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# Manipur volatile, HM monitoring state

mid escalating unrest in Manipur, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday cancelled all his rallies in poll-bound Maharashtra and returned to Delhi to hold a meeting to review the volatile situation. Irate mobs set fire to the residences of three more Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) legislators, one of whom is a senior Minister, and also the home of a Congress MLA in various districts of Imphal Valley, even as security forces foiled the attempt of agitators to storm the ancestral residence of Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh, officials said.

Later in the evening, the Home Minister held a meeting with senior security and intelligence officials, and reviewed the Manipur situation. Meanwhile, Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) chief Anish Dayal Singh reached imphal on Sunday, to monitor and security coordinate the operations in the region.

The fresh incidents of violent protests took place on Saturday night even as an indefinite curfew was clamped after people, agitated by the killing of three women and children each by militants in Jiribam district, attacked the residences of three state Ministers and six MLAs earlier on Saturday.

Meanwhile, the Manipur Government has requested the Centre to review and withdraw AFSPA from areas falling under the jurisdiction of six police stations in the The Centre has reimposed the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958 in Manipur's six police station areas, including violence-hit



Security personnel patrol in a sensitive area of Manipur. Search operations and area domination were conducted by security forces in the fringe and vulnerable areas of hill and valley districts of the state

Affairs had, on November 14, reimposed AFSPA in areas falling under Sekmai PS and Lamsang PS in Imphal West district, Lamlai in Imphal East, Moirang in Bishnupur, Leimakhong in Kangpokpi and Jiribam in Jiribam

Enraged people torched the houses of PWD Minister Govindas Konthoujam at Ningthoukhong, Hiyanglam's BJP MLA Y Radheshyam at Langmeidong Bazar, Wangjing Tentha's BJP MLA Paonam Brojen in Thoubal district and Khundrakpam's Congress MLA Th Lokeshwar in Imphal East district, the officials said. The legislators and their family members were not at home when the angry mob stormed their residential compounds,

## NPP withdraws support to BJP

PTI SHILLONG/IMPHAL

The National People's Party (NPP) on Sunday withdrew support to the BJPled government in violencehit Manipur, claiming that the N Biren Singh dispensation has "completely failed to resolve the crisis and restore normalcy" in the Northeastern state. The NPP has 7 MLAs in the 60member Manipur assembly. In the last few days, the situation in Manipur further deteriorated and many more innocent lives have been lost

the houses were partially burnt in the incidents. Jiribam. vandalised properties and set Fire services rushed to the night, protesters also Union Ministry of Home the houses on fire, police said, spots and doused the blaze advanced towards Biren

He also met Edward

Morton, founder of CT

developments in semiconduc-

received a complaint about a

man using his son for reli-

gious activities that is hurting

the sentiments of people. We

have sought a report from the

Bharatpur PS IIC. The District

Child Protection Officer has

also been directed to launch a

days to submit the report.

Necessary action will be taken

based on the report," she

Earlier, a voluntary

"We have given them 15

probe into the matter."

Welfare Committee files case suo motto

"going through immense suffering", the NPP claimed in a letter to BJP chief J P Nadda. "We strongly feel that the Manipur state government under the leadership of Shri Biren Singh has completely failed to resolve the crisis and restore normalcy. "Keeping the current situation in mind, the National People's Party has decided to withdraw its support to the Biren Singh government in the state of Manipur, with immediate effect," the letter said.

before the flames engulfed the houses. On Saturday

Singh's ancestral residence at Luwangsangbam in Imphal East but were stopped short of 100-200 metres by security forces. Security personnel, including Assam Rifles, BSF and state forces, fired several rounds of tear gas shells, rubber bullets to disperse the protesters and foiled the attempt to damage Singh's house, officials said.

Later, protesters burnt tyres on the main road leading to Biren Singh's residence and piled iron roads to prevent vehicular movement. Protests continued till around 11 pm in Mantripukhri area, some 3-4 km from the CM's ancestral home. Many of the protesters had come in vehicles from other constituencies, and not from the Heingang Assembly seat, which the CM

# **Embarrassed by 'Sheesh Mahal', infighting Kailash Gahlot quits AAP**

RAJESH KUMAR

Arvind Kejriwal's Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) received a massive setback just months before the Delhi Assembly elections, as senior minister and veteran leader Kailash Gahlot, who had claimed to be Kejriwal's "Hanuman", on Sunday resigned from the primary membership of the party and the council of ministers, citing the 'sheesh mahal' controversy, and the party unnecessary fighting with the Centre for setting their own political agenda.

With this, four MLAs, including three ministers, have resigned from the AAP Rajendra Pal Gautam joined the Congress in September, Patel Nagar and Chattarpur MLAs Raaj Kumar Anand and Kartar

Singh Tanwar joined the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) during the Lok Sabha polls. Gahlot is the third minister of the AAP led Delhi government who quitted in the past one-and-half years. In his resignation letter addressed to AAP's National Convener Arvind Kejriwal and Delhi Chief Minister Atishi, Gahlot also cited unfulfilled promises and recent controversies as reasons for stepping down. Gahlot has held key positions within Delhi government, including the portfolios of Transport, Law, Information Technology, Administrative Reforms, and

Gahlot pointed to the "grave challenges" facing the party Gahlot, a prominent figure in the party, also took a jab at Kejriwal while flagging some exit.

and

Child

Women

Development.

Gehlot was

"awkward" "embarrassing" controversies like 'sheesh mahal', saying it makes everyone doubt if "we still believe in being the 'Aam Aadmi". Gahlot's reference to the 'sheesh mahal' controversy comes against the backdrop of BJP leaders' charge that Kejriwal spent crores on lavish items and modern facilities at his former official residence at 6 Flagstaff Road. The BJP had dubbed Kejriwal's earlier residence as 'sheesh mahal'. Meanwhile, the AAP national convener refused to take a question on Gahlot's shock resignation at a press conference held at the party office hours after Gahlot's resignation and promptly turned the microphone towards MLA Durgesh Pathak, seated next to him. When pressed for his response, Kejriwal said with a smile, "You want an answer, right?" before Pathak began speaking. In fact, the former Chief Minister spoke soon after, criticised the BJP but spoke did not mention Gahlot's

responsible, Pathak said questioned and raided by Enforcement Directorate (ED) and Income Tax for months. "So he did not have a choice. But this makes it clear that BJP has lost the Delhi election. They have no issue, they are fighting on the basis of ED, Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and Income Tax and we are fighting on people's issues," he said. Earlier, AAP's Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh said

Gahlot's resignation is a part of BJP's "dirty politics". "It's a "dirty political conspiracy of the BJP and it wants to win the Delhi Assembly polls by misusing the ED and CBI", he charged. On the other hand, the BJP was quick to respond to Gahlot's announcement. Delhi BJP chief Virendra Sachdeva welcomed Gahlot's resignation, saying he took a brave step. "Gahlot stepped down raising the same issues for which the BJP was protesting and fighting against Kejriwal and AAP.

# CM Majhi meets business tycoons in Singapore

Urges them for investments in Odisha

PNS BHUBANESWAR

hief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, who is on a four-day visit to Singapore, Make-in- Odisha Conclave, Yin, group president and CEO met several top business leaders on Sunday and urged them to make investments and set up ventures in Odisha.

Majhi, who is in Singapore along with a high-level delegation from Saturday to attend a road show-cum-investors' meet, held discussions with a number of business leaders ahead of the Utkarsh Odisha

▲ he Child Welfare Com-

mittee on Sunday filed a suo

motu case against a man for

allegedly projecting his son as

the reincarnation of Kalki

Avatar or Lord Vishnu in the

Bharatpur police station area

Furthermore, the commit-

tee sought a report from the

Bharatpur police regarding

the matter. A deadline of 15

days was set for submission of

of Bhubaneswar.

Kalki Avatar of boy



2025. The CM urged of Sembcorp Industries Lim-Singapore-based Singapore Pte Ltd to set up its unit in Odisha. He met Ravin Jhunjhunwala, chairman of Orind Singapore Pte Ltd, who is looking to invest in the biofertilisers sector.

Majhi also met Vivek Agarwal, promoter of Visa Group Ltd, and Wong Kim

given to the District Child

Protection Officer to investi-

One Kashinath Mishra has

been accused of projecting his

son as the Kalki\_Avatar. The

controversy erupted after

photographs of Mishra's son

surfaced, showing him sitting

in a chair with sacred Tulsi at

Odisha State Child Protec-

tion Rights Commission

(OSCPPRC) Chairperson

gate the matter thoroughly.

Stating that semiconductors and electronics manufac-

> turing are a thrust sector for Odisha, he assured that the State Government would take proactive measures to ensure development of a robust electronics ecosystem in the State. as Chief Minister and we chose

Singapore for the Odisha business meet due to its thriving Metrix; BC Tan, chairman of industrial ecosystem and in-UBCT; along with Sushant practices. novative Patnaik, founder and CEO, Singapore's excellence in infraiHub Inc, and discussed the structure, logistics, and urban management presents valutors, medical equipment able lessons for our rapidly manufacturing and smart city urbanising State," Majhi said.

plaint against Kashinath and

his son at the Bharatpur po-

lice station. However, police

have not registered a case but

have received the complaint

"We have received a com-

plaint that the father-son duo

tried to hurt religious senti-

ments by projecting the son as

an incarnation of Lord Vishnu.

It is too premature to say con-

clusively what happened. A

probe will be initiated to un-

cover the truth," Zone ACP

and started a probe.

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#### Mandakini Kar said, "We had Tapas Pradhan said. organisation had filed a com-GRAP Stage IV invoked in NCR

RAJESH KUMAR NEW DELHI

s a thick blanket of smog Acontinued to engulf Delh $_{ar{i}}$ the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) sub-committee has decided to implement Stage IV of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) for Delhi-National Capital Region, that will come into effect from Monday at 8 am, owing to 'severe' air quality conditions which include complete halting construction and demolition activities that generate dust and a ban on truck entry.

Additionally, the government can choose to impose Oddrestrictions. Commission issued the order as Delhi's Air Quality Index



to disruptions in flights at at 8 pm. Due to unfavourable Indira Gandhi International weather conditions and dense Airport (IGIA). fog, visibility reduced to less

The India Meteorological than 50 metres in some parts Department (IMD) issued an of the National Capital, leading orange alert, warning of dense

fog on Monday morning. The decision to impose GRAP Stage IV was taken by the CAQM after meeting with all stakeholders on Sunday. According to the order, no trucks will be allowed into

Delhi except for those carrying essential items or using clean (LNG/CNG/BS-VI diesel/electric). Non-essential light commercial vehicles registered outside Delhi will also be prohibited, except for EVs and CNG and BS-VI diesel ones. Delhi-registered BS-IV or older diesel medium and heavy goods vehicles are banned, except for those in essential services, Commission said in its order. The CAQM order will be applicable for the NCR.

The usage of the medicine mentioned above is suggestive in nature and it is the choice of the treatment in the management of above-mentioned diseases Avoid self-medication and always take the medicines under medical supervision.

# 'Stern action against illegal sale of Jagannath land'

■Buyers, sellers, Sub-Registrars to face criminal charges ■Corpus fund planned from sale of

BHUBANESWAR

In the wake of an instance of illegal sale of land belonging to Lord Jagannath at Baselisahi in Puri, Law Minister Prithviraj Harichandan on Sunday warned of criminal action against buyers, sellers and concerned Sub-Regis-

encroached lands

"The illegal sale of Lord Jagannath's land will not be tolerated," he said while speaking to mediapersons.

Meanwhile, Harichandan

revealed that the Jagannath Temple's legal department is planning to sell off the Lord's encroached lands to raise a

In line with the 2003 Uniform Policy, settlements would be made for the encroached Jagannath lands. In Puri and other parts of the State, people have long held onto the deity's lands. This process aims to clear encroachments and can help create a corpus fund worth between Rs 8,000 and Rs 10,000 crore. The smallest



parcels of land would be sold at affordable rates, he said.

"After the formation of the temple's new Managing Committee, as per the 2003 Uniform Policy, settlement of all the lands belonging to Lord Jagannath will be done because most of the lands have been grabbed by criminals. This has happened not only in the minister said.

He said, "After the lands are freed from the grabbers, we will form a corpus fund. If anybody wants to buy the land they are grabbing, then they will have to pay the benchmark or the market value of the land. If everything goes well, we are sure of forming a corpus fund of Rs 8,000-Rs 10,000 crore.'

"First, we will focus on lands in Odisha and later on take steps to identify lands in other parts of the country that belong to Lord Jagannath. Strict action will be taken against those involved in the illegal sale of the Jagannath land," Harichandan added.

# 2 notorious chain snatchers held in city |

The Commissionerate police on Sunday arrested two notorious chain snatchers, who were allegedly involved in several chain snatching incidents in Bhubaneswar.

The two arrested were identified as Prafulla Navak and

During their grilling, it was ascertained that the duo had extensive knowledge of the layout of most streets and narrow lanes running through the city, which allowed them to target the victims and sped away from the spot with little resistance.

It also came to light that the duo has multiple cases registered against them with the



Commissionerate police. Furthermore, while Firoz was initially arrested on the November 9, Prafulla was absconding. Subsequently, the authorities have now apprehended a total of 15 such accused.

Sources said the police have now intensified their drive to nab more such criminals to curb the rising number of chain snatching incidents in the capital city

# Patapur police station 'best' in India



The Patapur police station in Ganjam district has been selected as one of the three best police stations in the country in 2024 by the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)

Union Home Minister Amit Shah will hand over the trophy to the Inspector-in-Charge of the police station in a convention of the Directors General of Police to be held at Bhubaneswar from November 29 to December 1.

The ranking of police stations across the country is an annual exercise by the MHA with the stations judged on the

Odisha Hockey Team

returns with historic win

rameters like crime rate, investigation and disposal of cases, infrastructure and delivery of public service. About 20 per cent of the total points are also based on feedback about the police station from citizens. "We are very happy as our

police station stands as one of the three best police stations in the country. It could be possible due to the teamwork of the staffs," said SP (Ganjam) Suvendu Kumar Patra. A team of the MHA had visited the 113year-old Patapur police station on September 28 to assess its infrastructure facilities and take feedback from the public about the community policing.

# Samanta gets Grand Cross Award

PNS BHUBANESWAR

Founder of KIIT and KISS Dr Achyuta Samanta has been conferred the 'Grand Cross Award', the highest honour from the International Volleyball Federation (FIVB). This recognition was bestowed upon him during the 39th FIVB World Congress held in Porto, Portugal, from November 15 to 17.

This award acknowledges Dr Samanta's outstanding contributions to the development of sports, particularly volleyball. FIVB President Dr Ary Graca presented the award to him in a ceremony attended by representatives



and presidents of volleyball associations from 222 coun-

Dr Samanta was specially invited to the World Congress. In his acceptance speech, Dr Samanta said, "I am deeply indebted to Lord Jagannath for this recognition and dedicate this award to Him. I also dedicate it to all sports enthusiasts and sportspersons of India, especially those from

## Central Varsity to study indigenous crops

The Central University of Odisha (CUO) Koraput has opened a germplasm plot at its Landiguda campus in Koraput to study different varieties of indigenous crops for conservation and potential reintroduction to mainstream

CUO Vice-Chancellor Chakradhar Tripathi inaugurated the germplasm conservation crop field on Wednes-

The germplasm plot is dedicated to conserving 104 varieties of indigenous rice, 87 types of finger millet, 30 species of local Niger, 15 types of little millet, five varieties of foxtail millet, 15 types of maize, and eight species of wild

These crops, integral to India's agrarian heritage, will be studied for conservation and potential reintroduction to mainstream agriculture.

Tripathi highlighted the urgent need to revive traditional crops, which are being overshadowed by modern, nonnative varieties.

"Our traditional farming practices are intertwined with our cultural heritage. Preserving these crops is essential not only for food security but for promoting health and sustainability," he said.

Dean of the School of Biodiversity & Conservation of Natural Resources Sharat Kumar Palita underscored the importance of bridging scientific research and practical application through a "lab-toland" approach.

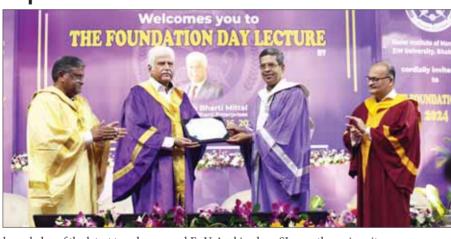
# XIM Univ foundation day

# Bharti Enterprises VC Mittal delivers talk

Conferred doctoral degree PNS BHUBANESWAR

The Xavier Institute of Management, XIM University, Bhubaneswar, celebrated its Foundation Day ceremony on November 16 at its old campus here.

Vice-Chairman of Bharti Enterprises Rakesh Bharti Mittal delivered a talk on the occasion. A passionate advocate for quality education, Mittal is actively engaged in enhancing school and higher education through multiple roles. He stressed the importance of preparing the younger generation for the future by raising their awareness and equipping them with



knowledge of the latest trends and technologies.

The presence of key officials of XIM University namely, Vice Chancellor Reverend Fr Antony R Uvari, SJ, Registrar Reverend Fr S Antony Raj, SJ and Chief Finance Officer Reverend Fr V Arokiyadass, SJ as well as prominent board members and distinguished faculty added prestige to the occasion. During the ceremony, Mittal was conferred the honorary doctoral degree in Business Management by

the university.

The event provided a good opportunity for the budding managers of the university to interact with Mittal. The celebration concluded with the vote of thanks by Registrar Reverend Fr S Antony Raj, SJ.

PNS BHUBANESWAR

The Odisha Men's Hockey Team has scripted history by winning 5-1 over Haryana in the final of the 14th Hockey India Senior Men's National Championship 2024. Notably, this was the first time ever that the State team had entered the final of the coveted hockey contest.

The team received a grand welcome on their arrival at the Biju Patnaik International Airport in Bhubaneswar on Sunday. A large crowd, including young school students, cheered them along the airport terminal entrance even as the players were seen shaking hands and interacting with them.

Governor Raghubar Das and Chief Minister Mohan Majhi congratulated the team for its historic achievement.

Odisha defeated a formidable Haryana team at Mayor Radhakrishnan Stadium in Chennai with Shilanand Lakra playing a crucial role by scoring a hat-trick of goals to se-

winning the 2024 Senior Men's National Championship is a "dream come true for

# 3 killed, 13 injured in separate road accidents

hree people lost their lives and at least 13 sustained severe injuries in separate road accidents across Odisha on Sunday.

In the first incident, Mahendra Jena, a fish vendor, was killed when a speeding truck ran over him in Paradip's Atharbanki. Jena was riding his bicycle to sell fish on the occasion of Chhadakhai when the accident occurred. Outraged by the in-



cident, locals staged a road blockade demanding restrictions on heavy vehicles' entry and adequate compensation for Jena's family

In another accident, Kahnu Pradhan, a youth from Baleswar, was fatally struck by an unidentified vehicle at Indira Square in Basta while returning home from work. The vehicle fled the scene after hitting him on NH-16. The local police seized the body and launched a manhunt to trace the absconding vehicle.

In the third incident, a female tourist, identified as Sarojini Behera, was killed and 13 others were critically injured when their vehicle overturned at Kendughati under the Mohana police limits in Gajapati district. The group, travelling from Bhubaneswar to Koraput's Gupteswar, faced the tragedy due to alleged rash driving. The injured were rescued

and initially admitted to the Mohana Community Health Centre. Two victims in critical condition were later transferred to the MKCG Medical Hospital College Brahmapur.

The vehicle, carrying 15 people including the driver, met with the accident due to reckless driving, according to the injured passengers.

cure the team's victory. Hockey India's president Dilip Tirkey said that Odisha

# **CONTEMPORARIES**

# J&K resolution undermines national unity

by the Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) Assembly advocating for dialogue on the restoration of the region's special status is a retrogressive move that threatens to unravel the significant progress achieved since the abrogation of Article 370 in August 2019. This demand not only disregards the Constitutional mandate but also risks reigniting separatist sentiments, thereby undermining the hard-won stability and socioeconomic development in the region.

