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Delhi Police fails yet another rape victim in the Capital

SAUMYA SHUKLA ■ NEW DELHI

Evoking horrific memories of the 2012 Nirbhaya gangrape case, and the 2002 Maulana Azad Medical College student rape case that shook the Nation, three men allegedly gangraped a 34-year-old researcher and social worker at midnight on October 10, near Rajghat in the heart of the National Capital. The police arrested the third accused on November 4, the first two had been arrested on November 2 and October

30. When asked about why the police kept the matter under wraps for about a month, Deputy Commissioner of Police (southeast) Ravi Kumar Singh said that "the issue was sensitive amid the ongoing festival season. When the accused were caught, we shared the details to the public." According to police sources, the sexual assault took place in a deserted area near the ITO metro station, and again in an autorickshaw near Rajghat. The victim who hailed from Odisha was

CASES THAT HAUNT

SWAROOP NAGAR RAPE CASE (2023)
A nine-year-old girl was abducted, raped and then strangled to death by her 52-year-old landlord, who dumped her body in a canal in outer Delhi's Swaroop Nagar on December 12, 2023. He was later arrested by the police.

CHHAWLA GANG RAPE AND MURDER (2012)
A 19-year-old woman from Uttarakhand was kidnapped, gang-raped, tortured, and murdered in Delhi's Chhawla area. She was abducted while returning home from work and found three days later with severe injuries. She had been brutally tortured, and her body was discarded in a field. In 2014, the Delhi High Court sentenced three men to death for the crime. However, the Supreme Court later acquitted them.

KHOONI DARWAZA RAPE CASE (2002)
The victim, a fourth-year student of the Maulana Azad Medical College (MAMC), was raped at knife point on the terrace of the Mughal monument 'Khooni Darwaza' in central Delhi on November 15, 2002. The trial court had awarded Rahul and Amit life imprisonment and acquitted two other accused, Ashok, of the charge of harbouring the accused, and Mohan Lal, of the charge of dishonestly receiving stolen property from the accused.

NIRBHAYA GANG RAPE (2012)
A 23-year-old physiotherapy intern was brutally raped and assaulted on a moving bus by six men, including a juvenile, on the night of December 16, 2012, which shook the entire nation. The attack left her with severe internal injuries, and she succumbed to her injuries on December 29, 2012. All the accused were arrested and charged with sexual assault and murder.

eventually left bleeding on the road. According to police, the victim had travelled to Delhi from Odisha on May 9, reportedly without informing her family who had filed a missing person's report in Puri. Police said the woman holds a postgraduate degree in social work from Utkal University of Culture, Bhubaneswar, has been a research fellow, and has over eight years of work experience in the social sector. The DCP said that a PCR call at 3.15 am on October

11 about a woman, wearing a red kurta, bleeding profusely from her wounds near Sarai Kale Khan. She was spotted by a Naval officer who was passing by. "At 3:15 am, the officer made a PCR call to the Sunlight Colony police station where he expressed concern that the girl might have been injured or subjected to wrongful assault. The police rushed her to AIIMS Trauma Centre where she disclosed that she was raped by three unknown men," he said.

National counter-terrorism policy soon: HM

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Thursday said the Government will soon bring a national counter-terrorism policy and strategy to fight terrorism, terrorists and their ecosystem. Addressing an anti-terrorism conference here, Shah also said that while law and order is a state subject and states have the geographical boundaries and constitutional limitations, terrorism doesn't and hence all security agencies - Central and States - must work in close coordination, chalk out joint strategies and share intelligence. He said the Government has come up with a vision on model anti-terrorism squad (ATS) and model special task force (STF) for the States and Union Territories, which, if adopted, will work as a



common structure and platform to deal with the menace of terrorism. "We need to work together to fight terrorism, terrorists and their ecosystem. And that's why, we will soon bring a new national counter-terrorism policy and strategy in which you all will play a key role," he said at the conference, which was attended by chiefs of State police forces and other top

security officials of states and the Centre. The Home Minister said the new policy will help states and central agencies to work in close coordination to deal with terrorism. On the model ATS and STF, he said the standard operating procedures (SOPs) are being shared with the states and they can be tweaked according to their respective requirements. Shah said to

make India developed by 2047 as envisioned by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, everyone has to deal with all security challenges and have a unified terror-fighting ecosystem. "This (adopting model ATS and STF) doesn't reduce the rights of States," he said. The Home Minister said the Modi Government is committed to eradicating terrorism in the country and moving forward with a solid strategy against it. Security forces have to well equip young officers and use technology to combat terrorism, he said. Highlighting the achievements of the Modi Government against terrorism since 2014, during which terror incidents have come down by 70 per cent in comparison to the previous decade, Shah said now the shelf life of terrorists has decreased from two years to a few days.

Get ready to pay double penalty for stubble burning

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Amid worsening air quality in Delhi and neighbouring areas, the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) has updated air quality management rules on Thursday, doubling the penalty amount for stubble burning, effective immediately, under which farmers are required to pay an environmental compensation on the size of their land holdings. A notification to this effect came after the Supreme Court pulled up the government for 'toothless environmental laws' to curb Delhi's deteriorating air quality every winter. Under the new rules, farmers with less than two acres of land will face a fine of Rs 5,000. Those with between



two and five acres will be fined Rs 10,000, while farmers with more than five acres of land will be penalised Rs 30,000 for engaging in stubble burning. The revised rules come into effect immediately. Meanwhile, farmers' leaders from Punjab have strongly condemned the Centre's

move of raising fines for stubble burning and asked why the government was not providing crop residue management machinery to them to check farm fires. Reacting to the union government's move, farmers' unions pointed out that farmers never want to set the crop residue on fire but they are forced to do so for want of required machinery. They also asked why farmers were always being "targeted" for pollution, and asked the government about action taken against the industry for polluting the environment. Bharti Kisan Union (Ekta Ugrahan) general secretary Sukhdev Singh Kokrikalan slammed the Centre for its "anti-farmer" move of increasing fine on farmers. "We strongly condemn this decision," Kokrikalan said.



Ruckus continues in J and K Assembly

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

The floor of the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly was virtually converted into a battleground between the members of the Treasury and Opposition benches for the second consecutive day after the Speaker failed to take action against one of the legislators, who dropped into the well-displaying poster which highlighted the demand for restoration of Articles 370, 35-A and release of political prisoners. As Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) members strongly protested and raised objections blaming the speaker for not preventing Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) Langate Sheikh Rasheed with a banner from roaming freely in the well of the house, pandemonium prevailed. Some of the members including Sajad Lone of the Peoples Conference, and Waheed Ur Rehman Para of the PDP came to blows with the BJP legislators while snatching the banner displayed by the MLA from Langate, the speaker ordered to marshal out some of the BJP legislators from the house. As left-out BJP legislators along with the Leader of the opposition Sunil Sharma stood their ground in the house the speaker decided to adjourn the house without transacting any business. After a brief pause when the house was reconvened, it again witnessed acrimonious scenes. The speaker again adjourned the house till tomorrow.

Naveen slams govt over mango kernel deaths

BJP responds

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Leader of Opposition (LoP) and BJD president Naveen Patnaik on Thursday targeted the State Government over the death of two women after consuming mango kernel gruel in Kandhamal district. "Without reason, now the State government has stopped supplying (PDS) rice to poor tribal brothers and sisters. They are consuming mango kernel gruel instead. It is a matter of great sorrow," Patnaik said. Quoting a popular Odia adage, he said, "Amara Bara Barsara Tapasya Ku Sukhua Podare Saridele (They spoiled our efforts of the last 12 years)." Reacting to this, Kantabanji BJP MLA Laxman Bag stated, "I do not know when Naveenbabu sat and performed his 'Tapasya' in empty stomach in the last 12 years. Even, I do not know when he wore a yogi's attire. If at all he knows this, you (media) better ask him when he received his Deeksha (initiation) and became a yogi."



CM vows to provide justice at doorsteps

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi on Thursday said his government wants to provide justice at the doorsteps of the people in the State. Attending a sensitisation programme on te Bharatiya Nyaya Samhita at the Lok Seva Bhawan here, Majhi announced that his government is also committed to provide accessible and efficient police services to citizens at their homes. "From now on, no police station can refuse to register an FIR. Victims do not need to personally visit the police station to lodge an FIR. Police are bound to lodge an FIR even if they are in a particular jurisdiction or not. This will be called 'Zero FIR' and will be sent to the respective police stations for further due process," said Majhi. "Moreover, police personnel cannot call a handicapped person, a minor below 15 years of age or those above 60 to the police station, except in unavoidable circumstances.

- Gram Nyayalayas to be set up
- Majhi raps past govt for low conviction rate in crimes against women



POCSO cases should be solved within 60 days or two months," the CM added. Majhi rapped the previous BJD government for the lowest conviction rate in crimes against women and girl children. "As per the NCRB report, Odisha has just a 9.3% conviction rate in crimes against women and the lowest compared to other States. Our government is taking this seriously. If needed, we will set up special courts and ramp up

the conviction rates," he said. Law Minister Prithviraj Harichandan, who was also present at the meeting, said, "In an effort to provide justice at doorsteps, we have approved construction of six new 'Gram Nyayalayas' (rural courts) that will serve as mediation forums and go a long way in reducing the load on the judicial system. Moreover, a law commission will be formed soon and all the unwanted laws will also be discarded in Odisha."

CHHATH PUJA BLESSINGS



Devotees during Chhath Puja festival, at the Ganga Ghat in Patna, Thursday

In Kendrapada Courageous youth escapes croc attack

PNS ■ KENDRAPADA

A youth escaped the attack of a crocodile while bathing in Galia river at Ramchandi in Kendrapada district on Thursday due to courage and presence of mind. The youth Dipu Ahadi (35) of Lunimathia village under Mahakalapada block was attacked by the crocodile, which tried to drag him into deep waters. But the youth instead of panicking, fought back and rained blows on the crocodile. As a result, the crocodile released him and Dipu escaped death by a whisker. He was rushed to the



Mahakalapada CHC in a critical condition with the help of locals. Crocodile attacks are becoming frequent in Rajnagar, Pattamundai, Rajkanika, Aul and Mahakalapada blocks in the district. Crocodiles are now migrating from their habitats and entering the rivers.

Royal Bengal Tiger sighted near Brahmapur

Forest Department on alert

RAJEEV RATHAN ■ BRAHMAPUR

A Royal Bengal Tiger was sighted on the outskirts of Brahmapur city on Wednesday night. The Forest Department collected the tiger's footprints from a farmland near Bhaliagarh on Thursday. The tiger's movement was also captured on video by tourists from West Bengal, who were travelling from Visakhapatnam to Brahmapur. The video, which went viral on social media, showed the animal walking across the road at approxi-



mately 10:30 pm on Wednesday night. Following this, the Forest Department mobilised teams to monitor the situation. Senior officials, including Brahmapur Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) Sunny Khokhar, visited the area. They confirmed that the tiger had crossed the highway be-

fore heading towards the Palur Hill outskirts of Brahmapur. One Juriya Pradhan said that on Thursday, he had taken 60 goats to graze in the jungle. Between 12 pm and 2 pm, suddenly the goats started running. Four goats were killed. This incident took place in village Panado under the Govindpur panchayat of

Chikiti block. Forest authorities have issued warnings to locals not to venture out alone at night and to keep their pets safe. There are ongoing concerns about the tiger's possible movements in surrounding areas, including Chikiti, Brahmapur, Digapahandi in Ganjam district and Mohana in Gajapati district.

Mango kernel gruel had turned toxic

Says Public Health Director

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Public Health Director Nilakantha Mishra on Thursday confirmed that the mango kernel gruel consumed by villagers at Mandipanka village under Daringbadi block in Kandhamal district had the presence of Hydrogen Sulphide, turning it toxic. The test reports of the food item have come out positive for the presence of Hydrogen Sulphide in the food, he said. Regarding the health of the two patients undergoing treatment at the SCB Medical

College Hospital, Cuttack, he said their conditions are improving and they are conscious. "Yesterday's dialysis reports show their conditions are improving. Their mental conditions are also showing improvement," said Mishra. "Those who consumed it on the first day hadn't complained of any health issues. When the same thing was consumed after two days, it had already turned toxic, resulting in health issues. Meanwhile, the testing reports have also reached. They are positive for the presence of Hydrogen Sulphide in food," Dr Mishra added.

Ration card holders to get wheat along with rice

From January first week
PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR
The ration card holders in Odisha would get wheat along with rice under food security schemes from January first week, informed Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare Minister Krushna Chandra Patra

on Thursday. According to him, wheat has been received from the Centre. However, there will be a delay in the distribution for two months as the government procedure is yet to be completed. "We will provide wheat from January. Data has been sought regarding the require-

ment of wheat by the beneficiaries from different districts. While some beneficiaries require wheat, others don't want it. We will make a tender as per the requirement and give it to a transportation company. The process will be a bit delayed and we can't be sure before e-KYC work is completed," said Minister Patra.

"As much as 85% of e-KYC has been done and more than 16 lakh ineligible beneficiaries have been identified so far. It will take 15 more days to complete the work fully," he added. Notably, after the BJP came to power in Odisha, the State Government has decided to provide wheat along with rice to the ration card holders.

Medical aspirant found hanging in room

Girl's kin allege pressure by coaching institute
PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR
A girl taking coaching in a Patia-based private medical coaching centre was found hanging in her hostel room under mysterious circumstances in Bhubaneswar on

Thursday. The deceased was identified as Kalyani Sahu of Salepur in Cuttack district. Kalyani was simultaneously preparing for NEET. Her body was found hanging from the fan of her room. While the exact reason for her death was yet to be ascertained, family members alleged that she was in depression due to 'extreme mental pressure' by the

coaching institute. The Chandrasekharpur police recovered the body. A case was registered and the body was sent for postmortem while a thorough probe into the incident was launched. As per family members' allegations, Kalyani had revealed being tortured and harassed by other students in the hostel, but the hostel or coaching cen-

tre authorities didn't take any action. No comments could be obtained from the Chandrasekharpur police or the coaching institute authorities in this connection. Notably, a student from Jharkhand had been found dead in a similar manner in the coaching centre just two months back.

State to launch bus services to Char Dham

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR
It is good news for the pilgrims of Odisha that the State Government would soon run bus services to Char Dham, the four Hindu pilgrimage sites in India, informed Commerce and Transport Minister Bibhuti Bhushan Jena on Thursday. Jena said the government would provide the bus services from Puri to Ayodhya, Tirupati, Mathura and Brundaban. "Odisha Government has already taken a decision in this regard and special Volvo buses have also been brought for this purpose. Per-

missions in this regard have already been selected. The bus services will start before the New Year," said Jena. "Subsidy will be provided in the prices of tickets for pilgrims and women. The government is also mulling to run more buses connecting Bhubaneswar to the other States," he added. Notably, Char Dham is a set of four Hindu pilgrimage sites in India, consisting of Badrinath, Dwarka, Puri and Rameswaram. As per Hindu belief, one can attain Moksha (salvation) by visiting these four pilgrim centres.

DA case IDCO Junior Manager arrested by Vigilance

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR
The Vigilance police on Thursday arrested Industrial Infrastructure Development Corporation (IDCO) Junior Manager Bijay Kumar Udaysingh on the charge of possessing disproportionate assets (DA). Based on searches conducted on the properties of Udaysingh, he was found in possession of disproportionate assets including a four-storied palatial building worth over Rs 3.22 crore in Bhubaneswar, a flat in Puri, three high-value plots in Bhubaneswar and Khordha, bank deposits of over Rs 55.5 lakh, net cash of Rs 4.5 lakh, etc, which he could not explain



satisfactorily. Udaysingh was forwarded to court to face the charges against him. Further investigation into the case was underway.

Notably, the lavish lifestyle of Udaysingh with 12 air conditioners, a remote-controlled main gate and 20 ATM cards and taking baths with mineral water left Vigilance officials stunned during the raids. The central geysers 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. Udaysingh's dressing room is also equipped with all modern amenities and his watch and sunglasses collections also reflect his lifestyle filled with luxury. Even there is a room in the house that is electronically locked and can only be opened by him.

22K gold rate dips in Bhubaneswar

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR
Gold prices have declined in Bhubaneswar with 22K now available at Rs 72,000. Jewellers see this as a chance for buyers ahead of the wedding season. The prices of the yellow metal have drastically slipped, giving the jewellers as well as buyers a reason to rejoice. In Bhubaneswar, the 24K and 22K gold rates have come down. After the decline in its price, the price of 22K gold

stands at Rs 72,000. Earlier, it was trading at Rs 73,800. "Wedding season is ahead. The drop in gold prices offers an opportunity for people to buy ornaments," said the general manager of a jewellery shop here. Similarly, in Delhi, the price of 24K gold has plummeted by Rs 1,790 per 10 grams and that of 22K by Rs 1,650 per 10 grams. The trend is currently witnessed not only in India but also across the globe.

SMC earns Rs 3L a month from waste recycling

PNS ■ SAMBALPUR
The Sambalpur Municipal Corporation (SMC) is earning Rs 2-3 lakh monthly by recycling discarded waste, primarily through sales of compost to the horticulture and forest departments. Monika Monali Mansingh, a solid waste management expert at SMC, shared that selling compost in the open market also adds to their revenue. SMC collects approximately 196 metric tons of waste daily, of which 60% is wet waste. This wet waste is processed into around 9.4 metric tons of compost at various centers in locations like Balibandha, Chaunrpur, Kainsir, and Burla. The waste collection team includes 100 women drivers out of 188



trucks deployed to transport waste to these facilities. However, while the residents are encouraged to separate wet and dry waste, some collectors mix them during collection, requiring SMC workers to manually sort the waste at the centers. Mansingh added, "Despite challenges in waste separation, SMC remains committed to recycling and compost production." Through these efforts, SMC not only reduces landfill waste but also creates a sustainable revenue stream, contributing positively to the local environment and economy.

Raid in Cuttack Cough syrup, fake medicines seized

PNS ■ CUTTACK
In a crackdown on the sale of banned drugs, a joint team of the Directorate of Drug Control and Excise Department seized huge amounts of cough syrup and other illegal medicines during a raid on a drug firm in Cuttack district late on Wednesday night. The team also apprehended the medicine firm owner and his accomplice in this connection. The duo was identified as Jayram Sahu and his aide Prafulla Kumar Jena. According to sources, Jayram owned the medicine firm named Krishna Medicine in Sumandi village within the



Sadar police limits. He and his aide used to buy, sell and store counterfeit drugs and cough syrups, which were later supplied to various medicine stores. After getting information from reliable sources, the Excise Department and Directorate of Drugs Control team conducted the raid at the medicine firm and made the seizure. At least 32 types of illegal medicines were seized, sources said.

NLUO launches course on cyber forensics

PNS ■ CUTTACK
The National Law University Odisha (NLUO) here has announced a single credit course on 'Exploring Cyber Forensics: Insights from the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, 2023. As per the official notification, the course is open for anyone who is interested in having a comprehensive understanding of the intersection between cybercrime and the legal processes governing the collection and presentation of electronic evidence un-

der the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, 2023 (earlier, Indian Evidence Act, 1872). The course will be helpful for students of law, judges, advocates, police personnel and in general, to the persons interested in the operation, execution and implementation of the law. The teaching mode is online and the course begins from November 21 to 30. Classes will be taken in the evening from 6 pm to 8 pm. The registration fee for NLUO students is Rs 750, for others, it is Rs 1,000. The last date for registration is November 19.

