect the room to accommodate more luxury items, money and whatnot.

During house searches so far, the following assets have been unearthed by in the names of Udaysingh and his family members: A four-storied building with area approx 7,500 sqft at Arya Vihar, Bhubaneswar worth over Rs 3.22 crore. A flat at Balukhand, dist-Puri. Three high-value home-stand plots, of which two in prime area of Bhubaneswar and one in Khordha. Bank deposits of about Rs 33 lakh and cash of Rs 4.50 lakh. Till the filing of the report, the raid by the Vigilance was underway.

'Kamadhenu Yojana' soon: CM



PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR
The State Government would soon launch a 'Mukhyamantri Kamadhenu Yojana' to substantially increase milk production in the State, said Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi at the 23rd general session of the Odisha State Non-Gazetted Veterinary Professionals' Association here on Wednesday.

Besides, the government is keen to raise the income of farmers and Rs 697 crore has been allocated in this year's Budget for animal resources development. The Mukhyamantri Kamadhenu Yojana would benefit more than 15.47 lakh farmers, Majhi said. He said most of the farmers in the State are small, medium or landless. Animal hus-

bandry is the most effective means of increasing the income of the farmers for their financial stability. The CM praised the technical knowledge of Veterinary Department employees which has significantly contributed to increasing farmers' income. He urged the employees to promote animal husbandry as a profitable and respectful profession.

'Godavarish Adash Vidyalaya' to be launched

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR
Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, reviewing the different processes for development of primary education on Wednesday, said a 'Godavarish Mishra Adarsh Prathamika Vidyalaya Yojana' would soon be launched in the State. Under the scheme, a modern primary school would be set up in every panchayat. A total of 6,794 schools would be constructed. New classroom, separate toilets for boys

and girls, boundary wall, digital library, language laboratory, dining hall, computers and smart boards provision would be there in the schools, Majhi said. Besides, stress would be laid on sports, physical exercises and social and cultural education. Discussions were also held on the development of Odisha Adarsh Vidyalas and midday meal scheme. More than 100 old schools of over a century old would also be developed, said the CM.

Tension at Boudh DHH High BP patient not admitted as he came at 10 pm

--Doctor tears prescription
PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR
Tension ran high at the Boudh District Headquarters Hospital (DHH) after a doctor allegedly tore the prescription of an elderly patient and misbehaved with him. As per the allegation of the family members of the patient, the doctor refused to check the blood pressure and admit him who visited the hospital at around 10 pm, citing it was too late. The incident has spread resentment in the area. Irate family members and relatives



staged a protest on the hospital premises demanding strict action against the doctor. According to sources,

High BP patient not admitted as he came at 10 pm

Santosh Pattanayak (60) is a BP patient and was admitted to the Boudh DHH. He was discharged after there was a slight improvement in his health. However, his condition further worsened after reaching home, following

which family members had to bring him back to the hospital. This irked the doctor so much that he tore the prescription and abused the elderly patient. "His condition was critical, so we had admitted him to the hospital and were discharged yesterday. However, his condition turned worse, so we had to bring him again to the hospital. But, the doctor refused to check on my father as 10 pm was too late night for him. He tore the prescription and started abusing my father using foul language. He even

wanted to beat up my father," alleged the patient's daughter. On the other hand, the doctor refused the misbehaviour allegations and stated, "His BP had reached 170 earlier. He had come here on November 2. I prescribed him medicines, but he refused to take the medicines. The patient was non-cooperative. Today again he came and asked me to admit him at night. So, I got angry and tore his prescription. Despite prescribing medicines, he comes at night demanding to be admitted to the hospital and administered saline."

In Kandhamal RDC probes alleged mango kernel deaths

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR
Acting swiftly after Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi ordered an RDC-level inquiry into the deaths and medical complications among the villagers of Mandipanka village of Daringbadi block in Kandhamal district over consumption of mango kernel, Revenue Divisional Commissioner (RDC) Southern Division, Roopa Roshan Sahoo on Wednesday visited Kandhamal village. She interacted with the family members, ward members, members of the community and civil society organisations along with the Collector and other officials of the district to have a thorough enquiry into



the deaths. The RDC also inspected the records of the Public Distribution System (PDS) at the LAMPS. According to the order from the Chief Minister's

Office (CMO), the enquiry report is to be submitted after further perusal of the relevant information in seven days. Apart from the deaths of two women reportedly due to

consuming a gruel made from mango kernels, six others fell seriously ill with two being shifted to the SCB Medical College Hospital in Cuttack as their conditions worsened.

'Mo Bus' speed to be limited to 40 km



PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR
The State Government on Wednesday decided to restrict the speed of Mo Buses to 40 km per hour (kmph) within cities as part of safety measures to prevent accidents. Housing and Urban Development Minister Krushna Chandra Mahapatra said the

speed limit of Mo Buses for routes outside city areas would be 50 kmph. Every bus would be equipped with speed governors to enforce these limits. Only licensed and experienced drivers would be allowed to operate the buses, he said. Movement of Mo Buses in all routes would be closely monitored, he said, adding

that strict checks would be conducted to ensure that drivers are not under the influence of alcohol while on duty. Instruction has been issued to the officials concerned to accord top priority to these safety protocols as part of measures to prevent mishaps, said the minister. The move comes in the

wake of a spate of road accidents involving Mo Buses in which some people were killed and injured. These incidents had raised safety concerns among the passengers. Notably, Mo Bus is currently available on different routes in Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, Khordha, Pipili, Puri, Konark, Rourkela, Sambalpur and Brahmapur

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PAPER WITH PASSION

Trump wins hands down

Donald Trump makes a sensational comeback in the closely fought US presidential elections

The US presidential election is one of the most influential political events worldwide, with major implications not only for domestic policy but also for international relations, economic stability, and global security. In 2024, the election has been particularly charged, with significant issues driving the race. Though the counting is still on and the winner is yet to be officially announced but going by the trends, Trump has won and he has already claimed victory. Kamala Harris failed to perform in the swing states leading to her defeat. Trump's victory brings a mix of continuity and radical shifts in several key areas. The 2024 US election has revolved around several pressing issues which were important not only for the Americans but for the people across the world. High inflation rates and concerns over economic recovery post-pandemic have been at the forefront. Voters were focused on job security, rising costs of living, and access to affordable healthcare. Trump's stance included pushing for lower taxes, reducing government spending, and deregulation to stimulate growth, which he claims would address inflation and boost job creation. Another major issue that was widely debated was immigration. The debate over immigration intensified, with Trump advocating for stricter border controls and policies aimed at reducing illegal immigration. His focus includes building stronger physical barriers at the US-Mexico border and increasing enforcement, framing immigration as a matter of national security and economic stability. Besides, healthcare accessibility and costs remain contentious topics. Trump in his campaign emphasised reducing healthcare costs and revisiting the Affordable Care Act. His approach included providing tax credits and fostering competition among providers, but it also drew criticism for potentially reducing access to affordable care for some citizens. Interestingly Trump has taken a critical stance on climate regulations, advocating for energy independence through expanded oil and natural gas production. His stance contrasts with those calling for robust climate action, as he argues that deregulation is essential for economic stability and growth. However the issue that is of utmost importance for the world at large is the US foreign policy. Foreign policy has emerged as a defining factor, particularly in relation to China and Russia. Trump's "America First" strategy focuses on reducing overseas military commitments and renegotiating trade agreements to protect American interests. This stance resonates with some voters concerned about national sovereignty but worries international allies and those advocating for a more collaborative global approach. However, Trump's victory may be well taken in New Delhi as he has had good chemistry with Prime Minister Modi and has supported India's stand. It would be interesting to see how Trump would steer international choppy waters this time as Ukraine war and Palestine issue would be two major issues he would need to handle immediately after assuming the office.