Article 370 was incorporated into the Constitution in 1949 which granted J&K a special autonomous status, allowing it to have its own constitution and limiting the Indian Parliament's legislative powers over the State. This provision was intended as a temporary measure to facilitate the State's integration into India. However, over the decades, it became a symbol of separatism and an impediment to the region's socioeconomic progress. The special status fostered a sense of isolation, hindering the full implementation of progressive laws and contributing to a climate



**S JYOTIRANJAN** 

conducive to militancy and unrest. On August 5, 2019, the Government of India took the decisive step of abrogating Article 370, thereby nullifying J&K's special status and bifurcating the State into two Union Territories: Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh. This move aimed to integrate the region more fully into the Indian Union, ensuring uniform application of laws and fostering socioeconomic development. Despite initial apprehensions, the abrogation has led to notable improvements in security and development indicators.

Since the abrogation, J&K has witnessed a significant decline in

militancy-related incidents. According to official data, terror incidents in the region decreased by over 30% between 2019 and 2023. This reduction is attributed to enhanced security measures and effective counter-insurgency operations. The dismantling of the politico-separatist nexus, which thrived under the erstwhile special provisions, has further weakened the support base for militancy. The improved security situation is also reflected in the resurgence of tourism with the region recording an all-time high in tourist arrivals in

The abrogation of Article 370 has paved the way for extensive economic integration and  $in frastructural\ investments\ in\ J\&K.$ The region is now subject to over 890 Central laws that were previously inapplicable, including progressive legislation such as the Right to Education Act and the Prevention of Corruption Act. These have marginalised communities and ensured greater socioeconomic inclu-

Under the Prime Minister's De-

empowered

velopment Package (PMDP), substantial funds have been allocated for projects aimed at infrastructure, health, education and employment generation. Notable initiatives include the construction of Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla rail link, which is expected to connect the Valley to the rest of India by 2025, thereby boosting trade and tourism. The region has also seen unprecedented investments in road and highway projects, creating new economic corridors that promise to transform the local economy.

In terms of employment, the government's focus on fostering entrepreneurship has yielded positive results, especially among the youth. Schemes like the Himayat Program and the Skill India Mission have empowered thousands of young Kashmiris to pursue self-employment opportunities. The industrial policy of 2021, which offers incentives to investors, has attracted significant investments in sectors such as manufacturing, agriculture and information technology, thereby creating job opportunities and reducing the region's dependence on government subsidies.

The post-abrogation era has also witnessed a focus on education and women empowerment. The region now boasts of an improved literacy rate, particularly among women who were previously denied many educational opportunities due to regressive norms perpetuated under the guise of special provisions. Initiatives like the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao campaign have led to increased school enrolments while new scholarships and vocational training programmes are empowering young women to become self-reliant.

The repeal of Article 35A, which prohibited non-residents from purchasing property in J&K, has been a game-changer for gender equality. Previously, women who married outside the State lost their property rights-a regressive provision that no longer holds sway in the reformed J&K. This change not only upholds constitutional principles of equality but also opens up avenues for women to assert their economic indepen-

In light of these significant strides towards progress, the J&K Assembly's resolution demanding dialogue on reinstating special provisions is both misguided and detrimental. It represents an attempt by vested interests to reclaim a status quo that fostered corruption, nepotism and political dynasties under the veil of special status. Reverting to the pre-2019 status would risk reigniting separatist sentiments and jeopardising the peace and development that have been painstakingly achieved.

India, as a sovereign nation, cannot afford to entertain demands that undermine its territorial integrity and constitutional values. The assertion that special provisions are necessary for safeguarding the cultural and political identity of Kashmiris overlooks the inclusive and pluralistic spirit enshrined in the Indian Constitution. Kashmiris, like all citizens of India, are entitled to the same rights, privileges and opportunities, no

more, no less. The abrogation of Article 370 was a bold and necessary step in

bringing J&K into the mainstream of national development. The region has already reaped the benefits of this decision through improved security, enhanced investments and greater socioeconomic inclusion. The J&K Assembly's resolution, far from being a constructive initiative, is an ill-advised move that threatens to undo the progress made thus far.

India must stand firm against any attempts to turn back the clock on this vital reform. The future of J&K lies not in resurrecting the ghosts of past privileges but in embracing a shared destiny within the Union of India. Let pragmatism, not populism, guide the discourse as we strive to build a more prosperous, secure and inclusive nation.

(The writer is an advocate, Orissa High Court, Addl. Central Government Standing Counsel, CAT, Cuttack Bench, Consulting Editor-Legal Affairs and Public Policy, The Pioneer and a Distinguished Adjunct Professor of Law and Media Studies, School of Mass Communication, KIIT University. Views are personal)

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# BJP leader escapes attempt on life

After supporters arrive in nick of time

PNS RAYAGADA

 ${
m B}_{
m JP}$  leader and Rayagada MLA candidate Basanta Kumar Ullaka narrowly escaped an alleged murder bid after his supporters reached the spot at the nick of time. The attackers fled after seeing his supporters, leaving Basant unharmed.

Sources said the incident



occurred while Basanta was sitting in the local party office at Vidyanagar. The miscreants armed with swords and other sharp-edged weapons tried to barge into the office and attack

Basanta. The attackers vandalissd the office and tried to barge into Basanta's room by breaking open the door. They completely damaged the door and were about to enter

Aims to provide

holistic edu in

RAJ KUMAR SHARMA

he Vidya Vikash Group of

Institutions has acquired

Aparna World School in

Vidya Vikash International

tional expertise across Odisha

and foster students develop-

The announcement was

made by Vidya Vikash Group

MDG Bhaskar Rao during a

The Odisha Government

has signed an MoU with the

Anil Agarwal Foundation to

upgrade 500 Anganwadi Cen-

tres across Jharsuguda dis-

Jharsuguda

**JHARSUGUDA** 

ers reached the spot. The miscreants fled the scene after seeing his supporters.

The exact motive behind the incident remained unclear as authorities are still investigating the matter. The incident sparked tension in the area, leading police to detain two suspects. Authorities have confiscated a sword from the individuals.

Basanta demanded a thorough investigation to uncover the truth behind the incident.

## In Kendrapada

# Man gets 20-yr RI for raping minor girl

 ${
m A}$ dditional District Judge and Special Judge (POCSO) Prangya Parmita Roul on Saturday convicted a person to 20 years' rigorous imprisonment (RI) for raping a minor girl in the Nikarai police station area in Kendapada district in June

The convict identified as Kapilendra Mallick was also directed by the court to pay a fine of Rs 50,000.

Kapilendra had raped the nine-year-old girl and threatened her of dire con-

gence and Mathematics. For

sports enthusiasts, the school

will offer amenities like a swim-

ming pool, skating rink, bas-

ketball and cricket grounds,

and an indoor badminton

court, with professional

coaches available for student

Aligned with the latest New

Education Policy (NEP), the

school will follow the CBSE

guidance.

Vidya Vikash Group acquires Aparna World Schoo

sequences if she revealed the matter to anyone.

Later, the family members of the victim lodged a complaint against Kapilendra, who was later arrested by police and forwarded to court, from where he was remanded into iail custody.

The court pronounced the judgement after verifying the evidence and hearing the depositions of 19 witnesses.

The District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) was ordered to pay a fine of Rs 4 lakh

curriculum. Starting in Class

6, a techno programme will

help students build a founda-

tion for national entrance ex-

ams. For Classes 11 and 12, the

programme will prepare stu-

dents for both board exams

and competitive exams,

guided by experienced faculty,

said Vidya Vikash Group di-

International School L

Bhuvaneshwari assured that

the institution would provide

"world-class education" at an

affordable cost, aiming to

serve students in Jharsuguda

and neighbouring areas.

Vidya Vikash Group officials

and school management were

Apart from the MoU-sign-

present at the Press meet.

Principal of Vidya Vikash

rector G Ramakrishna.

integrated

school's

## **INBRIEF**

#### Keonjhar girl tops State-level test

Keonjhar: Manjulata Barik, a Class-X student of Japidas Govt High School, Badarampas, Keonjhar topped in the essay writing competition in the State held under the Suravai programme of the State Government. This has been a matter of pride for the locality as well as for the whole district



Manjulata is the daughter of Mamata Barik and Susanta Kumar Barik of Nuarampas village. Susanta works in the Home Department. Manjulata has given credit for her success to her teachers, parents and the Almighty.

#### Children's Day held at Kakatpur school

Kakatpur: Jahan Public School, Kakatpur, observed the

Children's Day and Pandit [ Jawaharlal Nehru's birth anniversary under the guidance of director of the institution, Sumitra Ghosh. School principal Mamata Mohapatra and teachers

including Madhusmita Padhiary, Ashish Sahu, Prem Shankar Pujari, Bishnupriya Behera, Sasmita Samal, Lopamudra Malla and

Manasi Dash among others were present. The students were given motivational speech and distributed with sweets. Dancing and singing by students were also organised.

#### **Mankind Pharma creates awareness on diabetes**

Bhubaneswar: India is recognised as the diabetes capital of the world with a high incidence of diabetes and related complications affecting millions. Poor lifestyle choices and inadequate diagnosis are key factors driving the epidemic, leading to alarming rates of heart and kidney disorders among individuals with diabetes. In an innovative effort to address this



nealth crisis, Mankind Pharma, in collaboration with the Research Society for Diabetes in India (RSSDI), raised awareness on the importance of early diabetes diagnosis, diet and exercise through an impactful sand art initiative in this year's

# World Diabetes Day. 'Story book 'Chapala

# Pokhari' by Sahu released



The fifth story-book of eminent litterateur Padmanabh Sahu has been released here before an august gathering. The colourful book release ceremony was organised by

"Mayurbhanj

Padmashree Damayanti

Panda and Dr Nilakanth Mishra were special guests on the occasion.

Mavurbhani Sahitya Parishad secretary Manoj

# Talk on Indian edu system held at BU



BRAHMAPUR

An extramural talk focused on the Indian education system was organised under the guidance of Berhampur University Vice-Chancellor (BU) Geetanjali Dash on Saturday. The event commenced with a welcome address by the session's Coordinator Dr Satyanarayan Sahu.

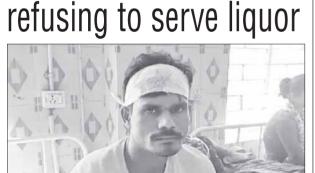
Programme Director Dr Sadanand Nayak highlighted the core aspects of the Indian education system. VC Professor Geetanjali Dash emphasised the significance of the Indian education system and its application in educational policies., Head of the Postgraduate Department

Professor Sukanta Kumar Tripathy spoke on the importance of the heritage and culture

of Indian education. Jharsuguda, rebranding it as Telecommunications Additional Director M Murali School. The group, recognized Krishna illustrated the relfor its two decades of educaevance of the Indian education system with several examples. and Chhattisgarh, aims to Telecommunications Deputy provide holistic education Director Subrat Kumar Prusty elaborated on the history and culture of Indian education with various insights. Basudev Mishra also provided an in-depth discus-Press conference held here on sion on the glorious past of the Indian education system. The Pact with Agarwal Fdn to transform 500 AWCs session concluded with a vote

of thanks delivered by Dr

#### Satyanarayan Sahu. In Bhadrak Bar staff attacked for



BHADRAK

A bar employee was attacked for refusing to serve liquor to a group of men near

Motel Chhak under the Town police station in Bhadrak on Saturday night. Sources said four miscreants allegedly assaulted the employee, identified as Ranjit

Kumar Jena. Following the at-

tack, Jena was admitted to

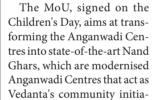
the District Headquarters

Hospital with severe head in-

The sources said the group arrived at the bar and demanded alcohol at around 11:30 pm. However, since the bar had

already closed, Jena did not take the order and refused to serve liquor despite repeated requests. Livid with rage over the refusal, the group turned violent and attacked Jena.

Getting information, the Town police reached the spot and began an investigation.



tive for promoting a holistic

development of women and

children.

Wednesday.

Chairman of the Laxmi

Vikash Group of Institutions,

D Nageshwar Rao highlighted

that the new school will oper-

ate as a day and boarding in-

stitution, equipped with mod-

ern facilities. The campus will

feature an e-library, smart

classrooms, and specialized

STEM labs for advanced sub-

jects such as Artificial Intelli-

The MoU was signed in the presence of Revenue Minister Suresh Pujari, Jharsuguda MLA Tankadhar Tripathy and district Collector Aboli

Officer Sunil Gupta said, "Through the Nand Ghar initiative, we aim to provide our young generation and women with the necessary tools for a

Vedanta Chief Operating

ing programme, a Children's Day event, "Dukan Jatra", brought together over 3,500 participants, including students from 60 schools, community members and Vedanta Aluminium's employee volunteers. The event featured an 'Entrepreneurship Showcase' with 60-plus stalls run by students, offering a diverse range of selfmade products from handicrafts to food items, fostering creativity and entrepreneur-

## In Dhenkanal • Protest as FIR not registered against Tehsildar

About 20,000 supporters of BJP leader Er Debashisha Hota gheraoed Dhenkanal Collector's office after a huge rally from Dakhinakali due to non-registration of FIR by him against Dhenkanal Tehsildar Litusmita Mishra.

On July 20, Er Hota's supporters had gheraoed Dhenkanal Tehsil Office opposing rampant corruption in the Tehsil office. When the then Collector Amrit Ritiraj



came to know that the agitators were preparing to block the National Highway, he directed the then Sub Collector Sapan Kumar Nanda to solve the issue. The Sub Collector called a meeting with Er Hota. The Sub Collector assured action against corruption in 7 days, after which the agitation was postponed.

On July 22, Tehsildar Litusmita Mishra submitted a letter before the Collector and the Sub Collector with a false allegation to harass Er Hota,

angry over his rally. In the letter, she alleged that Er Hota was trying to grab land illegally.

Hence on October 28, Er Hota submitted a request letter to the Collector and the SP to direct the IIC, Dhenkanal Town Police Station to lodge an FIR against Tehsildar Mishra for hatching a conspiracy against him by misuse of official power and corruption. Since the FIR was not registered by the police, Hota held the demonstration, he

Mayurbhanj's premier literorganization

Parishad" and was presided over by writer Kaberi Mishra.

Beshra was the chief guest. While 'Sagarika' editor Sairindri Sahu was the chief speaker and Sashiranjan Mallik the guest of honour,

'Eco project at Pentha beach to be harmful for turtles'

Dalbehera, at the outset, introduced the guests and delivered the welcome speech. Others present on the occasion included Ajit Kumar Kabat, Jayant Kumar Dwari, Samarendra Kumar Basa, Swarup Kumar Nayak and Shiulal Mohanta. The book consists of 36 short stories. The characters in the stories have been beautifully depicted, the analysts said.

# **Dalmia Bharat's**

# Project Annadata transforms lives of 5K farmers PNS PRAJGANGPUR

The Dalmia Cement Bharat Limited (DCBL) is making a transformative impact in rural Odisha through its sustainable farming initiative, Project Annadata. Launched in 2023 with an initial focus on 800 farmers, the project quickly expanded to reach over 5,000 farmers in 31 villages across Sundergarh district.

Project Annadata provides rural farmers with high-quality paddy seeds, access to community-led grain banks, and repurposes waste paddy straw through a buyback programme as an alternative fuel resource. This adaptable approach not only improves productivity and enhances income for farmers but also contributes to significant carbon emission reductions, helping to build both economic and



The initiative was also recently recognized as the "Best Sustainable Project of the Year 2023-24" at the 4th Sustainability Summit and

Awards by UBS Forum. In its first year, Project Annadata has made a significant impact on rural communities, collecting over 400 tons of straw from 1,000 families. The initiative has provided

farmers with additional revenue, reduced air pollution by preventing straw burning, and repurposed the straw as ecofriendly fuel for Dalmia Cement's operations.

By distributing high-quality seeds, the project has also enabled farmers to produce 10 to 15 quintals of paddy per acre, boosting food security and enhancing their livelihoods. Farmers have experilift, adding an average of Rs 5,300 per month to their earn-Executive Director of

DCBL and Unit Head of Chetan Rajgangpur, Shrivastav stated, "We are extremely proud of what we have been able to achieve in one year and look forward to continuing to set new standards in responsible business practices."

#### Environmentalist urges govt to stop project

RAJESH BEHERA **KENDRAPADA** 

A local environmentalist has raised concern over the State government's eco-retreat plan at Pentha beach in Bhitarkanika and demanded that the plan be dropped as the project would pose a serious threat to the endangered Olive Ridley turtles' nesting site.

Alaya Samantaray, a resident of Marshaghai tehsil in Kendrapada district, has written a letter to the State Chief Secretary, Additional Chief Secretary of Forest and Environment as well as the Deputy Director General of Forests and ADG Forests at MoEFCC seeking their immediate intervention in the matter.

Environmentalist Samantaray alleged that some



illegal and environmentally unsustainable activities have been taking place in the name of eco-tourism inside the Bhitarkanika Wildlife Sanctuary. Pentha is one of the nesting sites of Olive Ridley Sea turtle, which is an endangered

Some of the threats these sea turtles face in Odisha are drowning in shrimp nets, getting caught in net, development of nesting beaches, be-

sides habitat and light pollution. The polluted beaches make unsuitable for turtles to nest. The high predation by feral and wild animals are a hindrance and moreover, the human activities are harmful for habitat and breeding of turtles, he said. The eco retreat project

wherein 25 luxury tents would be set up for 3 months, besides provisions of motorised water sports, recreational activihighly illuminated lights and garbages would have harmful impact on the pristine beach, he said further. "These activities are prohib-

ited under the Wildlife Protection Act 1972. In the name of eco-retreat, mass tourism is promoted which is antithetic to the core principles of ecotourism. So, the proposed ecoretreat programme may be stopped," urged Samantaray.

# Mumbai police makes new arrest in Baba Siddique murder case

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

The Mumbai Crime Branch on Sunday arrested a Gujarat resident from Akola in Maharashtra in connection with the Baba Siddique murder case, taking the number of people held in the sensational assassination to 25, an official

Salmanbhai Iqbalbhai Vohra, a resident of Petlad in Gujarat's Anand district, was held from Balapur in Akola, some 565 kilometres from Mumbai, with the help of the police there, the Crime Branch official said. The 66-year-old NCP leader



12 near his MLA son Zeeshan Siddique's office in Bandra East's Nirmal Nagar area. "Vohra had opened a bank account in May this year and provided financial support to Nareshkumar accused Gurmail Singh, Mohol Rupesh Harishkumar. He has also helped others connected to the crime," the official said.

Gurmail Singh from Haryana and Uttar Pradesh resident Dharmaraj Kashyap were held from the spot immediately after the murder.

The police recently got a major breakthrough in the case when it arrested alleged main shooter Shivkumar Gautam from Bahraich in Uttar Pradesh. Gautam, who was on the run since October 12, was held while trying to flee to Nepal, as per

# PM praises 'The Sabarmati Report' movie

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday praised the film "The Sabarmati Report', saying the "truth is coming out." "Well said. It is good that this truth is coming out, and this truth is coming out, and that too in a way common people can see it. A fake narrative can persist only for a limited period of time. Eventually, the facts will always come out!" the prime minister said in a social media post.

He made these assertions while replying to an social media user who had tagged him with a video of the trailer of the film, which released on 'The Sabarmati Report' is based on the

burning of S-6 coach of Sabarmati Express near Godhra station of Gujarat on February 27, 2002, in which 59 Hindu devotees returning from Ayodhya were burnt to death. The incident triggered riots in Gujarat that

year.
Dheeraj Sarna has directed
"The Sabarmati Report",
produced by Shobha Kapoor,
Ektaa R Kapoor, Amul V Mohan and Anshul Mohan. The film features Vikrant Massey, Raashii Khanna and Ridhi Dogra.

This is not the first time when Prime Minister Narendra Modi has praised a film. In 2022, he praised Vivek Agnihotri's 'The Kashmir

# Nadda repeats PM claims on Bangladeshis, infiltration in Jharkhand



PTI RANCHI

JP Nadda, president of the BJP, on Sunday attacked the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM)-led coalition government in Jharkhand, accusing it of sheltering Bangladeshi infiltrators in madrasas in the state and ensuring Aadhaar, voter ID card, gas connection, ration card and land for them.

Nadda also hit out at Congress leader Rahul Gandhi saying he wants to become champion of OBCs, but questioned how many OBC members were in Rajiv Gandhi Foundation and National Advisory

Committee. have received an intelligence report just now. It that Bangladeshi infiltrators are given shelter in madrasas here. Their Aadhaar, voter ID, gas connection and ration card are facilitated and then the Hemant Soren government ensures land for them.