OES elects officer-bearers

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR
On the occasion of the 43rd Foundation Day of the Orissa Environment Society (OES), the annual general body meeting of the organisation was held here recently. There was an in-depth discussion on the future course of action, particularly on the environmental protection and conservation in the State. Also, the elections of vari-

ous officer-bearers and members of the executive committee for the next three years (2024-2027) were held. Dr Sundara Narayana Patro was re-elected as president, Dr Jaya Krushna Panigrahi as working president, Dr Bijay Ketan Patnaik and Dr Lala Ashwini Kumar Singh as vice-presidents, Er Manoranjan Mishra as secretary, Dr Suravi Jain as joint secretary and Prof B Seetarama Patro as treasurer.

SOCIAL CANVAS

Scheduled Caste status needs to be religion-neutral

The NDA government has notified a three-member inquiry commission in 2022 headed by Justice KG Balakrishnan, former Chief Justice of India and former Chairperson of NHRC, to see possible inclusion of Dalits Muslims and Dalit Christians in the Scheduled Caste (SC) list like their counterpart converts in Sikh and Buddhist religions. The other two members of the commission are Dr Rabindra Kumar Jain (a former IAS officer) and Prof Susama Yadav, UGC member. The commission has to examine the impact of conversion, its implication and other related issues. This is the second such commission, the first commission being set up by the UPA government to undertake a similar exercise under the chairmanship of Justice Ranganath Mishra, former CJI and former Member, Rajya Sabha, in 2004 known as National Commission for Religious and Linguistic Minorities. The Mishra Commission submitted its report in 2007 and rec-



MANAS JENA

ommended to separate religion in formulation of SC status like in the case of STs. Justice Rajinder Sachar, former Chief Justice of Delhi High Court who headed a seven-member committee to examine the condition of Muslims in 2005, also observed that conversion has not impacted much on the social and economic condition of Dalit Muslims. The other two commissions statutory

bodies -National Commission for Scheduled Caste and National Commission for Minorities in their affidavits made favourable recommendations in line with the earlier commissions. The Center for Public Interest Litigation, National Council of Dalit Christians and All India Backward Muslim Morcha besides many others have appealed to the Supreme Court to amend the SCs Order of 1950 to include Dalit Muslims and Dalit Christians in the SC list and by that make SC status religion neutral. The move has been supported by a number of Church bodies such as CBCI and Muslim organisations such as Jamiat Ulema -i-Hind. But minority religion-based reservation has been opposed by the BJP and Sangh Paribar at large, especially to such religions which came from outside India such as Islam and Christianity. Reservation policy in post-independent India during the Nehurvian era made reservation limited to Hindu Dalits on the ground of historical discrimina-

tion. It is argued that the denial of SC status to Dalit Muslims and Christians violates Article 14, 15, 16 and 25 of Constitution of India. Currently, the reservation for STs, OBCs and EWS is religiously neutral where SC reservation is primarily conditioned with Hindu religion when Pandit Jawarlar Nehru was the Prime Minister and later extended to all Sikhs in 1956 and Buddhists in 1990 during VP Singh tenure as PM. The first Backward Class Commission (1953) under Kaka Kalelkar, and second commission known as BP Mandal Commission (1979) by Janata Party and Dr Gopal Singh Commission on Minorities (1983) have given suggestions for inclusion of religious minorities under the provision of reservation. As a result, post-Mandal reservation benefits have been extended to backward and Dalit Muslims and Christians under the ambit of OBC reservation and all the Dalit Sikhs and Dalit Buddhists are included in SC list. Currently, many of the commu-

nities within Islam and Christianity have been listed as OBC in the Center and State lists. The States such as Kerala, TN, Bihar, AP, Assam, Gujarat, Karnatak, MP, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and UP have provided reservation to the Muslims under OBC reservation. The State of Odisha has about 2.17 percent of Muslim population but no community is identified under OBC category. Only a few Dalit Christians are enlisted under such category. Christians are a majority among about 6 percent of minority population of Odisha. There has been an attempt by States such as AP for exclusive 5 percent Muslim reservation which has been halted by court on the ground of lack of data and scientific approach of survey. Muslim and Christian communities not coming under OBC are eligible for 10 percent quota under EWS. The question now is why Dalit Muslims and Dalit Christians want SC status though they have been getting reservation under OBC category? It is because they are in need

of legal protection against discrimination including reservation and most importantly they want political reservation as all these reservations and legal protections are available to SCs and STs but not to OBCs. Credible studies and a number of commission reports found that the Muslims and Christians also practice birth-based discrimination against the converts from low castes. The Muslims constitute about 14 percent of population of India. Currently many of Muslim communities, mostly the Sudra and Dalit converts are listed under OBCs. The Dalit Muslims are Dhobi, Mochi, Halalkar, Bhangi, Lalbegi, donkey breeders, Gorkan, grave diggers and many more who constitute a sizable number. They still face differential treatments in mosques, graveyards, madrasa, socio-religious organisation and muslim civil society at large because of their low social status and poor economic condition. These vulnerable sections of Muslim are more prone to mob-lynching, hate crime, atrocities and violence.

The NCDC which filed a petition in the Supreme Court raised the issues of discrimination and caste-neutral treatment within Church institutions especially against Dalit converts baptized by European missionaries who have been still not treated equally with dignity as fellow evangelists. The church educational institutions largely benefited the Indian upper caste who over dominated civil society groups. Many of the upper caste converts in India still carry on their superior caste mentality and discriminatory cultural practices contradictory to Jesus's egalitarianism. Dalit Christians, mostly landless, who live in rural areas are prone to caste based atrocities and communal violence. It is found that mostly Dalits from different religious groups are fighting among one another. Therefore based on common historical suffering, Dalits in spite of their diverse religious identity, are looking for a common umbrella under SC category to access equal constitutional rights. (manasbbsr15@gmail.com).

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Man gets 20-yr RI for raping minor in S'pur

NIMAI CHARAN SAHU ■
SAMBALPUR

Special Judge (POCSO) Abhilash Senapati here on Thursday awarded 20 years' rigorous imprisonment (RI) to a man for raping a five-year-old girl. The convict was identified as Brahma Khadia (60) from a village under the Jamankira police station in Sambalpur district.

According to reports, on October 23, 2022, the victim and her younger sister (two years) were playing near a straw heap. The accused took the victim (now seven years) behind the straw heap and raped her. The father of the minor girl was returning from his paddy field when he saw

the accused was raping his daughter. He rescued his daughter; the accused fled the scene.

The victim's father called a village meeting and wanted village-level stringent action against the accused. The accused came to the meeting and created a chaos. The helpless father then filed an FIR at the Jamankira PS.

The court also levied a fine of Rs 1 lakh under the POCSO Act and a fine of Rs 50,000 under IPC. In failure to pay the penalty, the accused will undergo six months of extra RI. All the sentences will run concurrently.

The case was represented by Special Public Prosecutor Santosh Panda.

In Balangir Man rapes widow, thrashed with sandals Video viral; case lodged

PNS ■ BALANGIR

A Supply Assistant has been accused of raping a widow and blackmailing her at Budula gram panchayat under the Agalpur police station in Balangir district.

The matter came to the fore after the victim went to the panchayat office on October 31 and allegedly thrashed the Supply Assistant Girish Chandra Sahu Sahu with her sandals.

The video of the incident has gone viral over various

social media platforms.

Based on the complaint of the woman, the Agalpur police have registered a case in this connection and started an investigation into the incident. But the accused is still at large.

"We have registered a case and started an investigation into the incident. The statement of the victim has been recorded before the Magistrate. We have formed a team to arrest the accused who is on the run. More information about the incident could be divulged after further investigation," said Balangir SDPO Pradip Kumar Sahu.

In Baleswar Minor girl's rapist awarded 20-yr RI

PNS ■ BALESWAR

Special Judge, POCSO Court here Ranjan Kumar Sutar on Thursday awarded 20 years' RI to a 42-year-old stepfather and a fine of Rs 5,000 for sexually assaulting a 12-year-old girl.

In default of payment of fine, the convict would undergo a further period of two years' jail term.

According to the prosecution, the convict Manoranjan Behera, a resident of Patharapura under the Jaleswar police station, committed the offence when the vic-

tim was alone in their house.

The victim narrated her ordeal when her mother returned home. The mother lodged an FIR with police on April 2, 2019. Police investigated the matter, and after arresting Behera forwarded him to court.

"The court after examining 15 witnesses and 17 exhibits awarded the punishment," said Special Public Prosecutor Pranab Kumar Panda, adding the court further directed a Rs 4-lakh compensation for the victim to be paid through the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA).

After 'Yamuna' Another tigress to come to Similipal from M'ashtra

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The process to bring another tigress to the Similipal Tiger Reserve (STR) from Maharashtra next week in the second phase has already begun.

A special team from the wildlife wing of Odisha Forest Department comprising 10 members has visited Maharashtra to translocate another tigress from the Tadoba-Andheri Tiger Reserve (TATR) to the STR.

The team will stay at Tadoba forest for some days and keep a watch on the tigress.

Earlier, a two-and-a-half-year-old tigress, 'Yamuna', was brought from the TATR in Maharashtra on October 28. It was released into a soft enclosure of around two hectares in the core area of the STR on the following day.

The tigress has been put in a quarantine enclosure to acclimatise to the habitat. It has been given prey to hunt in the enclosure. Vigil is kept on the movement of the tigress by installing CCTV cameras in the enclosure. The tigress will be released into the wild very soon. The inter-State translocation project aims to infuse a fresh gene pool in Similipal.

In Brahmapur Santi Mishra murder: 11 accused get lifer

RAJEEV RATHAN ■ BRAHMAPUR

The District Court of Ganjam on Thursday sentenced 11 individuals to life imprisonment in the high-profile murder case of Santi Mishra on January 29, 2013, in the Gosaninuaagon area of Brahmapur.

Mishra, a close associate of Brahmapur city's then Mayor Siba Sankar Das, was killed in a bomb attack. Initial reports had suggested that Mishra was attacked with sharp weapons but the post-mortem examination confirmed that he died due to splinter injuries from a country bomb, which had pierced his body.

The convicted individuals include Rakesh Panda, Tukuna Behera, Santosh Kumar Sahu, Mrityunjay Sabat, Santosh Panigrahy, Budu Das, Ganesh Panigrahy, Sheikh Jafar, Babaji Rana, Shankarsan Padhi and Shankar Behera. However, one key accused, Mauj Mishra, is still at large.

The court confirmed that the murder was carried out by a group of around 12 people, with police continuing to search for the remaining suspects.

The case has drawn significant attention due to its links to local political dynamics as Mishra was also known for his involvement in organising BJD events.

Ghadai seeks CBI probe into NINL worker murder

PNS ■ JAJPUR

Former Minister and trade union leader Dr Prafulla Chandra Ghadai expressing shock over the killing of a labourer in the NINL plant in Kalinganagar, said that the law and order situation in the industrial belt in particular and Sukinda constituency in general has nosedived and demanded strictest punishment against the culprits.



Addressing mediapersons, he said during the BJD Government, crores of rupees came to the Kalinganagar area for investment, given the pro-industry environment of the area. More than 20 small and big industries were established in Kalinganagar. However, Ghadai said presently, the law and order situation is not good in the area.

"But for a few days, the quiet Sukinda has been disturbed. The police administration

should take strict action against those who are doing this. The manner in which a young worker, Silu Pradhan, was killed alive in the Nilchal Steel Corporation factory es-

tablished and run by the Tata Company in Kalinganagar has shocked the entire State. The question is how did the criminals get the courage to do this? The rule of law really vanished from the State! How did such a barbaric act take place within the premises of the Tata Company, where safety is paramount, and why did the company authorities hide such a touching and gruesome murder for 3 days?" said Ghadai, demanding a CBI investigation into the murder, besides adequate compensation to the kin of the deceased.

He also suggested the State's BJP Government to create a conducive atmosphere for industry in Sukinda area for attracting more investments.

In Sundargarh Tension as man crushed to death by truck

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

A man was crushed to death by a truck right in front of his wife and daughter at Parija Park in Sundargarh town while he was going to drop the little girl at her school on Thursday.

The woman and her daughter sustained grievous injuries.

Like every other day, the man was on his way to drop his daughter to school by his two-wheeler. His wife had joined him as the couple had planned to do some shopping after dropping their daughter.

However, a coal-laden truck shattered the lives of the happy family.

The mishaps occur due to negligent and reckless driving of the truck drivers engaged in coal transportation, said locals.

Illegal parking and reckless driving by the truck drivers have cost many lives in the town. Despite repeated accidents, the officials concerned are least bothered and do not take any action against the errant truck drivers, locals alleged. The incident triggered outrage as angry locals demanded a ban on the entry of trucks in the area. Tension prevailed in the area during the filing of this report.

K'pada elderly couple living in toilet for 6 yrs

As repeated pleas for house under govt schemes fall in deaf ear

RAJESH BEHERA ■ KENDRAPADA

Thanks to the step-motherly and indifferent attitude of the district administration in allotting a pucca house under housing schemes, an elderly couple has been living in a toilet for the last six years.

Pradip Das, a septuagenarian, and his wife, Jasoda (66) of Garajanga village under Marshaghai block, are the victims of apathy by the administration. After their ramshackle thatched house was destroyed in the year 2018, and their repeated pleas to get



a house under government schemes didn't yield any result, the couple was forced to fall back on a toilet to take shel-

ter in. The district administration during that time had provided a sum of Rs 12,000 for the construction of a toilet

under Swachha Bharat Mission. "We constructed the toilet and started staying in the toilet, as we don't have house to reside," stated Das, who is also suffering from paralysis.

While his wife Jasoda sleeps inside the toilet at night, Das generally sleeps outside the toilet. They have covered the toilet pan with a sack while they go to outside to defecate, stated Jasoda.

Though the couple brought their sorry plight before the local sarpanch and other PRI members urging to allot a pucca house under PMAY, but it was in vain. When contacted, district Collector Smruti Ranjan Pradhan stated that he would direct the BDO of Marshaghai to conduct an inquiry and submit a report.

Body-worn cameras in B'pur for traffic mgmt

PNS ■ BRAHMAPUR

In a progressive move to strengthen traffic management and public safety, the Brahmapur Traffic Police rolled out body-worn cameras for officers on Tuesday. Notably, the initiative was first introduced in Bhubaneswar, aiming to promote accountability and improve compliance with traffic regulations by capturing real-time interactions and violations.

Presently, five body-worn cameras have been allocated to Brahmapur's traffic personnel, covering a team of 113 officers. Equipped with a 120-degree field of view and capable of recording continuously for up to

six hours, these cameras will help document interactions with the public, preserving recorded visuals for a week. The footage will support traffic authorities in assessing officer performance and improving rule enforcement, especially in high-traffic areas.

The cameras will enable precise monitoring of traffic rule compliance. Recorded violations will be assessed and e-challans will be sent directly to offenders, with video evidence potentially used in legal cases if needed, Brahmapur SP Dr Saravana Vivek M said. The approach is expected to promote accountability and reduce traffic violations across the city, the SP added.

14 OCS achievers feted by SHARP



PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The SHARP, a leading social organisation of Baramba-Narasingshpur constituency, organised a special felicitation ceremony in the Police Bhawan here for 14 Odisha Civil Services achievers of the area.

The ceremony was inaugurated by ADG of Police Sanjeeb Panda as chief guest, along with former bureaucrats Suresh Chandra Panda and Bishnu Charan Sahoo and former District Judge Justice Debaraj Rout.

Secretary of SHARP Bijaya Kumar Panda, president Kulamani Bariki,

advisor Dr Prafulla Kumar Sahoo, member Sanat Mishra, Ajaya Kumar Panda and Sangram Keshari Sahu among others managed the show.

Sidhhanta Nayak, Prabhudatta Pradhan, Ranjita Lenka, Rajesh Kumar Sahoo, Bandita Priyadarshinee, Bhabani Prasad Sahoo, Chinmaya Kumar Rout, Sagarika Sahoo, Manmath Patra, Manoranjan Sahoo and Suchsmita Behera were felicitated on the occasion.

While welcoming the future administrators of the State, chief guest Panda advised them to be role models for the society.

In Ganjam Meet held for BJP organisational polls, membership

PNS ■ BRAHMAPUR

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) conducted a workshop on "Organisational Elections, Membership Expansion" on Monday in Brahmapur. The event saw the participation of BJP State executive member and Ganjam district returning officer Pratap Kumar Mishra as the chief guest, along with dignitaries like Aska MP Anita Shubhadarshini, Brahmapur MLA K Anil Kumar, State executive members Kahnu Charan Pati and Saroj Sabat, senior leader Suresh Padhi, district general secretaries Prabhath Kiran Sadangi, Prashant Nayak, and Siddhant Gangadev, who all provided guidance during the session.

The BJP had launched a membership drive on September 2 with a target to induct one crore new members into the party. So far, nearly 54 lakh people have joined BJP, including around 52 lakh joining online and 2 lakh joining offline. In Ganjam organisational district alone, more than 4 lakh members

joined online, and offline membership enrollment continues. A new phase of the active membership drive has begun, and booth-level elections will commence from November 20. Subsequently, organisational elections for mandal, district and State committees will follow, BJP Ganjam district returning officer Mishra said.

Suresh Padhi and Siddhant Gangadev have been appointed as assistant district returning officers. An active Membership Eligibility Committee has been established, comprising Saroj Sabat, Gangadhar Satapathy, and Prashant Nayak.

The district-level workshop, chaired by Ganjam district membership chief Prabhath Kiran Sadangi, also featured State Mahila Morcha general secretary Babita Patra, State Yuva Morcha secretary Tutun Patra, State Media Cell panelist T Gopi and senior leader Sunil Kumar Sahu, who oversees Aska, Brahmapur, and Kandhamal Lok Sabha constituencies. Additionally, key leaders from the district attended.

In Ganjam Mob attacks youth over FB comment



PNS ■ BRAHMAPUR

A mob attacked a youth, Ratnakar Khatua, over a Facebook comment at Kantapada village under the Kodala police station in Ganjam district on Wednesday.

The critically-injured youth was first admitted to a local hospital and then shifted to the MKCG Medical College Hospital in Brahmapur after his condition worsened.

According to sources, Khatua had made some comments on Facebook, leading to unrest in the village. Locals expressed outrage over the FB comment and attacked him.

However, he managed to alert police who rushed to the village and rescued him. He was being taken to the police station when the mob dragged him out of the police van and brutally beat him up, leaving him critically injured.

Cops had to beg intellectuals and elderly persons of the village to intervene and rescue Ratnakar from the mob. However, the mob went berserk and thrashed Ratnakar before he was finally rescued.

Based on a complaint by Ratnakar, police registered a case against 12 persons.