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PICTALK



A photographer takes a photo of a macaque monkey at the Shrine Galtaji temple, in Jaipur

Hazardous Delhi air is putting lives at risk



RAJDEEP PATHAK

As Delhiites face a significant decline in their health and life expectancy due to pollution, there is an urgent need for finding solutions to tackle this menace

Delhi's air quality has reached dangerous levels, with the Air Quality Index (AQI) crossing into the "hazardous" zone shortly after Diwali celebrations. This post-Diwali spike is not new, as the city frequently ranks among the most polluted in the world. In early November 2024, AQI levels in Delhi surged to nearly 500 in some regions, a threshold considered extremely harmful. According to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), key areas in Delhi like Anand Vihar, Alipur, and RK Puram reported AQI readings above 300. This rise indicates severe pollution levels far above the World Health Organisation's (WHO) recommended safety limits, posing substantial health risks for millions of residents. The AQI measures air quality on a scale that categorises air quality into six levels: "good," "satisfactory," "moderate," "poor," "very poor," and "hazardous." Readings above 300 signal critical pollution, while values over 400 reach the "severe" range. At such levels, exposure to fine particulate matter (PM2.5) becomes dangerous, as these minuscule particles can infiltrate deep into the lungs, affecting respiratory and cardiovascular health. The factors behind this annual pollution crisis are complex, involving both local and regional contributors. Delhi's high vehicular emissions, industrial output, construction dust, and waste burning are persistent contributors. However, during the harvest season, stubble burning in nearby states like Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh intensifies the problem. In October and November, farmers often burn leftover crop residue, producing vast smoke clouds that drift toward Delhi and blend with local pollutants. Vehicular pollution is another significant factor, with over 15 million registered vehicles in Delhi alone. Despite policies mandating regular Pollution Under Control (PUC) checks, enforcement remains a challenge. Emissions from diesel vehicles and two-wheelers, which lack proper pollution controls, further degrade the air quality. Attempts by the



Delhi Government to curb pollution have included measures like the odd-even traffic scheme, a firecracker ban during festivals, and incentives to use public transport. However, these initiatives have only provided limited relief. Residents continue to experience issues like breathlessness, sore throats, headaches and dry cough, compounded by long-term respiratory conditions. This year, the Supreme Court criticised Delhi's inadequate enforcement of pollution control measures during Diwali, particularly the lack of compliance with firecracker bans. The court expressed frustration over the non-implementation of its orders, highlighting the collective failure to safeguard public health. The Delhi government has also activated the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP), designed to address pollution levels as they rise. GRAP consists of multiple stages, with Stage III activated only when AQI reaches "severe" levels. At this stage, vehicle movement and construction activities are restricted, and educational institutions may close to protect students' health. While GRAP has achieved some improvements, its impact is often temporary, as citizens and businesses frequently ignore these directives. The severe air pollution in Delhi has profound effects on public health and quality of life.

THIS YEAR, THE SUPREME COURT CRITICISED DELHI'S INADEQUATE ENFORCEMENT OF POLLUTION CONTROL MEASURES DURING DIWALI, PARTICULARLY THE LACK OF COMPLIANCE WITH FIRECRACKER BANS. THE COURT EXPRESSED FRUSTRATION OVER THE NON-IMPLEMENTATION OF ITS ORDERS

During high-AQI periods, particularly vulnerable groups, like children and the elderly, are advised to stay indoors to avoid severe respiratory and cardiovascular issues. Outdoor activities are restricted, with schools occasionally closed to protect students from toxic air exposure. Additionally, dense smog disrupts transportation, leading to frequent flight and train delays due to poor visibility. As residents increasingly rely on air purifiers to maintain indoor air quality, the economic and psychological impacts of Delhi's air pollution crisis only deepen. In response to the deteriorating situation, the Delhi Government announced a series of measures to tackle pollution. These include developing green pathways, walkways, and open spaces along roads to reduce dust and improve urban greenery. Efforts are underway to enhance municipal waste management, including recycling 100 per cent of construction and demolition waste by 2025. To further manage waste, the Municipal Corporation of Delhi is establishing a fifth recycling unit in Tehkhand, capable of processing 1,000 tons daily. Biomining is also planned at major landfill sites, such as Okhla, Ghazipur, and Bhalswa, to excavate and treat years' worth of accumulated waste. Expanding public transportation is another goal, with

plans to grow Delhi's bus fleet to 10,500 by next year, 80 per cent of which will be electric. This is accompanied by a focus on impounding older, polluting vehicles. Such measures aim to address long-standing pollution sources sustainably. Experts emphasise, however, that reducing air pollution in Delhi will require more than Government policies; public engagement and behavioral change are also essential. A multi-pronged approach is crucial to effectively reduce air pollution. Introducing alternative methods to stubble burning, such as subsidising crop-residue management equipment, is one solution. Increasing urban greenery and limiting industrial emissions are further steps toward a healthier environment. On an individual level, Delhi residents can contribute by using public transportation, minimising car usage, and adopting energy-efficient practices at home. Additionally, improved air quality monitoring and early-warning systems could help raise public awareness and enable quicker responses. India's dedication to conservation aligns with the broader goal of creating a healthier environment for future generations. (The writer is Programme Executive, Gandhii Smriti and Darshan Samiti; views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

PAPER BALLOTS OVER MACHINES

Madam — In spite of being at the top of technologically advanced countries, the United States of America falls back on ballot paper voting to root out any suspicion of foul play stemming from voting through EVM. Over the last two decades, the United States has gradually moved back from electronic voting machines to paper ballots. Given ballot paper voting, unlike EVM, builds confidence among voters and opposition party members, it undoubtedly strengthens democracy. Another highly commendable step the USA election authorities have taken. They have printed the ballot papers in all major languages of a state, depending on its demography. While a voter in New York can choose a ballot paper in Bengali instead of English, Chinese, Spanish, and Korean, voters in Illinois can opt for a ballot paper printed in Hindi. It also shows how a democratic country should honour the mother tongue of even those voters who have origins in different countries. These actions reflect the attitude of catering and prioritising the interests of the demos (people) above everything. India needs to get back to ballot paper voting without any delay. It must also be remembered that to impose a language ignoring the major languages spoken in a particular area flouts democratic principles. There is no room for the 'one nation, one language' policy in a multilingual democratic country like India. **Sujit De | Sujit De**

DIVISION OVER CASTE

Madam — Since the last Lok Sabha elections, immediately followed by the state Assembly election and ensuing Assembly in Maharashtra and Jharkhand and by-elections in several states, demand for caste census is in top gear in the Opposition camp, while the BJP has been silent on it and is meekly supportive. Though not constitutionally valid and having no authentic official database of individuals' caste identity, the caste politics in the facade of the caste census is

Prioritise student wellbeing



Student suicides are rising worldwide. Every day, we read news about young students taking their own lives due to overwhelming pressure. Many of these students are studying far from their families, aiming to crack high-stakes exams like JEE, NEET, UPSC, and CA. Parents often send them away at a young age, where they're not fully prepared to handle the intense stress. At a time in life meant for playing, making friends, and

exploring their interests, they are pushed to lock themselves in rooms and study for hours. This isolation and pressure can lead to anxiety, and, tragically, some may feel that ending their lives is the only escape. Parents should avoid imposing career paths on their children and instead allow them to explore and decide what they want for themselves. Governments can also take steps to address this crisis, such as offering personal counselling sessions for students where they can discuss their struggles and implementing mental health awareness programmes in schools and communities. Ultimately, pressuring children to study hard for the sake of a "better future" can end up damaging their wellbeing and happiness. It's far better to let children decide what they want to work towards rather than forcing them into paths that might not be right for them. **Priya Thakur | Ujjain**

TEMPLE ATTACK CONDEMNED

Madam — The Canadian soil is becoming a battleground for the anti-India sentiments these days, as the Khalistani groups and supporters managed to score win after win in their anti-India agendas. The recent terror attack in the Hindu temple based in Canada is getting a global backlash and condemnation. India is particularly annoyed with the Canadian authorities for not paving the way for the miscreants who are spoiling India's image and hurting Indian sentiments as a whole. India in particular is condemning this carefully crafted attack on Hindu temples, and this is another low in the Indo-Canadian relationships as a whole. We Indians in particular wish strong Canadian intervention and demand speedy justice from the side of Canadian government and authorities as soon as possible. **Kirti Wadhawan | Kanpur**

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

Why are women overlooked for leadership? It's time for a change!