"Hemant Soren looted jaljungle-jameen of Jharkhand, infiltration is rampant here. Infiltrators are marrying tribal women and grabbing their land. We will bring a legislation to ensure that their offspring is debarred from land. Only PM Modi-led BJP government can check infiltration," Nadda said while addressing a poll rally at addressing a poll rally at Gomia in Bokaro district. He also termed the entire

JMM-RJD-Congress as a kunba (family) of corrupt leaders and added that INDIA bloc leaders were either in jail "Hemant Soren, who is out on

bail, will again go to prison. He has indulged in Rs 5,000crore mining scam, Rs 236-crore land scam, and several other scams," Nadda alleged. Hemant government followed divide

be forming the government here," Nadda said.

the world's most affordable and rule policy and created unrest among people. Now it He said five medical colleges is time for their exit. We will

He alleged that the Hemant Soren government betrayed people, looted state and promoted dynastic politics.

"I say this with pride that there are 27 OBC ministers in PM Modi's cabinet," he said. PM Modi-led NDA government is bringing OBCs, tribals and SCs to the

mainstream, he claimed. "The BJP-led government at the Centre spent Rs 19 lakh crore to augment infrastructure and will spend Rs 10 lakh crore more on it,' he added.

Nadda also said that under the Modi regime, agriculture budget increased by five times and India became the thirdautomobile manufacturer, second-largest steel maker, third-biggest market for toys and produces

were being set up in Jharkhand and PM Modi had allocated Rs 250 crore each

# Rahul urges PM to visit Manipur

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

The Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, on Saturday termed the recent string of violent clashes and continuing bloodshed in Manipur "deeply disturbing", as he urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to visit the state and work towards restoring peace in the region restoring peace in the region. A day after the bodies of three out of six missing persons were fished out of a river in

Three young women, all in their early 20s, drowned

on Sunday morning in the swimming pool of a beach

resort in Someshwara Uchula

near Mangalore where they

were staying.
The youngsters, Nishita
(21), Parvathi (20) and

Keerthana (21), all hailing

from Mysuru, were playing

in the swimming pool of the

resort when tragedy struck leading to the mishap.

Saturday attacked the residences of three state ministers and six MLAs, prompting the government to clamp prohibitory orders in five districts for an indefinite period besides suspending internet services in parts of the state.

protesters

In a post on X, Rahul Gandhi said the recent string of violent clashes and continuing bloodshed in Manipur is deeply disturbing. "After more than a year of

to the Wa Beach Resort,

theyoungsters drowned in

the water, and when another

tried to rescue her, she too

drowned, leading the third woman to enter the water.

This incident reportedly

occurred within a matter of

The resort staff discovered

the incident and raised the

alarm. Visuals from the

installed in

minutes.

one

the incident

on division and suffering, it was the hope of every Indian that the Central and state governments would make every effort at reconciliation and found a solution," the former Congress chief said.
"I urge the PM once again to visit Manipur and work

towards restoring peace and healing in the region," Gandhi said. In Imphal, angry protesters ransacked the houses of three legislators, including that of Chief Minister N Biren Singh's son-

showing the young women

struggling in the water. A team led by Ullal police inspector HN Balakrishna

has visited the scene and is

Though the resort and

police authorities claim that

it was a mishap caused by

the negligence, there are instances like young

women getting killed in

mysterious circumstances in

Kerala and Karnataka

young

conducting

investigation.

properties on fire even as the security forces fired tear gas shells to disperse the agitators. The Congress has been attacking the prime minister for not visiting Manipur, besides slamming the Centre for its handling of the situation in the ethnic strife-torn northeastern state. The violence between Meiter and Kuki communities in Manipur has claimed more than 200 lives since May last

Three women drown to death in Mangalore Shajan (first runner-up in Miss Kerala championship) and Ansi Kabeer, model, were killed in the wee hours of the day when the car they were travelling crashed against a two

wheeler. Though the police had taken into custody the owner of the star hotel where the ladies had their dinner and entertainment, nothing has been heard

#### BJP claims cleanchit on 40 per cent commission barb

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

The BJP in Karnataka on Sunday claimed that the Lokayukta probe has cleared the party's previous government from 40 per cent commission charges, and that the allegations levelled by the Congress against it as completely false. he BJP leaders said that it is

proved that the 40 per cent

commission allegation was part of the Congress' "tool kit". During the 2023 Assembly polls, the then opposition Congress had used the Karnataka State Contractors' Association's allegations of 40 per cent commission charge as a major weapon to corner the then BJP government, which is said to be one among the factors that led to the saffron party's debacle in the election.

# Bhramo Samaj, RK Mission clash over property in Shimla, seven injured



PTI SHIMLA

Seven people, including three police personnel were injured following a dispute between two Hindu groups here -- theHimalayan Brahmo Samaj and the Ramakrishna Mission Ashram -- in the heart of the state capital, police said on Sunday.

The premises of the Ramakrishna Mission Ashram, located within the Brahmo Samaj property near the Vidhan Sabha was also damaged in the conflict, they said. The clash occurred after over a 100 people, including elderly women associated with the Himalayan Brahmo Samaj, peacefully entered the ashram premises on Saturday evening to perform prayers, Sanjeev Kumar Gandhi Shimla superintendent of police (SP) said.

The group wished to continue their prayers into the night, but the members of the Ramakrishna Mission Ashram, who are in possession of the premises, objected, citing that they wished to close the ashram for

the night, Gandhi said. Anticipating a possible takeover attempt, as there is an ongoing dispute over the ownership of the property reported worth crores, the ashram authorities called the police and administration for assistance, said ashram office

According to the SP, it was a sensitive issue as it involved religious sentiments, hence police and administration were present at the spot, to mediate and resolve the matter. However, when

Himalayan Brahmo Samaj followers completed their prayers and agreed to leave on the condition that they will be allowed to perform prayers on Sunday, people gathered by the Ramakrishna Mission started pelting stones injuring seven people including three police personals, the SP said. FIRs have been registered against seven people including Sheetal Vyas, her husband ABVP leader Nitin Vyas, under sections 132 (assault against public servant discharging their duty), 121 (causing hurt to public servant), 221 (obstruction), 191 (unlawful assembly), 194 (2) (public fight disturbing peace) and 196 (2) (offence at place of worship) of the Bharatiya

Tanmahimanand, Swami secretary of the Ramakrishna Mission Ashram, alleged that the property was handed over to the ashram by the Brahmo Samaj for religious purposes and that the mission has been residing there since 2014.

Tanmahimanand said on Saturday, their gardener, who also looks after the ashram premises, and some union leaders held a conference in Kali Bari temple.

Thereafter, they entered the ashram as devotees and performed puja, heard pravachan and when at 8:30 pm they wished to close the ashram, members of the Himalayan Brahmo Samaj raised slogans of 'Jai Brahmo, this is our temple and you have occupied it and refused to vacate, he said.

"Everyone has the right to perform puja but no one has the right to take possession of the ashram and our demand is that the people of Himalayan Brahmo Samaj should vacate the temple (ashram)", he added.

Swami Ram Rupanand, cosecretary of the ashram said that an attempt was made to forcefully take possession of the temple and alleged that the administration and police remained a mute spectator to the incident. He also demanded a CBI inquiry into the incident.

Nyaya Sanhita, the police Trustee, Himalayan Brahmo Samaj, Shimla MR Sagroli said that a two-day Brahmo Samaj conference was held in Shimla and their members from across the country wanted to visit the temple (ashram) and they should be allowed to access.

# Delhi court grants exemption to Vikash Yadav from appearance

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

Delhi court has granted Apeini court has granted exemption from personal appearance to Vikash Yadav, accused of attempting to kill alleged Khalistani terrorist Gurpatwant Singh Pannun in the USA, in a case of kidnapping and extortion lodged against him after he claimed threat to life.

Special Judge Sumit Dass granted the exemption to Yadav for November 16 on an application moved by his lawyer, claiming that his personal details have been made public, putting his life at

The judge directed him to appear before the court on February 3, the next date of hearing.

Yadav was arrested by the Special Cell of Delhi Police in December last year following a complaint by a Delhi-based businessman, accusing him of



March and Yadav was granted bail in April.

Yadav, said to be a former RAW official, was named by the US in connection with the failed assassination attempt

court stated that "false and frivolous allegations have been levelled against the applicant (Yadav) and the particulars of the applicant such as his residence, his background along with his photographs have been

published all over the world, exposing the applicant to serious threat to his life from nefarious elements".

"The applicant is being hounded by continuous surveillance by inimical elements who are trying to trace the applicant at all possible places leaving no option for the applicant but to ensure his safety in confines. Threat to the life of the applicant is clear, present, grave, imminent and potential and physical appearance of applicant before the court is likely to lend an opportunity to annihilate the applicant," the application claimed.

It claimed that even to appear through video conference was "extremely unsafe" as Yadav's location might be detected by use of electronic technology. The applicant is keen to earn his innocence through trial and is represented by his counsel, it claimed.

## NGT asks UP to maintain Adi Ganga Gomti

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI** 

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has directed authorities in Uttar Pradesh to take expeditious steps to tap untapped drains, besides taking all possible measures to maintain the riverine ecology of the Adi Ganga Gomti river in Jaunpur district. The green body was hearing a matter regarding the drying up of the river and its chemical pollution, which has caused the death of a large number of fish. In an order dated November

eight, a bench of NGT Chairperson Justice Prakash Shrivastava noted that a joint team of the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), Uttar Pradesh Pollution Control Board (UPPCB) and district authorities had inspected the river and submitted a report.

## India's decarbonisation policies will impact global greenhouse gas emissions

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

A report by Climate Action Tracker 2020 has said that India's policy and programmes for decarbonising its cities will have a significant impact on global greenhouse gas emissions.

Decarbonising the Indian Transport Sector Pathways and Policies, India's transport sector is responsible for 13.5 per cent of the country's energy-related emissions, with transport accounting for 90 percent of the sector's final

energy consumption. While transport emissions have been steadily increasing

in the backdrop of growing demand for Internal Combustion Engine, policy interventions, investments and initiatives by central and state governments is playing a pivotal role in enabling and expanding green public and private mobility in urban areas.

These large-scale public initiatives to decarbonise cities and transport are supported by public, private and development sectors. Home to the world's largest population, India's action will significantly impact global emissions, especially around transport.

The Indo-Gangetic Plain (IGP), encompassing Uttar

Pradesh, Bihar, and Jharkhand, remains one of India's most polluted and climate-vulnerable regions. Decarbonising urban mobility here is crucial for

addressing the dual crises of air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. In this context, The Climate Agenda will be hosting first Regional Convention on Clean Inclusive Urban and Transport Systems that will focus on fostering equity and inclusivity in sustainable mobility solutions.

It aims to spotlight the faced challenges marginalized groups, such as women, children, and the elderly, while promoting their active participation in shaping urban transport systems that cater to their needs.

"The convention seeks to align with and support existing government initiatives like the Smart Cities Mission and FAME. By identifying unique regional challenges such as inadequate infrastructure and informal transit systems, the event aims to offer actionable solutions tailored to these

With a focus on electrifying public transport fleets, the convention will present a roadmap to accelerate adoption and set the foundation for future

collaborations, ensuring that the region contributes significantly to India's climate goals while fostering sustainable urban growth" said Ekta Shekhar, Founding Director, The Climate Agenda. The convention will also be

an opportunity to launch first-of-its kind collaborative platform with aim for knowledge-sharing, demand generation and joint action in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Jharkhand in promoting the electrification of public transport, collaboration across sectors, and supporting a transition to cleaner, more sustainable urban mobility solutions.

# Ragging kills 18-year-old in Gujarat medical college

**PTI** ■ PATAN

An 18-year-old MBBS student of a medical college in Gujarat's Patan district died after allegedly after being made to stand for three hours during ragging by his seniors, an official said Sunday. The college has started a probe into the incident which took place on Saturday. The deceased, who Saturday. The deceased, who apparently fell unconscious after being made to stand for a long time, was a first year MBBS student at the college. The victim, Anil Methaniya, fell unconscious and died allegedly after being made to stand for three hours during ragging by his seniors at a hostel of the GMERS Medical College and Hospital at Dharpur in Patan on Saturday night, the college dean, Dr Hardik Shah said Hardik Shah, said.

"The student was rushed to the hospital after he collapsed, and attempts to revive him failed and he was declared dead. His classmates said Methaniya died after being made to stand for three hours and introduce himself before seniors at the college hostel,' Shah informed.

He said the anti-ragging committee of the college has initiated a probe into the matter, and punitive measures will be taken against the senior students if they are found responsible for ragging. The student's body was sent for postmortem and a case of accidental death was registered, an official from Balisana police station said.

A first-year medical student at the college said seven-eight senior students forced a group of juniors to stand for around three hours and introduce themselves one by one.

"They forced us to keep standing and asked us not get agitated. At last, a student, who was also standing will who was also standing with us, fell unconscious. We rushed him to a hospital where he died," he said on condition of anonymity.

A cousin of Methaniya told reporters that the family was hopeful of getting justice from

TN RAGHUNATHA MUMBAI

In a joint operation, the Mumbai police and central

security agencies foiled a

purported attempt to disrupt

the November 20 Assembly

election in naxalite-infested

Gadchiroli district of eastern

Maharashtra, by recovering

two improvised explosive

Acting on a tip-off that a

group of Maoists had planted

some IEDs to blow up a

crucial bridge along the Palakot River in Bhamragad

tehsil of Gadchiroli district, a

team of Bomb Detection and

Disposal Squad rushed to the

targeted area in an helicopter

Subsequently, a joint team of

Gadchiroli Police, a company

of the Central Reserve Police

Force and Border Security

for an arial survey.

devices (IEDs).

**Politicians across party lines** pay homage to Bal Thackeray



**PTI** ■ MUMBAI

Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and former Maharashtra chief minister Uddhav Thackeray were among the leaders who paid homage to Shiv Sena founder Bal Thackeray on his 12th death anniversary on Sunday. In his tribute, PM Modi said, "I pay homage to the great Balasaheb Thackeray Ji on his Punya Tithi. He was a visionary who championed the cause of championed the cause of Maharashtra's development and the empowerment of Marathi people. He was a firm believer in enhancing the pride of Indian culture and ethos. His bold voice and unwavering spirit continue to

Cops recover IEDs, foil plans to

two IEDs, on the Palakota

River bridge that links

As the search team was

preparing to neutralise the two deadly IEDs, one of them

exploded, while the other

one was controlled by the

Police said that no one

suffered injuries nor was

there any damage to public

The search is now carrying

out combing the areas to

detect any more explosives

that might have been planted

The police said that the

motive behind planting IEDs

was either to create panic

among the people or trigger

actual explosions on election

Following the recovery,

property in the explosion.

Bhamragad and Tadgaon.

disrupt elections in Gadchiroli

inspire generations.'

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, in a post on X, wrote, Rahul "Remembering Balasaheb Thackeray ji on his 12th death anniversary. My thoughts are with Uddhav Thackeray ji, Aditya and the entire Shiv Sena family.'

Others who paid tribute to Bal Thackeray, among the state's most charismatic politicians with a fanatical following, Chief Eknath (CM) Minister Deputy Shinde, Devendra Fadnavis, NCP (SP) head Sharad Pawar, Mumbai Congress president Varsha Gaikwad and Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Aaditya

Pawar, in an online post,

also taking other precautions

such as keeping vigilance

over naxal hiding areas in the

forests and increasing security at critical public and

private installations such as

bridges, important roads and

The security agencies have chalked out elaborate plans

to deploy adequate security

personnel in three Maoist-

infested constituencies of

Gadchiroli, Armori and

Aheri in Gadchiroli district,

Chimur and Bramhapuri

neighbouring Chandrapur

constituency in Gondia

district to ensure smooth

polling on November 20.

constituencies have over the

six

Amgaon

Assembly

and succeeded in locating the many sensitive areas and are

highways.

constituencies

district and

These

years

Balasaheb Thackeray, the founder of Shiv Sena party, satirist and politician who fought against the injustice to the Marathi people." Gaikwad said Balasaheb

Gaikwad said Balasaheb Thackeray ruled over Marathi minds and fought for justice, rights of the Marathi people throughout his life. Senior BJP leader Fadnavis in his message said, "Humble tributes to Hinduhriday Samrat Balasaheb Thackeray on his Smruti Din." Earlier, Shiv Sena (UBT) head Uddhay Thackeray and his

Uddhav Thackeray and his wife Rashmi Thackeray visited the late stalwart's memorial at Shivaji Park in Mumbai and offered floral tributes. Several members of the two rival Sena factions also visited the memorial as a

mark of respect to Bal Thackeray

The Shiv Sena founder passed away on November 17, 2012 at his residence, Matoshree, in Mumbai after prolonged illness. The Shiv Sena split in 2022 after Shinde-led a rebellion against the party leadership, triggering the collapse of the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government under Uddhav Thackeray. Shinde subsequently joined hands with the BJP to form government.

The Election Commission of India later recognised the Shinde-led faction. However, both factions continue to engage in a bitter tussle to claim the legacy of Bal Thackeray, who championed

Punjab Governor GC Kataria pays tributes to martyrs

**PTI** ■ CHANDIGARH

 $T^{\text{ributes}} \ \text{were paid to the} \\ \text{martyrs here on Sunday as}$ a precursor to the eighth edition of Military Literature Festival (MLF), with Punjab Governor and Administrator Gulab Chand Kataria laying a wreath at the Chandigarh War

Memorial here. General (Retd) VP Malik, chief, BS former army Dhanoa, former Indian Air Force chief and Lieutenant General (Retd) TS Shergill chairperson of the MLF association were also present on the occasion.

Bravehearts motorcycle rally carrying the message of courage, sacrifice and patriotism was also organised in Chandigarh on

Sunday as part of the events connected with the MLF. The eighth edition of the MLF will be held in Chandigarh November 30 and December 1.

"We paid our tributes to the martyrs, who made supreme sacrifices for the motherland," Kataria told reporters after laying a wreath at the memorial.

He said the valour of the bravehearts continues to inspire generations and exhorted the youth to embrace the noble path of serving the nation with the same courage and dedication shown by these heroes.

Replying to a question, Kataria said even today the youth have a great fascination for the armed forces.

# Jagannath temple alleges its land being encroached, illegally sold across state

PTI BHUBANESWAR

Odisha Law Minister Prithviraj Harichandan on Sunday said strong action will be taken against all persons who made attempts to illegally encroach upon and sell land belonging to Lord Jagannath in Puri.

The Jagannath temple in Puri owns around 60,426 acres of land spread across 24 districts in Odisha, besides 395 acres outside Odisha.

outside Odisha.
The Shree Jagannath Temple
Administration (SJTA) on
Saturday filed a complaint at
Baseli Sahi police station in
Puri alleging attempts are
being made to sell land
belonging to Lord Jagannath
under Matitota mouza in
Puri

Speaking to media persons here, Harichandan said, "We will take strong action against all persons involved in the act. If any plot has been sold to some person, we will take stringent action against persons including seller, buyer, sub-registrar, who transferred the land."

The government will not tolerate unauthorised sale of a single inch of land of Lord Jagannath

circumstances, he assured.
The temple administration has also initiated its move in this direction, the minister

The government is mulling steps for settlement of Jagannath temple land available in Odisha and outside as per uniform policy consequences.

formulated in 2003, as maximum land parcels are under encroachment, he said, adding, "Through this move, a big corpus fund for the temple can be created." In a statement, SJTA chief

administrator Padhee has urged the district collector and SP to take

immediate measures to stop the illegal sale attempt. The disputed property, registered under khata no 38, comprises 109 plots that are legally owned by the deity. The temple administration has cautioned the public against engaging in such illegal activities, warning that any attempts to transfer or encroach on temple property would lead to severe legal

# Death toll rises to 11 in Jhansi hospital tragedy



BISWAJEET BANERJEE JHANSI

Another rescued infant succumbed to death on Sunday. District Magistrate (DM) Avinash Kumar clarified that the death was not caused by burns.

The aftermath of the devastating fire at the Special Newborn Care Unit (SNCU) of Maharani Laxmibai Government Medical College continues to unfold, with the

Autopsies conducted on the victims revealed that the infants were burned beyond recognition, with over 80% of their bodies affected. Three teams of two doctors each carried out the postmortems. Initially, seven bodies were sent for examination. Identification of three more infants was delayed due to the severity of burns.

By Sunday, the remaining infants were identified, and their bodies were handed over to grieving families. DNA samples were collected from the charred remains to confirm identities and for use in any future disputes. The findings disclosed that the intense heat had exposed bones, and the infants died within minutes of the fire breaking out.