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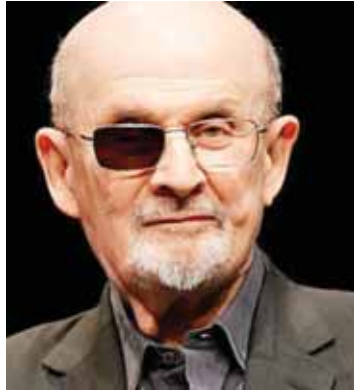
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Based on a complaint by Ratnakar, police registered a case against 12 persons.

Delhi HC closes plea against ban on Rushdie's The Satanic Verses

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has closed the proceedings on a petition challenging the Rajiv Gandhi government's decision in 1998 to ban the import of Salman Rushdie's controversial novel, *The Satanic Verses*, after authorities failed to produce the relevant notification. The court noted it has to be presumed that such a notification does not exist. In an order passed on November 5, a bench headed by Justice Rekha Palli observed that the petition, which was pending since 2019, was therefore infructuous and the petitioner would be entitled to take all actions in respect of the book as available in law. The Centre banned the import of the Booker Prize-winning author's *The Satanic Verses* for law-and-order reasons in 1988, after Muslims across the world



viewed it as blasphemous. Petitioner Sandipan Khan had argued in court that he was unable to import the book on account of a notification issued by the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs on October 5, 1988, banning its import into the country in accordance with the Customs Act, but the same was neither available on any official

website nor with any of the authorities concerned. "What emerges is that none of the respondents could produce the said notification dated 05.10.1988 with which the petitioner is purportedly aggrieved and, in fact, the purported author of the said notification has also shown his helplessness in producing a copy of the said notification during the pendency of the

present writ petition since its filing way back in 2019," the bench, also comprising Justice Saurabh Banerjee, observed. "In the light of the aforesaid circumstances, we have no other option except to presume that no such notification exists, and therefore, we cannot examine the validity thereof and dispose of the writ petition as infructuous," it concluded. Besides assailing the ban notification, the petitioner had sought to set aside other related directions issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs in 1988. The petitioner had also sought directions to enable him to import the book from its publisher or international e-commerce websites. During the course of the proceedings in the court, authorities had said the notification was untraceable, and therefore, could not be produced.

CPCB rejects Lancet study linking air pollution to 33,000 deaths in India

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) opposed the findings of a Lancet study in the National Green Tribunal (NGT), which claimed poor air quality had severely affected mortality rates in 10 major Indian cities. Claiming the study's data may not be "absolute," the CPCB said the deaths couldn't be attributed to pollution alone and that the satellite data and modelling techniques used for extrapolations in it may not necessarily represent the "realistic Indian scenario". The NGT had taken suo motu cognisance of a newspaper report quoting the study, which stated approximately 33,000 annual deaths were linked to air pollution levels that exceeded the World Health Organisation guidelines. The study examined the cities of Delhi, Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Chennai, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Mumbai, Pune, Shimla, and Varanasi.



In its reply dated November 4, the CPCB said the study analysed the daily average Particulate Matter (PM) 2.5 concentrations at one square kilometre spatial resolution across the country between 2008 and 2020. It also used mortality records from each municipal corporation in the 10 cities. "The study concludes that short-term PM2.5 exposure was associated with a high risk of death in India, even at concentrations below the current Indian PM2.5 standard. These associations were stronger for locally generated air pollutants.

However, the study has limitations," claimed the CPCB report. According to the pollution control board, the "variability in the strength of death registration systems across different states and cities" and the analyses of "cause-specific mortality" as "the international classification of disease codes" was not done by the authors for most cities. "In the absence of cause of death data, several extrapolations of data take place. Therefore, the deaths cannot be attributed to air pollution alone and thereby may not portray a correct

comparison," it claimed. Regarding the adverse health impact of PM2.5 and other pollutants, the CPCB report said air pollution was one of the factors affecting respiratory ailments and associated diseases. It said an individual's health was also influenced by several factors, including food habits, occupational habits, socio-economic status, medical history, immunity and heredity. "Ground monitors-based data and satellite study-based data have been used for PM2.5 measurements using a generalised model. Satellite data and modelling techniques used for extrapolations may not necessarily represent the realistic Indian scenario and that such an analysis may not be absolute," it added. The CPCB said cities exceeding the national ambient air quality standards for PM10 concentrations for five consecutive years had been designated as non-attainment cities.

SC: No change in Government recruitment rules, after process starts

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Bringing transparency in Government recruitments, the Supreme Court (SC) on Thursday held that rules of the game for appointment in Government jobs cannot be changed midway unless the procedure permits so. A five-judge Constitution Bench headed by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud said recruitment process commences from the issuance of advertisement calling for applications and ends with filing up of vacancies. "Eligibility criteria for being placed in the select list notified at the commencement of the recruitment process can't be changed midway through the recruitment process unless the extant rules so permit or the advertisement which is not contrary to the extant rules so permit," the bench said. The bench, also comprising Justices Hrishikesh Roy, P S Narasimha, Pankaj Mishra and Manoj Misra, unanimously held if change of criteria is permissible



under the extant rules or advertisement, it would have to meet the requirement of Article 14 (right to equality) of the Constitution and satisfy the test of non-arbitrariness. "Recruiting bodies subject to the extant rules may devise appropriate procedure for bringing the recruitment process to its logical end provided the procedure so adopted is transparent, non-discriminatory, non-arbitrary and has a rationale nexus to the object sought to be achieved," Justice Misra said while pronouncing the verdict. The bench said that extant rules having statutory force are binding on the recruiting bodies both in terms of procedure and eligibility.

"Placement in the select list gives no indefeasible right to appointment. The state or its instrumentality for bona fide reason may choose not to fill up the vacancy," it said. However, the bench clarified if vacancies exist, the State or its instrumentality cannot arbitrarily deny appointment to persons who are in the zone of consideration in the select list. The top court said that if the extant rules or the advertisement provides for setting of benchmarks for different stages of recruitment process and if any such benchmark is set, the same should be stipulated before the commencement of the recruitment process. "But if the extant rules or the advertisement inviting application empowers the competent authority to set benchmarks at different stages of the recruitment process, then such benchmarks may be set anytime before that stage is reached so that neither the candidates nor the valuator/examiner/interviewer is taken by surprise," the bench said.

SC refuses to transfer Kolkata rape-murder case trial outside West Bengal

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday refused to transfer the rape and murder trial pertaining to a doctor in Kolkata outside West Bengal. A bench headed by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud said the trial court judge had sufficient powers to order another investigation upon feeling it necessary after examining the evidence. The top court also examined the sixth status report filed by the CBI in relation to the case of rape and murder at Kolkata's RG Kar Medical College and Hospital, but refrained from making observations saying the probe was underway. The apex court noted that a Kolkata court had framed charges against prime accused, Sanjay Roy, on November 4 and a day-to-day trial in the case would start November 11 onwards. During the hearing, the National Task Force (NTF), formed to create a protocol over the safety of health professionals, submitted its

report in the apex court. The top court directed the NTF's report to be shared with all states and union territories and posted the hearing after four weeks. The top court on October 15 questioned the West Bengal government over the hiring of civic volunteers in the state and sought data on their recruitment and appointment process. On August 22, the SC pulled up the Kolkata police over the delay in registering the case of unnatural death of the deceased, calling it "extremely disturbing" while frowning upon the sequence of events and the timing of its procedural formalities. The top court had constituted a 10-member NTF to formulate a protocol for ensuring the safety and security of doctors and other healthcare professionals. Terming the incident as "horrific," the SC court had censured the state government over the alleged delay in filing of the FIR and allowing a crowd of thousands to vandalise the state-run facility.

840 tonne onions arrive in Guwahati via rail for distribution in Northeast

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre on Thursday said 840 tonnes of onions have arrived by rail rake in Guwahati to boost availability of the key kitchen item in northeastern states. In an official statement, the Department of Consumer Affairs said it "maintains tempo of bulk disposal as a shipment of 840 tonnes onion by rail rake arrived at Changsari Station in Guwahati on November 5, 2024". Onion is being distributed by the NCCF (National Cooperative Consumers' Federation) in various districts of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and other northeastern states. "This will ensure wider availability of onions in north-eastern states ensuring its availability at a very reasonable price to consumers," the statement said. Bulk transportation of onions from Nashik to major destinations like Delhi, Chennai and Guwahati by rail rake has been adopted for the



first time this year for a more cost-effective and efficient disposal. On October 18, 1,600 tonnes of onion was dispatched from Nashik by Kanda Express and arrived at Kishanganj Station in Delhi on October 20, 2024. That apart, on October 23, 840 tonnes of onion had been dispatched from Nashik by rail rake, which arrived at Chennai on October 26, 2024. A shipment of 840 tonnes of onion by rail rake to Delhi arrived on October 30, 2024. Another rail rake of 840 tonnes was dispatched on October 30, 2024, to Guwahati for disposal in Assam and other northeastern states.

"Bulk disposal of onions in major mandis has helped in augmenting availability and in bringing down the prices," the department said. The government had procured 4.7 lakh tonnes of rabi onion for the price stabilisation buffer this year, and started releasing from September 5, 2024, through retail sales at Rs 35 per kg and also through bulk sales in the country. To date, over 1.50 lakh tonnes of onion in the buffer has been dispatched from Nashik and other source centres through trucks by road transport and rail.

International climate funding increases, but billions more needed for adaptation, says UN

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

International public finance to help developing countries adapt to climate change increased from USD 22 billion in 2021 to USD 28 billion in 2022, but there remains a huge gap between what is needed and what is being delivered, according to a new UN report. At the UN climate conference in Glasgow in 2021, developed nations were urged to at least double their adaptation funding for developing countries from about USD 19 billion in 2019 by 2025. The UN climate summit in Dubai in December 2023 repeated this call, asking developed countries to report progress in 2024.



The "Adaptation Gap Report 2024: Come Hell and High Water" from the United Nations Environment Programme on Thursday said even achieving the Glasgow Climate Pact goal would only reduce the adaptation finance gap, estimated at USD 187-359 billion per year, by around 5 per cent. Earlier in the day, European climate change agency

Copernicus said it is almost certain that 2024 will be the warmest year on record and the first with an average temperature at least 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, following the second-warmest October in history. UNEP's Emissions Gap Report, released last month, said the world is on course for a catastrophic temperature rise of 2.6-3.1 degrees Celsius this century without immediate and major cuts to greenhouse gas emissions. "Global average temperature rise is still below 1.5 degrees Celsius, yet climate change is already hitting communities across the world hard, particularly the most poor and vulnerable. And it will get much worse... So, it is for good

reason that UNEP's Adaptation Gap Report 2024 calls on nations to dramatically increase efforts to adapt to climate change, starting with a commitment to act ambitiously on adaptation finance at COP 29," UNEP's Executive Director Inger Andersen said. She said the enormous gap between adaptation finance needs and flows means that the world is failing to adapt to current impacts - with adaptation planning slowing and implementation falling behind. According to the report, 171 countries now have at least one national adaptation policy, strategy, or plan in place. Of these, 51 per cent have a second, and 20 per cent have a third.

SC restores DRI officers' powers to issue show-cause notices under Customs Act to recover dues

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In a significant decision impacting customs enforcement across the country, the Supreme Court held on Thursday that officers of the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) have the authority to seek recovery of duties on goods already cleared for import by the customs department. Allowing a review plea of the customs department, a bench comprising Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and Justices J B Pardiwala and Manoj Misra overturned the apex court's 2021 ruling, penned by the then CJI S A Bobde, that DRI officers are not "proper officers" for issuing notices

under section 28 of the Customs Act, 1962. Writing a 162-page judgment for the bench, Justice Pardiwala upheld the authority of DRI officers to issue show-cause notices and recover duties under the Act. The verdict came as a boost to the customs department, which has several proceedings related to duty dues pending. "Subject to the observations made in this judgment, the officers of the DRI, Commissionerates of Customs (Preventive), Directorate General of Central Excise Intelligence and Commissionerates of Central Excise and other similarly-situated officers are proper officers for the

purposes of section 28, and are competent to issue show-cause notices thereunder," the bench held. "The petition seeking a review of (the) Canon India (judgment) is allowed for the following reasons... In other words, the judgment in Canon India was rendered without looking into the circular and notification, therefore seriously affecting the correctness of the same. The decision in Canon India failed to look into the statutory scheme," it said. The court also issued specific instructions to streamline the handling of the pending cases challenging show-cause notices issued by DRI officers. "Where the show-cause notices issued under section

28 of the Act have been challenged before the high courts directly by way of a writ petition, the respective high courts shall dispose of such writ petitions in accordance with the observations made in this judgment and restore such notices for adjudication by a proper officer under section 28," it said. Where the petitions have been disposed of by the high courts and appeals preferred against such orders, which are pending before the apex court, they shall be disposed of in accordance with this decision, the bench said, adding that the show-cause notices shall be restored for adjudication by a proper officer under section 28.

India's climate policies expected to reduce CO2 emissions by around four billion tonnes by 2030: Report

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

India's current climate policies are projected to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by around four billion tonnes between 2020 and 2030, and drive a 24-per cent reduction in coal-based power generation, according to a new report. This is significant considering the fast-developing South Asian country, now the fifth-largest economy in the world, had committed to reducing emissions by one billion tonnes by 2030 at COP26 in Glasgow. The study by Delhi-based independent think tank Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW) said policies for India's power, residential and transport sectors have already

saved 440 million tonnes of carbon dioxide (MtCO2) between 2015 and 2020. According to the report, in the power sector alone, policies promoting renewable energy are expected to drive a 24 per cent decline in coal-based electricity generation by 2030, relative to a no-policy scenario. This is equivalent to avoiding 80 GW of coal-based power plants, which would have otherwise been installed to meet India's burgeoning power demand, CEEW said. At present, India generates around 71 per cent of its electricity using coal. Further, with strategic support and competitive tenders, the share of combined solar and wind power in India's energy mix is projected to rise to 26 per cent by 2030 and 43 per

cent by 2050, up from only around 3 per cent in 2015. This shift will decisively reduce reliance on coal, which is currently the source of nearly half of the country's total carbon dioxide emissions. This transition is crucial for bending India's emissions curve downward, but achieving net zero by 2070 will require even more ambitious action. India has been pushing for a higher share of renewables in its energy mix, increased adoption of electric vehicles and improved energy efficiency in domestic air-conditioning and lighting. It has also launched programmes like the National Solar Mission, the FAME I and II schemes, the Standards and Labelling scheme and the UJALA programme, which



will continue to affect future energy demand and supply. Arunabha Ghosh, CEO, CEEW, said, "India has demonstrated formidable climate leadership over the past decade, from scaling renewables to advancing energy efficiency and electric mobility through policies. This

has not only diversified our energy mix and doubled down on energy security, but also created new markets and significantly cut carbon dioxide emissions. "The road to net zero needs bolder action and the foot cannot be taken off the pedal now. To enable the global

south's efforts, COP29 must ensure climate finance flows to developing countries like India, without riders. This would deepen renewable markets and a sustainable future for all." In the transport sector, the CEEW study has found that policies, such as the FAME (2015-2022) schemes, have set the stage for significant growth in the Electric Vehicle (EV) market. Projections show that by 2030, electric two-wheeler and four-wheeler sales could account for 19 per cent and 11 per cent of their respective segments. This could lead to a 13 per cent reduction in oil and gas demand in this decade. By 2050, these figures are expected to rise dramatically to above 65 per cent for both EV categories, resulting in a 55

per cent reduction in the sector's oil and gas demand relative to the no-policy scenario. In the residential sector, the 2006 Standards and Labelling programme has led to significant energy efficiency improvements in air-conditioning and cooling. The study has found that air conditioning-related electricity consumption in Indian households is projected to double between 2020 and 2030, and then soar by almost 10 times by 2050. This growth would be driven not just by hotter summers and higher incomes but also due to lower electricity prices, supported by higher renewable energy penetration. The UJALA programme -- by promoting and distributing more than 36.7 crore energy-

efficient LED bulbs since 2015 -- is projected to reduce residential lighting electricity use by 48 per cent by 2030 and 59 per cent by 2050 relative to the no-policy scenario. Vaibhav Chaturvedi, senior fellow, CEEW, and the lead author of the study, said, "Our findings show that current policies have set India on the right path. New policies that build on existing climate policies are already being formulated to accelerate efforts to meet the 2070 net-zero target." Immediate steps should include scaling up investments in renewable energy, enhancing the domestic Carbon Credit Trading Scheme and focusing on energy efficiency in key sectors like industry, transport and buildings, he added.

First India-Bhutan check post opened in Assam

PTI ■ DARRANGA/ASSAM

The first Integrated Check Post (ICP) along the India-Bhutan border was inaugurated at Darranga in Assam on Thursday. Assam Governor Lakshman Prasad Acharya inaugurated the ICP in presence of Prime Minister of Bhutan Dasho Tshering Tobgay.



The strategic location of Darranga is further boosted by its connectivity. On the Indian side, it is well-connected to National Highway 27 near Rangia, while on the Bhutanese side, robust customs infrastructure at Samdrup-

Jongkhar ensures efficient trade. Ongoing improvements to the highway from Samdrup-Jongkhar to Tashigang are expected to further enhance connectivity and trade prospects. Governor Acharya, terming

it a historic moment, said, "The ICP will strengthen the deep ties between the two nations. It will help not only trade but also cultural exchange." Stressing the age-old relations between India and Bhutan, he said, "These ties have only deepened over the years. The King of Bhutan visiting Assam last year has further boosted our ties."

well as collaborative ventures, especially in the eastern part of the country. "We want to prosper together with India. We export boulders to Bangladesh, but we are also exporting some manufactured goods and we want to boost it further," Tobgay said, adding that Bhutan is getting both goods and services from India, which can be increased further. "We must build on our friendship and what better way that through people-to-people contact. This ICP will help in tourist as well as business exchanges," he said. "I also want to commit to a special programme to market eastern Bhutan and northeastern India together to the world," Tobgay added, referring to the shared heritage with the region.

Maharashtra Assembly Elections 2024: Campaign set to gather steam next week

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Prime Minister and key BJP campaigner Narendra Modi will address at least a dozen rallies across Assembly poll-bound Maharashtra from November 8 to 14, while Congress leaders, including Mallikarjun Kharge and Rahul Gandhi, will be on a week-long campaign trail from November 12. The electioneering will begin to peak when Modi addresses the first two rallies in north Maharashtra - Dhule and Nashik - on Friday, while he will hold public rallies at Akola and Nanded on November 9. And at Chandrapur, Chimir, Solapur, and Pune on November 12. Later on November 14, he will address rallies at Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar (erstwhile Aurugabad), Sambhajnagar, Navi Mumbai, and Mumbai.. Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin



Gadkari, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and Maharashtra deputy chief minister Devendra Fadnis will be other key campaigners for the BJP. While Fadnis is expected to address 60 rallies, Gadkari will hold 50-odd rallies across the state. A rabble-rouser that he is, Modi - who had addressed 18 rallies during the recent Lok Sabha polls - will once again try to whip up frenzy among the people harping on the now-familiar issues. Given that the Prime Minister had not elicited the desired impact

from voters during the Lok Sabha poll campaign, it remains to be seen if the Modi factor will work in this election. At their rallies, the BJP leaders will focus on the MahaYuti government's schemes and achievements like the Ladli Behna Yojana, an electricity waiver for 44 lakh farmers, and other initiatives that are personally benefiting the public. There will also be a refrain on re-electing the "double-engine" government in Maharashtra. From the Congress side, Mallikarjun Kharge will hold a series of rallies across the state from November 13 to 18. Rahul Gandhi will undertake an extensive campaign on November 12, 14 and 16, while Priyanka Gandhi will take a break from her campaigning in the Wayanad LS by-polls to canvass to campaign for the Congress-led MVA candidates on November 13, 16 and 17.