RACHNA LAKHPATRI

Deep-rooted biases and outdated stereotypes frequently overshadow women's capabilities, despite evidence that women leaders enhance company performance and culture

In India, women are frequently overlooked for management and senior leadership roles despite their proven capabilities in both personal and professional settings. It's a complex issue often attributed to stereotypes, unconscious biases, and a society that still grapples with entrenched gender roles. Yet, if we pause and consider the day-to-day roles women play, particularly in an Indian household, it becomes evident that they possess an array of skills crucial to any organisation's success. Imagine a typical day for a woman managing her household. She coordinates with household help, ensures that her family's needs are met, oversees children's schedules, and often also supports extended family members. Each of these tasks requires quick thinking, negotiation skills, empathy, and time management. Such daily acts of coordination and problem-solving are, at their core, management skills. The inquiry at hand is, why do we fail to acknowledge these abilities when they are



showcased in a professional setting?

Do these skills lose their validity simply because they originate from home-based experience? Many argue that women's ability to blend emotional intelligence with logical decision-making makes them especially adept at leadership roles. Their approach is often holistic—they not only focus on completing tasks but also on nurturing relationships, fostering team morale, and ensuring that the process is as smooth as the outcome. Research indicates that companies with gender-diverse leadership teams tend to achieve better financial performance and foster a more satisfied workforce, contributing to a healthier com-

pany culture. Women bring different perspectives and problem-solving approaches, which complement male colleagues' styles. When women are given a seat at the table, companies gain a more nuanced understanding of their markets and customers. And yet, despite clear advantages, women remain vastly underrepresented in senior roles. The reasons are rooted in a long history of gender bias. Women are often pigeonholed as too "emotional" or too "soft" for the challenges of executive positions, while men are assumed to be inherently more decisive and resilient. Yet, resilience is something that women exemplify every day—balancing multiple roles in a society that demands more of them both at home and at work. Change is on the horizon, with many organisations now actively working to bridge the gender gap in leadership. However, it requires a deeper cultural shift to truly unlock the leadership potential of women. Organisations need to embrace mentorship pro-

grams, implement unbiased hiring practices, and encourage flexible work policies that allow women to balance personal and professional responsibilities. Moreover, celebrating women's leadership styles rather than forcing them to fit into traditionally masculine roles can create more authentic, powerful leaders. The argument is simple: women already demonstrate essential leadership skills every day, whether in boardrooms or in households. It's time to recognise their contributions and give them the opportunities they deserve. For any organisation that values growth, empathy, and resilience, overlooking women isn't just unfair—it's a missed opportunity. Let's champion a future where leadership is based on talent and vision, not on outdated biases. Women are ready for the challenge, and it's time we give them the space to lead. (The writer is a motivator and a freelance journalist; views expressed are personal)

Vinod Johri | Delhi



FIRST COLUMN

THE ART OF HEALING

True healing must be comprehensive, nurturing both the physical and spiritual self



RAVI VALLURI

Humans are creatures of their habits. I was addicted to smoking, drinking and consuming 'Gutakha'. It had become almost a quotidian habit and had taken a severe toll on my health. Ailments could be self-inflicted or they could be a professional hazard. In all such cases, the victim suffers physically and emotionally. The healing must be both physical and spiritual. I vividly recall how the Sri Lankan cricket team was a victim of terror and violence in Lahore. They underwent therapeutic care by psychiatrists and underwent several mind management and mental strengthening therapies. Similarly, the Tsunami victims of 2004, those affected by the 26/11 Mumbai terror strikes and the earthquake victims of Gujarat (2001) and Uttarakhand (2013) were revived by the bouquet of self-healing courses by several spiritual organisations and professional help offered by numerous self-help groups. Such tragedies are traumatic experiences. Cities, towns, villages and settlements are razed to rubble.

I come back to my story, where like an ignoramus I started consuming liquor, ignoring all warnings. Thus, my moral compass fell prey to the predilections of a weak mind. It was at this time that my mother, a trained social worker, and a practitioner of Siddha and Pranik healing, refused to entertain my supercilious and specious arguments and extolled certain dormant virtues in me so that I could upend the pyramid. My mother was afflicted by repeated attacks of Paroxysmal Atrial Tachycardia (PAT). This is a type of arrhythmia (irregular heartbeat) that is accompanied by severe sweating, dizziness, palpitations, angina and acute breath-



lessness. I had seen my mother suffering from this condition on several occasions and being admitted to the ICU. However, after undergoing the ten-day Vipassana spiritual sojourn, she recovered from the debilitation. She simultaneously learnt Siddha and Pranik healing, which augured well for her recovery.

These healing techniques along with proper medication and diet helped her in healing. This is the unbounded power and scientific attribute of the breath. Breathing techniques, meditation proper medication and diet are all healthy habits. These can change the traction of our lives and rejuvenate the body and mind. During 'Operation Parakram' our defence forces, after a protracted stay of more than a year at our borders, returned to their cantonments. The fractious behaviour of our unfriendly neighbour did not make them lose their sanity. It is not only the deaths, but defence personnel get maimed during such operations.

Further, their mental state becomes foggy and they become highly irritable. Mere administration of drugs does not act as a panacea. It is medication plus something more to revive their physical and mental bodies. As our defence and para-military forces work in hostile environments it is heartening to know that yoga, Vipassana and Art of Living Courses are conducted for them so that they can maintain physical and mental equilibrium. A soldier asked Gurudev whether he would become passive if he continued with his sadhana, to which Guruji responded, "Most certainly not." Further, he added that Gita Upadesh itself was revealed by Lord Krishna during the Mahabharata war. Arjuna regained the power of discrimination after witnessing the "Divine Spectacle." Be it an individual or a cricket team, those affected by environmental disturbances or our defence forces, all require continuous physical and mental healing to continue their journey. The mystic Rumi has succinctly said, "The wound is the place where the light enters you."

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

CoP 29: A pivotal moment to act on climate crisis

With the upcoming CoP 29 summit in Azerbaijan, world leaders face mounting pressure to deliver on pledges for climate finance and reduced fossil fuel reliance



B K SINGH



Back-to-back hurricanes Helene and Milton originating from the Gulf of Mexico, that have battered the western coast of Florida in the United States have led to political debates and blame games ahead of the US Presidential election. The Republican team targeted the Biden-Harris duo for not doing enough to save lives and restore electricity. More than 200 people have perished in each of the hurricanes and also people have lived without electricity for more than 24 hours. Tropical typhoon Trami over the South China Sea claimed more than 150 lives in the Philippines, and 10 in Vietnam, injured thousands and damaged properties and infrastructures in both countries. Further, the deadliest flood in 50 years in Spain has also claimed more than 250 human lives. As against this, India's disaster management response during cyclones has been praiseworthy.

Whether it was cyclone Nisarga on our West coast in 2020 cyclone Fani in West Bengal in 2019, or the recent Dana in Odisha and West Bengal we have evacuated million of people on each occasion in a record time of 24 to 48 hours and as a result, there has hardly been any loss of life. Recent images from Valencia and other regions of Spain, last month's image from Italy where vehicles were swept away as roads became rivers, and before that similar flooding in France, Poland, Austria, and Czech are reminders of frequent flooding and associated misery to people. The global physics of fossil fuels has destabilised the world. The warmer the atmosphere gets; the more moisture it can hold. This would mean more intense downpours and longer drought.