DM Avinash Kumar stated that 49 newborns were in the SNCU at the time of the fire, and 39 were rescued. However, earlier reports suggested 55 children were present, highlighting discrepancies in official

The ward, designed to care for

critically ill newborns with conditions such as jaundice and pneumonia, was reportedly operating at three and monitoring machines, essential for neonatal care, were running continuously. Experts noted that these devices require periodic breaks to prevent overheating, a safety protocol allegedly overlooked on the night of the

accounts.

incident. Questions abound over safety lapses and administrative negligence, as the heartwrenching cries of grieving parents such as Rema Devi, whose first baby died, continue to echo through hospital corridors. "Let me see the face of my child," she wailed, encapsulating the anguish of a mother whose hopes were cruelly extinguished.

While the hospital administration attributes the fire to a short circuit, the

exact cause remains under investigation. findings electrical excessive caused a short circuit, which ignited concentrator and escalated the fire. However, officials have yet to provide a definitive explanation for the

incident. Bereaved families have raised serious questions about overcrowding, safety hospital staff. The tragedy has sparked widespread outrage, responsible. with many demanding strict

Chief Minister Deputy Brajesh Pathak has ordered a three-tier investigation to determine accountability for the catastrophic fire. While the investigation initially involved Jhansi Divisional Commissioner Vimal Kumar Dubey, the government later transferred the responsibility to Director General of Medical and

Department Kinjal Singh. The government's decision to alter the investigation committee has not been explained, but the findings from all three investigations are awaited to establish culpability.

#### years been registering sizeable voter turnouts in the Nagaland government to meet Center, security agencies have intensified patrolling in Force carried out an extensive search operation elections. after NSCN-IM threatens armed conflict Railways plays cupid, creates special Sources also said that the state

corridor to help a groom reach marriage **SAUGAR SENGUPTA** KOLKATA

The Indian Railways proved that they are "with you ... for always," a genuine friend indeed. But for the timely intervention of the Indian Railways officials at Howrah Station, a prospective groom might have failed tying the nuptial knots.

Upon receiving a message that the grooms' party comprising about 35 people, including women, old and children bound for Guwahati was arriving late at the Howrah Station from Mumbai in Gitanjali Express running and could miss the connecting train, which was about to leave the station, the Divisional Railway Manager

Manager of the Eastern Railways swung into action, alerting the entire staff and "It was nearly impossible for

issuing necessary directions. us to catch Saraighat Express, which was just about to leave. Our train was somewhere around the outer signal when the pilot was asked to hurry up. As our train rolled into the station, we found railway employees had created a special corridor for the groom's party. We managed to cross 15 platforms to catch the Saraighat Express," said one of the members of the groom's party while thanking the entire railway fraternity. Sensing trouble as the Gitanjali Express -scheduled

and the Chief Commercial to reach Howrah at 1 pm on Friday - was running behind schedule and there was more chance of missing than catching the Guwahati bound train, Čhandrasekhar Bag, a member of a wedding party, pleaded helplessness on X to Railway authorities. He tagged several top officials and even the Union railway The minister. Eastern Railways, in a post on X, said, "IR arranged to detain Saraighat Express at Howrah for a few minutes so that a marriage party with dulha; coming by Gitanjali Express and going to Guwahati can catch the train. The marriage party has expressed their thanks to Railways for this helping gesture.'

**PTI** ■ KOHIMA

With the National Socialist Council of (Isak-Muivah) Nagaland (Isak-Muivah) (NSCN-IM) threatening to go back to jungles due to delay in the resolution of the Naga political dialogue with the Government of India (GoI), the Nagaland cabinet has decided to meet both negotiating parties at the earliest, official sources said on Sunday.

A delegation of Nagaland cabinet led by Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio and his deputies TR Zeliang and Y Patton are scheduled to leave for Delhi on Monday to meet home minister Amit Shah to press for expediting the Naga political negotiations.

In a statement, NSCN-IM general secretary Th Muivah has alleged that the Centre was deliberately refusing to honour the key provisions of

historic agreement, specifically the recognition of the Naga national flag and constitution.

Threatening violent armed conflict, the NSCN-IM on November 7 sought a thirdparty intervention to address the impasse over the Naga political issue.

The group, which has maintained ceasefire since 1997, accused the Union government of betraying the Framework Agreement signed on August 3, 2015. In an interview with a news channel on Saturday, Zeliang had said that a cabinet meeting held during the day

had deliberated on Muivah's

statement and therefore decided to meet the Union home minister and also the NSCN-IM leadership. On NSCN-IM seeking third-party intervention, Zeliang had said that unless there is

an understanding between



them (Centre and NSCM-IM), third-party intervention may not help them. "There should be a meeting point... both sides should reconsider and come to an understanding," he had told the news channel. Sources said that before leaving for Delhi, the state cabinet is approaching the NSCN-IM leadership for deliberation. However, sources said the meeting with both Centre and NSCN-IM leadership has not been scheduled.

cabinet would also apprise the Union home minister about the decision of the September 12 consultative meeting of the state government with Naga tribal bodies and civil societies seeking appointment of a proper interlocutor and also to elevate the ongoing Naga political dialogue to ministerial level. The House appealed to the GoI to elevate the ongoing

dialogue and peace process to the highest political level by appointing an interlocutor of, who has the confidence and mandate of the government," the meeting had resolved.

Former Governor of Nagaland, RN Ravi was the last interlocutor for the talks but after being shifted to Tamil Nadu, the Centre appointed AK Mishra only as

a representative. The Centre has been holding negotiations with NSCN-IM since 1997 after the ceasefire agreement and inked the Framework Agreement on

August 3, 2015. It also started parallel talks with the Working Committee of Naga National Political Groups (WC NNPGs) in 2017 and signed the Agreed

The then interlocutor Ravi had declared talks have concluded on October 30, 2019.

Position the same year.

However, the persistent demand of NSCN-IM of a separate flag and constitution for Nagas and integration of all Naga inhabited areas has not been accepted by the Centre, delaying the final

solution. On the other hand, WC NNPGs, composed of seven Naga groups, have declared to accept whatever is possible for now and continue further negotiations remaining demand.

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-PAPER WITH PASSION-

# Left turn ho!

Anura Kumara Dissanayake's election triumph could prove to be a turning point for Sri Lanka's politics and South Asia

ri Lanka has done it again. After electing Anura Kumara Dissanayake as President his left-leaning party has secured a majority in the parliament, which gives Anura a complete control over Sri Lanka. What is more startling is that his party has decimated the Tamil parties in the northern Sri Lanka, which was the stronghold of Tamil parties. This is indeed a stunning political shift. Anura Kumara Dissanayake, leader of Sri Lanka's National People's Power (NPP), has achieved a resounding victory in the country's parliamentary elections, winning 123 out of 225 seats in Sri Lanka's Parliament. This outcome, which comes barely two months after Dissanayake's election as President on September 21, marks a pivotal moment in the nation's political landscape and could have significant ramifications not only for Sri Lanka but also for the wider South Asian region. Dissanayake's rise to prominence is both unexpected and historic. His party, despite winning only 42 per cent of the presidential vote, has managed to galvanise a



broad cross-section of Sri Lankan society, particularly in regions where other political forces have traditionally held sway. His victory represents a rejection of the traditional political elites that have long governed the island since its independence in 1948, and it signifies the growing appeal of his platform advocating for economic revival and social justice. Notably, the NPP's win in the Jaffna district—a historically Tamilmajority area in the northern part of Sri Lanka—has surprised political pundits. For decades, Tamil ethnic parties have dominated this region, a legacy of the civil war (1983-2009) that left a deep divide between the Tamil minority and the Sinhalese-majority government.

This victory in Jaffna is symbolic of a new approach to ethnic relations in Sri Lanka. Traditionally, the Tamil population has been wary of Sinhalese-majority leaders, given the traumatic history of the civil conflict, where over 100,000 lives were lost according to conservative UN estimates. Dissanayake's success in these areas suggests that many Tamils are willing to embrace a new kind of leadership, one that offers economic promise and a path forward, beyond ethnic divisions. Dissanayake's victory carries significant implications for the future of Sri Lanka. First and foremost, his strong mandate gives him the political capital needed to implement his economic revival agenda, which is urgently needed as Sri Lanka grapples with economic instability and growing debt. Dissanayake has long advocated for Marxist economic policies, including land reforms, wealth redistribution and greater state control over key industries. If successful, his administration could lead to a reshaping of Sri Lanka's economy, potentially benefiting marginalised communities, including Tamils and other ethnic minorities. Dissanayake's popularity, especially among younger voters and ethnic minorities, suggests a growing demand for alternative political solutions. But can he live up to people's expectations, bring about radical changes and maintain ethnic harmony? That is the big question only time can tell!



Labourers thresh paddy at a field on the outskirts of Amritsar

# The smog capital of India



As Delhi battles a toxic mix of seasonal stubble burning and local pollution sources, its residents are exposed to severe and potentially life-threatening health risks

he National Capital Territory of Delhi, which is home to nearly 30 million people, has been grappling with dangerously high pollution levels for over two weeks. On Wednesday, November 13, 2024, the air quality index (AQI) across Delhi remained in the 'very poor' category, marking the 15th consecutive day when residents faced increased health risks from the polluted air. According to official data (the Air Quality Early Warning System for Delhi, manby the Central Government), this situation will likely persist for at least six days. In parallel, the city is also experiencing an unusually warm spell that defies typical seasonal trends, adding complexity to an already challenging situation for residents. This grim forecast highlights the role of unfavourable meteorological conditions that limit the dispersal of pollutants, essentially trapping them close to the ground. The AQI measures levels of harmful pollutants in the air, with a higher value indicating a greater concentration of pollutants. While an AQI between 300 and 400 is considered "very poor," levels above 400 are classified as "severe," meaning the pollution is severe enough to affect even healthy individuals.

The IMD has reported that the typical winter season may not arrive in Delhi as quickly as expected, thereby disrupting long-established weather patterns that typically bring cooler, less polluted air to the region.

The dense fog mixed with thick smog has created a near-total obscurity, as citizens found themselves enveloped in a hazardous blend of pollutants and moisture resulting in keeping daytime temperatures lower than expected for this time of year – because of fog and smog – although overall temperatures remain warmer than the seasonal norm. This combination of high pollution and unusual weather patterns has compounded the health concerns for residents, particularly the elderly, children and those with respiratory ailments. Delhi's persistent air pollution crisis is fuelled by a combination of local and regional sources.

There are many contributors to this game, the primary being: vehicle emissions, industrial activities, construction dust, and the neighbouring states of Punjab and Haryana which engage in the seasonal burning of crop residue.

The primary pollutant in

Delhi's air, according to IQAir - a global air quality monitoring agency based in Switzerland – is PM2.5, a fine particulate matter that can penetrate deeply into the lungs. Earlier this month, parts of Delhi recorded Air Quality Index (AQI) levels as high as 1,133, placing them in the category. "hazardous" Prolonged exposure to such elevated PM2.5 levels poses serious health risks, including respiratory infections, asthma attacks and even heightened mortality rates among vulnerable populations. Warmer-than-normal temperatures hinder the ability of pollutants to disperse, as colder temperatures usually facilitate the movement of these particles away from the urban air

The combination of stagnant weather conditions, pollution, and warm temperatures has created a perfect whirlpool of the smog's persistence over Delhi, making it more difficult for the city to breatne as it would in cooler conditions. Health experts believe that exposure to high levels of pollution can lead to short-term

of Maharani Laxmibai Medical College in

Jhansi, Uttar Pradesh, in which at least 10

newborn babies died due to burns and suf-

focation and some still struggling for their lives, is really heart-wrenching. Just a few

months back, a devastating fire in a new-

born care unit of a children's hospital in

Delhi had claimed the precious lives of

infants. Lack of preparedness, readiness to

tackle fire accidents, be it due to short cir-

cuit or any other sort and lack of aware-

ness on what to do in case of such inci-

dents make us victims to infernos. The

death of these little innocent infants

poses a big question: when are we really

going to learn our lessons?
Be it hospitals or hotels, movie halls or

malls, people may not have the slightest

bit of idea about the escape routes, layouts

and other possible ways of escape in case

of an inferno. Staff of the concerned estab-

lishments should be prepared to rescue or

at least guide the guests to safety. Intensive

care units and baby care units should def-

initely have safety arrangements so that

such fire accidents can be prevented.

Buildings should have a common way to

exit that anyone, irrespective of age and

gender, should be able to identify and

escape immediately. Buildings should

have proper fire and electricity safety

devices and these must be checked occa-

sionally. Staff, especially in sensitive places

like hospitals, schools, and hotels, should

take part in mock drills and be ever ready

in case of emergency. Schools and colleges

should include fire disaster management

lessons in their physical education curricu-

lum so that we can groom citizens who can

face such emergencies boldly, wisely, and

bravely and even help the weak and those

who are very young.

**INFANT LIVES LOST** 



THE DENSE FOG MIXED WITH THICK SMOG HAS CREATED A **NEAR-TOTAL** OBSCURITY, AS CITIZENS FOUND **THEMSELVES ENVELOPED IN A HAZARDOUS BLEND OF POLLUTANTS** AND MOISTURE RESULTING IN

**KEEPING DAYTIME** 

**TEMPERATURES** 

LOWER THAN

**EXPECTED** 

effects like coughing, throat irritation and chest tightness. In the long term, the risks increase substantially, with studies linking air pollution exposure to chronic respiratory diseases, lung cancer, heart disease, and even impacts on cognitive functions. Air pollution is a severe health crisis in India, causing between 1.2 million and 1.8 million premature deaths each year.

The 7 million annual deaths from air pollution worldwide exceed those from COVID-19, as well as combined fatalities from war, homicide, car and plane accidents. Clean air is essential for human health, yet scientific studies continue to reveal new health risks linked to air pollution, including respiratory diseases, heart issues, stroke, and lung cancer, as well as emerging links to premature births, diabetes, and brain damage.

Poor air quality can also wors-

en outcomes for COVID-19 by increasing vulnerability to respiratory illnesses. Dr David R Boyd, Institute for Resources, Environment Sustainability, University of British Columbia, CA, Associate Professor in law, policy and Sustainability in his paper "The Human Rights to Breathe Clean Air" published in The National Library of Medicine (2019) necessitates the urgency for treating air pollution as a human rights issue and that "Air pollution on

rights to life and health, the rights of the child and the right to live in a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment" and that there is an urgent need to voice that the legal support of a human rights issue, since Dr David says that "The human rights perspective changes everything – because governments have clear, legaly enforceable obligations to respect, protect, and fulfil human rights. As Delhi battles yet another season of toxic air, the health and wellbeing of millions are at stake. The situation demands urgent and coordinated action from the government, industry, and residents (read citizens). Sustainable improvement requires systemic changes to reduce pollution at its source. While the road to a cleaner, healthier Delhi may be long, there is hope in ongoing technological and policy developments aimed at reducing pollution. As more people become aware of the critical importance of air quality, public support for environmental initiatives will continue to grow, fostering a collective movement toward cleaner air and a better quality of life for all Delhiites and others who visit to see the grandeur of the Capital City.

today's scale, clearly violates the

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

vvnen... its in our nands:

#### THE EDITOR

# Let us be comfortable with silence to discover inner self

Silence is empowering, it not only gives peace but also strength and clarity. It

invites us to reconnect with our inner calm, a solitude we often shun

am writing this column from the quiet environs ▲ of an Alpine valley in Germany. The winter has set in, turning the skies grey and the air bleary. This small town in Bavaria withdraws into its living rooms as early as 4.30 pm when darkness falls and then there is only silence all around, made palpable by the dwindling traffic and people on the streets. For someone who is used to the non-stop noise of metropolitan Dubai, this silence is new and com-

The downtime it offers is not everyone's cup of tea though, for silence can be disconcerting to many. Its virtues are disregarded and it is taken as a sign of lethargy and dispiritedness, an absence of inspiration and the ultimate sign of an introverted personality. In a world teeming with sounds, silence has become something of an endangered species.

It is the quietude that we collectively fear as if the absence of words leaves us exposed, untethered, and somehow incomplete. When conversations taper off, Silence is perceived as racing minds and to let the



there's often an instinctual drive to fill the void, a compulsion to keep the hum of interaction alive lest silence brings its "awkwardness" into the room. But I often wonder, is silence something to be avoided?

Or is it, in fact, a sanctuary we have lost touch with, one that could lead us back to ourselves? I think of the times I have seen people friends, even strangers—grapple with the discomfort of a pause, reaching for words as if they were life preservers in a sea of quiet. We are, it seems, constantly seeking refuge in noise, hoping it will drown out whatever solitude and reflection might stir in

us if given the chance.

emptiness, a fearful space, rather than a fertile ground for connection and self-discovery. We are conditioned to believe that engagement is strength and that silence, somehow, signals inadequa-

To be quiet in conversation is almost seen as a failing; we are regarded as "shy" or "distant." Yet, silence has its richness, a subtle power that invites us into the fullness of presence, something words cannot always offer. In silence, we are called to listen, not only to others but also to our inner voice and perhaps that's where the unease begins. The quiet holds a mirror up to us, revealing what lies within when the outside world fades to a hush.

Silence invites us to reconnect with an inner calm, a solitude we often shun. Instead of fearing what might emerge in the absence of chatter, we might learn to find comfort in simply being-without the compulsion to fill every moment with talk. In this way, silence is not a void; it is an invitation to pause, to settle our

dust of daily life drift gently to the ground. Consider, too, the depth that silence brings to rela-

tionships. When we share a moment of quiet with someone, we are not erasing the connection; we are deepen-

ing it. It is in these pauses that we see each other most clearly, unfiltered by words, and held by the simple act of shared presence. Yet, our tendency to fear silence as awkward makes us miss the power of these moments times when we could breathe alongside one another, unburdened by the need to perform or impress. It is time we learn to embrace silence not as an absence but as a presence a steady, gentle force that grounds us when words have exhausted their role. For in those quiet spaces, we can find not just peace, but a reservoir of strength and clarity, one that restores rather than depletes, and brings solace to our weary

(The author is a columnist and children's writing coach based in Dubai; views are personal)

M Pradyu | Kannur **BULLDOZER RULE ENDS** 

Madam — The spirit of the verdict should sensitise all the concerned. Bulldozing the structures of those who are branded as

#### **Secure online transactions** Madam — The shocking fire accident in the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU)



¶he rapid growth of digital payments, from banking to shopping, has made everything done online nowadays; it has opened doors for scammers as they continue to evolve their methods to con people in newer ways. Cybercriminals are

criminals and those of communally ostracised is an act that proclaims the rule of a dictator and the death of democracy. The rule of law is thrown in bins and the individual's whims and fancies of the persons at the helm of power prevail only

in a totalitarian state. The salient feature of the verdict is the part that recommends payment of compensation to the victims. The bureaucratic section should stick to the statutory provisions and should not dance to the tunes of those in power, as persons in power may come and go but laws prevail forever. Also, those who permit illegal constructions in the water areas should be penalised by making them compensate the victims when such structures are razed. But the crux of the issue is the corruption and avaricious attitude of the political bigwigs to enjoy a monopoly in enjoying asset accumulation by demolishing dissents and oppositions. The real solution to such issues could emerge only from a people's movement against corrup-

A G Rajmohan | Anantapur

employing new tricks to defraud individuals, like fake UPI transaction images, net banking fraud through

emails, etc. And from common citizens

to government officials, no one is untouched by these scamsters. There are various things that we must do if we fall prey to such scammers, like contacting authorised customer care centers, reporting incidents immediately to the National Cyber Crime Helpline, documenting everything, keeping strong passwords, and staying informed through social media, etc. A strong and rigorous awareness campaign has to be started by the government of India so that these scammers do not have a free run

& individuals are safe. Bal Govind | Noida

#### **DELHI POLLUTION CRISIS**

Madam — The Delhi Chief Minister Atishi has directed all educational institutions, particularly the primary schools, to shift to online classes while going by the very high risk of AQI in the state. The Delhi civic authorities started implementing methods like sprinkling water with dust suppressants on roads, as well as mechanised sweeping that would help settle dust, which also came into effect. There is a ban on non-essential constructions in the world's most polluted capital. The air quality has worsened to the level that the image of the Taj Mahal appears to be a kind of ghost at the moment. The manmade calamity by worsening air conditions and the cleaning up of the image by the Delhi government's AAP has become like a war for them, which is symbolic of the party's election symbol, the 'Broom,' to rebuild their unclean image nearing the elections along with other major issues

A P Thiruvadi | Chennai

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## **FIRST COLUMN**

#### **SERVANT LEADERSHIP**

Servant leadership redefines leadership, emphasising the leader's role as a servant to their team



n an increasingly complex and interconnected world, the traditional top-down leadership model is often insufficient for addressing the challenges organisations and communities face. The concept of servant leadership approach which, prioritises service to others over self-interest, has emerged as a vital alternative for fostering trust, collaboration and sustainable success.