BJP pulls out all stops for Budhni by-election, eyes seat with non-Kirar candidate Ramakanth Bhargava



GIRISH SHARMA ■ BHOPAL

The ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in Madhya Pradesh is leaving no stone unturned in campaigning for Budhni by-election. This is for the first time that the BJP is making hectic efforts to wrest the Budhni seat, probably due to fielding of non-Kirar community candidate Ramakanth Bhargava. Till last Assembly elections

in 2023, former chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan contested the election from this constituency and no major effort was made during electioneering by Shivraj or the BJP. At times, when the Congress leaders tried to corner him, making efforts to defeat him, Shivraj openly challenged stating that he would visit Budhni only to file his

nomination papers. He used to say, public of the constituency would contest election on his behalf. Since, 2006, there have been elections, when Shivraj did not visit Budhni and only his wife Sadhna Singh and son Kartikey Singh Chouhan campaigned for him. Political observers feel that this time the Budhni by-election is not easy for the BJP as for the first time after decades, the BJP has fielded non-Kirar community candidate-Ramakant Bhargava. On the other hand, the Congress has fielded Rajkumar Patel, who is Kirar by caste. The Kirar community is sizeable in the constituency and play a decisive role in the outcome. Budhni constituency comprises of three tehsils-Nasrullahganj, Shahganj and Rehati. Kirars are spread in all the three tehsils and play important role in the elections.

BJP insiders say that the voters in the constituency are annoyed with the BJP as they had elected Shivraj Singh Chouhan and he was forcibly removed. Being in the constituency of chief minister, the locals had several benefits which they are being deprived of now. While talking to The Pioneer, a local BJP leader in Shahganj said, the only chance of BJP winning the by-poll is only if Shivraj visits door to door convincing the voters. Shivraj, who is Union Agriculture Minister is already campaigning in both Budhni and Vijaypur constituencies. Spokesperson of the State unit of BJP Rajneesh Agrawal said cast factor does not matter in Budhni constituency. This is for sure that the BJP candidate will win with margin of more than one lakh voters, he claimed.

NCP (SP) chief Sharad Pawar slams Mahayuti Government, accuses PM Modi of favoritism

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NAGPUR

NCP (SP) chief Sharad Pawar on Thursday hit out at the Mahayuti government in Maharashtra, saying it has failed to safeguard the interests of farmers, protect women and provide jobs, and urged people not to allow them to continue in power. He also targeted Prime Minister Narendra Modi, accusing him of working in the interest of a particular state. Pawar was addressing a campaign rally for NCP (SP)'s Nagpur East candidate Duneswar Peth. Assembly elections are scheduled to be held on November 20. "Nagpur has a deep relationship with the Congress and its ideology, with leaders from Vidarbha, including Vasantrao Naik and Sudhakarrao Naik, serving as the chief minister of Maharashtra and empowering the state," he said.

But those who are in power today have failed to solve the problems faced by farmers and the number suicides by farmers in Vidarbha is very big. Farmers had to take the path of suicide because the government not solve their issues, the former Union agriculture minister said. A few days back, a report on the standard of living of people came out, he said. "There was a time when Maharashtra was at number one position in the country in terms of standard of living. However, it slid down to the sixth position after the BJP came to power," Pawar said. On the law and order situation in Maharashtra, he said around 630 females, including girls, have gone missing from Nagpur and nearby areas in the last six months. "The state government has the responsibility of protecting women and it has failed to carry out this responsibility," he alleged. Pawar further said,

"Those leaders in power who cannot protect the interest of the farmers, cannot provide protection to women and cannot give jobs to the youth should not be given power again. People have to take a decision to snatch away the power from these people. Political leaders were expected to carry out the industrial development of Vidarbha. When the Congress and allies were in power, they brought industries in Butibori and other areas of Nagpur, according to him. "But today, we can see that no industries are coming to Vidarbha and even if they come, they are shifted out of the state," he said, and cited the example of Vedanta-Foxconn semiconductor plant that was shifted to Gujarat from Maharashtra. Foxconn was supposed to set up its plant in Maharashtra and had the capacity to generate thousands of jobs. But it was shifted to Gujarat.

The Centre gave suggestion to the management of Foxconn to shift to Gujarat. Similarly, Airbus and Boeing companies were supposed to set up their manufacturing units in Nagpur, but they were also shifted to Gujarat, he charged. "Today, the prime minister of the country intervenes in such matters. I have a complaint against him that a prime minister is the head of a country and if the PM starts taking a stand in the interest of a particular state, then you and me can question him whether he has the right to hold the post or not," Pawar said. "We need to change the picture and provide employment to people, improve farming and protect women folk and this cannot be done by those who are in power and we need to snatch away the power from their hands. You and I need to do this work and the upcoming assembly polls are important to change this scenario," he said.

Dalits to be appointed in key positions in Juna Akhara for Maha Kumbh

BISWAJEET ■ LUCKNOW



In a groundbreaking move, 370 Dalit saints will be appointed to prestigious religious positions such as Mahamandaleswar, Mandaleswar, Mahant, and Peethadheeshwar in Juna Akhara during the upcoming Maha Kumbh at the Sangam. This historic decision is part of a broader initiative to promote the protection and preservation of Sanatan Dharma, with a special focus on including saints from deprived and marginalized communities. The list of these 370 Dalit saints has been finalized, and they will be formally anointed under the religious flag of Juna Akhara on the banks of the Sangam, in Prayagraj marking a significant step towards their active involvement in the promotion of Sanatan Dharma. Following their anointment, each will be assigned specific

responsibilities to further the cause of Sanatan culture and spiritual practices. This initiative is being led by Mahant Hari Giri, the General Secretary of the Akhara Parishad and Patron of Juna Akhara, alongside Jagadguru Mahendranand Giri, the Gujarat Peethadheeshwar of Junagadh. Mahendranand Giri has been instrumental in this process, having already given Sanyas Diksha (spiritual initiation) to 907 people from various

backgrounds, including 370 from Dalit communities. These newly initiated saints have undergone rigorous training on the purity and conduct of Sanatan Dharma, including understanding its rituals and practices. Swami Mahendranand Giri, himself from the Dalit community, emphasized that the inclusion of Dalit saints is a crucial step in uniting all sections of society for the preservation of Sanatan Dharma. "To preserve

Sanatan Dharma, we are connecting the deprived from across the world," he said. "It is essential to involve them in this sacred cause to safeguard our spiritual heritage." Earlier this year, Dalit saint Kailashananda was appointed Mahamandaleswar in the Maujgiri temple complex on the banks of the Yamuna. This marked another milestone in Juna Akhara's efforts to empower Dalit saints within the spiritual fold. Mahendranand Giri noted that in the current era, people who believe in Sanatan Dharma, regardless of their religious or sectarian affiliations, face challenges and attacks. "In such times, it is vital to raise awareness among Sanatanis and introduce future generations to the deep-rooted significance of our ancient traditions," he added. In a related event, the Girinar Parikrama will begin on November 12 in Junagadh,

Gujarat, and will continue until November 16. This four-day religious gathering is expected to attract lakhs of devotees from across the country. The Parikrama of Lord Girinar is considered a spiritual pilgrimage, where devotees will offer prayers and partake in prasad offerings. Mahendranand Giri, the manager of the fair organizing committee, explained that performing the Parikrama not only brings immense spiritual merit but also fulfills all wishes of the devotees. "Girinar is a land of Lord Krishna's leela, and people from every corner of the country will gather here to experience its divine blessings," he said. The upcoming events reflect Juna Akhara's commitment to fostering unity and spiritual growth, while making significant strides in social inclusion and the promotion of Sanatan Dharma.

Rahul Gandhi's remarks on caste representation spark controversy

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ LUCKNOW

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's recent remarks on the lack of Dalit, OBC, and tribal representation in administrative roles have ignited a political firestorm, drawing a sharp response from Uttar Pradesh Minister Dinesh Pratap Singh, who termed the comments "laughable" and "baseless." The controversy began during a recent District Development Coordination and Monitoring Committee meeting in Rae Bareilly, where Gandhi claimed that administrative positions in the region were dominated by members of two specific castes, leaving Dalits and OBCs underrepresented. Recounting his experience, Gandhi said, "I asked all officers to introduce

themselves, and during the introductions, I did not hear a single name from the Dalit or OBC communities." Responding to Gandhi's claims, Minister Singh refuted the account, stating that officers introduced themselves voluntarily rather than at Gandhi's request. He criticized Gandhi's remarks as an attempt to create "unrest" in Rae Bareilly and beyond. "These comments are not just about Rae Bareilly; they are aimed at creating discord across the nation," Singh argued. Singh also rejected Gandhi's suggestion that Dalits, OBCs, and tribals are underrepresented in the judiciary, pointing out that many judges were appointed during Congress rule. He remarked, "Congress has

a history of neglecting Dalits and OBCs. Under Modi and Yogi's rule, no one faces injustice." Gandhi's remarks also stirred attention when he claimed that Congress had historically discriminated against Dalits and backward communities, specifically in Rae Bareilly, where no Dalit or backward candidate has reportedly been given a ticket since 1951. Singh countered by questioning why Gandhi had not fielded a Dalit candidate from his own Wayanad constituency, labeling the statement as "divisive." With both sides exchanging sharp rhetoric, Gandhi's comments have underscored ongoing political divides over caste representation and social justice.

Kerala BJP's infighting reaches boiling point ahead of Palakkad by-election

KUMAR CHELLAPAN ■ KOCHI



The last nail has been driven into the coffin of Kerala BJP by a group of leaders including the party's State president K Surendran. The fact that the group fighting, shadow boxing and the mutually assured destruction have come at a party time the BJP candidate C Krishnakumar was fighting the by-election from Palakkad scheduled for November 20. The infighting in the Congress and the CPI(M) over the selection of candidates has been eclipsed by the chaos in the Hindutva party. The party's state chief K Surendran faces a criminal case under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) in connection with the money heist from Vadakara alleged to have taken place during the 2021 assembly election. Unaccounted cash to the tune of Rs 3.5 crore which was being transported to the party's Thrissur district office

was waylaid by a group of people and taken away making one of the couriers in the vehicle to file a police complaint. Though the police, after initial investigation, chose not to proceed with the case the Kerala High Court in a directive asked the cops to take up the case and investigate the same. Surendran had been grilled by the police in connection with the PMLA case which earned him the rare "distinction" of becoming the one and only state chief of a national party to have been interrogated by

the police in a criminal case. Even as the police resumed the probe, a former office secretary of the Thrissur district BJP came out and declared that the waylaid money was unaccounted cash and was meant for distribution among the party candidates. Meanwhile, Shobha Surendran, a party leader who has declared her intention to become the party president declared that a powerful group in the BJP was subverting her works in the party as they do not want her to remain in the BJP. She claimed she has a plan of action ready to ensure at least 25 party candidates would get elected to the legislative assembly in the 2026 election. Along with Shobha Surendran, the BJP's television spokesman Sandeep Varrier too has raised a flag of revolt questioning the propriety of Surendran's continuation as party chief despite a series of

failures in the parliamentary and assembly polls. The BJP failed to win at least a single seat in the 2021 assembly election. The party's major achievement till date has been the 2016 victory of nonagenarian O Rajagopal from Neman assembly constituency and that of Suresh Gopi in the 2024 Lok Sabha poll from Thrissur. "The Palakkad poll had offered an opportunity to the party to open its account in the assembly. But the infighting and one-upmanship by leaders divided on caste lines is destroying the BJP in Kerala. Right now the party is under the control of the powerful Theyeya Surendran and V Muraleedharan are from this caste and both of them do not like the Eezhavas or Nairs and this is costing the party dear," said Sudheer Damodaran, political observer and a former associate of Prashant Kishor told the Pioneer.

Assam CM slams Congress 'Dynasty Politics' over Samaguri Assembly Seat nomination

PTI ■ NAGAON



Targeting Congress MP Rakibul Hussain over his son Tanzil getting the nomination for the bypoll to the Samaguri assembly seat, Assam Chief Minister Nimesh Sarma on Thursday said "dynasty politics" of the opposition party was preventing talented youths from coming into politics. Addressing an election rally, Sarma said the BJP was working hard to attract around 1.5 lakh youths into politics to shape the country's political landscape in coming years. "In Samaguri assembly seat, we are not just fighting Congress, we are up against an entrenched and corrupt family-led club. We are grateful to the people who have decided to join us in this fight," the CM said. Hussain won the recent Lok

Sabha polls from Dhubri by a margin of more than 10 lakh votes and he could have given the Samaguri ticket to any hard-working Congress worker, but they don't believe anyone else other than their wards, Sarma said. "Will anyone be able to tell who the MLA in Samaguri will be after Tanzil? It will obviously be his son. Only their children and grandchildren will be the next leaders... Others will sip Amul milk from the sidelines and Tanzil will become the MLA," he added. Sarma said Samaguri has seen

only dynasty politicians as first it was Nurul Hussain, former Congress minister, then his son Rakibul Hussain, who was also a minister, and now it is Tanzil. The CM wondered if anyone from the crowd knew the name of the father of Dipu Ranjan Sarma, the BJP candidate for the bypoll, or any of the nearly 10 MLAs sitting on the dais. "Dynastic politics is never beneficial for us. A few days ago, PM Narendra Modi told me that Congress started bad politics. After the father, the son will come and then the grandchildren. If this continues, then brilliant youths willing to work for society will never join politics. He told me that we should work in such a way that 1.5 lakh youths from villages and towns who do not identify with their father's identity can

join politics. That is what we are trying now," he said. Sarma also alleged that the Congress' only intention was to put hurdles in the state's development and likened the opposition party to a "male cow" that cannot produce milk (development). "If the (MLA) is from the BJP with BJP governments at Dispur and Delhi, they will work together. But if the Congress candidate wins, he will later say that he cannot get things done as the BJP is in power in the state and at the Centre," he said. "The Congress is like a male cow, you can feed it as much as you want but it cannot give you milk. You can vote for the Congress, but it cannot give you development," he said. Sarma claimed that the BJP would be in power in Assam for at least 50 years, and was the "milching cow," giving 16 litres of milk every day.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

A turning point

While the US-India relationship is poised to deepen in defence and trade, there will also be hurdles in some areas

Donald Trump's return to the presidency brings a new chapter in US foreign policy that holds considerable implications for India. The outgoing Biden administration though not averse to India had reservations about the way domestic politics was shaping in India. But with Trump at the helm of affairs that reservation may quietly go and the Trump administration may go an extra mile to accommodate New Delhi. Trump's victory could reshape strategic alliances, redefine trade relations and impact key regional dynamics that matter to New Delhi. The US-India defence relationship saw considerable progress during Trump's previous tenure. He promoted India as a key strategic partner in the Indo-Pacific to counterbalance China's rising influence, leading to initiatives such as increased military sales and the signing of defence agreements, including BECA (Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement). Trump's victory may reinforce these policies, as he is likely to continue focusing on Indo-Pacific security. A renewed push for defence cooperation, joint military exercises, and arms deals could bolster India's military capabilities in the region.



However, not all his policies may be to India's liking. In his earlier tenure, Trump prioritised American industry, his trade policies often led to increased tariffs and renegotiations that impacted India. His 'America First' approach pressured India into trade reforms to reduce the US trade deficit. This time, India might face similar pressures, particularly in the technology and pharmaceutical sectors, but could also see openings to negotiate more favourable terms, especially if Trump seeks to reduce dependency on Chinese goods. There is potential for renewed trade deals, but both sides will likely need to balance protectionism with mutual growth. Trump's previous immigration policies, which included tighter visa regulations, impacted the Indian IT workforce, particularly regarding H-1B visas. If his administration continues down this path, it could further restrict Indian tech talent. However, there may be room for negotiation to secure beneficial terms for skilled Indian workers, especially if Trump seeks closer ties with India on other fronts. Both Trump and India share a common concern over China's assertive actions in Asia. Trump's firm stance against China aligns with India's interests, especially in light of the India-China border standoff. Trump's support for a 'Free and Open Indo-Pacific' and his scepticism towards Chinese trade practices resonate well with India's own strategic goals. Under Trump, the US could be a more vocal supporter of India's position on regional issues, potentially even playing a bigger role in multilateral forums like the QUAD. Trump's stance on energy independence for the US could be beneficial for India's energy security goals. Trump's victory offers both opportunities and challenges for India. For India, the priority will likely be to build on common ground, particularly in areas where interests align, and work diplomatically to address any points of contention.

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PICTALK



A trader with his camel at the annual Camel Fair at Pushkar, in Ajmer

PTI

Gen Z: Hyper-connected yet shallow relations

In an age where friendships are as easy as a "follow" or a "like," Gen Z finds itself paradoxically more isolated than ever

In a world where friendships are just a tap away, Gen Z is paradoxically more connected and yet more alone than ever. With countless social media networks, endless group chats, and online "friends," you'd think they'd feel fulfilled. But under the endless likes, comments, and selfies, there's a haunting emptiness. I often meet young people who, despite their vast online networks, feel utterly isolated. They are connected to everyone, yet truly close to no one. Take Rhea, a 22-year-old with a picture-perfect online life. Her feed is filled with smiling photos, exotic vacations, and witty captions. But behind this flawless facade lies a young woman scarred by painful experiences. She lost her father at five, faced years of abuse, and carries a deep, invisible wound. Rhea carefully hides this pain, crafting an online persona that feels safe and acceptable. "I keep thinking if I post the right picture, maybe I'll finally feel like I belong," she admitted once, her voice breaking. Yet the emptiness doesn't fade. Her online "friends" see



the bright exterior, but none see the broken girl within. Another story is of Arjun, a young man shaped by a chaotic home and constant content bombardment. Now 20, he spends hours scrolling through his feed, comparing himself to others who appear effortlessly perfect. "Everyone seems so complete," he said, "but I feel like I'm failing." In a crisis, Arjun realises he has no one to truly rely on. His friendships, based on memes and brief exchanges, feel hollow when life gets tough. The endless scrolling only deepens his loneliness, as he sees everyone's best

moments while silently suffering through his worst. Rhea and Arjun's stories echo a painful truth for many in Gen Z. Friendships today are often shallow, based on convenience rather than commitment. They form and dissolve easily, leaving young people adrift in a sea of acquaintances who vanish when things get real. This generation's friendships are filtered through screens, built on quick likes and superficial messages. The traditional bonds of trust and time are slipping away, leaving behind connections that feel fleeting and, ultimately, empty.