In Spain, a year's worth of rain was dumped in half a day. While India's track record in dealing with disasters is good, what it should relook is its decisions to sacrifice natural forests for infrastructures, development projects and mining. Consumption of coal, oil and natural gas is swelling worldwide, despite leaders knowing that the surge in emission of greenhouse gases leads to increased warming of the planet and we face more destructive and frequent climatic catastrophes. Forests are the best sink for carbon and sacrificing them for GDP is only

to invite more frequent disasters. Earth is already warmed by 1.2 degrees Celsius. The year 2023 has been the warmest in the recorded history of post-industrialisation.

The trend from 2024 till July suggests that we are on course to break the 2023 temperature record. Developed countries are responsible for the warming so far. Scientists are consistently forecasting that beyond 1.5 degrees Celsius warming, part of many countries especially island nations will be submerged in the Sea. United Nations Framework Convention for Climate Change (UNFCCC) has provided a forum for World leaders to meet annually and decide on actions to be taken to keep the warming within 1.5 degrees.



THE TRANSFER OF TECHNOLOGY FROM DEVELOPED COUNTRIES TO DEVELOPING AND THIRD-WORLD COUNTRIES FOR TRANSITION TO RENEWABLE ENERGY AT SPEED AND SCALE IS ANOTHER KEY TO CLIMATE MITIGATION

In the annual conference (CoP 25) in Paris in 2015 countries pledged their nationally determined contributions (NDC) to cut the consumption of fossil fuel and to develop renewable energy at speed and scale by 2030. Among G20 countries India is the only one, which is on course to fulfil the pledge. Donald Trump as US President in 2017 refused to toe the line with the Paris Agreement and said that climate is a hoax. No CoP meeting took place till he was in office. Corona pandemic delayed it further even after Biden took over and CoP 26 at Glasgow was held in November 2021.

Here again, leaders reiterated their pledge at Paris and also revived climate finance of \$100 billion that developed countries would contribute towards the cost of climate adaptation in the developing world annually. Another rhetoric was started during CoP 27 at Sharm el Sheikh that developed and some developing countries like China would pay for loss and damage in global south countries. This has again not been complied with. The climate finance of \$100 billion

annually has been agreed upon in Copenhagen CoP in 2009 but has not been complied with so far. African countries and island nations are suffering from extreme climate events like droughts and floods as well as supply chain disruptions owing to geopolitical tensions in West Asia and Ukraine.

Countries like Namibia and Zimbabwe have ordered to cull thousands of wild elephants (a threatened species) for food. If climate finance and loss and damage funds were made available, there was no need to cull threatened species and endangering the ecological security of the region further. The pledge regarding cutting fossil fuel consumption and transition to renewable energy especially by Western nations and China has been overlooked. There has been unprecedented growth in oil and gas drilling in the US and coal production in China.

Biden and other European leaders are not on course to fulfil their commitment to bring down fossil fuel consumption by 2030 and achieve net zero by 2050. China has pledged net zero by 2060 and India by 2070. Scientists are telling us to keep the warming within 1.5 degrees lest we face the consequences. 2050 and 2060 are far ahead and the question is whether we will be able to stand the disasters till then.

During the nomination as Republican presidential candidate in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Trump in his address said to abandon climate - drill baby drill. He cut jokes in his election rallies saying that if the Sea level rises due to warming, the people will have more buildings facing the Sea. The transfer of technology from developed countries to developing and third-world countries for transition to renewable energy at speed and scale is another key to climate mitigation. India, China and Western nations have gone

ahead substantially, yet they need to step up their efforts.

Renewable energy transition should take place at such a pace that we automatically cut fossil fuel consumption. Countries' demand at Glasgow CoP 26 to 'phase out' fossil fuel did not have total acceptance and was modified to 'phase down' on the insistence of China and the support of India. Further at Dubai CoP 28 another phrase 'transition away from fossil fuel' was agreed upon. Irrespective of the phrases used in the CoP resolutions, leaders are only concerned about the growth and GDP and are not inclined to bring down fossil fuel consumption. CoP 29 is scheduled to commence in Baku, Azerbaijan on November 13th, when world leaders will again take stock of the situation and roll out further actions.

Unfortunately, the host country along with its neighbours Armenia and Georgia is experiencing relatively more warming as compared to the global average. While every nation should put in their efforts to cut emissions, India should have relook at the projects requiring the sacrifice of natural forests, whether for linear infrastructures in the Himalayas, in Western Ghats or deforestation of 130.75 sq km forests for great Nicobar Development projects.

India's track record for growing compensatory afforestation for the trees lost is very poor. Supreme Court recently threatened contempt against agencies for not taking up planting ten times the trees lost in the project. 3700 trees were sacrificed in 2015 for the widening of NH 123 Bharatpur Dholpur road and Apex court's condition to plant up 37000 trees has not been fulfilled so far.

(The writer is retired principal chief conservator of Forests-Head of Forest Force-Karnataka; views are personal)

How AI, big data and personalisation are transforming B-school curricula

From integrating AI into decision-making processes to adding global perspectives, B-schools are merging traditional education with innovative technology

In 2024, technology is influencing every aspect of life, transforming the way we communicate, learn, and run businesses. With advancements in Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, IoT, Big Data, Blockchain, and other digital technologies, we are currently navigating the fourth wave of the industry revolution.



PRABHU AGGARWAL

Businesses primarily prioritise automation and machinery to enhance workforce operations, with 88 per cent of small business owners using automation to increase their workforce efficiency, according to an Unmud study. This shift is driving up the demand for digitally literate and tech-savvy professionals in the industry, inspiring business schools to redesign their academic curricula. Following are the revolutionary ways technology is reshaping the business industry.

Reshaping Business Education through AI: According to the Future of Jobs Survey, 75 per cent of companies plan to adopt AI technologies in the coming years. This signals a significant shift brought about by technology in business education; the integration of AI and ML.

Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning are revolutionising how future business leaders think and make decisions, disrupting the traditional learning models. Emerging technologies such as generative AI provide real-time feedback and high-level interactivity, inspiring B-schools to employ learning approaches to develop AI skills in students, thus, preparing them to meet the demands of a rapidly evolving business landscape. **Integration of Data Analytics into Business Intelligence:** Data has become the primary currency in business intelligence, helping businesses make informed decisions to enhance their growth. Technological trends such as statistical techniques, predictive analysis, machine learning,

and artificial intelligence allow businesses to identify leading patterns and tailor their offerings. As recent studies by Edge Delta point out, more companies will adopt big data and technology, increasing the employment rate by 58 per cent. To help students stay competitive, B-schools actively embed data analysis into their offered curriculum, improving students' data proficiency. Incorporating data analytics into higher education curricula, particularly in PGDM and MBA programmes, will promote innovation and solution-oriented thinking among students. **Experiential Learning and Real-World Applications:** With the rapid inclusion of technology in business, the leading employers are ex-



cessively prioritising professionals with industry-ready technical and soft skills. The technologically integrated method of business education complements the traditional teaching pedagogy, preparing students to tackle real-world challenges and provide futuristic solutions. Through industry internships, consultation projects, case studies, and business simulations, B-school students gain hands-on experience and practical skills necessary to

excel in today's competitive job market. While a business degree holds significant importance, practical experience allows students to turn their learnings into actionable solutions.

Personalised Learning Approach: The amalgamation of technology and education has made education personal. The traditional learning model employs a one-size-fits-all approach, ignoring individual learning needs. On the other hand, the modern learning model is tailored to meet individualistic demands, making learning seamless for every student. Through tech-integrated personalised education, students can adapt the learning materials and understand at their own pace. This shift is especially impactful in

business education, where personalised learning helps students stay current with industry trends, bridge the skill gap, and learn based on their proficiency.