Servant leadership is grounded in a set of key principles such as empathy, awareness, commitment to growth, stewardship that distinguish it from traditional, top-down leadership models. Trust in leadership across industries is at an all-time low, exacerbated by scandals, corporate greed and exploitative practices. By putting people first, servant leaders create a foundation of reliability and authenticity that restores faith in leadership.

Nowadays modern employees seek more than just a paycheck. They want meaningful work, supportive environments and leaders who genuinely care about their growth and wellbeing. Servant leadership aligns with these expectations by fostering empowerment, empathy and commitment to growth. This approach helps organisations attract and retain top talent in competitive job markets. Servant Leadership has proven effective in various contexts, from corporate settings to community organisations. Companies like Southwest Airlines and Starbucks have integrated servant leadership into their management philosophies, resulting in loyal employees and strong customer relationships. In education, servant leadership fosters supportive environments where teachers and students thrive. Similarly, nonprofit organisations benefit from servant leaders who prioritise the needs of the communities they serve.



It is often believed that, in times of crisis, such as economic downturns or global pandemics, organisations with servant leaders are more likely to thrive as these leaders provide stability and reassurance to their teams; prioritise people over profits during tough times and even empower employees to adapt and innovate. In an era where businesses are held accountable for their societal and environmental impact, servant leadership helps organisations fulfill their social responsibilities. By focusing on stewardship and community building, servant leaders ensure that their organisations contribute positively to soci-

While servant leadership offers numerous benefits, it is not without its challenges. Its emphasis on service, empathy and community-building can sometimes create complexities, especially in environments that demand rapid decision-making or highly competitive strategies. Undeniably, this approach is a compassionate and effective approach in many scenarios but is not a one-size-fits-all solution. To succeed, it must be carefully balanced with the demands of the organisation and tailored to the specific context in which it is applied. By placing the wellbeing and development of others at the forefront, servant leaders foster trust, collaboration and sustainable success. In an era where ethical leadership is more important than ever, adopting the principles of servant leadership can lead to profound, lasting impact not just within organisations, but in society as a whole. By serving first, leaders ultimately inspire and empower others to achieve their fullest

In essence, servant leadership is about flipping the traditional power dynamic. Instead of a command-and-control approach, servant leaders focus on collaboration, ethical behaviour and the empowerment of others to create more effective and meaningful outcomes. In a world that increasingly demands empathy, collaboration and accountability, servant leadership is more than a philosophy it is a necessity.

(The writer is an educator; views expressed are personal)

# Supreme Court strikes down 'bulldozer injustice'



By reinforcing legal safeguards, the Apex Court seeks to restore public trust in the justice system and ensure that no citizen is denied their constitutional rights

historic Supreme Court verdict against "bulldozer justice" promises broad legal, social, and administrative impacts, addressing concerns around the unchecked, high-handed demolition of properties linked to criminal accusations. Such actions have often violated the fundamental tenets of the Indian Constitution. This ruling holds direct implications for BJP-ruled states like Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Haryana, Assam and the Delhi Municipal Corporation, which have been accused of misusing administrative powers to punish marginalised sections of society without due legal process.

The concept of "bulldozer justice" was notably invented by Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister, Yogi Adityanath, earning him the nickname "Bulldozer Baba" among sup-porters. The Court's verdict marks a setback to the UP government, though CM may not express regret for actions nullified by the ruling, which had previously jeopardised the constitutional guarantees afforded to all

Social Implications Protection of Marginalised Communities: The ruling acknowledges that bulldozer justice has disproportionately impacted marginalised groups. By mandating due process, the Court aims to prevent biased or retaliatory actions against vulnerable communities, promoting equal treatment under the law. Public Trust in the Rule of Law: By condemning bulldozer justice, the Supreme Court seeks to rebuild public confidence in lawful governance, fostering trust that the state will not bypass legal safeguards to punish alleged offenders.

Awareness and Advocacy: This judg-

ment may empower civil rights groups to challenge arbitrary demolitions, advocating for the rights of those affected by unilateral property destruction. Administrative and Policy Impact

Reduced Arbitrary Actions: Administrative bodies may now face restrictions against immediate demolition practices that bypass judicial processes, holding them accountable to legal frameworks designed to protect against arbitrary punishment. This could encourage a fairer and more equitable application of laws. Policy Revisions at the State Level: States that have regularly employed demolitions as a form of "bulldozer justice" may need to revisit their policies, ensuring alignment with constitutional rights to property and due process. This could result in tighter guidelines and even statutory changes. Limit on Executive Power: The Court's disapproval of unilateral demolition reinforces the separation of powers, signaling that executive decisions must strictly adhere to legal boundaries.

Legal and Judicial Consequences Strengthened Due Process: The ruling reaffirms that demolitions must respect due process, requiring legal scrutiny rather than administrative discretion. This will likely lead to the implementation of judicial approval for demolition orders, protecting citizens' rights against arbitrary state

**Increased Judicial Oversight:** The ruling could result in heightened court involvement in cases where demolitions serve as punitive responses to alleged crimes, particularly in cases involving minority or marginalised groups.

Pressure for National Guidelines: The Supreme Court suggested nationwide stan-



**ADMINISTRATIVE BODIES** MAY NOW FACE **RESTRICTIONS AGAINST IMMEDIATE DEMOLITION** 

**PRACTICES** THAT BYPASS **JUDICIAL** PROCESSES, HOLDING THEM **ACCOUNTABLE** TO LEGAL **FRAMEWORKS DESIGNED** TO PROTECT **AGAINST ARBITRARY** 

**PUNISHMENT** 

dards for property demolitions related to criminal cases, which could formalise rules for state authorities to follow, reducing current ambiguities. Supreme Court Guidelines on

Demolitions Justices BR Gavai and KV Viswanathan made impactful assertions, noting that demolitions based solely on accusations violate fundamental rights. The Court emphasised the presumption of innocence and man-dated a 15-day notice period, allowing tenants or owners time to challenge demolition orders or make necessary arrangements. This highlights the right to shelter under Article 21 of the Indian Constitution.

The Court warned that contempt proceedings could follow violations of these guidelines and responsible officials may face compensation liabilities for restitution. I his ruling stemmed from controversial demolitions in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh, alongside a Jamiat-Ulama-i-Hind petition challenging demolitions in Delhi's Jahangirpuri in 2022. Data show that state laws on demolitions were often violated in Uttar Pradesh, a state pioneering "bulldozer justice."

The Uttar Pradesh Urban Planning and Development Act, 1973, requires a minimum 15-day notice before unauthorised structures can be removed, with a right to appeal. However, the 2022 demolitions, where structures were razed without due process, led to the Jamiat-Ulama-i-Hind's petition to the Supreme Court.

In another significant instance, former Chief Justice Chandrachud, before his retirement on November 9, and Justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra directed the Uttar Pradesh government

to pay Rs 25 lakh as compensation to a man whose home was demolished in 2019 for a road-widening

The Court expressed concern over state actions that could potentially use demolitions as selective reprisals, noting that citizens' voices must not be stifled by the threat of losing their homes. In Rajasthan, demolition laws under Section 245 of the Rajasthan Municipalities Act, 2009, require prior written notice detailing the grounds for eviction.

Following communal tensions in Udaipur, authorities issued a quick notice before demolishing a house on alleged forest land encroachment, contravening local law requirements for a reasonable response period. Section 91 of the Rajasthan Forest Act, 1953, restricts eviction orders to be issued only by a Tehsildar.

maanya Municipalities Act, 1961, stipulates that any unauthorised building alteration or construction may be removed, but only after notice. However, this was ignored when a labourer's home was demolished immediately after his son's arrest, raising rights violation con-

Under the Delhi Municipal Corporation Act, 1957, the commissioner can remove illegal structures but must give reasonable opportunity for owners to dispute

The Jahangirpuri incident in 2022 highlighted the need for due process, intensifying scrutiny on such practices. In Haryana, demolitions are governed by Section 261 of the Haryana Municipal Corporation Act, 1994, which mandates a notice period with an opportunity to contest. However,

in 2023, authorities demolished over 440 structures, mostly affecting Muslim households. Although similar to Delhi's DMC Act, Haryana's compliance period is notably shorter—only three days, leaving owners little time for appeals

Strengthening Accountability: The Supreme Court's new guidelines aim to check arbitrary demolitions and uphold legal protections, particularly for vulnerable tenants. These regulations emphasise that adequate notice, transparency, and due process must be integral to any demolition order. While state laws vary, adherence to these guidelines will be essential in ensuring that demolitions respect both legal and constitutional rights, strengthening administra-

tive accountability.

A Fundamental Shift in the Justice System: The Supreme indias recent ruling against "bulldozer justice" was a response to cases where properties of individuals accused of crimes, especially those involving communal violence, were demolished without legal due process.

The Court underscored that demolitions must be legally justified and cannot bypass established procedures. It criticised this practice for disproportionately impacting marginalised communities, violating human rights, and eroding public trust. In essence, this ruling reaffirms the constitutional right to due process, expected to curb the trend of using demolitions as extrajudicial punitive measures. The ruling marks a shift toward a justice system grounded in fairness, procedure, and accountability.

(The author is a political analyst and strategic affairs columnist;

# Tackling the epidemic of diabetes and hypertension: Urgent action needed Lack of awareness and limited early screening make these two lifestyle diseases rampant

iabetes and hypertension are two interconnected yet distinct chronic diseases that collectively strain public health. Both conditions share underlying risk factors, such as unhealthy diets, physical inactivity and high stress levels. They also frequently co-occur, accelerating the onset of severe complications and amplifying each other's impact.

Diabetes and hypertension significantly increase the risk for cardiovascular diseases, chronic kidney disease, stroke, and eye disorders, forming a "double-edged sword" for health. In particular, hypertension, when combined with diabetes, can increase the likelihood of heart disease and stroke. Management of these conditions in India is challeng-



ing due to lack of awareness, inadequate early screening and inaction, particularly in rural and resource-poor areas. More than half a billion people are living with diabetes globally. This is only expected to more than double in the next 30 years, in almost every country, according to a Lancet study. When it comes to hypertension, over a billion peoplewomen—are living with this condition, which ranks as one of the leading causes of premature death worldwide. In addition to this, WHO states that more than 50 per cent of people with diabetes and about 46 per cent of adults living with hypertension don't even know about their condition.

It is safe to argue that lack of awareness is the biggest problem here. Both conditions have become the largest, silent, dual epidemics currently challenging India. The Cost of Inaction: Tertiary treatment for complications from advanced diabetes and hypertension such as heart disease, kidney failure, or stroke—is exponentially more costly than primary health interventions. In that the cost of a kidney transplant in public sector hospitals in India generally goes up to 6

This estimate is significantly lower than in private hospitals, which can go up to INR 15 lakhs or more, due to higher administrative and facility fees. Similarly, cardiac surgery can range anywhere between Rs 1 lakh and Rs 15 lakhs. In contrast, medication for diabetes and hypertension cost potentially up to only Rs 10,000 yearly, which is otherwise completely free of cost if obtained from a Government

Thus, investing in primary care interventions is far more cost-effective and sustainable than managing advanced com-2024, reports from different plications. Reducing the community health services.



Burden: Encouraging people to take ownership of their health and get regular checkups could prevent costly treat-

One person's decision to monitor their blood pressure or blood sugar levels could save thousands in healthcare costs—covering medication, hospital beds and medical staff-funds that could otherwise be allocated to proactive

decrease in the incidence of severe complications, ultimately saving lives and reducing the overall societal cost. A Path Forward: Our country

needs to work on three fronts parallelly: first, increasing awareness campaigns, second, enhancing access to screenings and third, ensuring wide-spread support for affordable primary care.

Educating communities, especially in rural areas, about the importance of early detection can create a more health-conscious society that seeks intervention before these conditions spiral.

At the same time, the government's initiatives, such as the National Programme for Prevention and Control of Diabetes,

Cardiovascular Diseases and Stroke (NPCDCS), need robust on-the-ground implementation to reach every corner of the country. The National Programme for Prevention and Control of Diabetes, Cancer, Cardiovascular Diseases, and

Stroke (NPCDCS) was launched in 2010 by the Government of India, as a game changer.

It aims to reduce the burden of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) through early diagnosis, management, and health promotion. The programme focuses on four major NCDscancer, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, and stroke—due to their high prevalence and impact on public health. It equips our communities to battle hypertension and diabetes through accessible screenings and preventive care. By catching issues early and promoting lifestyle change, we're not just treating diseases—we're transforming health outcomes and reclaiming years of productive life across India.

Conclusion: Addressing diabetes and hypertension isn't just a medical issue; it's a societal one. India's battle against these diseases demands the willingness of individuals to seek preventive care, awareness of the risks, and action by both govt and citizens to implement and utilise early detection programs. Only then can we mitigate these silent but pervasive epidemics and prevent a looming healthcare crisis.

(The author is a public health expert; views are personal)

# the pioneer BHUBANESWAR | MONDAY | NOVEMBER 18, 2024

# Xi cautions US to 'make wise Trump names fossil fuel executive choice' to keep ties stable

¬hina's leader Xi Jinping met for the last time with US President Joe Biden on Saturday but was already looking ahead to President-elect Donald Trump and his "America first" policies, saying Beijing "is ready to work with

administration".During their talks on the sidelines of the annual Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit, Xi cautioned that a stable China-US relationship was critical not only to the two nations but also the "future and destiny of humanity'

"Make the wise choice," he cautioned. "Keep exploring the right way for two major countries to get along well with each

Without mentioning Trump's name, Xi appeared to signal his concern that the incoming president's protectionist rhetoric on the campaign trail could send the US-China relationship into another valley.

"China is ready to work with a new US administration to maintain communication, expand cooperation and manage differences so as to strive for a steady transition of the China-US relationship for the benefit of the two peoples," Xi said through an interpreter.

Xi, who is firmly entrenched atop China's political hierarchy, spoke forcefully in his brief remarks before reporters. Biden, who is winding down more than 50 years of public service, talked in broader

brushstrokes about where the relationship between the two panies, including Nike and eyewear retailer Warby Parker, countries has gone. He reflected not just on the past four vears but the decades the two have known each other.

'We haven't always agreed, but our conversations have always been candid and always been frank. We've never kidded one another," Biden said. "These conversations prevent miscalculations, and they ensure the competition between our two countries will not veer into conflict."

Biden urged Xi to dissuade North Korea from further deepening its support for Russia's war on Ukraine. The leaders, with top aides surrounding them, gathered around a long rectangle of tables in an expansive conference room at Lima's Defines Hotel and Conference Center. China "hosted" the meeting this year, after Xi and Biden met a year ago on the APEC sidelines in northern California, a gathering hosted by the US. They had much to discuss, including China's indi-rect support for Russia, human rights issues, technology and Taiwan, the self-ruled democracy that Beijing claims as its own. On artificial intelligence, the two agreed on the need to maintain human control over the decision to use nuclear

There's much uncertainty about what lies ahead in the US-China relationship under Trump, who campaigned promising to levy 60 per cent tariffs on Chinese imports. Already, many American com-

have been diversifying their sourcing away from China. Shoe brand Steve Madden says it plans to cut imports from China by as much as 45 per cent next year.

In a congratulatory message to Trump after his victory over Vice-President Kamala Harris, Xi called for the US and China to manage their differences and get along in a new era. In front of the cameras Saturday, Xi spoke to Biden — but it was unmistakable that his message was directed at Trump.

"In a major flourishing sci-tech revolution, neither decoupling nor supply chain disruption is a solution," Xi said. "Only mutual, beneficial cooperation can lead to common development. Small yard, high fence is not what a major country should pursue."

Biden administration officials would advise the Trump team that managing the intense competition with Beijing will likebe the most significant foreign policy challenge they will face. White House national security advisor Jake Sullivan

On Saturday, Sullivan said Biden had reinforced to Xi "that these next two months are a time of transition, and the president would like to pass it off "in stable terms" to the new administration. Biden has viewed his relation-

ship with Xi as among the most consequential on the international stage and put much effort into cultivating it. The two first got to know each other

**AP** WASHINGTON on travels across the US and China when both were vicepresidents, interactions that both have said left a lasting impression. But the last four

energy secretary in his upcoming, second administration. CEO of Denver-based Liberty Energy, Wright is a vocal advocate of oil and gas development, including fracking, a key pillar of Trump's quest to achieve US "energy domi-nance" in the global market. Wright has been one of the industry's loudest voices against efforts to fight climate change and could give fossil fuels a boost, including quick action to end a year-long pause on natural gas export approvals by the Biden administration. Wright also has criticised what he calls a "top-down" approach to climate by liberal and leftwing groups and said the climate movement around the world is "collapsing under its own weight". Wright, who has never served in government, has written that more fossil fuel production is needed around the globe to lift people out of poverty. Consideration of Wright to head the administration's energy department won support from influential con-

gas tycoon Harold Hamm.

Chris Wright as energy secretary

President-elect Donald Trump has selected Chris Wright, a campaign donor and fossil fuel executive, to serve as servatives, including oil and

Hamm, executive chairman of Oklahoma-based Continental Resources, a major shale oil company, is a longtime Trump supporter and advisor who played a key role on energy issues in Trump's first term. Hamm helped organise an event at Trump's Mar-a-Lago resort in April where Trump



President-elect Donald Trump attends UFC 309 at Madison Square Garden, Saturday in New York, with Kid Rock, Donald Trump Jr., Dana White and Elon Musk.

reportedly asked industry leaders and lobbyists to donate USD 1 billion to Trump's campaign, with the expectation that Trump would curtail environmental regulations if reelected.

Mike Sommers, president of the American Petroleum Institute, the oil and gas industry's top lobbying group, said Wright's experience in the energy sector "gives him an important perspective that will inform his leadership" of the Energy Department. "We look forward to working with him once confirmed to bolster American geopolitical strength by lifting DOE's pause on LNG export permits and ensuring the open access of American energy for our allies around the

world," Sommers said. Jackie Wong, senior vice president for climate and energy at the Natural Resources Defense Council, an environmental group, called Wright "a champion of dirty fossil fuels" and said his nomination to lead the Energy Department was "a disastrous mistake".

"The Energy Department should be doing all it can to develop and expand the energy sources of the 21st century, not trying to promote the dirty fuels of the last century," Wong said.

"Given the devastating impacts of climate-fueled disasters, DOE's core mission of researching and promoting cleaner energy solutions is more important now than ever." The Energy Department is responsible for advancing energy, environmental and nuclear security of the US. The agency is in charge of maintaining the country's nuclear weapons, oversees 17 national research laboratories and approves natural gas exports, as well as ensuring environmental cleanup of the nation's nuclear weapons complex. It also promotes scientific and technological research. Republican Senator John Barrasso of Wyoming, who is expected to become chair-man of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, said Trump promised bold choices for his Cabinet, and Wright's nom-

#### Young woman found murdered in car boot in UK

London (PTI): A 24-year-old woman believed to be of South Asian origin has been found murdered in a car boot in east London after a missing person inquiry was launched for her in the East Midlands region of England.

Northamptonshire Police named the victim as Harshita Brella on Saturday night as the force launched a murder inquiry and appealed for information in the case.

Police said it had received a call

on Wednesday regarding concerns for Harshita's welfare and officers were deployed to her home address at Skegness Walk in Corby, Northamptonshire. police launched a missing person investigation and fast-track enquiries were made which led to the discovery of the victim's body inside the boot of a vehicle on Brisbane Road in the Ilford area of east London in the early hours of Thursday.

A post-mortem was conducted at Leicester Royal Infirmary on Friday which established the murder victim as Harshita Brella, whose name indicates a South Asian heritage, but there is no further confirmation of her family background at this stage of the inquiry.

"First of all, I want to express my heartfelt condolences to everyone who loved Harshita Brella," said Detective Chief Inspector Johnny Campbell Senior Investigating Officer from the East Midlands Special Operations Major Crime Unit (EMSOU). "She was a young woman in her early 20s with her whole life ahead of her and it is absolutely tragic that her life has been cut short in this way Detectives from EMSOU and Northamptonshire Police are working around the clock to establish the circumstances behind her death, including the exact location and timeframe in which it took place," he said.