What's missing here is depth — the kind of friendship that stands the test of hardship, that offers warmth and understanding beyond a screen. For Rhea, there's a wounded inner child who craves a friend who will listen and care beyond the "perfect" image she shows online. For Arjun, there's a desperate need to find a friend who sees his struggles, not just his shared posts. As a society, we need to understand that true friendship isn't about quick exchanges or temporary validation.

It's about sharing real moments, both joyful and painful. It's about listening, being there, and caring without conditions. Perhaps, as Felice Buscaglia once said, "It's not enough to have lived." True living means creating joy, sharing love, and holding each other through life's storms. Until Gen Z learns to build friendships beyond the screen, they'll remain in search of bonds that can truly make them feel seen, safe, and understood. (The writer is a psychologist and mindset coach; views are personal)

KAVITA KABIRA



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Donald Trump's historic comeback

With a Republican majority in the Senate, Trump re-enters the White House with renewed authority, poised to reshape both American politics and global dynamics



KALYANI SHANKAR



The much-awaited US presidential election ended on November 5, and former President 78-year-old Donald Trump triumphed by winning the White House. This would be his second inning and an extraordinary comeback for Trump. He will be the 47th president of the US. Reactions to Trump's election performance started coming in even before the final votes were counted in the US some leaders, like Israel's, showed enthusiasm as they dealt with an ongoing multi-front war. Others like Ukraine President Zelenskyy expressed anxiety. In contrast, some of America's long-standing European allies expressed anxiety about the election results. It was a nail-biting wait. Vice President Kamala Harris and Donald Trump were virtually tied in the polls, adding to the suspense. The odds that the race comes down to a few swing states are high, further prolonging the anticipation. Trump vowed to remove Democrats from the White House by defeating Kamala Harris. Kamala lost to Trump, just like Hillary Clinton lost in 2016. Clinton was the first woman nominated for president by her party. Trump built

a diverse group of voters, more than any Republican nominee in the last 20 years, even though he ran a campaign that was racially charged and attacked immigrants. Trump's election is not just a national event, but a global one. Its impact will be felt not only in American politics but also in global affairs, particularly in the ongoing Middle East and Ukrainian conflicts. The historic polls have denied a chance for a woman to preside over the White House. Vice President-elect JD Vance has an Indian connection as his wife, Usha, is an Indian. In the last 20 years, the most recent Republican presidential candidate to win the nationwide popular vote was George W Bush in 2004. This historical context is crucial as it underscores the unique nature of the US election process. In 2000, he won the Electoral College and the presidency but lost the popular vote to Al Gore. Donald Trump became president in 2016 by securing more than 270 votes in the Electoral College, a system where each state is assigned a certain number of votes based on its population. Despite losing the popular



ITS IMPACT WILL BE FELT NOT ONLY IN AMERICAN POLITICS BUT ALSO IN GLOBAL AFFAIRS, PARTICULARLY IN THE ONGOING MIDDLE EAST AND UKRAINIAN CONFLICTS

vote to Hillary Clinton by more than 2.8 million votes, Trump's victory in key states gave him the necessary Electoral College votes. In 2020, Trump lost the Electoral College and the popular vote to Joe Biden by over 7 million. The final results of the 2020 election hinged on the meticulous absentee ballot procedures in four crucial swing states — Arizona, Nevada, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin. These procedures, which can take days to conclude, hold the key to the outcome as they determine the validity of votes cast by mail. It was these battleground states and their absentee ballots that ultimately decided Trump's win. Donald Trump won the presidency in 2016 by getting more than 270 votes in the Electoral College. However, he lost the popular vote to Hillary Clinton by over 2.8 million votes. In 2020, Trump lost the Electoral College and the popular vote to Joe Biden by more than 7 million votes. With Trump's victory, the fears of potential violence have been allayed. The predicted disturbances during the oath-taking ceremony of President Biden in

January 2021 are less likely to occur. The power transition is expected to be peaceful, bringing a sense of reassurance to the nation. Trump was not willing for a smooth transition in 2021 claiming the results were not correct and he was cheated by becoming the victim. Trump's victory can be attributed to the diverse issues he addressed, such as immigration and the economy. In this election, Trump not only secured the White votes but also a diverse group of voters, a testament to the complexity and diversity of the American electorate. Exit polls show that nearly 20 per cent of Trump voters were people of colour. In his first election in 2016, only about 13 per cent of his voters were people of colour. Simultaneously, Republicans have snatched control of the Senate, propelled by wins in West Virginia and Ohio. Democrats previously held a narrow majority in the Senate. It will make Trump's job easy. (The writer is a popular columnist currently travelling the US; views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

TRUMP WINS AGAIN

Madam — It's Trump again in America and the Americans cast their votes for reclaiming the presidency for Trump over Kamala Harris, and probably the voters were colourblind by giving an edge over to Trump to lead again. The last few weeks were certainly a grinding one for Trump and Harris and it was an evenly poised battle till the end. When Biden opted himself to bring in Kamala Harris into the fray, it was appreciable on the part of Harris to put up a brave fight to win over the hearts of voters in a closely contested election in America. The voters' keenness was visible even on election day while the voters continued to queue, adding to the record-breaking 84 million early ballots already submitted. Though the economy, immigration, and the preservation of democracy were among the pressing issues driving the voters to the polls, Trump gained momentum in his campaign after the attempt of assassination and was probably lucky enough to escape for a rebirth as the President again by winning the Presidency. By his victory, the Americans may have to wait for some more time to elect their first female president, which has been eluding the country for a long time.

A P Thiruvadi | Chennai

ARTICLE 370 CONTROVERSY

Madam—The present NC-Congress Govt in J and K is posing a grave danger to the parliamentary democracy and the constitution and thus be sacked forthwith for taking up and passing a resolution for restoration of Article 370, which was abrogated by the Parliament of Bharat. As everybody knows the problems it created in the way of integration of Jammu and Kashmir with the rest of Bharat and ultimate elimination of Kashmiri Pandits from the valley with continuing Jihadi Terror till date. The Supreme Court unnecessarily interrupted into the matter and forced premature election in the state,

Canada must take action



Propos to "Cowardly attack" published on November 6. The violence at Hindu Sabha Mandir in Brampton is reprehensible, and it has once again exposed Canada's inept handling of a sensitive situation. The

Trudeau government has been burning bridges with India after Nijjar's murder last year. On one side, he says that every Canadian has the right to practice his or her faith freely, but sadly, he cannot protect them and provide safety.

When the Canadian government can appoint India-designate terrorists like Pannun, Sandeep Singh Sidhu, and Sgt Harinder Sohi in the government or government agencies, then nothing better can be expected out of the Trudeau government. Canada, which otherwise proudly claims to be a peace-loving nation, has to deal strictly with all those elements who are destroying communal harmony and public order. Trudeau cannot allow to spew venom against India in the name of freedom, and he will have to salvage India-Canada ties before it is too late.

Bal Govind | Noida

which was limping back to normal steadily under the central rule. Muslims in the valley are still against Bharat and Hindus while expecting everything to be free from the state and are still intolerant against the return of Pandits in the valley. The regiment that supports the restoration of Art. 370 cannot be allowed to run the affairs of the state. The Supreme Court should be told in no uncertain terms not to interrupt J&K affairs any more.

Jai Prakash Gupta | Ambala Cantt

INDIA BIDS FOR OLYMPICS

Madam — India has taken a concrete step towards hosting the Olympics and Paralympics by formally expressing interest in hosting the big ticket events. The Indian Olympic Association (IOA) officially submitted a Letter of Intent to the Future Host Commission of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), formally expressing India's interest in hosting the Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2036, officially known as the Games of the XXXVI

Olympiad. India's top sports administrators, including IOA President PT Usha, were at the Paris Olympics earlier in the year to lobby for the country's selection. There have been reports that India would push for the inclusion of indigenous disciplines like yoga, kho kho and kabaddi if the bid is successful.

IOC President Thomas Bach had also supported India's case, claiming that there was a "strong case" for India to host the Olympic Games. In the process, India joined nine other countries that have expressed interest in hosting the 2036 Games. The 10 countries that have shown initial interest in hosting the 2036 Games include Mexico (Mexico City, Guadalajara-Monterrey-Tijuana), Indonesia (Nusantara), Turkey (Istanbul), India (Ahmedabad), Poland (Warsaw, Krakow), Egypt (New Administrative Capital), and South Korea (Seoul Incheon).

Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee | Faridabad

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



FIRST COLUMN

UNDERSTANDING THE MIND OF GOD

Aligning our actions with divine wisdom can only steer us through life's hardships



AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

We want to live a nice life, but we do not know how. Individually, we all try but come up short except for a few, who seriously take shelter of God. Because God only can make a difference. A big percentage of us, if not all humans, are aware of God but are unable to become serious about making a proper attempt to link with God – the Creator. I will try in this article to get you interested in getting started in this noble act. I am using similes and contrasts – the usual ways to compare. And I have chosen an example of a businessman for this purpose. God is the Creator; we are aware of this fact. A businessman is a prime mover for a business venture. God creates the entire solar system. In the case of a businessman, he starts small and tries to grow it into a vast business empire. A businessman is intrinsically small, i.e., will always remain small, no matter how big his business empire may become. God is incomprehensibly big and will always be. Our problem is to think of God to be a person like us, just as He incarnates to teach us what is proper for us. Our ignorance is not limited to this fact only but extends to what we know. A businessman falsely assumes that what he knows about a business is sufficient. What happens? Many businesses fail. What he could have done? He could have prayed to God for guidance. God would have given him instructions through mediums, those around him. And the business would have succeeded, because God is omniscient, i.e., He



knows past, present and future also; God always knows what will work. God is also omnipresent, i.e. present everywhere all the time. A businessman tries to replicate and over-stress himself frequently. God can help if one remains in His shelter. Then, it becomes God's business, literally so. The businessman will get a partner, who owns everything in the first place.

All businesses face challenges of many kinds because this earth's planet is a place of misery. (The Bhagavad-Geeta 8.15) Smooth sailing is out of the question. When God – the Controller gets involved, then, success is guaranteed, no matter what challenges come. The Omnipotent God takes care of them. A businessman is limited to what his 'karmaphalas' (fruits of past 'karmas') ordain. We can understand this by the fact that the extent of success of a business is widely varied. All work hard but destiny rules. With God in the picture, He becomes the 'Karta' (doer). My business survived even in the extreme conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic. We even paid bonuses to our employees in this period, because God is involved. Where do many businesses falter?

They don't follow 'dharma' (the highest religious/moral principles). And God is all for upholding dharma. So there is no help from God. You cross 'maryada' (acceptable limits) and face the music. Failed businessmen blame their luck for it. It is true because that was ordained. Bad luck could have been nullified if one had pleased God by staying within the dharma.

The conclusion is to start with accepting that God is one and incomprehensibly big, and we are small parts of Him. We should take shelter from God and remain there. Then, we will be best served in whatever proper, i.e. according to dharma we do. God will guide help, and even micromanage our lives.

(The writer is a spiritual teacher; views are personal)

Trump 2.0: What lies ahead in his second term



NILANTHA ILANGAMUWA

For ardent supporters, it's a long-anticipated victory, a "Make America Great Again" revival, while critics recoil at the reality of his return



He's back. Brace yourselves: Donald Trump is set to reclaim the White House as the 47th President of the United States. He would become the first president since Grover Cleveland in 1892 to serve two terms that were not consecutive. Love him or loathe him, this moment is nothing short of historic. For his supporters, it's a long-awaited reckoning; for his critics, it's a nightmare realised. Hollywood elites—George Clooney, Leonardo DiCaprio, and Oprah Winfrey among them—are likely stewing in disbelief, unable to reconcile with the stark message that America is prepared to usher in another Trump era. Meanwhile, personalities like Megyn Kelly and Tucker Carlson bask in the triumph of what they perceive as the return of their "Messiah," the man who vowed to Make America Great Again. This is democracy in action, like it or not. In his first victory speech, Trump wasted no time hammering home his agenda: "I will not let my supporters down," he declared. "America's future will be bigger, better, bolder, richer, safer, and stronger than it has ever been." Bold words, indeed. Yet the question hangs—what will the cost of 'greatness' be in a nation this divided? This time, he returns stronger, fortified by allies like Elon Musk, while other titans—Jeff Bezos, for one—strive to remain neutral. Yet the fallout is profound. Influential voices such as Robert Kagan, a staunch advocate of liberal internationalism and husband of the American diplomat Victoria Nuland, have resigned, signalling that the ground is shifting. For mainstream media—outlets like The New York Times, NBC, and CNN—the election results are a rebuke they cannot ignore. These media powerhouses, which for years wielded narratives against Trump, now face a public that feels increasingly alienated from the polished, elitist stories they've been fed. The trust gap widens as citizens see the chasm



THIS IS DEMOCRACY IN ACTION, LIKE IT OR NOT. IN HIS FIRST VICTORY SPEECH, TRUMP WASTED NO TIME HAMMERING HOME HIS AGENDA: "I WILL NOT LET MY SUPPORTERS DOWN," HE DECLARED

between elite narratives and their lived realities. Trump's second term will likely turn a blind eye to the domestic affairs of other nations, signalling potential cuts in funding to so-called civil society organisations and other international interests maintained by the US State Department and its clandestine bodies. Immigration policy, too, could see a harsher edge, as tensions over border security and the influx of immigrants under Biden intensify. This stricter stance could stoke the fires of domestic unrest as Americans grapple with yet another transformation of national priorities. The war in Ukraine may come to an end sooner rather than later, potentially through a bitter compromise with Russia, as many countries in Europe may not align with Trump as they did under the Biden administration.

However, if Ukrainian President Zelenskyy has a different understanding of the situation, it may be time for him to seriously consider pursuing the Chinese peace proposal. Meanwhile, the conflict in West Asia is likely to pause, but tensions could rise, possibly leading to new forms of attacks on Iran. The relationship between Iran and the Trump administration will be crucial in determining the future scenario in West Asia, as decisions made in this context could significantly alter the region's geopolitical dynamics. One should not forget that it was during Trump's first administration that Qasem Soleimani, an Iranian military officer who served in the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, was assassinated in Baghdad, Iraq, using a reaper drone (Predator B).

Soleimani was a key enabler of Iranian actions, and even now, he is widely regarded as a major influence in Iran and its alliances. On the home front, the controversial Project 2025 blueprint stands as a bold bid to remodel US government institutions in line with a nationalist, ultra-conservative vision.

Critics warn of an authoritarian slide. Trump himself claimed he had "no hand in the policy," even as his campaign speeches echoed its themes. Dismantling regulatory agencies, installing ideologically driven personnel, and consolidating executive power—such moves could test the very checks and balances that underpin the American system. The potential cost? A dramatic weakening of civil liberties, environmental protections, and democratic norms, is likely to spark deep political divisions and civil unrest. If realised, this vision would also redefine America's role on the global stage. The "America First" doctrine, which shaped Trump's prior foreign policy, may once again destabilise multilateral efforts on urgent issues like climate change, nuclear disarmament, and trade. Trump's rhetoric could erode US alliances, and as Washington retreats from the mantle of democracy promotion, a vacuum forms—one that China, no doubt, is eager to fill. Worth noting is Trump's first note during his visit to the CIA headquarters, right after becoming the 45th president.

Mainstream narratives often painted him as dismissive of the intelligence apparatus, but Trump's note challenged that view, acknowledging the agency's

importance. Now, as political winds shift, Trump is rumoured to be eyeing Kash Patel, an Indian-American with roots in counterterrorism and intelligence reform, as his new CIA head. Patel's controversial stance on challenging the so-called "deep state" marks a radical shift in US intelligence policy—likely a step towards Trump's broader agenda of power consolidation within the federal government.

Patel, known for his book Government Gangsters: The Deep State, the Truth, and the Battle for Our Democracy, is expected to tackle intelligence reform head-on, aligning with Trump's vision of shaking up entrenched power structures. A second Trump administration would also stoke tensions with China, particularly in the Indo-Pacific, where US-China rivalry is reaching new heights. Trump's hawkish stance on Taiwan and the South China Sea could signal increased military presence, arms deals, and strengthened alliances with Japan, South Korea and India.

The administration is likely to challenge China's Belt and Road Initiative and impose sanctions on Chinese firms, aiming to limit Beijing's influence. Smaller nations in the region, meanwhile, could find themselves stuck in a high-stakes dilemma—aligning with the US risks Beijing's wrath while leaning towards China risks Washington's ire. With Trump redefining US foreign policy, these nations may face an impossible choice in a tightening geopolitical vice.

(The writer is a journalist and author; Views are personal)

PM-Vidyalaxmi: A yet another 'Modi Kee Guarantee' for learners

The Government has initiated this financial aid programme to harness the potential of the youth from the weaker sections

India has the largest number of millennials and Gen Zs in the world. This population constitutes a critical mass for increasing GER in higher education from the current 28 per cent to 50 per cent by 2035 as envisaged in NEP-2020. Moreover, India's working population in the age bracket of 15-64 is nearly 68 per cent. The current demographic dividend will not be available for a longer period as the youth population will turn old and thus will become non-productive. Precisely for this reason, PM Modi called the current time window in the lifespan of Bharat the 'Amrit Kaal' and has given a clarion call for making it 'Viksit' by 2047 through self-reliant measures. Skilled youth are in high



RAGHAVENDRA P TIWARI

demand the world over and this trend will always remain as skilling, upskilling and reskilling will always be required to cope with ever-evolving job profiles in the workplace. However, owing to the economic transformation that the nation has witnessed over the last decade, living standards have greatly improved leading to an enhanced cost of living. And, education is no exception.

The Central Government has taken several initiatives to ensure hassle-free access to quality higher education, especially regarding NEP-2020 implementation. These include multidisciplinary and learning outcome-based curriculum for holistic learning; innovative pedagogy (experiential learning, internship, field immersion, etc); evaluation to test the learning outcomes; Academic Bank of Credits; Multiple Entry-Exit; Dual degree, joint degree and twin degree programmes; emphasis on Indian Knowledge System and Universal Human Values, etc. The latest edition to the long list is the PM-Vidyalaxmi scheme to provide collateral-free, guarantor-free financial loans to needy meritorious stu-

dents covering all categories to ease them from financial constraints for pursuing quality higher education. Approved by the Cabinet on November 5, 2024, as a Deepawali Gift to the nation, PM-Vidyalaxmi is a mission mode, simple, transparent, student-friendly and fully digital mechanism to facilitate easy access to loans to meritorious students admitted in, to begin with, top 860 quality higher education institutions. This initiative provides a single-window integrated platform for students seeking educational loans to apply for it and to track their applications. PM Vidyalaxmi will add to the scope and reach of earlier initiatives of the current government for maximising access to quality higher education for socially deprived sec-



tions of society. Under this scheme, students will be eligible to obtain collateral-free, guarantor-free loans from banks and financial institutions to cover the full amount of tuition fees and other expenses to be incurred for pursuing academic programs. Under PM Vidyalaxmi, the government will also provide a 75 per cent credit guarantee of outstanding default for loan amounts up to? 7.5 lakhs to support banks to

expand coverage. The scheme will also provide for 3 per cent interest subvention on loans up to Rs 10 lakh during the moratorium period for those students having an annual family income of Rs 8.00 lakhs and are not covered under any government scholarship of interest subvention. This will be in addition to full interest subvention already offered to students with up to Rs 4.5 lakhs annual family income. Interest subvention will be paid through E-vouchers and Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC) wallets. An outlay of Rs 3,600 Crore has been made available for the period from 2024-25 to 2030-31, and 7 lakh fresh students are expected to get the benefit of this interest subvention during the above timeslot. PM-Vidyalaxmi will supple-

ment the two components of the scheme of Pradhan Mantri Uchchatar Shiksha Protsahan (PM-USP), namely, the Central Sector Interest Subsidy (CSIS) and Credit Guarantee Fund Scheme (CGFS) for education loans, already offered by the Ministry of Education. Under the PM-USP-CSIS, students pursuing technical/professional courses from approved institutions.