Balance Between Human Creativity and Automation: While many view the current era as Industry 4.0, others argue we are swiftly moving towards Industry 5.0. Unlike its predecessor, Industry 5.0 emphasises the well-being of professionals, fostering prosperity beyond jobs and promoting ecologically balanced economic growth. The upcoming industrialisation era envisions close collaboration between humans and AI tools, enhancing operational efficiency and cost-effectiveness. This has led top B-schools to thoughtfully curate the core

management courses, integrating human-centricity, sustainability, and automation.

Bringing Global Perspective to Classrooms: Business challenges today are inherently global in nature, such as sustainability issues, supply chain management, foreign regulations, and cultural diversity. By embedding a global outlook in business education, B-schools equip students with essential tools to effectively address these problems. Facilitating worldly industry collaborations and connecting peers from diverse cultures through virtual modes fosters a deeper business understanding in the students, enabling them to drive positive changes.

(The writer is Dean BMS Hyderabad; views are personal)

Total vehicle retail sales in India in October sees 32 per cent Y-O-Y rise to 28,32,944 units: FADA

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The total vehicle retail sales in India witnessed a 32 per cent Y-O-Y rise to 28,32,944 units with all segments including two-wheelers and passenger vehicles registering strong growth, Federation of Automobile Dealers' Association (FADA) said on Wednesday.



FADA said, Passenger vehicle sales grew 32.38 per cent to 4,83,159 units in 2024, from 3,64,991 units retailed in October 2023, it stated.

Two-wheeler sales for the previous month were recorded at 20,65,095 units, as compared to 15,14,634 units in October 2023, registering a growth of 36.35 per cent, while three-wheeler sales were up 11.45 per cent year-on-year to 1,22,846 in October 2024, it said. Tractor sales, according to FADA, increased 3.08 per cent during October to 64,433 units, from 62,542 units a year ago. The convergence of major festivals (Navratri and Diwali) in October significantly boosted consumer demand; attractive festive offers, new model launches, and improved stock availability led to a 36 per cent year-on-year and 71 per cent month-on-month

growth in two-wheelers, according to FADA. Besides, rural sentiments, favourable monsoon and good crop expectations, further contributed to the growth, it stated. Moreover, the 32 per cent year-on-year and 75 per cent month-on-month rise in passenger vehicle sales was driven by festive demand, aggressive offers, and new model introductions, it said. FADA remains optimistic about near-term growth of the overall automobile industry particularly with the wedding season ahead. However, potential challenges such as inventory overstock and economic headwinds may affect sales momentum towards the end of the year, it said.

Rubicon Research, Sai Life Sciences and two others get Sebi's nod to float IPOs

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Four companies, including pharmaceutical formulation firm Rubicon Research and TPG Capital-backed Sai Life Sciences, have received Sebi's go-ahead to raise at least Rs 3,000 crore collectively through Initial Public Offerings (IPOs), an update with the markets regulator showed on Wednesday.



Draft Red Herring Prospectus (DRHP).

The other two firms that obtained the regulator's clearance are yarn manufacturer Sanathan Textiles and auto components maker Metalman Auto. Meanwhile, BMW Ventures, which filed its preliminary IPO papers in September, withdrew the documents on October 28.

At present, General Atlantic owns over 57 per cent stake in Rubicon Research. The company proposes to utilise proceeds from the fresh issue to the tune of Rs 310 crore for payment of debt. Also, funds will be used for supporting inorganic growth through unidentified acquisitions as well as other strategic initiatives and general corporate purposes.

The four companies - Rubicon Research, Sai Life Sciences, Sanathan Textiles and Metalman Auto - which filed their draft IPO papers with Sebi during July and August, obtained the regulator's observations on October 31, the update showed.

Hyderabad-based Sai Life Sciences' proposed IPO comprises a fresh issue of equity shares worth Rs 800 crore and an OFS of 6.15 crore shares by a promoter, investor shareholders and other shareholders, the DRHP showed. Of the IPO proceeds, funds to the tune of Rs 600 crore will be used for debt payment and a portion will be used for corporate general purposes, the draft papers filed showed.

The proposed IPO of Metalman Auto is a combination of a fresh issue of equity shares worth Rs 350 crore and an OFS of up to 1.26 crore shares by its promoters. Proceeds from the fresh issue to the tune of Rs 25 crore will be used to part financing the capital expenditure towards procurement of plant and machinery at Pithampur manufacturing unit two in Madhya Pradesh.

FSSAI to hold CAC meet to discuss food safety issues on e-commerce platforms

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) will hold meeting of its Central Advisory Committee (CAC) on November 7-8 to discuss food safety issues on e-commerce platforms among others challenges.

ensure sale of quality food products on e-commerce platforms, they said. The committee will discuss this issue amid reports of sale of food products nearing expiry on e-commerce platforms.

The meeting, to be held under the chairmanship of FSSAI's CEO G Kamala Vardhana Rao, will see participation of food commissioners from all states/Union Territories or their representatives.

Sources said FSSAI is likely to call a meeting of big e-commerce players next week to ensure food safety. As per the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, the food authority constitutes the CAC for close cooperation between the Authority and enforcement agencies/organisations operating in the field of food.

According to sources, the CAC meeting will be held on November 7 to November 8 to discuss the various issues, including how to strengthen surveillance and testing of food products across all states to ensure food safety. The CAC will also discuss measures to be adopted to

The committee generally meets three to four times a year and advises the Authority on various matters including prioritisation of work, identifying potential risks and the pooling of knowledge.

Thailand replaces Maldives to emerge as top honeymoon destination for Indian couples: MakeMyTrip

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Thailand has emerged as the favourite international honeymoon destination for Indian couples, replacing Maldives, as it recorded the highest share of honeymoon package bookings between October 2023 and September 2024 on MakeMyTrip, the travel booking platform said on Wednesday.

The Maldives saw a 16.2 per cent Year-on-Year decline in honeymoon package bookings while all other top five international destinations - Indonesia, Mauritius, and Vietnam - gained share this year, the travel booking platform stated. MakeMyTrip's 'How India Travels for Honeymoon', analyses booking data from October 2023 to September

2024, compared to the same period in the preceding year. Thailand increased its booking share by 5.2 per cent year-on-year, surpassing the Maldives, which led the rankings last year. On the domestic front, the Andamans replaced Kerala as the most booked honeymoon destination, increasing its share of honeymoon package bookings by 6.9 per cent YoY.

Air India deploys additional resources at touch points, airports to help Vistara passengers

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Air India has deployed additional resources, including help desk kiosks, at touch points and airports to ensure a smooth experience for Vistara passengers post its merger with the airline next week, an official said on Wednesday.

Full-service carriers - Air India and Vistara, a joint venture between Tata and Singapore Airlines - set to be merged on November 11. Post-merger, the routes and schedule operated by Vistara and the Vistara inflight experience will remain the same. Also, Vistara aircraft will be identified by a special four-

digit Air India code beginning with the digit '2'. The official in the know said Air India deployed additional resources across touch points in India, including help desk kiosks, at the curbside before terminal entry at hubs and metro city airports. There will be "customer support staff wearing 'How

may I assist you?' Air India x Vistara branded t-shirts for support", the official added.

In due course, Vistara airport ticketing offices and check-in terminals will become that of Air India. Over the last few months, 2,70,000 customers who had booked Vistara flights have been migrated to Air

India, and more than 4.5 million Vistara loyalty programme members are being migrated to Air India's loyalty programme. There are concerns in certain quarters on whether Vistara passengers will continue to get the same services post-merger as Air India, which is in the transformation phase, has

been facing certain service issues in recent times. The Tata Group-owned Air India has emphasised that the Vistara experience will remain post-merger. The integrated entity will have a fleet of more than 200 planes, offering connectivity to 90 domestic and international destinations.