# Israeli strikes kill 12 people in Gaza

years have presented a steady stream of difficult moments.

The FBI this week offered new

details of a federal investigation

into Chinese government

efforts to hack into US telecom-

munications networks. The

initial findings have revealed a "broad and significant"

cyberespionage campaign aimed at stealing information

from Americans who work in

government and politics.US

intelligence officials also have

assessed China has surged sales

to Russia of machine tools,

microelectronics and other

technology that Moscow is

using to produce missiles, tanks, aircraft and other

weaponry for use in its war against Ukraine. Biden is look-

ing for Xi to step up Chinese engagement to prevent an

already dangerous moment

with North Korea from further

escalating.Biden, South Korean

President Yoon Seok Yul and Japanese Prime Minister

Shigeru Ishiba on Friday con-

demned North Korean leader

Kim Jong Un's decision to send

thousands of troops to help

Moscow repel Ukrainian forces

who have seized territory in

Russia's Kursk border region. Biden called it "dangerous and

destabilising cooperation".

White House officials have

expressed frustration with

Beijing, which accounts for

the vast majority of North

Korea's trade, for not doing

more to rein in Pyongyang.



Residents and rescuers gather at the site of an Israeli airstrike that hit a building in central Beirut's Ras el-Nabaa neighborhood, Lebanon, Sunday

**AP** TEL AVIV

Tsraeli strikes in the Gaza Strip Lovernight killed 12 people, Palestinian medical officials said on Sunday. Israeli police meanwhile arrested three suspects after flares were fired at Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's private residence in the coastal city of Caesarea.In Lebanon, Israeli warplanes pounded the southern suburbs of Beirut after the military warned people to evacuate from several buildings. The Hezbollah militant group has a strong presence in the area, known as the Dahiyeh, and the strikes came as Lebanese officials are considering a United Statesbrokered cease-fire proposal. One of the strikes hit central Beirut for the first time in weeks.

Netanyahu and his family were not at the residence when two flares were fired at it overnight, and there were no injuries, authorities said. A drone launched by Hezbollah struck the residence last month, also when Netanyahu and his family were away. The police did not provide details about the suspects behind the flares, but officials pointed to domestic political critics of Netanyahu. Israel's largely cere- 250 others. Around 100 hostages

monial president, Isaac Herzog condemned the incident and warned against "an escalation of the violence in the public sphere". Netanyahu has faced months of mass protests over his handling of the hostage crisis unleashed by Hamas' October 7, 2023 attack into Israel, which ignited the ongoing war in Gaza. Critics blame Netanyahu for the security and intelligence failures that allowed the attack to happen and for not reaching a deal with Hamas to release scores of hostages still held inside Gaza. Israelis rallied again in the city of Tel Aviv on Saturday night to demand a cease-fire deal to return them. Israeli strikes killed six people in Nuseirat and another four in Bureij, two built-up refugee camps in central Gaza dating back to the 1948 war surrounding Israel's creation. Another two people were killed in a strike on Gaza's main north-south highway, according to the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in the central city of Deir al-Balah, which received all 12 bodies.The war between Israel and Hamas began after Palestinian militants stormed into Israel on October 7, 2023, killing about 1,200 people mostly civilians — and abducting

# Pope calls for investigation to determine if Israel's attacks in Gaza constitute 'genocide'

Rome (AP): Pope Francis has called for an investigation to determine if Israel's attacks in Gaza constitute genocide, according to excerpts released on Sunday from an upcoming new book ahead of the pontiff's jubilee year.

It's the first time that Francis has openly urged for an investigation of genocide allegations over Israel's actions in the Gaza Strip. In September, he said Israel's attacks in Gaza and Lebanon have been "immoral" and disproportionate, and that its military has gone beyond the rules of war. The book, by Hernán Reves Alcaide and based on interviews with the Pope, is entitled "Hope never disappoints. Pilgrims towards a better world". It will be released on Tuesday ahead of the pope's 2025 jubilee. Francis' yearlong jubilee is expected to ing more than 30 mil celebrate the Holy Year. "According to some experts, what is happening in Gaza has the characteristics of a genocide," the pope said in excerpts published Sunday by the Italian daily La

"We should investigate carefully to determine whether it fits into the technical definition formulated by jurists and international bodies," he added.

Last year, Francis met separately with relatives of Israeli hostages in Gaza and Palestinians living through the war and set off a firestorm by using words that Vatican diplomats usually avoid: "terrorism" and, according to the Palestinians, "geno-

Francis spoke at the time about the suffering of both Israelis and Palestinians after his meetings, which were arranged before the Israeli-Hamas hostage deal and a temporary halt in fighting was announced. The pontiff, who last week also met with a delegation of Israeli hostages who were released and their families pressing the campaign to bring the remaining captives home had editorial control over the upcoming book.

The war started when the militant Hamas group attacked Israel on October people and abducting 250 as hostages and taking them back to Gaza, where dozens still remain. Israel's subsequent yearlong military campaign has killed more than 43,000 people, according to Gaza health officials, whose count doesn't distinguish between civilians and fighters, though they say more than half of the dead are women and chil-

are still inside Gaza, about a third of them believed to be dead. The Health Ministry in Gaza says around 43.800 Palestinians have been killed in the war. The ministry does not distinguish between civilians and combatants but has said women and children make up more than half the fatalities. Around 90 per cent of Gaza's population of 2.3 million Palestinians have been displaced, and large areas of the territory have been flattened by Israeli bombardment and ground operations.

#### **ISRAELI WARPLANES POUND S BEIRUT**

The Israeli military posted evacuation warnings on X about an hour before the strikes on southern Beirut, which came early Sunday. Local media reported church bells ringing in and around the area to alert residents. There were no immediate reports of casualties. One of the strikes hit

a building in central Beirut Israel each day and has expandbelonging to the Arab socialist Baath party. It was the first strike in the central part of the city in weeks. An Associated Press photographer at the scene saw four lifeless bodies and four wounded people. People could be seen fleeing the neighbourhood after the strike, which came without warning. There was no immediate comment on the strike from the Israeli military. The Israeli military also renewed calls on Sunday for residents in over a dozen villages in southern Lebanon to flee as ground troops pushed farther north.Hezbollah began firing rockets, missiles and drones into Israel the day after Hamas' 2023 attack, drawing retaliatory airstrikes. The conflict steadily escalated and erupted into all-out war in September. Israeli forces invaded Lebanon on October 1.Hezbollah has continued to fire dozens of projectiles into

ed their range to the central part of the country. A rocket barrage on the northern city of Haifa on Saturday damaged a synagogue and wounded two civilians. More than 3,400 people have been killed in Lebanon, according to the country's Health Ministry, and over 1.2 million driven from their homes. It is not known how many of the dead are Hezbollah fighters. On the Israeli side, Hezbollah's aerial attacks have killed at least 76 people, including 31 soldiers, and caused some 60,000 people to flee from communities in the north.

Netanyahu ally wants to revive divisive plans to overhaul judiciary Israeli Justice Minister Yariv Levin seized on the flare attack on Netanyahu's home to call for a revival of his plans to overhaul the Israeli judiciary, which had sparked months of mass protests before the war.

## Trump takes break from making Cabinet picks

President-elect Donald Trump is attending the UFC heavyweight championship clash at Madison Square Garden on Saturday night, combining two things close to his heart — fierce battles inside the octagon and New York City. After a year's delay, Stipe Miocic is getting his shot at a third heavyweight championship reign when he battles current champion Jon Jones at UFC 309.

Trump is a longtime UFC enthusiast and frequent attendee of major fights. He made promoting hypermasculine tones a signature of his the White House - as he looked to further widen the gap among male voters between himself and his Democratic opponent, Vice-President Kamala Harris. Trump and his top supporters

embraced alpha-male terms and often accentuated them with vulgar and demeaning language. While campaigning, Trump appeared frequently on podcasts, gaming platforms, and with key supporters who described a vote for Trump as a way to demonstrate true manliness. Trump also spent three hours taping a podcast with Joe Rogan, who himself has spoken about hypermasculinity.

Harris failed to do a similar appearance with Rogan, citing scheduling conflicts.

A return to Madison Square Garden means revisiting the place where a comedian caused an uproar at a Trump rally last month by likening Puerto Rico to a "floating island of garbage". Yet Trump continues to relish visits to New York, where he lived for decades, before moving to his Mar-a-Lago club in Palm Beach, Florida.

Trump boarded his plane for the flight to New York accom-

panied by Robert F Kennedy Jr, his choice to lead the Department of Health and Human Services after his new administration begins on January 20.

ination delivers.

Except for a day trip to Washington this week to meet for nearly two hours with President Joe Biden, and separately address House Republicans, Trump has been spending his time since his Election Day victory at Mar-a-Lago. The club has hosted galas and conservative events

throughout the week. Trump has been close to UFC President Dana White for more than two decades.

White hosted a 2001 UFC batmer casino-hotel in Atlantic City, New Jersey, and Trump has frequently attended UFC matches since — including during his 2024 campaign. Trump has turned up at fights recently with famous entourages, including White, musician Kid Rock and former Fox News Channel host Tucker

Carlson. In 2018, during Trump's first term, he and White starred in a UFC video where the thenpresident was called the

'Combatant in Chief". As Trump has strengthened his grip on the national Republican Party over the last near-decade, White's personal political profile has grown exponentially. White spoke at the 2016 and 2020 Republican conventions,

and when the party gathered in

Milwaukee this past July. He also addressed the crowd at Trump's Florida victory party in the wee hours of the morning after Election Day. "This is what happens when the machine comes after you," White said then. "What you've seen over the last several years, this is what it looks like couldn't stop him.

He keeps going forward. He doesn't quit."

## COP29 week one ends in deadlock as divisions stall climate action progress

Baku (Azerbaijan) (PTI): The first week of the COP29 summit concluded in Baku without significant breakthroughs, as deep divisions between developed and developing nations stalled progress on key issues like climate finance, trade measures, and equitable responsibility for climate action.

India, representing the G-77/China and BASIC blocs, demanded accountability from wealthier countries on unmet financial commitments.

The G-77/China bloc reiterated the call for USD 1.3 trillion annually in climate finance, with an emphasis on grants and concessional funding to avoid burdening economies already grappling with the impacts of climate

"Loans make up nearly 70 per cent of climate finance provided so far. This is unacceptable and places undue pressure on developing economies," an Indian negotiator had asserted, urging developed nations to move away from debt-inducing mechanisms.

**UN Executive Secretary Simon** Stiell added to the urgency, urging G20 countries to take bolder action, warning that without it, no economy in the grouping would be spared from climatedriven economic losses.

vulnerable However, his call for solidarity failed to resolve the dead-

Cosima Castle, of E3G's climate diplomacy team, acknowledged the challenges posed by geopolitical tensions but underscored the potential of the upcoming G20 Leaders' Summit in Rio de

E3G is an engineering and environmental consulting firm. "We're seeing strains everywhere, from the Middle East to Africa to Ukraine, yet there's collective resolve among many nations to work toward a deal,

Castle pointed out that the G20 countries, responsible for 80

per cent of global emissions and 85 per cent of the world economy, hold the key to unlocking ambitious climate agreements.

The contentious issue of the European Union's Carbon Adjustment Border Mechanism (CBÁM) also fuelled sharp exchanges.

India and other developing nations criticised the measure for disproportionately penalising their economies, calling it a violation of equity principles and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). "CBAM shifts the responsibility of climate action onto nations with minimal historical emissions, undermining industrial growth in the developing world," warned a negotiator from Bolivia, echoing India's concerns.

Technology transfer emerged as another unresolved issue. Developing nations demanded a robust technology implementation programme supported by dedicated financial backing.

"Without equitable access to climate technologies, the promises of the Paris Agreement will remain unful-filled," an Indian negotiator stated.

India also opposed any

attempts to impose external regulations on its climate targets, emphasising that mitigation efforts should align with Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and national sovereignty.

The BASIC bloc criticised developed nations for attempting to dilute their commitments under the Paris Agreement by shifting additional obligations onto emerging economies.

The BASIC countries include Brazil, South Africa, India, and China

The Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) and the Arab Group joined forces with India,

highlighting the disproportionate impact of climate change on vulnerable populations and demanding scaled-up financial and technological support.

The negotiations in Baku have also highlighted the urgent need for a comprehensive climate finance package that addresses both mitigation and adaptation.

"The costs of inaction are far greater than the costs of action," Castle warned, adding that countries must come together not only for climate action but

stability.

also for long-term economic South Africa, which will

2025, is expected to play a crucial role in bridging the gap between developed and developing countries. Gillian Hamilton, a civil soci-

assume the G20 presidency in

ety leader from South Africa, emphasised the country's commitment to debt relief and reforms in multilateral financial South Africa has been close-

ly working with the African Únion to reflect the priorities of the Global South, focusing on equity and solidarity," she said, adding that the country's leadership would build on themes introduced by Brazil

# Russia launches fiercest attack on Ukraine's infrastructure

 $R^{\mathrm{ussia}}$  on Sunday launched a massive drone and missile attack on Ukraine, described by officials as the largest over the past months, targeting energy infrastruc-ture and killing civilians.

The attack came as fears are mounting about Moscow's intentions to devastate Ukraine's power generation capacity ahead of the cold winter.

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said that Russia had launched a total of 120 missiles and 90 drones in a large-scale attack across Ukraine. Various types of drones were deployed, he said, including Iranian-made Shaheds as well as cruise, ballistic and aircraft-launched ballistic missiles.

Ukrainian defences shot down 140 air targets, Zelenskyy said in a statement on the Telegram messaging

throughout Ukraine. Unfortunately, there is damage to objects from hits and falling debris. In Mykolaiv, as a result of a drone attack, two people were killed and six others were injured, including two children," Zelenskyy said. Two others were killed in the Odesa region, where the attack damaged energy infrastructure and disrupted

power and water supplies, said local Gov. Oleh Kiper. The combined drone and missile attack was the most powerful in three months, according to the head of Kyiv's City Military Administration Serhii Popko. Russian strikes have ham-mered Ukraine's power infrastructure since Moscow's allout invasion of its neighbour in February 2022, prompting repeated emergency power shutdowns and nationwide rolling blackouts. Ukrainian officials have routinely urged

"The enemy's target was our Western allies to bolster the energy infrastructure country's air defences to counter assaults and allow for repairs.

Explosions were heard across Ukraine on Sunday, including in capital Kyiv, the key southern port of Odesa, as well as the country's west and central regions, according to local

The operational command of Poland's armed forces wrote on X that Polish and allied aircraft, including fighter jets, have been mobilised in Polish airspace because of the "massive" Russian attack on neighbouring Ukraine. The steps were aimed to provide safety in Poland's border areas, it

One person was injured after the roof of a five-story residential building caught fire in Kyiv's historic centre, according to Popko. A thermal power plant operated by private energy company DTEK was "seriously damaged", the company said.



In this photo provided by the Ukrainian Emergency Service, emergency services personnel remove part of a Russian missile that hit an apartment house during massive missile attack in Kyiv, Ukraine, Sunday. AP/PT

# Latest typhoon lashes Philippines

Manila (Philippines) (AP): A powerful typhoon wrecked houses, caused towering tidal surges and forced hundreds of thousands of people to flee to emergency shelters as it cut across the northern Philippines on Sunday in the sixth major storm to hit the country in less than a month.

Typhoon Man-yi slammed into the eastern island province of Catanduanes on Saturday night with sustained winds of up to 195 kilometers (125 miles) per hour and gusts of up to 240 kph (149 mph). The country's weather agency warned of a "potentially catastrophic and life-threatening situation" in provinces along its path.

There were no immediate reports of casualties from the typhoon, which was forecast to blow northwestward on Sunday across northern Luzon, the archipelago's most populous region. The capital region of metropolitan Manila would likely be spared from a direct hit but was placed, along with outlying regions, under storm alerts and warned of dangerous coastal storm surges.

"The rain was minimal, but the wind was very strong and had

this eerie howling sound," Roberto Monterola, a disastermitigation officer in Catanduanes, told The Associated Press by telephone. "Along a main boulevard here, the tidal surges went up to more than 7 meters (23 feet) near the seaside houses. It looked really scary."

The entire province of Catanduanes had no power after the typhoon knocked down trees and electricity posts, and disaster-response teams were checking how many more houses were damaged in addition to those impacted by

previous storms, he said. "We need tin roofs and other construction materials, aside from food. Villagers tell us here that they still haven't gotten up from the past storm and were pinned down again by this typhoon," Monterola said. Nearly half of the island province's 80,000 people were sheltering in evacuation centers. Catanduanes officials were so concerned as the typhoon approached that they threatened vulnerable villagers with arrest if they did not follow orders to evacuate to safer grounds. More than 750,000

people took refuge in emergency shelters, including churches and a shopping mall, due to Man-yi and two previous storms mostly in the northern Philippines, Assistant Secretary Cesar Idio of the Official of Civil Defense and other provincial officials said. The rare number of back-toback storms and typhoons that lashed Luzon in just three weeks left more than 160 peo-ple dead, affected 9 million people and caused such extensive damage to residential communities, infrastructure and farmlands that the Philippines may have to import more rice,

a staple food for most Filipinos. In an emergency meeting as Man-yi approached, President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. asked his Cabinet and provincial officials to brace for "the worst-case scenario." At least 26 domestic airports and two international airports were briefly shut and inter-island ferry and cargo services were suspended due to rough seas, stranding thousands of passengers and commuters, according to the Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippine and the coast

# to be sworn in today

Colombo (PTI): Sri Lanka's new Cabinet will be sworn in on Monday in the presence of President Anura Kumara Dissanayake, his media office said on Sunday.

National People's Power led by Dissanayake swept the parliamentary elections held on Thursday by winning a two-thirds majority. It also dominated the Jaffna electoral district - the heartland of the nation's Tamil minor-

ity.
"The swearing-in of the new
Cabinet of the government will take place tomorrow (18) at 10:00 am at the Presidential Secretariat, in the presence of President @anuradisanayake, President's Media Division posted on X.

The 10th Parliament is set to convene for its first session on November 21.

According to Article 46 of the Constitution, the total number of Cabinet ministers is limited to 30. The number of deputy ministers shall not, in the aggregate, exceed 40.
The NPP has been advocating

a smaller government to reduce costs for the public. Since the NPP won the preselection in idential September, the government functioned with just 3 ministers, including the President. The NPP's victory in the parliamentary election has created many firsts and records. It received 61.56 per cent of

the total votes counted. The previous best was 60.33 per cent by former president Mahinda Rajapaksa's party in the 2010 election.

The NPP won the highest number of polling divisions, 152 out of 168, the previous best was Rajapaksa's 136 best was Rajapaksa's 136. It also won the highest number of districts 21 out of 22, the previous best was 19 by

It has the highest number of 159 parliamentary seats over Rajapaksa's 145 in 2020. Under the proportional representation system of elections, they became the first party to cross the 150 mark to gain a two-thirds absolute

Rajapaksa in 2010.

#### Lanka's new Cabinet | Senegal votes in election that will decide if prez can carry out reforms he promised and coalitions.

Dakar (Senegal)(AP): Polls opened in Senegal on Sunday for a parliamentary election that is set to determine if the country's newly elected president can carry out ambitious reforms. More than 7 million registered voters in the West African country are choosing 165 lawmakers in the nation al assembly, where the party of President Bassirou Diomaye Faye currently does not hold a majority.

Faye, who was elected in March on an anti-establishment platform, says that has blocked him from executing the reforms he pledged during his campaign, including fighting corruption, reviewing fishing permits for foreign companies and securing a bigger share from the country's natural resources for the popula-

In September, he dissolved the opposition-led parliament, paving the way for a snap legislative election. His party is facing the Takku Wallu opposition platform led by former President Macky Sall, alongside 39 other registered parties Polls will close at 6 p.m (1800 GMT). The first provisional results are expected to be known by Monday morning, but the final count will only be published later during the

week.