PM Vidyalaxmi, in a nutshell, is an entirely new scheme launched for empowering youth, especially of the middle class, with necessary financial support for pursuing the education of their choice. The scheme will operate in tandem with PM-USP to provide financial support to all deserving students to pursue quality higher education and techni-

cal/professional education in select quality Higher Education Institutions in India. The newly launched scheme, apart from making quality higher education available to meritorious students, will ease the impounding stress of students opting for loans and will enable them to fully concentrate on learning.

Kudos to PM Narendra Modi and Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan for launching a new learner-centric scheme for spearheading the implementation of NEP-2020. PM Vidyalaxmi is in fact, a confluence of Vidya, the Goddess of Knowledge, and Laxmi, the Goddess of Wealth! (The writer is Vice Chancellor, Central University of Punjab, Bathinda; views are personal)

Trump has vowed to shake some of democracy's pillars

AP ■ WASHINGTON

American presidential elections are a moment when the nation holds up a mirror to look at itself. They are a reflection of values and dreams, of grievances and scores to be settled. The results say much about a country's character, future and core beliefs. On Tuesday, America looked into that mirror and more voters saw former president Donald Trump, delivering him a far-reaching victory in the most contested states.

He won for many reasons. One of them was that a formidable number of Americans, from different angles, said the state of democracy was a prime concern.

The candidate they chose had campaigned through a lens of darkness, calling the country "garbage" and his opponent "stupid," a "communist" and "the b-word."

The mirror reflected not only a restive nation's discontent but childless cat ladies, false stories of pets devoured by Haitian immigrant neighbours, a sustained emphasis on calling things "weird," and a sudden bout of Democratic "joy" now crushed.

The campaign will be remembered both for profound developments, like the two assassination attempts on Trump, and his curious chatter about golfer Arnold Palmer's genitalia.

Even as Trump prevailed, most voters said they were very or somewhat concerned that electing Trump would bring the US closer to being an authoritarian country, where a single leader has unchecked power, according to the AP VoteCast survey. Still, 1 in 10 of those voters backed

him anyway. Nearly 4 in 10 Trump voters said they wanted complete upheaval in how the country is run. In Trump's telling, the economy was in shambles, even when almost every measure said otherwise, and the border was an open sore leeching murderous migrants, when the actual number of crossings had dropped precipitously. All this came wrapped in his signature language of catastrophism.

His win, only the second time in US history that a candidate won the presidency in non-consecutive terms, demonstrated Trump's keen ear for what stirs emotions, especially the sense of millions of voters of being left out — whether because someone else cheated or got special treatment or otherwise fell to the ravages of the enemy within.

That's whom Americans decisively chose. The centuries-old democracy delivered power to the presidential candidate who gave voters fair warning he might take core elements of that democracy apart.

After already having tried to disrupt the peaceful transfer of power when he lost to President Joe Biden in 2020, Trump mused that he would be justified if he decided to pursue "the termination of all rules, regulations, and articles, even those found in the Constitution."

This, in contrast to the oath of office he took, and will again, to "preserve, protect and defend the Constitution" as best he can.

One rough and decidedly imperfect measure of whether Trump might mean what he says is how many times he says it. His direct threat to try to end or suspend the Constitution was largely a one-off. But the 2024 campaign was thick with his vows, rally after rally, inter-

view after interview, that if realised would upend democracy's basic practices, protections and institutions as Americans have known them.

And now, he says after his win, "I will govern by a simple motto: promises made, promises kept." Through the campaign, to lusty cheers, Trump promised to use presidential power over the justice system to go after his personal political adversaries. He then raised the stakes further by threatening to enlist military force against such domestic foes — "the enemy from within." Doing so would shatter any semblance of Justice Department independence and turn soldiers against citizens in ways not seen in modern times.

He's promised to track down and deport immigrants in massive numbers, raising the prospect of using military or military-style assets for that as well.

Spurred by his fury and denialism over his 2020 defeat, Trump's supporters in some state governments have already engineered changes in how votes are cast, counted and affirmed, an effort centered on the false notion that the last election was rigged against him.

On Tuesday, Trump won an election in the time of a Democratic administration. The effort to revise election procedures will now be fought out by states in his name.

Yet another pillar of the system is also in his sights — the non-political civil service and its political masters, whom Trump together calls the deep state.

He means the generals who didn't always heed him last time, but this time shall.

He means the Justice Department



people who refused to indulge his desperate effort to cook up votes he didn't get in 2020. He means the bureaucrats who dragged their heels on parts of his first-term agenda and whom Trump now wants purged.

Trump wants to make it easier to fire federal workers by classifying thousands of them as being outside civil service protections. That could weaken the government's power to enforce statutes and rules by draining parts of the workforce and permit his administration to staff offices with more malleable employees than last time.

But if some or all of these tenets of modern democracy are to fall, it will be through the most democratic of means. Voters chose him — and by extension, this — not Democrat Kamala Harris, the vice president. And by early measures, it was a clean election, just like 2020.

Eric Dezenhall is a scandal-management expert who has followed Trump's business and political career and correctly predicted his wins in 2016 and now. He also foresaw that the criminal cases against Trump would help, not hurt, him.

Sussing out what Trump truly intends to do and what might be bluster is not always easy, he said. "There are certain things that he says because they cross his brain at a certain moment," Dezenhall said. "I don't put stock in that. I put stock in themes, and there is a theme of vengeance."

So it remains to be seen whether America will get two special days Trump has promised.

Upon taking office again, he said, he'll be a "dictator," but only for a day. And he's promised to let police stage "one really violent day" to crack down on crime with impunity, a remark his campaign said he didn't really mean, just as his peo-

ple said he wasn't serious about subverting the U.S. Constitution.

The voters also gave Trump's Republicans clear control of the Senate, and therefore majority say in whether to confirm the loyalists Trump will nominate for top jobs in government. Trump controls his party in ways he didn't in his first term, when major figures in his administration repeatedly frustrated his most outdoor ambitions.

"The fact that a once proud people chose, twice, to demean itself with a leader like Donald Trump will be one of history's great cautionary tales," said Cal Jillson, a constitutional and presidential scholar at Southern Methodist University whose new book, "Race, Ethnicity, and American Decline," anticipated some of the existential issues of the election.

"Donald Trump's actions will be as divisive, ill-considered, and mean-spirited in his second term as in his first," he said. "He will undercut Ukraine, NATO, and the U.N. abroad and the rule of law, individual rights, and our senses of national cohesion and purpose at home."

From the political left, any threats to democracy were not on the mind of independent Sen. Bernie Sanders of Vermont when he offered a blistering critique of the Democratic campaign.

"It should come as no surprise that a Democratic Party which has abandoned working people would find that the working class has abandoned them," he said in a statement. "Will they understand the pain and political alienation that tens of millions of Americans are experiencing?"

He concluded: "Probably not."

For his part, Trump says he is

intent on restoring democracy, not tearing it down.

There was nothing democratic, he and his allies assert, in seeing military leaders defy the elected commander in chief, whether the issue was troop deployments or his wish for a splashy military parade. Or in seeing Democratic presidents establish immigration policy and vast student loan relief through executive action, bypassing Congress.

But that case is built from the ground up on the lie of a stolen 2020 election, his machinations to stall the certification of that vote and his mob's bloody attack on the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021. He comes to office intending to pardon some of the people convicted for that riot and perhaps clear himself of criminal cases against him.

Guardrails remain. One is the Supreme Court, whose conservative majority loosened the leash on presidential behavior in its ruling expanding their immunity from prosecution. The court has not been fully tested on how far it will go to accommodate Trump's actions and agenda. And which party will control the House is not yet known.

The Republican's victory came from a public so put off by America's trajectory that it welcomed his brash and disruptive approach.

Among voters under 30, just under half went for Trump, an improvement from his 2020 performance, according to the AP VoteCast survey of more than 120,000 voters.

About three-quarters of young voters said the country was headed in the wrong direction, and roughly one-third said they wanted total upheaval in how the country is run.

By Trump's words, at least, that's what they'll get.

I concede this election, but not the fight: Harris

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Shortly after conceding the presidential race to Donald Trump, Vice President Kamala Harris urged supporters to accept the election results and pledged to ensure a peaceful transfer of power to the Republican leader.

In an emotional concession speech at her alma mater Howard University, 60-year-old Harris said the "light of America's promise will always burn bright" and vowed to keep up the "fight" that fuelled her campaign.

"My heart is full today — full of gratitude for the trust you have placed in me, full of love for our country, and full of resolve," she said in an attempt to lift the spirits of her supporters.

"The outcome of this election is not what we wanted, not what we fought for, not what we voted for. But hear me when I say, the light of America's promise will always burn bright," she added.

"I know folks are feeling and experiencing a range of emotions right now. I get it. But we must accept the results of this election," she said, adding that a fundamental principle of democracy is to accept the election outcomes.

Harris said she spoke to President-elect Trump and congratulated him on his victory.

"I told Trump that we will help him and his team in their transition and that we will engage in a peaceful transition of power," she said.

"In our nation, we owe loyalty not to a president or a party but to the constitution of the United States," she added.

"While I concede this election, I do not concede the fight that fuelled this campaign," Harris said.

Harris also called on her supporters not to give up their fights to protect the country's foundational principles.

"Sometimes the fight takes a while, but that does not mean we will not win; the important thing is don't ever give up," she said.



"Sometimes the fight takes a while, but that does not mean we will not win; the important thing is don't ever give up"

thing is don't ever give up," she said.

In the election, 78-year-old Trump pulled off an incredible comeback wresting 291 electoral college votes as against Harris' 223 in a fierce contest that almost left the Americans with two world views.

While Harris projected herself as an "agent of change," Trump constructed a campaign on people's concerns over economy and immigration.

"The fight for freedom, opportunity, for fairness and dignity of all people will continue,"

Harris said in her address. The vice president said she will never give up the fight for democracy, rule of law and for equal justice.

"The fight for our freedom will take hard work, but as I always say we like hard work; the fight for our country is always worth it," she said.

"I know many people feel like we are entering a dark time, but for the benefit of us all, I hope that is not the case," she added.

The mood at the rally was incredibly sombre. The crowd of what appeared to number several thousand was very quiet. Harris campaign aides stood to one side of the stage as she spoke and exchanged hugs, including Jen O'Malley Dillon, David Plouffe, and Brian Fallon.

Former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and DC Mayor Muriel Bowser were seen conversing in the crowd. Several of Harris's younger family members were wiping away tears as they left the rally.

Biden calls Trump to congratulate him on his victory

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

US President Joe Biden on Thursday made a phone call to president-elect Donald Trump and congratulated him on his victory, the White House said.

Biden also spoke over the phone with Vice President Kamala Harris and congratulated her on her historic campaign, the White House said.

In his call with Trump, Biden expressed his commitment to ensuring a smooth transition and emphasised the importance of working to bring the country together.

"He also invited president-elect Trump to meet with him in the White House. The staff will coordinate a specific date in the near future. Tomorrow, President Biden will address the nation to discuss the election results and the transition," the White House said.

"President Joe Biden called President Donald J. Trump to congratulate him on his victory and extended an invitation to the White House to ensure a smooth transition between the current administration and the incoming administration. President Trump looks forward to the meeting, which will take place shortly, and very much appreciated the call," Steven Cheung, Trump Campaign Communications Director, said.

Meanwhile, President Joe Biden on Wednesday applauded Vice President Kamala Harris for leading a historic campaign under extraordinary circumstances.

"What America saw today was the Kamala Harris I know and deeply admire. She's been a tremendous partner and public servant full of integrity, courage, and character," Biden said in a statement.

"Under extraordinary circumstances, she stepped up and led a historic campaign that embodied what's possible when guided by a strong moral compass and a clear vision for a nation that is more free, more just, and full of more opportunities for all Americans," he said.

"As I've said before, selecting Kamala was the very first decision I made when I became the nominee for president in 2020. It was the best decision I made. Her story represents the best of America's story. And as she made clear today, I have no doubt that she'll continue writing that story," he said.

"She will continue the fight with purpose, determination, and joy. She will continue to be a champion for all Americans. Above all, she will continue to be a leader our children will look up to for generations to come as she puts her stamp on America's future," Biden said.



US should find 'right way' to manage differences, says China

PTI ■ BEIJING

Chinese President Xi Jinping on Thursday congratulated President-elect Donald Trump on his election victory and called for China and the US to find the right way to manage the differences by strengthening dialogue and communication.

Trump won the US presidential election for a second term on Wednesday in one of the most remarkable comebacks in American electoral history.

Xi, in his congratulatory message to Trump, called for the two countries to strengthen dialogue and communication, properly manage differences and expand mutually beneficial cooperation, official media reports here said.

"I urge China and the US to expand mutually beneficial cooperation," Xi said. "I call for the right way for China, and the US to get along in the new era," he said, adding that both

the countries, the top two economies of the world, should strengthen dialogue and communication.

History teaches that China and the United States gain from cooperation and lose from confrontation, Xi said, noting that a stable, sound and sustainable China-US relationship serves the two countries' shared interests and meets the aspirations of the international community.

He expressed the hope that the two sides will uphold the principles of mutual respect, peaceful coexistence, and win-win cooperation, strengthen dialogue and communication, properly manage differences

and expand mutually beneficial cooperation.

Also on Thursday, Chinese Vice President Han Zheng congratulated J D Vance on his election as vice president of the United States, state-run Xinhua news agency reported.

As the results of the US presidential elections poured in on Wednesday pointing to a sweeping victory for Trump, who pursued a tough policy against China in his first term including clamping tariffs on over USD 380 billion Chinese exports to the US, Beijing reacted guardedly and said that it respects the choice of the American people.

Our policy towards the United States has been consistent and we will continue to view and handle the China-US relations in accordance with the principles of mutual respect, peaceful coexistence and win-win cooperation," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Mao Ning told a media briefing here.



UK PM Starmer covers defence, security in first call with Trump

PTI ■ LONDON

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer touched upon a range of topics, including defence and regional security, during his congratulatory phone call with US President-elect Donald Trump after a "historic" election victory.

During the call on Wednesday evening, both leaders agreed to work towards strengthening the "incredibly strong" US-UK special relationship and committed to ensure the bilateral ties continue to thrive.

"The Prime Minister offered his hearty congratulations and said he looked forward to working closely with President-elect Trump across all areas of the special relationship. From defence and security to growth and prosperity, the relationship between the UK and US was incredibly strong and would continue to thrive for many years to come, the leaders agreed," a Downing Street

spokesperson said.

Starmer is said to have also reflected on the situation in the Middle East and "underscored the importance of regional stability". They went on to discuss their recent meeting at Trump Tower when Starmer was in New York for the United Nations General Assembly.

"The leaders fondly recalled their meeting in September, and President-elect Trump's close connections and affinity to the United Kingdom and looked forward to working with one another," Downing Street added.

The phone call came after a heated first exchange between Starmer and the newly elected UK Leader of the

Opposition Kemi Badenoch in the House of Commons.

The Conservative Party chief challenged the Labour leader over his party volunteers having flown in to support the campaign of Trump's Democrat rival Kamala Harris.

"I am very sure that President Trump will soon be calling to thank him for sending all of those north London Labour activists to campaign for his opponent," Badenoch taunted.

"It is absolutely crucial that we have a strong relationship — that strong, special relationship, forged in difficult circumstances — between the US and the UK. We will continue to work, as we have done in our four months in government, on issues of security, our economy and global conflict," Starmer responded.

Earlier, Starmer had been forced to stress that any party activists in the US during the election campaign were there as volunteers on their own time.



European leaders assess how Trump will affect their fortunes

AP ■ BUDAPEST (HUNGARY)

Around 50 European leaders, including Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte, will be reassessing their trans-Atlantic relations in the hope that Donald Trump's second US presidency will avoid the strife and political pitfalls of his first administration.

Further compounding an already complicated situation, Germany — Europe's troubled economic juggernaut — sank into political crisis after German Chancellor Olaf Scholz fired his finance minister. It raises the spectre of an election in a few

months and yet another standoff between the emboldened hard right and the establishment parties in Europe.

Those two combined "adds even more pepper and salt to this situation," Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk said.

But the US election fallout still took centre stage.

"Our relationship with the US is essential and we are ready to deepen it," European Council President Charles Michel said.

The 27 nations from the European Union bloc will be meeting in a separate summit as soon as other leaders from the United Kingdom,



Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, center, and Latvia's Prime Minister Evika Silina, right, arrive for the European Political Community (EPC) Summit at the Puskas Arena in Budapest, Hungary, on Thursday. AP/PTI

Turkey and the Balkans leave in the evening.

During his election campaign, Trump had threatened anything from a trade war with Europe to a withdrawal of NATO commitments and a fundamental shift of support for Ukraine in its war with Russia — all issues that could have ground-breaking consequences for nations across Europe.

Summit host and ardent Trump fan, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban, said early Thursday he already had a phone call with the incoming president overnight, announcing that "We have big plans for the future!"

So did hard-right Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, who lauded the "deep and historic strategic partnership that has always tied Rome and Washington."

That partnership came under constant pressure during Trump's first term, from 2017-2021.

Trump's administration slapped tariffs on EU steel and aluminum in 2018, based on the claim that foreign products, even if produced by American allies, were a threat to US national security. Europeans and other allies retaliated with duties on US-made motorcycles, bourbon, peanut butter and jeans, among other items.

The impact of the US election result could be felt in Europe for years to come, on issues including the wars in Ukraine and the Middle East, as well as migration and climate change.

Among the leaders due to attend on Thursday is Zelenskyy, who is expected to make another plea for more aid as his country finds off Moscow's invasion. The timing is laden with significance as Trump has vowed to end the war "within 24 hours" of being elected — something leaders in Kyiv interpret as an impending evaporation of US support following Trump's win.

European agency says this will likely be hottest year on record — again

AP ■ CHICAGO
For the second year in a row, Earth will almost certainly be the hottest it's ever been.

record-breaking temperatures without the constant increase of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere driving global warming.

normal will be about a decade from now," said Zeke Hausfather, a research scientist with the nonprofit Berkeley Earth.

thus avoid continued warming. Buontempo pointed out that going over the 1.5 degree Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) threshold of warming for a single year is different than the goal adopted in the 2015 Paris Agreement.

degrees Fahrenheit) or 1.2 degrees (2.2 degrees Fahrenheit). That's of concern because the U.N. says the greenhouse gas emission reduction goals of the world's nations still aren't nearly ambitious enough to keep the 1.5 degree Celsius target on track.