Incoming data on GDP growth mixed but positives outweigh negatives: Reserve Bank Governor

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Reserve Bank Governor Shaktikanta Das on Wednesday said the incoming data on economic growth is "mixed", but the positive factors outweigh the negative ones.



7.2 per cent real GDP growth for FY25, even as some expect it to be lower than 7 per cent. Das said the RBI tracks over 70 high-speed indicators to arrive at its estimates and described both the positive factors pushing the number and the negatives pulling it down.

Speaking at Business Standard's annual BFSI event here, Das stressed that the underlying economic activity by and large remains strong. "Data which is coming in is mixed but the positives outweigh the negatives and by and large underlying activities remain strong," Das said. It can be noted that many analysts have been voicing concerns about growth, especially after official data showed growth slowing to a 15-quarter low of 6.7 per cent in the first quarter of FY25. The RBI, however, has been holding onto its estimate of

urban demand being witnessed by fast-moving consumer goods companies are the negative factors. Besides, subsidy outgoes have increased in the September quarter and will impact the Q2 GDP number, Das said. The positives include the handsome growth in GST e-way bills, toll collections, air passenger traffic, and steel

and cement industry performance, Das said. Amid the increased discussion on the auto sector prospects recently with concerns around rising inventory amid lower demand, Das said the sector has done exceedingly well in October with a 30 per cent growth which includes a 23 per cent rise in four-wheeler sales. Additionally, the agriculture and services sectors are also doing well, Das said. "I would not rush to declare that the economy is slowing down," the RBI governor said amid some analysts saying that the economy is in a cyclical growth slowdown. When reminded of his animal analogies on inflation and asked to choose the animal which describes the Indian economy, Das said national animal "tiger" which is also

there in the RBI logo best describes the country. He said the economy has got the strength of a tiger, while RBI provides the "agility", which is another key attribute of the tiger. On inflation, Das said the October headline consumer price inflation number to be announced on November 12 will be higher than September's 5.5 per cent, but added that the central bank had already pencilled in the higher numbers for the two months. The shift in stance of the monetary policy should not be seen as a precursor to a rate cut at the very next meeting of the rate-setting panel, Das said adding that the panel is under no pressure on the next course of action. On the issue of regulatory and supervisory actions against four non-banks recently, Das

reiterated that the RBI has acted against a very small number if one were to compare the overall number of NBFCs (non-banking financial companies), which is 9,400. Asserting that the central bank actions are "calibrated, selective and measured", Das said such decisions are not abrupt and are preceded by months of bilateral engagement with an entity. It is only when an entity refuses or delays RBI's suggestions that such actions are taken, Das said, adding that the number of entities marked out for the need to improve is far higher than the ones against whom actions are taken. Detailed reasons on why an action has been taken are given to the entity, Das said, underlining that these actions are not "punitive" but

"corrective" in nature wherein the RBI takes back the measures if it sees improvements sought. The RBI has done a quick study to understand the use of borrowed funds being deployed to punt on the capital markets, Das said and added that this phenomenon does not pose a major risk to the banking sector or lead to "systemic instability". He urged banks to look at the end use of funds even in unsecured loans, admitting that it is very difficult to monitor the same. The RBI does not have a prescribed credit deposit ratio for the banks, Das said, adding that this ratio has improved to 80 per cent at the systemic level in the last few months. However, there are a few entities which are the outliers on this, he admitted. Quality of loan underwriting

and the ability to sustain the loan growth are two important aspects that the central bank looks at while understanding loan growth, Das specified. He also made clear that the central bank does not have a view on credit growth. The RBI endeavours to "smell around" constantly, and be preemptive in identifying and rectifying risks before they become into systemic trouble, he said. Replying to a question on the future of central bank digital currency (CBDC), Das said the RBI is in no hurry to have a national launch of what is a pilot project at present and added that new use cases are emerging like Odisha's transfer of cash support to beneficiaries under a scheme or some corporates transferring lunch vouchers to employee wallets.

Maruti Suzuki seeking to enhance exports with upcoming new Dzire sedan

PTI ■ DABOLIM/GOA

Maruti Suzuki India is targeting markets like UAE, Saudi Arabia, Chile, Mexico and other Latin American countries with its upcoming new version of compact sedan Dzire to accelerate exports as it eyes over 3 lakh units of overseas shipments this fiscal, a senior company official said on Wednesday. In the domestic market, the company hopes to enhance its share in the sedan market amid the passenger vehicles market shifting towards SUVs (Sports Utility Vehicles), with the new Dzire which is slated for launch next week. "We have been growing (exports) at a rate of about 11.9 per cent in the first seven months of the financial year and we hope to continue on that momentum. So we hope to do more than about 3 lakh car exports within this financial year," Maruti Suzuki India Executive Director Corporate Affairs



Rahul Bharti told PTI here. In contrast, just about four years ago, the company's exports were below one lakh per year, he added. "So, now we'll be doing about three times of that, and by the turn of the decade, we hope to multiply it another three times over to something like 8 lakh units a year," Bharti added. Elaborating on the export strategy, Bharti said, "One of the biggest enablers of increasing export is more models in more geographies. So, we are adding the number of models, and we are adding the markets also." At the moment, he said, the

company is exporting to Latin America, the Middle East and Southeast Asia. Further, he said, "At some point in time, we will re-enter Europe and Japan also (with upcoming electric SUV eVitar). With the upcoming new version of Dzire compact sedan, Bharti said, "We hope to increase our exports also because with the new sleek design, technologies, six airbags, as standard, it is being widely accepted in the market." He further said, "We have to increase the density in those (existing) markets. We will target markets like the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Chile, Mexico, other countries in Latin America and maybe some markets in Southeast Asia also." The existing Dzire model was among the top three export models in October, he added. On the domestic front, Maruti Suzuki India Senior Executive Officer, Marketing and Sales, Partho Banerjee said the company hopes to

enhance its share in the sedan market with the new offering. Last year, the outgoing version of Dzire clocked over 1.6 lakh units, he said, adding that with the new offering coming in the company expects more growth. "Every second car which is sold in the sedan segment (in the domestic market) happens to be from Maruti... We are, in fact, increasing our market share in the sedan segment," he asserted. Banerjee acknowledged that with the SUVs growing faster, the sedan segment is shrinking but sedans will continue to have its market as SUV demand stabilises at some point in time. "Being the market leader we need to be present in all the segments. Our take is this, in each segment, we need to be present and offer products to the consumers. Let the consumer decide which form factor they want to go," Banerjee said.

Brand Street Integrated expands with new operations in Kerala

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Brand Street Integrated has announced the expansion of its Southern operations with the launch of its Kerala office. Following successful initiatives across Hyderabad and other Southern regions, the Kerala expansion is a significant step in their strategic journey to bring innovative and localised marketing solutions to brands across India. Leading the new Kerala division are two of Brand Street Integrated's experts namely, Rajinikanth Manickam, bringing over five years of experience within the company, and Joe Matthew, both of whom possess a deep understanding of the local market and consumer behavior. Their expertise will be instrumental in offering

clients tailored, on-ground marketing solutions that resonate with the region's unique audience. "We are incredibly excited to strengthen our presence in the South by launching operations in Kerala," said Surendra Singh, CEO of Brand Street Integrated. "Kerala represents a vibrant market with a wealth of opportunity, and expanding here allows us to offer brands even more localised and impactful marketing solutions." Brand Street Integrated's Kerala operations will provide the full spectrum of experiential marketing services, including rural and digital marketing, OOH advertising, and merchandising solutions, all backed by a unique, data-driven approach to ensure optimal engagement.

INBRIEF

PSPCL AND GNDEC LUDHIANA SIGN MOU

LUDHIANA: Punjab State Power Corporation Limited (PSPCL) and Guru Nanak Dev Engineering College (GNDEC), Ludhiana, have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) under the guidance of Power Minister of Punjab, Harbhajan Singh ETO.