Faye's political party, PASTEF, needs at least 83 seats in order to gain a majority in the assembly. Analysts say it has a high chance of securing that, given its popularity and Faye's margin of victory in the March presidential election. Faye, 44, was elected with 54

per cent in the first round, becoming Africa's youngest elected leader, less than two weeks after he was released from prison. His rise has reflected widespread frustration among Senegal's youth with the country's direction a common sentiment across Africa, which has the world's youngest population and a number of leaders accused of clinging to power for decades. Over 60 per cent of Senegalese

are under 25 and 90 per cent

work in informal jobs. Senegal

has been hit by skyrocketing

inflation in recent years, making it difficult for them to get

The country is also a major source of irregular migration to Europe, with thousands leaving every year on rickety, artisanal fishing boats in search of economic opportunities. The campaign for the legislative election was marked by spo-radic clashes between supporters of different parties. The headquarters of an opposition party were set on fire in the capital, Dakar, and clashes have erupted between sup-porters in central Senegal in recent weeks, the interior ministry said Monday,

On Tuesday, Ousmane Sonko, the country's prime minister who helped catapult Faye to victory, denounced attacks against supporters of PASTEF in Dakar and other cities. "May each patriot they have attacked and injured be proportionally avenged. We will exercise our legitimate right to respond," he wrote on X, before back-pedalling and asking his supporters to remain peaceful in a speech later that day.



Miss Denmark Victoria KjAlr Theilvig waves after winning the 73rd Miss Universe Beauty Pageant in Mexico City, on Saturday.

# Sudha Murty praises son-in-law Rishi Sunak's 'good Indian cultural values'

London (PTI) Well-known author and Rajya Sabha MP Sudha Murty has spoken of her pride in son-in-law Rishi Sunak, a British citizen with "good Indian cultural values" imbibed from his parents' upbringing in the UK.

Murty joined Sunak and her daughter Akshata Murty as the guest of honour at Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan's annual Diwali gala in London on Saturday evening.

The parents of the British Indian former prime minister, Usha and Yashvir Sunak, were also in the audience as Bhavan UK students showcased a variety of Indian classical music and dance forms.

"I always believe when you are abroad, your parents must do two things: one is good education, which gives you wings in return and you can fly anywhere and settle; the second is great culture, your origin which is Indian origin or roots which you can get at Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan along with your

parents," said Murty, deliver-

ing her keynote address. "I want to congratulate Ushaji, my sambandhi and a good friend of mine, who gave her son Rishi Sunak, former prime minister, a great route to identify with the culture, making him a proud British citizen as well as [having] good Indian

cultural values," she said. The philanthropist went on to appeal to the British Indian community to enable the work of Bhavan UK's cultural activities, "mentally, physically and

financially" You must send your children here to understand Indian culture because when you grow old you go towards your roots... that gap is addressed by Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, so you have to help them in every way to survive," said the staunch supporter of the cultural centre over the years. Indian High Commissioner to the UK, Vikram Doraiswami, reflected upon Murty's writings which inspire readers to be true to themselves because our "origin story matters" as he went on to trace the pan-Indian message of Diwali.

The Krishna story is relevant to Diwali in the south, just as the 'Ramayana' story and the return of Lord Ram to Ayodhya from Lanka is connected to the Diwali story of the north and the story of Kali Puia is connected with the story of Diwali in the east," he

"Diwali connects up with the Sikh tradition, with the Jain and Buddhist traditions too. It tells us that light also means there is no such thing as a single certainty because in the light you recognise the diversity of the human condition. the diversity of everything we live with. So, in a world in which we spend our time fighting about certainties, it is a really good idea to look at Diwali as an opportunity to consider how so many things look differently in the light. Subhanu Saxena, chairman of

The Bhavan UK, and Executive Director Dr M.N. Nandakumara opened the event with Vedic chants as they highlighted the cultural centre's many achievements over the years as a centre of excellence in Indian arts. music, dance, Yoga and languages, offering over 120 classes across 23 different subject areas. Rishi Sunak and Akshata Murty presented mementoes to the team

ities since the 1970s. Its students and teachers showcased their Kuchipudi, Kathak and Bharatanatyam skills at the annual Diwali celebration as they appealed for donations from the British Indian community to enhance their summer school and scholarship offerings.

behind the centre's many activ-

"The Bhavan UK is a great organisation promoting Indian culture and deserves our full support," said NRI industrialist Lord Swraj Paul, one of the many supporters of the centre.

#### Pak religious body faces backlash over anti-VPN decree

Islamabad (PTI): Pakistan's leading constitutional religious body came under severe criticism after it issued an edict terming the use of Virtual Private Networks (VPNs) to access blocked content on the internet as 'un-Islamic'. The unprecedented pro-clamation by the Council of Islamic Ideology (CII), which advises parliament on aligning legislation with Islamic teachings, enraged digital rights activists as well as some religious scholars. According to the Dawn newspaper, the CII chief Raghib Naeemi said that using VPNs to access "imm-oral or illegal content" was against Sharia. In a social media statement on

Saturday, Maulana Tariq Jameel, a prominent religious scholar, said if watching adult content or blasphemous material was an issue then mobile phones should be declared un-Islamic before labelling VPNs as such. Senator Allama Nasir Abbas,

the chief of Shia organisation Majlis Wahdat Muslimeen (MWM), said the country was being ruled by an "incompetent and corrupt elite" who were not even the true representatives of the people."They make laws in such a way and are using decrees ... as per their whims," Senator Abbas added. Wahaj Siraj, the CEO of telecom company Nayatel, said technology has always been neutral and only its use or misuse made it 'Halal or Haram'. The issue of VPNs came to light after the Interior Ministry asked the Pakistan Telecom Authority, the electronic media watchdog, to take action against their illegal use as they were being used for terrorism. Nighat Dad, the executive director of the Digital Rights Foundation, said the action to block VPNs was "contradictory" to the

rights of privacy granted in the

Constitution.

# Gold pocket watch from Titanic rescue sells for record price **London (AP):** A gold pocket watch given to the ship captain Titanic memorabilia. The price vear demonstrates the endur-

who rescued 700 survivors from the Titanic sold at auction for nearly \$2 million, setting a record for memorabilia from the ship wreck.

The 18-carat Tiffany & Co. watch was given by three women survivors to Capt. Arthur Rostron for diverting his passenger ship, the RMS Carpathia, to save them and others after the Titanic struck an iceberg and sank in the north Atlantic on its maiden voyage in 1912.

Auctioneers Henry Aldridge and Son, who sold the watch to a private collector in the United States on Saturday for 1.56 million British pounds, said it's includes taxes and fees paid by the buyer.

The watch was given to Rostron by the widow of John Jacob Astor, the richest man to die in the disaster, and the widows of two other wealthy businessmen who went down with

Astor's pocket watch, which was on his body when it was recovered seven days after the ship sank, had previously set the record for the highest price paid for a Titanic keepsake, fetching nearly \$1.5 million (1.17 million pounds) from the same auction house in April. Auctioneer Andrew Aldridge

said the fact that Titanic mem-

ing fascination with the story and the value of the dwindling supply and high demand for ship artifacts.

Every man, woman and child had a story to tell, and those stories are told over a century

later through the memorabilia," he said. Rostron was hailed a hero for his actions the night the Titanic

sank and his crew was recognized for their bravery. The Carpathia was sailing from New York to the Mediterranean Sea when a radio operator heard a distress call from the Titanic in the early hours of

April 15, 1912 and woke

Rostron in his cabin. He turned

his boat around and headed at full steam toward the doomed vessel, navigating through ice bergs to get there.

By the time the Carpathia arrived, the Titanic had sunk and 1,500 people perished. But the crew located 20 lifeboats and rescued more than 700 passengers and took them back to New York.

Rostron was awarded the U.S. Congressional Gold Medal by President William Howard Taft and was later knighted by King George V.

Madeleine Astor, who had been helped into a lifeboat by her husband, presented the watch to Rostron at a luncheon at her mansion on Fifth Avenue in New York.

## Japanese troops will train with US, Aus forces as concerns over China grow

Canberra (AP): Japan will send troops for joint training with US Marines and Exercise Orient Shield in Japan for the first time next year. Australian forces in northern Australia, the three defence ministers said on Sunday as they expressed concern about a spate of confrontations with China's increasingly assertive military.

Australia's Acting Prime Minister Richard Marles hosted US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin and Japanese Defence Minister Nakatani Gen for talks in Darwin.

The ministers announced trilateral amphibious training between Australia, Japan and the US Marine rotational force in northern Australia from 2025, beginning with Exercise Talisman Sabre.

A joint statement reiterated 'serious concern" about destabilising actions in the East and South China seas including "dangerous conduct" by the Chinese military against Philippine and other vessels from the region. China claims the South China Sea almost in its entirety. The ministers also urged the importance of peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait. China claims self-ruled Taiwan as its own territory and has stepped up military harassment with frequent drills

around the island. Marles, who is also Australia's Australia will also join defense minister, said follow-

counterpart in September that both nations looked to ways to build greater familiarity between their forces. One of the "obvious opportunities" was for Japan to participate in activities during the US Marine rotation in Australia, he said Sunday.

ing talks with his Japanese

'Having a more forwardleaning opportunity for greater training with Japan and the US together is a really fantastic opportunity," he said. Asked if the increased mili-

tary cooperation would anger Beijing, Marles said the decision was about building "the best relationships possible with like-minded countries, with our friends and with our

# Municipal corporations need to impose adequate user charges to provide better facilities: RBI report

Municipal corporations to impose adequate user charges for essential services like water supply and sanitation, to boost non-tax revenues and quality public services, according to a Reserve Bank of India (RBI)

report.
The 'Report on Municipal Finances' delves into the fiscal position of 232 municipal corporations (MCs) from 2019-20 to 2023-24 (Budget Estimates), with a focus on the theme 'Own Sources of Revenue Generation in Municipal Corporations: Opportunities and Challenges'.

"MCs can significantly enhance them (non-tax applying revenues) appropriate and adequate fees and user charges for essential services such as water supply, sanitation, and waste management while also ensuring seamless availability of high-quality public services," it said.

These measures, combined with more transparent and accountable governance practices, can contribute to bolstering the financial health of MCs, setting off a



virtuous cycle of better services for the public, stronger revenues and a continuous upgrade of the urban infrastructure, it said. The major non-tax revenue sources include user charges, licensing layout/building approval fees, development charges, betterment charges, sale and hire charges, market fees, slaughterhouse fees, parking fees, birth and death registration fees.

Sources of tax revenue, include property tax, vacant land tax, water benefit tax, advertisement tax, sewerage benefit tax, tax on animals, and taxes on carriages and

The report further said own sources of revenues (tax revenue, non-tax revenue, and other receipts) afford municipalities increased financial autonomy, stability, and enhanced capacity to strategise and execute urban development initiatives more efficiently and effectively. Municipal corporations need to augment their own

municipal services such as

supply,

management

transportation.

revenue sources for greater operational and financial flexibility. "By optimising property and water taxes, increasing non-tax revenues, and adopting transparent governance practices, urban local bodies can improve their finances," it said.

Leveraging technologies Geographic Information System (GIS) digital mapping and payment systems enhance property collections, it said.

Periodic revisions in water and drainage taxes, and fees and user charges, coupled with use of technology for plugging leakages, can also help improve their revenue collections, it added.

## Enforce odd-even rule to encourage people to shift to natural gas or EV: IBA

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Indian Biogas Association has suggested enforcement of the odd-even rule for four wheelers in Delhi NCR to check air pollution and encourage people to shift to electric vehicles or those based on compressed biogas (CBG) or natural gas.

Under the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) 4 (with air quality index of over 450) measures, odd/even rule for four wheelers is imposed. The Commission for Air

Quality Management (CAQM) has already imposed GRAP 3 measures with the air quality remaining in the

"severe" category. Taking with PTI in an interaction, Indian Biogas Association (IBA) Chairman Gaurav Kedia said, "We recommend implementing the Odd-Even Rule for Petrol and Diesel Vehicles in the coming months so that a good impact can be seen for the air pollution levels in Delhi, and subsidy on EVs and CNG/CBG vehicles, as this will compel the citizens to shift to greener fuel alternatives.

The air pollution situation in Delhi NCR worsens every winter, with the seasonal air quality index consistently remaining above the 300 mark. Delhi due to its the severely polluted AQI has received worldwide attention as one of the most polluted

cities on earth.

burning, residue particularly of paddy straw, in neighbouring states is a major contributor to this scenario, but that's just a small piece of the bigger puzzle.

Kedia suggested that the government must focus on incentive schemes such as reduced charges on electricity bills, PNG connections, and LPG cylinders for houses that effectively segregate organic waste.

It would yield a double dividend: cleaner energy generation from green and leafy biomass collected for biogas plants and a significant reduction in landfill loads, he

The upcoming budget must provide substantial amount to fulfill target of segregating and processing at least 85 per cent of Delhi's waste in the next five vears, he stated.

Organic waste remains one of prime unmanaged pollution sources in Delhi, filling up landfills. These overflowing sites continue to burn, emitting toxic fumes and significant amounts methane gas,

greenhouse gas. Delhi in 2023-2024 generated about 11,342 tons of waste per day. As per the 2024 annual report on implementation of (solid management) rules, 2016, 33.5 per cent of generated MSW (municipal solid waste) goes to landfill but an estimate by the association depicts the number to be around

Of all the municipal solid wastes produced, around 40-60 per cent is organic in nature. It represents an untapped resource clean energy generating through biogas production. Kedia stated that there is a sense of urgency that no organic waste finds its way to the landfill sites and rather should be diverted energy-generating

35percent.

## **CNG** retailers want price hike, government wants to see cost

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

City gas companies like Indraprastha Gas Ltd and Adani Total Gas Ltd are mulling an increase in CNG prices after supplies of cheaper input gas was cut for the second time in a month, but the government officials say the retailers must give a cost breakup to justify the

The government, with effect from November 16, cut supplies of low-priced natural gas coming from old fields to city gas retailers by up to 20

per cent. This reduction came on the back of a 21 per cent reduction on October 16. City gas retailers IGL, which

retails CNG in national capital and adjoining cities, Mahanagar Gas Ltd that does the same in Mumbai, and Adani Total Gas Ltd which operates in Gujarat and elsewhere, in regulatory filings flagged profitability concerns due to supply cut and hinted at price hike.

Officials in the ministry of petroleum and natural gas however are unimpressed as they feel the retailers operate on "hefty" margins and can easily absorb the additional cost they may have to incur on replacing the lost volumes with slighted higher priced gas from new wells or imported LNG.

Take for instance IGL. It posted a net profit of Rs 1,748 crore on revenue of close to Rs 16,000 crore in the fiscal year

ending March 31, 2024. That is a margin of 11 per cent. MGL had a profit of about Rs 1,300 crore on a revenue of Rs 7,000 crore. Which retailer earns that kind of margin?" a senior official

Officials said the government is not against companies earning profits but if they want low-priced input (gas from old fields) then they should also declare the cost breakup of the final product

There cannot be a situation where you insist on getting low cost input but will not reveal the buildup to the final product price," another

official said 'The profitability numbers they have been operating at huge margins. Indian Oil Corporation, which is also a retailer, had its crore on a revenue of Rs 8.71 lakh crore, implying a margin

of 4.5 per cent."

Natural gas pumped from below the ground and from under the seabed from sites ranging from the Arabian Sea to Bay of Bengal within India is the raw material that is turned into CNG for sale to automobiles and piped cooking gas to households. Production from legacy fields, called APM gas and whose price is regulated by the government to feed city gas retailers, has been falling by up to 5 per cent annually due

to the natural decline that has set in. This has led to supply cuts to city gas retailers, officials said. While the input gas for piped cooking gas that households get is protected, the government has cut supply of raw material for

Gas from legacy fields used to

# Coal India arm NCL plans to relocate township having 600 MT of mineable coal underneath



PTI ■ SINGRAULI

¬oal India arm NCL is rehabilitation resettlement (R&R) project and is working on relocating the residents from the

Pradesh's Singrauli, which has million tonnes of mineable coal underneath, company's CMD B Sairam

Talking to reporters here, Sairam said Morwa township in Singrauli, Madhya Pradesh, is spread across 927 hectares.

The project, which is quite huge, will have its own share of challenges as it will involve relocation of the entire Morwa township of Northern

particularly important in the

context of constraints on tax

revenues. MCs in India earn

66.5 per cent of non-tax

revenue from fees and user

It noted that fees and user

charges represent important

sources of revenue for all

civic bodies, particularly in

Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Gujarat, and Tripura, where

their share in own-source

revenue outweighs that of

This, the report said can be

attributed to various factors,

including a high degree of

subsequent expansion in

and

tourist

the

property taxes.

urbanisation,

destinations

charges," the report said.

Coalfields Ltd (NCL). 'The good thing is that in this acquisition, the people are ready to relocate. So half of the problem is solved because the first resistance comes from the people only," the and managing chairman director (CMD) said.

Once people are ready, the only thing to decide is the rates of the compensation and the R&R benefits, he said. For the last six months, NCL

has been regularly negotiating the people

"Based on the combination of

past disbursements, the mandatory provisions and the call taken by the people residing in these areas and what is being given by the private commercial coal blocks coming up in the region, we have been able to reach a consensus and all the parameters of compensation and R&R are firmed up," he explained.

The CMD said the relocation of the township has to take place as one of its coal mines -

Jayant block - is moving closer to this township and within another two years it will reach 500 metres of the residential area, which would

hinder the mining operations. The district administration is helping NCL on this and details of the first phase of R&R needs to be chalked out, he said, adding, "From May, we will start handing out its first compensation cheque." The tenancy land of 572.5 hectares is to be vacated in the first phase, the CMD said.

According to the sources, the company is still working out the finer details of the plan that includes the financial implication.

The Morwa township R&R project will be huge and is likely to entail an estimated expenditure of more than Rs 20,000 crore.

The project will affect 30,000

families and will involve the relocation of 22,000 houses, structures.

The total area for which the relocation being planned is 927 hectares, including 205.8 hectares of forest land, 572.5 hectares of tenancy/private land, and 149.3 hectares of government land.

The company is planning to ramp up the capacity of Jayant coal mine from 30 million tonnes per annum (MTPA) to 35 MTPA by 2026-27.

The company is expecting a big jump in capex target in the coming fiscal year, the CMD said, adding that a chunk of its over Rs 4,000 crore capex will be spent on land compensation.

NCL's capex for the current fiscal year will be in the range of Rs 2,500-2,600 crore. The PSU company produced

136.2 million tonnes of coal in 2023-24. The miniratna company under the Ministry of Coal is targetting production of 139 MT coal in the current fiscal year.

The company accounts for 14 per cent of the total coal produced in the country, contributing to 10 per cent of the country's total electricity generation.

The Singrauli-headquartered company operates through its 10 mechanised opencast mines across Singrauli and Sonebhadra districts of MP and UP, respectively.

## Hyundai Motor India bets on CNG vehicles, sees accelerated demand

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Hyundai Motor India Ltd fuel option with sales of models equipped with the technology witnessing increasing demand across rural and urban markets in the country, according to a top company official.

The company, which currently offers CNG option in its three models - Grand i10 NIOS, AURA and EXTER has seen an increase in contribution of the CNG models to its domestic sales to 11.4 per cent in FY24 from 9.1 per cent in FY22

So far in the April-October period this fiscal, the contribution of CNG models to the company's domestic sales has risen to 12.8 per cent.

Its overall vehicle sales across different fuel options stood at 3.54 lakh units in the domestic market during the period.

"At present, India already has more than 7,000 ĆNG



approximately 17,500 CNG in October 2024. stations by 2030 which will further fuel the CNG demand," HMIL Whole-time Director and COO Tarun Garg said on the reasons behind the company's bullishness on CNG models. With a view to increase CNG HMIL vehicle sales, introduced the 'Hy-CNG Duo' - with a dual-cylinder system offering ample boot space and higher fuel efficiency - in its EXTER and Grand i10 NIOS models.

"The introduction of Hy-CNG Duo is aimed to meet customer demands of providing ample space with high mileage and safety. This has helped us achieve

"Company-fitted system with three years warranty assures maximum

added. The 'Hy-CNG Duo' is also equipped with an integrated ECU for faster and seamless shifting between petrol and

assurance for customers," he

CNG fuel options. In October this year, HMIL had clocked 8,261 units of CNG models in domestic sales with CNG penetration in its compact car Grandi10 NIOS at 17.4 per cent, 39.7 per cent for mini SUV EXTER and 90.6 per cent for compact sedan AURA.