Going over that number in 2024 doesn't mean the overall trend line of global warming has, but "in the absence of concerted action, it soon will," said University of Pennsylvania climate scientist Michael Mann.

Copernicus, but emphasized that people should remember climate is a global issue beyond their local experiences with changing weather.

weather stations around the world. He said that going over the 1.5 degree Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) benchmark this year is "psychologically important" as nations make decisions internally and approach negotiations at the annual U.N. climate change summit Nov. 11-22 in Azerbaijan.

Australia plans social media ban for children under 16

AP ■ MELBOURNE
The Australian government announced on Thursday what it described as world-leading legislation that would institute an age limit of 16 years for children to start using social media, and hold platforms responsible for ensuring compliance.

The proposal comes as governments around the world are wrestling with how to supervise young people's use of technologies like smartphones and social media.

She added that stronger tools in app stores and operating systems for parents to control what apps their children can use would be a "simple and effective solution."

risks effectively." Jackie Hallan, a director at the youth mental health service ReachOut, opposed the ban.

Albanese said there would be exclusions and exemptions in circumstances such as a need to continue access to educational services.

SCBA seeks comprehensive immigration reform in US

PTI ■ WASHINGTON
Observing that this election cycle was a divisive one, filled with uncertainty and anxiety about the future of the nation and democracy, the South Asian Bar Association (SCBA) has pushed for a comprehensive immigration reform, including improving the H-1B programme.

America and Mona Shah, its executive director, said. SABA North America said it is committed to working with president-elect Donald Trump and his administration to ensure that the voices of its members are heard on a broad range of policy issues impacting the South Asian community, from racial justice and immigration to religious discrimination, reproductive rights, and the rule of law.

December 2023 when it submitted its comments to USCIS's proposal for improving the H-1B programme and registration process under the Biden-Harris Administration. Lobbying for reproductive justice freedoms, an issue that uniquely affects Asian American and South Asian American women; and advocating for key endorsements and nominations of qualified South Asian attorneys to the judiciary, including the US Supreme Court," the press release said.



In this photo provided by Ukraine's 24th Mechanised Brigade press service, servicemen of the 24th Mechanised Brigade improve their tactical skills at the training field in Donetsk region, Ukraine.

Large airstrikes hit Beirut suburbs as Israel expands Gaza operations

AP ■ BEIRUT
Several large airstrikes hit Beirut's southern suburbs early Thursday, including one on a site adjacent to Lebanon's only international airport. The Israeli military had issued an evacuation notice for the site, saying there were Hezbollah facilities there, without giving more details.

Israel on Oct. 8, 2023, in solidarity with the Hamas militant group in the Gaza Strip. Since the conflict erupted, more than 3,000 people have been killed and some 13,600 wounded in Lebanon, the Health Ministry reported.

by the U.S. government earlier this year. Deliveries will begin in 2031, and there's an option for the purchase of an additional 25 aircraft.

news network says the Israeli military has extended the order shutting down its bureau in the occupied West Bank. Walid al-Omari, the network's bureau chief, said Israeli troops raided the office in Ramallah again early Thursday and posted a notice extending the closure for an additional 45 days.

Indian consulate in Canada cancels consular camps due over security issues

PTI ■ TORONTO
The Consulate General of India in Toronto on Thursday said it is cancelling some of its scheduled consular camps after the Canadian security authorities conveyed their inability to provide minimum security protection to its organisers.

Brampton and the Indian Consulate. "In view of the security agencies conveying their inability to provide minimum security protection to the community camp organisers, the Consulate has decided to cancel some of the scheduled consular camps," the Consulate General of India said in a post on X.

ners in support of Khalistan. The protesters clashed with people and disrupted the consular event. The incident was condemned by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau who said every Canadian has the right to practice their faith freely and safely.

Canada. The relations between India and Canada came under severe strain following Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's allegations in September last year of a "potential" involvement of Indian agents in Khalistan extremist Hardeep Singh Nijjar's killing.

Canada orders TikTok's business to be dissolved, won't block app

AP ■ TORONTO
Canada announced Wednesday it is ordering the dissolution of TikTok's Canadian business after a national security review of the Chinese company behind the social media app but said it won't block access.

Beijing could use it to collect data on Western users or push pro-China narratives and misinformation. TikTok is owned by ByteDance, a Chinese company that moved its headquarters to Singapore in 2020.

My name is Muhib Ahmad S/o Mohd Hanif resident of Muradnagar, I have got my passport number F5489202 from the Passport Office Ghaziabad, I have kept my passport in my document file, I need my passport for any necessary work, I did not get my passport, I tried to find my passport at every possible place and also from family members.

CORRIGENDUM NO. 01 & 02 AGAINST TENDER NOTICE NO. : CE/CON/2024/OCT/03, Dated : 21-10-2024

Scholz fires his finance minister, coalition collapses

AP ■ BERLIN
Germany's centre-left Chancellor Olaf Scholz announced Wednesday he was firing Finance Minister Christian Lindner, signalling the collapse of the ruling three-party coalition that relied on Lindner's pro-business party.

to prevent damage to our country. We need an effective government that has the strength to make the necessary decisions for our country," Scholz said.

new economic awakening in our country. He has played down the economic concerns of the citizens.

He accused Lindner of publicly calling for a fundamentally different economic policy, including what Scholz said would be tax cuts worth billions for a few top earners while at the same time cutting pensions for all pensioners. "That is not decent," Scholz said.

Advertisement for 'THE PIONEERS CLASSIFIED' featuring a logo and text: 'CHANGE OF NAME', 'I, SHELLY, SHELLY BANSAL, SHAILY BANSAL, W/O JALAJ GUPTA, D/O SANDEEP KUMAR BANSAL, R/O B-347, THIRD FLOOR, STREET NO 04, MAJLIS PARK, ADARSH NAGAR, DELHI-110033 HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO SHAILY GUPTA FOR ALL PURPOSES.'

Advertisement for 'PUBLIC NOTICE' containing legal notices and real estate information: 'My client Suresh Kumar S/o Suraj Pal and his wife Saroj H No 80 Block 20, JJ Colony Dakshinipuri, New Delhi- 62 got fed up with the wrong behavior of their Son Rakesh and Daughter-in-law Madhu Mehraulia and disposed all their movable and immovable property and severed the relationship. My client will not be responsible for any of their dealings. S.P Pandey (Adv)'

Supreme Court orders liquidation of grounded Jet Airways' assets



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court (SC) on Thursday exercised its extraordinary constitutional powers and ordered the liquidation of grounded air carrier Jet Airways' assets. A bench of Chief Justice DY Chandrachud and Justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra set aside the National

Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) decision upholding the resolution plan of Jet Airways, which approved the transfer of its ownership to Jalan Kalrock Consortium (JKC). Pronouncing the judgement for the bench, Justice Pardiwala allowed the plea of the State Bank of India (SBI) and other creditors against the NCLAT decision that

upheld the resolution plan of Jet Airways in favour of JKC. It said the liquidation of the air carrier was in the interest of creditors, workers and other stakeholders. The bench came down on the NCLAT, which the SC held disregarded the court's 2023 ruling. "We have no doubt that the NCLAT acted contrary to settled legal principles...

NCLAT incorrectly interpreted our order," the court noted in the judgment. The fundamental concern is not only to do substantial justice but also to bring speedy disposal of dispute, it further noted. The court used its powers under Article 142 of the Constitution which gives it the power to make orders and decrees to ensure complete justice in any matter or cause pending before it. The NCLAT on March 12 upheld the resolution plan of the grounded air carrier and approved the transfer of its ownership to JKC. The SBI, Punjab National Bank (PNB) and JC Flowers Asset Reconstruction Private Limited had challenged the NCLAT verdict. Additional Solicitor General (ASG) N Venkataraman appeared for the SBI - the lead lender of Jet Airways, while Senior Advocates Mukul Rohatgi and Gopal Sankaranarayanan represented the Successful Resolution Applicant (SRA) Jalan KalRock Consortium (JKC). In the past, Jet was the second largest carrier in India.

Markets snap rally ahead of Fed interest rate decision



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Benchmark Sensex and Nifty tumbled more than 1 per cent on Thursday after a two-day rally as investors remained on the sidelines ahead of the US Federal Reserve interest rate decision and unabated foreign fund outflows. The BSE Sensex tanked 836.34 points or 1.04 per cent to settle at 79,541.79. During the day, it slumped 958.79 points or 1.19 per cent to 79,419.34. The NSE Nifty dropped 284.70 points or 1.16 per cent to finish at 24,199.35. From the 30-share Sensex pack, Tata Motors, Tech Mahindra, UltraTech Cement, JSW Steel, Sun Pharma, Asian Paints, IndusInd Bank and ICICI Bank were the major losers.

State Bank of India emerged as the only gainer from the pack. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 4,445.59 crore on Wednesday, according to exchange data. In Asian markets, Seoul, Shanghai and Hong Kong settled higher while Tokyo ended lower. European markets were trading in positive territory. Wall Street ended significantly higher on Wednesday. Global oil benchmark Brent crude dipped 0.33 per cent to USD 74.67 a barrel. The BSE benchmark jumped 901.50 points or 1.13 per cent to settle at 80,378.13 on Wednesday. The Nifty soared 270.75 points or 1.12 per cent to 24,484.05.

Q3 rural consumption volume outgrows urban markets by two times: NielsenIQ report

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Urban and rural markets have shown a sequential recovery in consumer demand and rural areas continue to surpass urban areas in volume growth across most regions of India, according to a report from data analytics firm NielsenIQ. According to the latest NielsenIQ's FMCG Quarterly snapshot, the Indian Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) industry witnessed a 5.7 per cent value-based growth and 4.1 per cent volume growth on a 1.5 per cent price growth in the July-September quarter. "Urban consumption growth in Q3 24 was 2.8 per cent, while rural growth increased to 6 per cent from 5.2 per cent in the previous quarter, 2X faster growth than urban," the report said. Small and medium FMCG companies had a rebound after facing a decline in some quarters. They had faster growth helped by the food segment in comparison to large FMCG giants in terms of value and volume. In the September quarter results leading FMCG companies including HUL, Nestle, Dabur, and Tata Consumer Products have reported a softness in the demand from the

urban market, mainly on account of high food inflation. According to industry observers, the urban market contributes to around 62 to 65 per cent of FMCG sales and the rest is from the rural market, which is largely dominated by food products and small offerings. Moreover, in the September quarter, the FMCG industry also had "slight improvement" on the volume front sequentially, the report said. "Food consumption growth increased to 3.4 per cent in Q3'24 compared to 2.1 per cent in Q2'24," it said. This uptick in volume growth is largely attributed to staple categories such as edible oils, packaged atta, and spices despite price growth. "In Home & Personal Care (HPC) categories, the consumption growth stabilised at 6 per cent in Q3' compared to Q2'23 at 6.7 per cent," it added. This stabilisation in consumer demand for HPC categories, which includes categories such as skin cleansers, shampoo, body lotion, shower gel, toothpaste, laundry detergents etc, was observed in both urban and rural markets. Small manufacturers recovered from the decline of the last three quarters and grew faster than big companies, helped by a sharp recovery in volume growth.

HDFC raises lending rate on select maturity

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

HDFC Bank on Thursday raised the marginal cost of funds-based lending rate (MCLR) by 5 basis points (0.05 percentage points) on select maturity. The benchmark one-year tenor MCLR, which is used to price most consumer loans like auto and personal, has been retained at 9.45 per cent, according to the bank website. The overnight MCLR has risen to 9.15 per cent from 9.10 per cent, while the one-month rate has been increased by 5 basis points to 9.20 per cent. Rates on other buckets have been left unchanged.

Vedanta, Oil India bag critical mineral blocks

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Vedanta Group has won four blocks while state-owned Oil India Ltd (OIL) bagged one in the fourth round of critical mineral blocks auction, the government said on Thursday. While Vedanta bagged vanadium and graphite mine in Arunachal Pradesh, cobalt, manganese and iron (polymetal) mine in Karnataka, Hindustan Zinc Ltd (HZL) -- a subsidiary of Vedanta -- won tungsten and associated minerals block in Andhra Pradesh and a tungsten mine in Tamil Nadu. Oil India Ltd has bagged graphite and vanadium block in Arunachal Pradesh, the government said. Vedanta Ltd had earlier bagged two critical mineral blocks in Karnataka and Bihar in the second and third



auction rounds. Mamco Mining Pvt Ltd and Orissa Metaliks Pvt Ltd are the other two companies that have bagged blocks in this round of auction. "The Ministry of Mines has successfully concluded the auction of eight critical mineral blocks, launched under tranche IV of the auction of critical and strategic mineral blocks," an official statement said. Following the issuance of the

Notice Inviting Tender (NIT) for 21 mineral blocks on June 24, the auction attracted strong interest from industry stakeholders. "After the evaluation of technical bids, 10 mineral blocks advanced to the second round of e-auction, which included three first attempt blocks and seven second attempt blocks," the mines ministry said. These blocks contain deposits of strategic minerals such as

phosphorite, graphite, and vanadium, essential for high-tech and green energy applications. Auction process for the eight blocks have successfully concluded and for the remaining two blocks the process will be completed by December 2. With the auction of these critical mineral blocks, the total number of successfully auctioned critical and strategic mineral blocks has reached 22. The fourth round of auction has marked a beginning for the Northeast into India's mineral auction landscape, with four maiden blocks successfully auctioned. Significantly, this tranche features the first successful auction of a tungsten and two cobalt blocks. These minerals are essential for high-tech, defence, and energy storage applications.

JK Lakshmi Cement reports revenue drop

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

JK Lakshmi Cement has reported a consolidated net loss of Rs 19.24 crore for the second quarter ended September 30, 2024 on account of drop in sales realisation. The company had posted a profit of Rs 95.87 crore in the July-September period a year ago, according to a regulatory filing from JK Lakshmi Cement Ltd (JKCL), a flagship company of JK Organisation. Its revenue from operations was down 2.16 per cent at Rs 1,234.29 crore in the September quarter. It was at Rs 1,574.53 crore in the year-ago period.



Total expenses of JKCL were at Rs 1,263.01 crore, down 1.27 per cent in the September quarter of FY25. JKCL's total income, which includes other income, was also down 2.17 per cent to Rs 1,242.67 crore. During the quarter, JKCL's sales volume declined 1.40 per cent to 18.66 lakh tonnes. "The profitability of the company for the quarter has been impacted due to a sharp drop in sales realisation in our primary markets," Vinita Singhania, chairperson &

managing director said. The cement industry has witnessed a decline in sales realisation due to falling cement prices on an year-on-year basis. The company, however, remained bullish in its outlook for the sector based on the government's spending on infrastructure projects. "Given government's focus on infrastructure development and higher budgetary allocation and various other Initiatives for housing and road development, the outlook for the cement sector is positive in the coming year," it said. Shares of JK Lakshmi Cement Ltd on Thursday were trading at Rs 772 per scrip on BSE.

Nissan cuts jobs as sales tank

AP ■ TOKYO

Nissan reported Thursday a loss for the latest fiscal quarter as its vehicle sales sank while costs and inventory ballooned, prompting the Japanese automaker to slash 9,000 jobs. Chief Executive Makoto Uchida said he was taking a 50 per cent pay cut to take responsibility for the dismal results, while promising that a turnaround was coming. Nissan Motor Corp announced a global workforce reduction of 9,000 people, or about 6 per cent of its more than 1,33,000 employees, as well as a plan to slash global production capacity by 20 per cent. Uchida declined to say which regions will be affected by the cuts or give specifics. For the latest quarter through September, Nissan racked up a 9.3 billion Yen (USD 60 million) loss, a reversal from the 190.7 billion Yen profit recorded the same quarter a



year ago. Quarterly sales fell to 2.9 trillion Yen (USD 19 billion) from 3.1 trillion Yen. Uchida acknowledged Nissan didn't respond quickly or flexibly enough to global changes, including market tastes and soaring raw material costs. "I take this situation very seriously," he told reporters. "Nissan will restructure its

business to become leaner and more resilient." Nissan models did not sell well in the US, one of the most lucrative auto markets in the world that's recently been dominated by Ford, Toyota and Tesla. All aspects of Nissan's operations and plans will be under review, Uchida said. Nissan, based in the port city of Yokohama, reported fiscal first half sales revenue of 5.98 trillion Yen (USD 39 billion), edging down 1 per cent from the more than 6 trillion Yen the same period last year. Its April to September profit totaled 19.2 billion Yen (USD 124 million), declining sharply from the 296.2 billion Yen earned over the six months last year. Nissan lowered its sales revenue forecast for the fiscal year through March 2025 to 12.7 trillion Yen (USD 82 billion) from an earlier projection for 14 trillion Yen (USD 91 billion).

It did not give a net profit forecast, citing uncertainty. It promised to give a profit forecast as soon as possible. Earlier, Nissan was forecasting an annual profit of 300 billion Yen (USD 1.9 billion). The company misread the trend on hybrid and electric vehicles, Uchida further added. "We did start to understand this trend towards the end of last fiscal year," he said, adding that making some changes to core models didn't go as smoothly as planned. Nissan now expects to sell 3.4 million vehicles around the world in the fiscal year ending in March 2025, down from an earlier projected 3.65 million vehicles. The new number is about the same that Nissan sold last fiscal year. Nissan said it's appointing a chief performance officer tasked with turnaround decision-making, who will begin his job next month.

ED searches premises of Amazon, Flipkart vendors

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate Thursday conducted searches against some of the "main vendors" operating on platforms of e-commerce giants Amazon and Flipkart as part of a foreign investment "violation" investigation, official sources said. A total of 19 premises of these "preferred" vendors located in Delhi, Gurugram and Panchkula (Haryana), Hyderabad (Telangana) and Bengaluru (Karnataka) were covered as part of the action, the sources said. It is learnt that the ED inspected documents and took copies of some from the premises of about six such vendors who were not named. The sources said a probe has been initiated by the federal agency under the provisions of the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA) after it received several complaints against the



two large e-commerce companies where it is alleged that they were "violating India's Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) rules by directly or indirectly influencing the sale price of goods or services and not providing level playing field for all the vendors". There was no immediate response from the two e-commerce companies. Meanwhile, the

Competition Commission of India (CCI) had also issued "penalty notices" to Amazon and Flipkart, and their "preferred" sellers, for "engaging" in anti-competitive practices that have adversely affected small traders and 'kirana' (grocery) stores. The CAIT and mainline mobile retailers' association AIMRA had also petitioned the CCI sometime back seeking immediate suspension of operations of Flipkart and Amazon as they alleged that the companies engaged in predatory pricing and were burning cash to offer heavy discounts on products. These practices, in turn, are creating a grey market of mobile phones, causing losses to the exchequer "as players in the grey market evade taxes", they had said. The CCI is already looking into the practices of e-commerce companies.