ALL INDIA INTER-UNIVERSITY TAEKWONDO (MEN) CHAMPIONSHIP BEGINS



AMRITSAR: The All India Inter-University Taekwondo (Men) Championship started today and will continue until November 9, 2024. This exciting event is taking place at Multipurpose Hall of Guru Nanak Dev University.

CRICKET MATCH ORGANISED BY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

AMRITSAR: Department of Education of Guru Nanak Dev University organized its first annual department cricket match to foster the sense of healthy competitions among the students of the department.



REAL MADRID, MANCHESTER CITY BOTH HUMILIATED IN CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

AP ■ MILAN
European heavyweights Real Madrid and Manchester City both suffered big defeats in the Champions League. Defending champion Madrid was humbled 3-1 at home by AC Milan, while Erling Haaland missed a penalty and City squandered a fourth-minute lead as it lost 4-1 at Sporting Lisbon, whose coach will soon take charge of its crosstown rival.

Liverpool moved top of the league phase table with four wins from four games, followed by Sporting and Monaco, both on 10 points after three wins and a draw. Under the new 36-team format introduced by UEFA this season, the top eight teams advance directly to the next round, and those from ninth to 24th enter playoffs to reach it, while the bottom 12 are eliminated.

AMORIM'S AUDITION: Before their game, Sporting fans displayed a huge tifo thanking Rúben Amorim in his last home game before he takes over Manchester United. Phil Foden then got City off to a flying start in the fourth minute, only the second goal Sporting has conceded in four games of the competition.

But Swedish forward Viktor Gyökeres scored a hat trick as Sporting came roaring back. Gyökeres first equalized in the 38th after a perfect through ball from Geovany Quenda,



before Maximiliano Araújo made it 2-1 right after the break. Gyökeres then made it 3-1 from the penalty spot after Joško Gvardiol was penalized for a shove on Francisco Trincão in the area. Haaland's penalty hit the

crossbar, before Gyökeres showed the Norwegian how it's done with another spot kick at the other end to complete the scoring. It is the first time since 2018 that City has lost three straight games, coming off a defeat to

Tottenham in the English League Cup and a loss to Bournemouth in the Premier League. "In my seven and a half years at the club, I don't remember losing three games in a row," City midfielder Bernardo Silva

said. **MADRID FALTERING:** In Spain, Christian Pulisic sent in a corner for Malick Thiaw to head Milan into a 12th-minute lead, ensuring Madrid trailed in a third straight game in the Champions League this

season. The 15-time champion had already lost to surprise team Lille in their second game. Vinicius Júnior equalized from the penalty spot in the 23rd after he'd been tripped, but Alvaro Morata pounced on the rebound after Andriy Lunin saved Rafael Leão's shot to restore the visitors' lead against his former club. Morata had already been given a hostile reception from the home fans, who evidently remember the goal he scored to take Juventus through to the 2015 final at their team's expense. Tijjani Reijnders scored Milan's third goal as the home fans made their frustrations known at Santiago Bernabéu Stadium. "The last two defeats are inexplicable. We have to analyze and react quickly," Lunin said, referring to Madrid's 4-0 loss to Barcelona in its previous Spanish league game. It's the first time since 2009 that Madrid has lost two successive

games at home with at least three goals conceded in each, according to Opta. "We have to get back on track," Lunin said. **OTHER RESULTS:** German forward Nicolas Kühn scored twice as Celtic defeated Leipzig 3-1 at home, and Juventus drew 1-1 at Lille. Lille midfielder Edon Zhegrovca eluded two defenders before playing a perfect pass for Jonathan David, who fired inside the far post, but Dušan Vlahovic equalized with a penalty for the Italian club. Donyell Malen scored late for Borussia Dortmund to beat Sturm Graz 1-0 at home, and Thilo Kehrer did likewise for Monaco to win at Bologna 1-0. United States midfielder Malik Tillman scored one goal and set up another as PSV Eindhoven beat Spanish team Girona 4-0. Dinamo Zagreb dealt Slovan Bratislava its fourth straight defeat in the competition as the visitors came from behind to win 4-1 in Bratislava.

Cristiano Ronaldo scores as Al-Nassr beats defending champion Al-Ain 5-1

AP ■ RIYADH
Cristiano Ronaldo scored the second goal as Al-Nassr defeated defending champion Al-Ain of the United Arab Emirates 5-1 in the AFC Champions League Elite to put Saudi Arabian teams in the top three places in the 12-team standings.

Al-Nassr has 10 points from four games, two behind local rivals Al-Hilal and Al-Ahli who both have a perfect record with four wins. Anderson Talisca opened the scoring in Riyadh after just five minutes with a shot into the bottom corner from the edge of the area. Ronaldo then netted his second goal of this season's competition from close range just after the half-hour mark after goalkeeper Khalid Eisa could only parry Sadio Mané's shot from outside the

goalkeeper Bento and into the net. Wesley and Talisca added late goals for Al-Nassr to cement the Saudi dominance of the western zone's group. The top eight from each of the two groups progress to the knockout stages.

In the eastern zone, Vissel Kobe of Japan went top of the group with a 2-0 win over South Korea's Gwangju FC, the previous leader. Taisei Miyashiro scored with a penalty after 15 minutes and Daiju Sasaki sealed the victory after the break. Johor Darul Tazim of Malaysia went third with a 3-0 win over two-time champion Ulsan HD of South Korea. Just three days after lifting the Chinese Super League title, Shanghai Port lost 3-1 at Kawasaki Frontale of Japan. Australia's sole representative Central Coast Mariners picked up its first point with a 2-2 draw with Shanghai Shenhua.

Manas Dhamne can become Mr. Dependable of Indian tennis: Davis Cup coach Ashutosh Singh

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
Manas Dhamne could be the answer to Indian tennis' desperate search for 'Mr Dependable', reckons new Davis Cup coach Ashutosh Singh, who is mighty impressed with the teenager's diligent approach and workmanlike attitude.



the excitement that the debuts of two young tennis players, which has largely gone unnoticed due to other important discussions going on.

Ashutosh, who replaced Zeeshan Ali as coach, observed the youngster from Malegaon in Stockholm, where India competed in the Davis Cup Group I tie against Sweden. Dhamne, 16, did not get to play a match but was part of the squad that travelled to Stockholm along with another youngster, Aryan Shah. It was a clear sign that the team management and the selectors wanted Dhamne and Shah to have the Davis Cup experience, what it means to be with the national squad and what it takes to represent the country at the World Cup of tennis. While India were bested 0-4 by the hosts, coach Ashutosh chose to see a silver lining in the forgettable outing in Sweden. "Manas is a quintessential hard worker with a workman like attitude," said Ashutosh, who is son of former Davis Cupper Balram Singh. "He just makes eye contact and nods 'ok' for any on-court work he's asked to do. He has potential to become the Mr Dependable in singles that Indian tennis has long been

searching for," remarked Ashutosh. "Of course it's miles to go but the road he's taken looks possible with his diligent approach. One has to keep in mind that Manas is only 16 and does need careful supervision in certain aspects of his workload management but it seems he's in experienced hands at his training base in Italy." India have just one player in top-100 in Sumit Nagal (83) and the next best is Ramkumar Ramanathan, way behind at number 309, followed by Sasi Kumar Mukund (365). All others are outside the top-500 bracket. Dhamne initially trained in Pune but left for Italy to train with renowned coach Riccardo Piatti at the Piatti Tennis Center in Bordighera. Dhamne made a quick impression when he won the singles titles at the ITF Asia-Oceania Junior (Under-18)

championships in 2022, becoming the youngest Indian to win the prestigious event at the age 14 years and nine months. A year later, he was given a wild card by the MSLTA for the Tata Open Maharashtra, the ATP250 event, and again he impressed with his baseline game and range of strokes against American Mihale Mmoh, who was ranked 113 then. In the season 2024, Dhamne has consistently competed on the ITF Men's Tour. He himself has not yet broken into top-1000 but already has wins over Nicholas David Ionel (378) Japanese veteran Tatsuma Ito (top-60 a few years back) and Romania's Vlad Dancu (ranked 565). Ashutosh said India may have lost badly in Sweden but not everything was bleak. "The main thing is to keep the main thing as the main thing. I want to bring to the forefront

"Talking about Aryan Shah, Ashutosh said he was a 'skilful' player. "Aryan is hard working and a quick learner with an enterprising head on his shoulders. Being inquisitive is a good indication of the eagerness of a young mind to learn, Aryan definitely checks that box. "Alongside Manas, he brings much-needed unbridled energy of youth into the team. Having played all four junior grand slams in singles, he has foundation of top tier exposure to firmly understand the points of his game he needs to work on." Ashutosh had an interesting take on how India's junior players approach the domestic tournaments. He said it was worrying that many players, equipped with talent and the game, were not succeeding, simply because they were burning themselves out by playing more tournaments than necessary. "Till U12, players shouldn't play more than 12 weeks. U14 also should be 15-16 weeks because each player plays two age groups, and they end playing almost 30-40 weeks per year. So, there is no time for working on the game and fitness.

Gauff defeats Swiatek to reach the semifinals

AP ■ RIYADH
Coco Gauff earned her second victory over Iga Swiatek in 13 career matchups, winning 6-3, 6-4 at the WTA Finals to reach the semifinals of the season-ending tournament. The result means that Swiatek can't move up from No. 2 in the rankings this week, so Aryna Sabalenka will finish the year at No. 1 for the first time. It was Gauff's first victory over Swiatek since the 2023 Cincinnati Open, snapping a four-match losing skid head-to-head. Gauff, the 2023 U.S.



Open champion, also put an end to five-time Grand Slam champ Swiatek's six-match unbeaten run at the WTA Finals, an event the Polish star won a year ago.

The win moved Gauff to 2-0 in the Orange Group, while Swiatek fell to 1-1. Swiatek had rallied to beat Barbora Krejčíková in three sets on Sunday in her first match in two months. Krejčíková, the Wimbledon champion, kept her chances of advancing alive with a 6-3, 6-3 win over Jessica Pegula. That eliminated Pegula, who lost in straight sets to Gauff in their opening match in Saudi Arabia. Krejčíková was the last player to qualify for the event for the top eight players on the women's tennis tour, earning her berth thanks to her Grand Slam title at the All England Club in July. At No. 13, she became the lowest-ranked player to win a WTA Finals match since Magda Maleeva 22 years ago.

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Standout boxing nation at Paris Olympics joins new body aiming to keep the sport at 2028 Games

AP ■ LAUSANNE
The most successful boxing nation at the Paris Olympics has joined the new governing body that aims to keep the sport in the 2028 Los Angeles Games after years of turmoil outside the ring. The boxing federation of Uzbekistan, whose fighters won five of the 13 gold medals in Paris this year, is among four new members of World Boxing, said the Switzerland-based body that is trying to win formal recognition by the International Olympic Committee. The IOC has set a deadline of "early 2025" to work with a new governing body replacing the Russian-led International Boxing Association, which was disbanded from the Olympic movement last year. In a years-long dispute with the IBA over finance and integrity concerns, the IOC has overseen boxing tournaments at the past two Olympics in Paris and Tokyo but does not want to organize for a third

time in Los Angeles. The dispute intensified in 2018 when boxing officials defied IOC warnings and elected Uzbek businessman Gafur Rahkimov as their leader. The IOC recently warned boxing federations that stay loyal to the IBA, now led by Russian Umar Kremlev, they will be cut off from funding and liaison with their national Olympic committee - effectively blocking their path to the 2028 Summer Games. "The addition of Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, which are two of the world's leading boxing nations, is a major coup for World Boxing," the emerging governing body said, which also added Guatemala and Laos to a roster of 55 members. World Boxing president Boris van der Vorst said the recruits "recognize it is the only way to keep the Olympic dreams of their boxers alive." The new members joined at a meeting in Pueblo, Colorado which hosted World Boxing's first global championships, at under-19 level.

Southern rivals strive to strike back after recent defeats

PTI ■ KOCHI
Southern rivals Kerala Blasters FC and Hyderabad FC will seek a turnaround in their fortunes when they lock horns in the Indian Super League here on Thursday, having suffered reverses lately. Kerala Blasters FC and Hyderabad FC currently stand at the 10th and 11th spots in the points table -- coming into this match on the back of defeats to Mumbai City FC and Mohun Bagan Super Giant respectively. This match gives them a chance to fix things up and get their respective seasons back on track. The wind can be said to be swaying in the favour of the Kerala Blasters, as the Kochi-based outfit has won three out of their last four matches against Hyderabad FC. However, they have never won thrice in a row in front of the visitors, presenting this match as an unprecedented opportunity for them to do so.

Hyderabad FC will be eyeing points on the road to build upon one win and draw each that they have accumulated in ISL 2024-25. Kerala Blasters FC have found the back of the net in each of their previous 14 ISL matches at home. They have struck at least twice in eight of those games, and only Chennaiyin FC, Delhi Dynamos FC and Bengaluru FC (16 games each) have gone on longer such runs in the competition. With the power-packed attacking duo of Noah Sadaoui and Adrian Luna in their ranks, the Mikael Stahre-coached team is all set to delight the home fans further with their offensive firepower this term. Simultaneously, Kerala Blasters FC have not kept a clean sheet in their previous 18 consecutive matches in the league. This is the joint second-longest such sequence in the ISL, along with FC Goa and Hyderabad FC, with only NorthEast United FC having conceded



goals in a longer stretch of matches. It might prove out to be difficult for the team to climb up the league ladder unless they set their backline in order. Hyderabad FC had snapped their four-game-long losing streak on the road by triumphing over Mohammedan SC by 4-0 in their previous away match. That win must have infused greater belief in them to produce similar such performances in unfamiliar conditions, and the offensive cohesion displayed by Hyderabad FC will keep the Kerala Blasters FC defence in check as well. Hyderabad FC have ended up conceding at least a goal each in seven out of their last nine away fixtures. They have been defeated in all those games, and in fact won the two matches when they kept a clean sheet, drawing a clear parallel between defensive discipline and a greater possibility of them capturing the three points.

Sauber signs Brazilian driver Gabriel Bortoleto to partner Nico Hülkenberg in F1 for 2025

AP ■ HINWIL (SWITZERLAND)
Sauber has signed 20-year-old Brazilian driver Gabriel Bortoleto to make his debut in Formula 1 next year as Nico Hülkenberg's teammate. The decision means that Sauber's current drivers Valtteri Bottas and Zhou Guanyu are without an F1 seat for 2025. Neither has scored a point all season and Sauber's car has been largely uncompetitive. Signing Bortoleto, who leads the Formula 2 standings with two rounds to go, gives Sauber a blend of youth and experience alongside the 37-



alongside an experienced driver like Nico." Bortoleto, who won the F3 championship last season, began racing in karting as a kid before his family moved to Europe. He is the first full-time Brazilian driver in F1 since Felipe Massa retired in 2017. Pietro Fittipaldi did two races in 2020 as an injury replacement. Bortoleto joined the McLaren's driver program last year and the team said he will be released at the end of the 2024 season so he can pursue his F1 career. "All the best for the future," McLaren said. Bottas and Zhou had been

with Sauber since 2022. "After open and constructive discussions with Valtteri Bottas and Zhou Guanyu, we mutually concluded that conditions to continue together could not be met so we agreed that it is time to part ways," Sauber said. "We would like to thank both for the contribution they have made to the team in the last three years. They have been the embodiment of professionalism, using their experience and enthusiasm to support our growth." Bottas, who had joined from Mercedes, could reportedly return to his former team in a reserve role.