Scindia rules out spectrum auction pitch by Ambani, Mittal

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Communications minister Jyotiraditya Scindia has said the spectrum for satellite broadband will be allocated and not auctioned as sought by Indian billionaires Mukesh Ambani and Sunil Mittal. The statement is being seen as a potential win for Elon Musk's Starlink. The satellite broadband spectrum will however be not given free and sector regulator TRAI will fix a price for the resource, he told PTI in a text and video interview. "Every country has to follow the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), which is the

organisation that lays out the policy for spectrum in space or satellites, and the ITU has been very clear in terms of the spectrum being given out on an assignment basis. In addition, if you look across the world today, I cannot think of a single country that auctions spectrum for satellite," Scindia said. India is a member of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), a UN agency for digital technology. Musk's Starlink and global peers like Amazon's Project Kuiper back an administrative allocation. While Ambani's Reliance Jio has been vocal



about the need to allocate that spectrum through an auction to provide a level playing field to legacy operators who buy airwaves and set up infrastructure like telecom towers. Mittal, last month at an industry event, where Prime

Minister Narendra Modi was also present, articulated the need to use bidding for such allocation. Jio and Bharti Airtel - India's largest and second-largest operators, respectively - feel that giving away the satellite broadband airwaves at a pre-decided price by the government will create an uneven playing field since they had to compete in an auction to get spectrum for their terrestrial wireless phone networks. The two are vying for a piece of the satellite broadband segment as well. Musk-led Starlink is demanding administrative

allotment of licences in line with the global trend as it looks to tap into the world's fastest-growing mobile telephony and internet market. Scindia said the Telecom Act of 2023 passed in December has put the matter in 'Schedule 1', which means that the Satcom spectrum will be allocated administratively. Such an allocation will be at a government-decided price, and allow foreign firms like Starlink to offer voice and data services. If the spectrum were to be auctioned, it would have made it costlier for Starlink to roll out services. Starlink has applied for a

licence to start operations in the country. Scindia, however, offered no clues on the fate of his application. The minister said that the regulatory process is very clear and transparent. The new Telecom Act has been passed, and the Satellite spectrum is very clearly a part of that in schedule one, he pointed out. "...We are open to looking at the application of any entity that wants to invest in India at this point in time. I think only one or two licenses have been given out. And whoever else wants to participate, India is surely going to welcome that," the minister said.

INBRIEF

VIT-AP UNIVERSITY HOSTS IHEF 2024

AMRAVATI: VIT-AP University today hosted its first-ever International Higher Education Fair (IHEF) 2024, bringing together prestigious educational institutions from abroad to showcase graduate, research, and professional study programs.

POWERGRID POSTS PAT

Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (POWERGRID) has announced the Unaudited Financial Results for the quarter and half year ended 30th September 2024. At the end of Q2FY25, the total transmission assets of POWERGRID and its subsidiaries stood at 1,78,195 ckm of transmission lines, 279 substations strategically placed across the country.



THE RAMAYANA

A CONTEMPORARY REVIVAL

Dushyanth Sridhar's Ramayanam is a contemporary translation that makes the ancient epic accessible to modern readers, preserving its themes of love, duty, and human relationships

BY KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

My first-ever foreign tour was to Indonesia in 2011 as an Indian delegate to attend an international workshop on the Tsunami Early Warning System. I was put up at Hotel Borobudur in Jakarta by the hosts, the UNDP.

While the workshop was from 8 am to 6 pm (with an hour-long lunch break and two high-tea sessions each of 15 minutes' duration), the delegates were free after the day's engagements. What caught my attention was the Ramayana Ballet staged daily in the ballroom of the hotel. Since admission was restricted by tickets, I had to collect the details from the hotel staff about the show.

A hotel staff member told me that Ramayana Ballet was a daily event not only in this star hotel but in most of the islands in the archipelago. "The story is the same as that played out in India. Maybe the dance and music associated with the Ramayana are different from what they are in your country," he said.

Lord Anjaneya (Hanuman) was the mascot of the 1997 edition of the South East Asian Games held in Jakarta. This shows the kind of reverence with which the commander of the Monkey Brigade is held in Indonesia, the country with the largest Muslim population in the world.

Nicholaz Kazanas, director, OMILOS Meleton Cultural Institute, Greece, in his 2011 lecture held at Madras University, said that the Rig Veda is the oldest published literature of science and culture in the world and the Ramayana and Mahabharata are not mere epics but chronicles of events.

We Indians are still to accord the due status to these works. But for Ramanand Sagar and B. R. Chopra, who took the initiatives in making television series about the Ramayana and Mahabharata

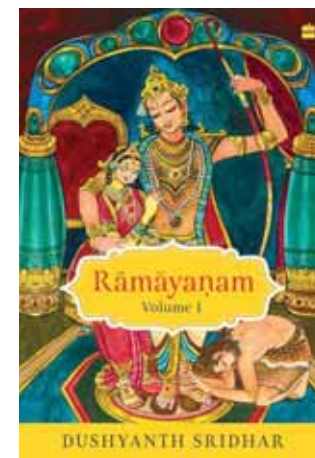


which were telecast through Doodarshan, these epics would have been forgotten long ago. I can still remember the cynicism on the faces of the Left Liberals when these works were aired by Doodarshan. Our contempt for our own culture and tradition inspired Wendy Doniger, the modern-day Lucille Ball (of I Love Lucy fame), to write *The Hindus: An Alternative History*. She had to meekly surrender and withdraw the book following a suit filed by Dinanath Batra under Section 295A of the IPC. The lady had to withdraw the book lest she would have to undergo imprisonment and pay a hefty

amount for offending sentiments of religious communities. The Sanatanis do not react to the insults meted out to them by self-styled intellectuals who publish all kinds of nonsense against the culture, literature, and great epics of India. Many "scholars" have tried to tarnish Indian culture. The name that comes to mind is that of A. K. Ramanujan, who authored an essay "Three Hundred Ramayanas; Five Examples and Three Thoughts on Translation". Ramanujan, known as a poet and scholar of Indian literature and linguistics, portrayed Lord Rama and Sita as siblings and

this upset the believers. Batra himself approached the court and dragged the essay by Ramanujan to the court demanding it be withdrawn from the undergraduate curricula of Delhi University, and the academic council removed the same from the syllabus. The move by the University antagonised the Left intellectuals who described Batra's action as Fascist. It is in this background that *Dushyanth Sridhar*, a young Vedic scholar, chose to translate the Ramayanam by Valmiki into English. *Sridhar* is familiar to people in South India as a leading Harikatha artist (an art

form of telling stories from the Puranas and that too with eloquence). The dying art of Harikatha Kalakshepam got a new lease of life thanks to scholars like Sridhar. His latest work *Ramayanam Translation* proves that his achievements in the field of Vedic literature are not a flash in the pan and Sridhar is here to stay for many decades. Volume one of the book has Ayodhyakhanda (Ayodhya Canto) and concludes with Lord Rama mourning the passing of his father, King Dasaratha. The information about Dasaratha's death was conveyed to him by Bharata and his entourage who went to the



"THE STORY IS THE SAME AS THAT PLAYED OUT IN INDIA. MAYBE THE DANCE AND MUSIC ASSOCIATED WITH THE RAMAYANA ARE DIFFERENT FROM WHAT THEY ARE IN YOUR COUNTRY"

forest pleading with Rama to return to Ayodhya and take over the reins of the kingdom. The remaining volumes are expected shortly, and it is worth waiting to read how *Sridhar* has portrayed Lord Anjaneya and other characters. What is unique about the Ramayana is the theme Mata, Pita, Guru, Deivam (Mother, Father, Teacher and God) – a statement that makes it unambiguously clear that it is through the first three named that one is led to spirituality and truth, the two terms that encompass God. The Indian system of knowledge makes it clear that the Guru is as

important as mother and father. For Rama, Sage Vasishtha was the God incarnation because he had his education under him. A student organisation in Kerala has put flex boards in all college campuses and schools stating that "Teachers are not Gods. Students are not slaves!" This is what information technology and artificial intelligence of the modern day propagate.

Sridhar, having directed a Sanskrit movie *Sakuntalam*, displays his prowess in movie making in the book. The intercuts between what happened after Rama's return to Ayodhya from the Vana Vasa and spurning his royal consort in the jungles as the beginning of the story is intriguing. But more than that, what stands out is Dasaratha's consultation with other Kings about who should be the future emperor of Ayodhya. It is not a namesake discussion but a serious exchange of views. The Kings wanted Rama to be coronated as the next emperor, and they had their own reasons for their stance. It is not like the meetings of the working committees and political affairs committees summoned to sign on the dotted line choosing the son/daughter handpicked by the family patriarch as his heir apparent.

We learn new and newer things each time we read the Ramayana. *Sridhar's* mission is to take the Ramayana to the new age youth who may not be well-versed in Sanskrit. He has edited 24,000 shlokas from Valmiki's Ramayana and made it easy for the modern-day youth to comprehend the great epic. People do not just read the Ramayana; they comprehend the work and learn new things each time they go through the work.

What adds to the beauty of the book is the caricatures by Keshav, formerly working with a newspaper known as the English edition of *Deshabhimani*, the CPI(M) mouthpiece. Now over to you, dear readers.

NEW ARRIVALS

NOVEMBER MUST-READ

Publisher: Niyogi Books



Citizen Charles

By MUSTANSIR DALVI
(PRICE: ₹299, PAGES: 204)

Citizen Charles is the first biography of architect Charles Correa (1930–2015), exploring his profound impact on Indian modernism. The book traces his journey from Art Deco Bombay to his advocacy for urban equity in post-independence India, highlighting his commitment to ensuring decent housing and public spaces for all citizens. Through triumphs and challenges, this monograph reflects on Correa's legacy as a pioneering architect who merged contemporary design with Indian culture.

Shyam Benegal: Film-maker of the Real India
By ARJUN SENGUPTA
(Price: ₹299, Pages: 248)

Shyam Benegal: Film-maker of the Real India delves into the life and career of one of India's most acclaimed filmmakers. With a career spanning five decades, Benegal has been a pioneer of alternative cinema, using film to expose societal inequalities and injustices. This book examines his evolution as a filmmaker, exploring his choice of subjects, cinematic techniques, and philosophical perspectives. It also features a chapter dedicated to his work in television and an exclusive interview discussing his craft. Accessible and insightful, this monograph offers a valuable analysis of Benegal's contributions to Indian cinema and cultural history.

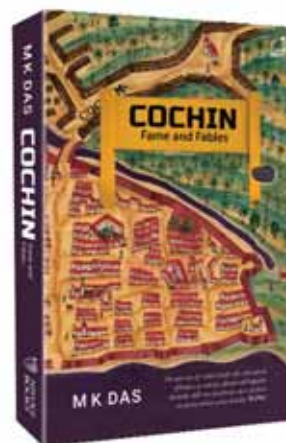
From Port to Cultural Gem

Cochin, once a small fishing village, is now a vibrant city rich in culture and history. In 'Cochin: Fame and Fables', M.K. Das shares the stories of its people and the events that shaped its identity, showing how this city has embraced change while holding onto its roots, writes SAKSHI PRIYA



Welcome to Cochin, a city alive with stories. Set along Kerala's stunning coastline, this vibrant place has witnessed countless changes over the centuries. Once a small fishing village, it grew into a bustling port that attracted traders from around the globe. *'Cochin: Fame and Fables'* by M.K. Das takes readers on a journey through this remarkable city, revealing the rich history and diverse cultures that have shaped it. In his book, M.K. Das captures Cochin's spirit, sharing stories of its people and the challenges they faced. Through his words, we discover how the city has transformed while staying true to its roots. *Das* examines Cochin's role in the spice trade, which made it a major trading hub. Known as "black gold," pepper attracted traders from Rome, Arabia, China and eventually Europe. In the chapter "Birth of a City," *Das* explains how Cochin's location along the Malabar Coast turned it into a gateway for both commerce and culture. The spice trade brought prosperity but also made the city a target for foreign powers, with pepper trade playing a role in diplomacy and negotiations. A major theme in *'Cochin: Fame and Fables'* is the impact of colonisation. The Portuguese, Dutch and British each

sought control over Cochin's valuable trade routes and resources. *Das* describes how these foreign powers altered the city's governance, trade, and architecture. Despite the disruptions, Cochin's people adapted and resisted, maintaining a distinct cultural identity while navigating these political shifts. This theme of resilience underscores the book, as *Das* shows how the city's people absorb outside influences while preserving their roots. The author paints a vivid portrait of the Maharajas of Cochin, modest rulers who focused on the well-being of their people. Unlike the luxuries typically associated with Indian royalty, the Maharajas of Cochin emphasised unity and harmony, providing a peaceful coexistence among the city's diverse communities. Another focus of *Das's* research is the broader impact of global trade. The discovery of the Cape of Good Hope route expanded Cochin merchants' access to international markets, allowing the city's economy to flourish beyond traditional trade routes. These shifts reinforced Cochin's position in international trade. Cochin's religious and cultural diversity stands out as well. Known for inclusivity, the city has welcomed people of various



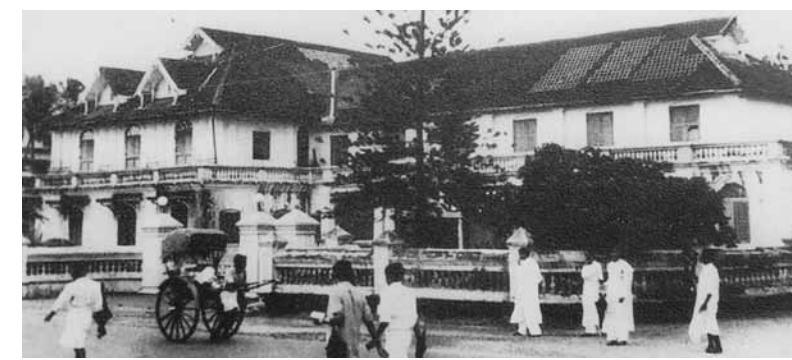
ABOUT THE BOOK

Book : COCHIN : Fame and Fables
by M K DAS

Publisher : Niyogi Books

₹795.00

Pages : 300



faiths for centuries. *Das* describes the coexistence of Hindu temples, Christian churches and Jewish synagogues, highlighting a long history of religious tolerance and diversity that has given Cochin a unique character. *Das* also explores Cochin's architectural heritage, a blend of traditional and colonial influences. The city's architecture serves as a visible record of its history, with ancient structures standing alongside colonial buildings, illustrating its journey and adaptation over time. In the book's final chapters, *Das* reflects on Cochin's modern identity, connecting its historical legacy with its current role as a cultural and economic

hub. He argues that Cochin's resilience and openness to new influences continue to define it today, suggesting that understanding the city's past is essential for appreciating its present. *'Cochin: Fame and Fables'* is a well-researched account that captures the essence of a city with a rich and complex history. *Das* braids together themes of trade, culture and resilience, offering readers an insightful look into Cochin's evolution. For those interested in Indian history, colonialism or cultural exchange, this book provides a comprehensive view of a city that has retained its identity while embracing change.

INDIA'S SECOND LINE STARS LOOK FOR A BREAKAWAY SERIES AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA

PTI ■ DURBAN

As India firmly embraces a transition phase, a clutch of second line stars such as Sanju Samson and Abhishek Sharma will be hoping for a breakaway series in the four T20Is against South Africa...



South Africa's T20I career against the West Indies in August 2023. Since then, his 12 outings in the shortest format have produced - 0, 10, 14, 16, 15, 4.

Jurel shines, Rahul fails as India A flounder bounce test

PTI ■ MELBOURNE



Dhruv Jurel showcased his sound technique and cool temperament while wickets fell like ninepins at the other end in another shoddy batting display by India A on the opening day of the second unofficial Test against Australia A...

middle-order batter role. It was also the day when one got an indication that India senior team might bank on Rahul's experience of opening the innings if Rohit Sharma skips a match.

Sinner and Alcaraz headline the ATP Finals with Djokovic out



Jannik Sinner and Carlos Alcaraz are poised to add another entry into their rapidly developing rivalry when the ATP Finals open Sunday without any members of the Big Three for the first time in nearly a quarter century.

at the finals but never won it. Sinner withdrew from last week's Paris Masters due to a virus and showed up early in Turin for training.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, P. H. DIVISION, CUTTACK. e-procurement Notice for Bid Identification No. SEPH-DIVISION, CTC- 16 of 2024-25.

Sambalpur Municipal Corporation Sambalpur. Procurement Notice. Bid Reference No: 17/SMC/SBP/2024-25. Tender ID No: 2024_ORULR_106282.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER RURAL WORKS DIVISION: BOLANGIR. e-Procurement Notice. IFB IDENTIFICATION NO. BEBLGR-Online-05/2024-25.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER MINOR IRRIGATION DIVISION, MAYURBHANJ. e-Procurement Notice. Identification No-S.E.M.I.D. MBJ.No.- 07/MID, MBJ/2024-25.

OFFICE OF THE DIVISIONAL FOREST OFFICER BALASORE WILDLIFE DIVISION. e-Procurement Notice. Bid Identification No. DFO-BLS-01/2024-25.

OFFICE OF THE DIVISIONAL FOREST OFFICER, PARALAKHEMUNDI DIVISION. INVITATION FOR BIDS. E-Procurement Bid Identification No. DFO-PKD -01/2024-25.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER OF HORTICULTURE (NORTHERN ZONE), AT/PO- FARM ROAD, SAMBALPUR-768002. Notice No.: 1238 / EE / Hort / NZ / 2024-25.

Harmanpreet features in 50-player for WBBL Team of the Decade

PTI ■ MELBOURNE



Captain Harmanpreet Kaur is the lone entry from India in the 50-player shortlist for the Women's Big Bash League (WBBL) Team of the Decade, which was released on Thursday.

Duffin, Rene Farrell, Ashleigh Gardner, Heather Graham, Nicola Hancock, Grace Harris, Laura Harris, Rachael Haynes, Alyssa Healy, Sammy-Jo Johnson, Jess Jonassen, Marizanne Kapp (International), Harmanpreet Kaur (International), Delissa Kinnimce, Alana King, Heather Knight (International), Meg Lanning, Lizelle Lee (International), Katien Mack, Hayley Matthews (International), Tahlia McGrath, Tegan McPharlin, Sophie Molineux, Beth Mooney, Ellyse Perry, Rachel Priest (International), Georgia Redmayne, Amy Satterthwaite (International), Megan Schutt, Natalie Sciver-Brunt (International), Molly Strano, Annabel Sutherland, Stafanie Taylor (International), Dane van Niekerk (International), Elyse Villani, Georgia Wareham, Amanda-Jade Wellington, Laura Wolvaardt (International), Danni Wyatt-Hodge (International), Jess (International).

and the panel will then review and combine those votes with their own selections to finalise the 12-player side, to be announced at the WBBL 10 final on December 1.

AFFIDAVIT. I, Sambunatha Mallick, S/Late Gobardhan Mallick, resident of Plot No. A-241, Phase-5, Dumda Housing Board Colony, Ps.-Khandagiri, Bhubaneswar-751019, Dist.-Khurda, Odisha declare by this affidavit No. 110, dtd. 19.10.2024 that now onwards I shall be known as SAMBHUNATH MALLICK for all future purposes.