HMIL said it has also witnessed the penetration of cent in FY24 in the urban markets, and from 7.1 per cent in FY22 to 12.0 per cent As of October this fiscal,

HMIL's urban penetration of CNG models stood at 12.3 per cent while it was at 14.6 per cent in the rural market. The company's top three cities for CNG vehicle sales in the January to October period of 2024 were Pune, New Delhi and Ahmedabad while in terms of states it was Maharashtra, Gujarat and

Uttar Pradesh. HMIL is joining rivals Maruti Suzuki India and Tata Motors which have also focussed on enhancing sales of their CNG models.

In fact, Maruti Suzuki India has set a target of selling 6 lakh CNG vehicles in FY25, up from 4.89 lakh units in FY24.

Tata Motors' passenger vehicles segment has also increasing witnessed penetration of CNG vehicles in its overall portfolio in the first half of the fiscal to 21

 $D_{\text{Jainam and Jivika, the}}^{\text{ubai-based}} \ \ \text{siblings}$ 

domain, have decided to

transfer it to Reliance "free

on social media platforms.

The story of the internet

grabbed a lot of attention on

for funding his higher studies at the Cambridge

name,

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

domain

## Retail tomato prices drop 22.4 per cent on improved supplies: Government

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

 $R^{\text{etail}}_{\text{declined}} \ \substack{\text{tomato} \\ \text{22.4 per cent}}$ month-on-month improved supplies across the the Consumer country, Affairs Ministry said on Sunday.

The all-India average retail price of tomatoes stood at Rs 52.35 per kg on November 14, down from Rs 67.50 per kg on October 14, according to an official statement.

During the same period, modal wholesale prices at Delhi's Azadpur mandi witnessed a sharper decline of nearly 50 per cent to Rs 2,969 per quintal from Rs 5,883 per quintal, driven by increased arrivals.

Similar price corrections were reported from key markets Pimpalgaon (Maharashtra), Madanapalle (Andhra Pradesh), and Kolar (Karnataka), the ministry



subsided at major tomato centres in Madanapalle and Kolar, prices have eased due to seasonal supplies from Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat filling supply gaps nationwide," it added

Favourable weather conditions have supported both crop growth and smooth supply chain movement from fields to consumers, the statement noted.

country's tomato production is projected to increase 4 per cent to 213.20 lakh tonne in 2023-24.

seasonally across regions. The ministry said adverse weather and logistics disruptions significantly impact prices due to the crop's susceptibility perishable nature.

The price surge during October 2024 was attributed to excessive and prolonged rains in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. October and November are

the main sowing periods in major producing states. Regular market availability is maintained due to the crop's short cultivation duration and harvests,

#### meet 90 per cent of the demand for CNG in May 2023 CNG models grow from 8.8 highest ever CNG per cent, up from 16 per cent While tomatoes are grown multiple "Though arrivals have ministry added. penetration of 14.9 per cent per cent in FY22 to 10.7 per year-round, production varies and has progressively fallen. stations and aim is to have Dubai-based siblings to transfer jiohotstar.com domain to Reliance free of cost Reliance Group establishes



PTI NEW DELHI

The Reliance Group on Monday has launched the "Reliance Group Corporate Centre" (RGCC) as a part of its VISION 2030: Growth

Strategy. The RGCC will serve as a strategic hub, providing guidance to the Group's companies as they pursue new opportunities and technological advancements.

include leaders of the group Sateesh Seth, Punit Garg, and K. Raja Gopal, who will collectively bring

management expertise. Both Sateesh Seth and Punit Garg have dedicated more than two decades to the group, serving in various leadership positions.

The establishment of RGCC Group's leadership for future

aims to harness the in-house expertise of these seasoned leaders to support the forward-looking initiatives and cultivate a new generation of

projects. The RGCC will play a pivotal role in mentoring and developing emerging leaders, blending experience with success.'

The core team of RGCC will fresh talent to propel the group towards sustained growth.

Reliance Group spokesperson said, "We are thrilled to introduce RGCC, team of seasoned professionals with broad spectrum expertise. This strategic move aims to

steer the Group's future recent past, ended with "seva growth by tapping into the and kindness", according to vast experience of these the duo. The unique website ID was leaders, will help navigate industry challenges and said to have been initially capitalize registered by a Delhi-based opportunities, drive app developer last year amid innovation, and deliver speculation about the exceptional value to our potential merger of Reliance customers and stakeholders. Jio and Disney Hotstar. Last month, the developer We believe RGCC will be instrumental in shaping the came up with the demand

next phase of our Group's



University in return of the domain's ownership transfer, days after Reliance Jio and The Walth Disney formally announced the merger of their media businesses Later, the Dubai-based

siblings purchased jiohotstar.com domain from registered owner. According to industry observers, the domain was sold to Dubai-based siblings after Reliance declined his

The siblings now shared an update, saying the Reliance IP Legal team approached them and the duo has decided to pass the them ownership (Reliance), hoping that it would be "useful for them". "Reliance IP legal team has approached us, and we will be transferring this domain to them, free of cost," they said in a message on the website.

"There have been some rumours online suggesting that there is a payment or deal involved, but we want to make it clear, this is not true," the message said. Moreover, the duo in his

video also clarified there is "no pressure from anyone" and denied of having a "deal of any kind".

This is purely a transfer of the domain from our side

because we believe it could be useful for them. Whether or not they choose to use it is up to them," the message added. PTI reached out to Reliance

for its comment on the development but did not receive any response. In their previous message,

the siblings said they had received numerous offers, including some genuine ones offering significant amounts. However, they had said that the domain was not for sale.

While announcing the ʻiournev jiohotstar.Com is coming to an end", the duo said they are waiting for a draft from the

Reliance legal team for the transfer. The Reliance IP legal team has contacted us. We have told them that the

is signed. They have asked us to visit Mumbai to sign the agreement," they said, expecting the agreement to be signed soon. "As soon as this happens, we will transfer the domain and

this website will come to an

happen after the agreement

end," the message said. Reliance had last week announced completion of the merger of its media assets with the India business of global media giant The Walt Disney, forming a joint venture

worth around Rs 70,352

crore (USD 8.5 billion). The JV will be one of the largest media entertainment companies in India with a combined revenue of approximately Rs 26,000 crore and will be led Nita Ambani as its

domain transfer will only chairperson. REDEFINING

kincare has been the talk of the town from quite a time now. From using normal soaps and moisturisers, to now being choosy due to thousands of brands typically using chemicals it's difficult to rely on the ones which are healthy for the skin. Some brands live up to the mark but the others are religiously rejected by the people.

From the days Ayurvedic products have come into the business, the trust of the people have been retained. Param Amrit, a luxurious skincare brand launched at the Constitution Club of India by Nutan Kher recently promises you the same.

Param Amrit is a luxurious skincare brand to revive the ancient wisdom of Avurveda by integrating the transformative power of Mantra Aushadhi. Each product of Param Amrit is handcrafted and is a testament to holistic well-being, connecting mind, body, and soul. By merging ancient rituals with modern wellness aspirations, Param Amrit offers a range of Ayurvedic products that go beyond surfacelevel beauty, promoting spiritual and emotional rejuvenation.

The Ayurvedic products that have been launched are Soaps -Abundance, Celestial, Divine Citrus, Divine Orcard, Enchanted, Fairy Dust; Face Serums Face Kumkumadi Serum. Kumkumadi Gold Face Serum and Ghritamrit face cream.

Talking to Nutan Kher, Founder of Param Amrit about the many Ayurvedic brands, people in the majority still going for brands that use chemicals and how does she think that Param Amrit can bring a change to people's choices? She said, "We believe the shift towards natural, Ayurveda-based products more than awareness-it calls for trustbuilding, education, and tangible results. That is why despite the growing awareness around Ayurveda, many consumers continue to lean toward brands that use chemicals, driven by aggressive marketing and instant results. However, Param Amrit is dedicated to educating consumers about the holistic, restorative benefits of Ayurvedic ingredients and the importance understanding what they're putting on their skin. We stand out by focusing not just on the purity of its ingredients but also on the



Vedic processes that enhance their healing properties. Our products are carefully crafted using traditional

methods, ensuring that formulation retains its natural potency and effectiveness. Moreover, we use high-quality,

traditionally revered Ayurvedic ingredients in combination with modern testing to ensure efficacy, safety, and visible results. We at Param Amrit offer the best

of both worlds: effective skincare rooted in nature and Avurveda, without the potential downsides of synthetic chemicals. Our products demonstrate how true wellness is a gradual journey that prioritises long-term health over quick fixes, we aim to shift consumer preferences. We confident that once people experience the

authentic,

THE AYURVEDIC

PRODUCTS THAT HAVE

BEEN LAUNCHED ARE

SOAPS – ABUNDANCE,

CELESTIAL, DIVINE

CITRUS, DIVINE ORCARD

**ENCHANTED**, FAIRY DUST;

FACE SERUMS -

KUMKUMADI FACE SERUM

KUMKUMADI GOLD FACE

SERUM AND GHRITAMRIT

FACE CREAM

benefits of our products, prioritised they will make more conscious, healthier choices for themselves and their families. Our mission is to make Ayurvedic skincare a primary choice for holistic beauty

holistic

and wellness, shifting consumer perceptions to recognise the true, sustainable benefits of naturebased solutions." On asking that does she (Nutan

Kher) thinks that Ayurvedic products can lead the way, she explained, "Absolutely. The launch of Param Amrit will set a new standard in the skincare industry with more Ayurvedic products. This shift is timely and necessary as consumers are becoming increasingly conscious of what they put on their skin and the impact these choices have on their overall well-being. Ayurveda offers a comprehensive, time-tested approach to skincare that aligns perfectly with these values, emphasising balance, sustainability, and nurturing from

within thus, reviving the age-old

wisdom Ayurveda in modern context. We believe that the

authenticity and purity of Ayurvedic products like ours can pave the way for a more meaningful and conscious approach to skincare and self-care. In contrast to conventional skincare, which often uses chemicals for quick, surface-level results, Ayurveda prioritises understanding each individual's skin type, body constitution, and specific needs. Our goal is to help consumers make informed choices, empowering them to experience skincare that works in harmony with their natural biology.

Our formulations, rooted in ancient wisdom, are developed using ethically sourced, highquality herbs, and botanical extracts, blended with modern safety standards. By embracing this combination of ancient science and modern rigour, our brand

> shows that Ayurvedic skincare is not just an alternative but a reliable and effective choice today's consumers. people

become aware of the adverse effects of chemicalbased products, there is a inclination towards

natural embracing safer, nature-derived solutions. The market is ready for a resurgence of Ayurvedic products, and with Param Amrit leading by example in quality and efficacy, we are optimistic that Ayurveda can reclaim its rightful place in the mainstream, encouraging more people to choose natural, sustainable, and wellness-centric lifestyles."

With its roots in the time-tested wisdom of Ayurveda, Param Amrit will not just be a skincare brand; it is a movement towards conscious, holistic, and sustainable beauty. By blending ancient practices with modern aspirations, the brand promises to inspire a healthier, more mindful approach to skincare, leading the way for nature-based solutions in the modern world.



BY JYOTI SINGH

n today's fast-paced world, stress is a constant companion for many, affecting both hysical and mental well-being in New Delhi, offers yoga as a powerful remedy for stress relief. Yoga isn't just exercise; it's a way to reconnect with oneself, find calm amid chaos, and build resilience against daily

Understanding Yoga's Role in Stress Relief Yoga is unique in its ability to address stress at multiple levels - physically, mentally, and emotionally. Yoga isn't merely about flexibility or strength; it's about achieving balance. Practicing yoga lowers cortisol levels, the primary stress hormone, helping practitioners experience a natural sense of calm and well-being. In addition to the physical benefits, yoga cultivates mindfulness and deep breathing, both essential tools for managing stress.

By focusing on breathing and bodily awareness, yoga trains the mind to stay grounded in the present moment, reducing anxiety and worry. This mindfulness aspect of yoga empowers individuals to manage stress more effectively, turning challenges into manageable experiences. Yoga can be a sanctuary - a place to find peace within yourself, no matter the external circumstances.

Effective Yoga Practices for Managing

The combination of physical poses, breathing exercises, and relaxation techniques tailored to relieve stress is recommended. Here are some practices especially effective:

#### **PRANAYAMA (BREATHING TECHNIQUES)** Pranayama, or controlled breathing, is one

of the most effective tools for stress relief. Techniques like Anulom Vilom (Alternate Nostril Breathing) and Bhramari (Bee Breath) are ideal for calming the mind. Anulom Vilom, for example, involves breathing through alternate nostrils, which balances energy flow and reduces stress. Bhramari, on the other hand, involves creating a humming sound while exhaling, promoting a sense of tranquility and relieving mental tension.

#### **BALASANA (CHILD'S POSE)** This restorative posture allows practition-

ers to rest and reset. By folding forward with arms extended or resting by the sides, the Child's Pose provides a gentle stretch for the back while calming the mind. It's an effective way to release built-up tension and focus on breathing, encouraging relaxation.

#### **SUKHASANA WITH FORWARD BEND**

Cross-legged with a forward fold stretches the spine and relaxes the nervous system. This position is simple yet effective for rate these practices into their lives and expe-

oneself and encouraging introspection, making it a valuable addition to a stressrelieving yoga routine.

#### **SHAVASANA (CORPSE POSE)**

Shavasana is the ultimate relaxation pose, allowing the body to rest and the mind to find calm. Practiced at the end of a session, it involves lying flat on one's back with the body relaxed and eyes closed. It is recommended that you do deep breathing during Shavasana, as it allows the nervous system to reset, enhancing relaxation and reducing stress levels.

#### The Science Behind Yoga & Stress Reduction

Studies confirm that yoga activates the parasympathetic nervous system, also known as the "rest and digest" mode, which is the body's natural counter to stress. Regular practice enhances this calming response, improving long-term stress management. Yoga builds resilience - it helps you create inner strength so that stress doesn't control you. Yoga is not only a coping mechanism but a preventive measure that enables individuals to handle life's challenges with greater ease.

#### **Practicing Safely**

For beginners, starting slowly and consulting an instructor to ensure poses are performed correctly. Practicing under guidance, especially when new to yoga, can enhance the benefits and minimize any discomfort. Sessions are tailored to meet individual needs, with a focus on safe and effective stress-relief practices. Yoga offers a sanctuary from the pressures

of daily life, helping individuals find inner peace and resilience. Anyone can incorpogrounding rience the transformative effects of yoga for stress relief.



# FIBRE-PACKED ALMONDS

The Australian almonds are your key to a healthier gut microbiome, writes KAVITA DEVGAN

Regardless of whether you're a professional athlete or simply interested in health and fitness, it's easy to integrate almonds into your routine. In fact, a regular 30-gram handful of Australian almonds contribute to heart health.

#### THE GUT BENEFITS OF ALMONDS

Interest in gut health has increased exponentially over recent years. Understanding what drives a healthy gut is still in its infancy, but current knowledge suggests a healthy gut is dependent on an abundant and diverse gut microbiota. Lower gut microbiota diversity is associated with a range of disorders and disease states, including cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes and inflammatory bowel disease. The nutrients that we get from food, in particular fibre, *phytochemicals* (particularly flavonoids and polyphenols) and unsaturated fatty acids, can positively impact the gut micro biota. Almonds contain a unique nutrient package that includes all three, but what exactly is the evidence base for nuts and gut health?

#### Key insights you need to know:

• Gut health, and specifically micro biota balance and diversity, can influence overall health.

Almonds are one of the few foods to



contain a unique package of fibre, phytochemicals and unsaturated fat, that can all positively affect the gut microbiota composition.

There is established evidence that eating at least 1 large handful (>42g) of almonds daily has a positive effect on gut microbiotaboth increasing beneficial bacteria

decreasing potentially pathogenic types.

Evidence suggests that long-term nut consumption may also decrease the risk of colorectal (and colon) cancer recurrence and death, and this link may be more apparent in women than men. Almonds contain the highest content of fibre, and one of

highest amounts phytochemicals, of all nuts.

About the research A literature review investigating the relationship between nuts, specifically almonds, and gut health was conducted Nutrition Research Australia

(NRAUS). A review of the literature

database. Study types were limited to randomised controlled trials (RCTs), cohort studies and systematic literature reviews (SLR). Targeted searches were also conducted in Google Scholar using

was undertaken via the PUBMED

#### Research findings in a snapshot: THE GUT MICROBIOTA

A 2020 SLR and meta-analysis of nine RCTs found strong evidence that both almonds (5 studies) and walnuts (3 studies) can improve the gut microbiota. There was an absence of evidence for other nut types (8). Almonds had a dual effect, increasing the abundance of healthy short chain fatty acids producing bacteria, and decreasing potentially pathogenic bacteria.

In one study, even greater effects were found in children, where 42.5g and 85g of almonds per day over 3 weeks had a more pronounced effect on gut microbiota in four-year-old children compared with their parents.

#### Is the level of processing important?

Research has shown that whole and chopped almonds have a greater positive impact on the gut microbiota than almonds in butter form. This may be because approximately 50% of the fibre

content of almonds is found in the almond skin. How are Almonds linked to GUT

#### HEALTH? Nuts are one of the few foods that provide

nutrient package of fibre, phytochemicals (flavonoids, flavanones and polyphenols) and unsaturated fatty acids, which may explain their strong beneficial effects on bacterial abundance and microbiota

composition. Fibre is well known to provide important fuel for colonic bacteria, and

phytochemicals act like

positively prebiotics, influencing the maintenance of healthy and diverse microbiota. Unsaturated fatty acids have been shown to have antimicrobial properties and also benefit gut microbiota composition.

#### Amounts and frequency

- One large handful (42g) of almonds or walnuts per day over 3-12 weeks had positive effects on the gut microbiota.
- Two or more handfuls (57g) of nuts per week were associated with a lower incidence of colorectal cancer recurrence and death.

The author is the Simone nutrition program ambassador of Australian

# India beat Japan 3-0 to top league stage

PTI ■ RAJGIR (BIHAR)

efending champions India stormed into the semifinals of the Women's Asian Champions Trophy with an unbeaten record, defeating Japan 3-0 here on Sunday.

Continuing her stellar form, star striker Deepika netted a quickfire brace from penalty corners in the final quarter to seal the victory, following vice-captain Navneet Kaur's opener in the 37th minute. With this win, India topped

the league stage with maximum 15 points from five matches, ahead of Olympic silver medallists China (12 points). India will take on fourth-

placed Japan in the semifinal on Tuesday, while China will play third-placed Malaysia in the other last-four game. Deepika, the tournament's

leading scorer, now boasts 10 goals, including four field goals, five penalty corners, and one penalty stroke, underscoring dominance.

In the day's other matches, Malaysia beat Thailand 2-0, while China defeated South Korea by an identical

The Indians secured their



first scoring chance in the second effort was brilliantly

form of back-to-back penalty saved by Japanese goalkeeper corners in the eighth minute Yu Kudo. India earned but Deepika's flick from the another penalty corner in

the 13th minute but yet again wasted the chance. The Indians continued dominate and secured their

fourth penalty corner in the 25th minute but once again Kudo rose to the occasion and made three brilliant

A minute after the change of ends, Kudo again came to Japan's rescue to deny Deepika.

India eventually broke the deadlock in the 37th minute through Navneet's brilliant reverse hit to the second

Deepika's brilliance

The Indians continued their domination and earned three back-to-back corrners in the 47th minute and star dragflicker Deepika finally found the back of the net with a powerful low dragflick to open her account.

A minute later, the Indians secured another set piece and this time too Deepika struck again with a powerful flick into the top right corner, effectively sealing the

Credit must also go to the defence, Indian brilliantly by Udita and Sushila Chanu, as they didn't let the Japanese take a single shot at the Indian goal.Skipper Salima Tete, Neha and Sharmila Devi too brilliant in the midfield, creating numerous chances for the forwardline with their runs and neat

minutes of playing time. The Polish pair converted all four break chances and hit Tga Swiatek won in singles and doubles to lead Poland's 2-1 comeback more winners, 29-18, than against the Czech Republic in the Billie Jean King Cup.

the Czechs. Poland is seeking its first title. The Czech Republic is Poland will meet Italy in the an 11-time champion, second only to the United

Paolini likewise won her singles and doubles matches to lead Italy back for a 2-1 win over Japan. Bouzkova Marie Magdalena Frech 6-1, 4-6, 6-4 to give the Czech Republic a 1-0 lead on the indoor

Swiatek leads Poland comeback

over Czechs to set up BJK Cup

semi against Paolini's Italy

hard court in Malaga's Palacio del Deportes.
The second-ranked Swiatek leveled the score after she held on for a 7-6 (7), 4-6, 7-5 win over Linda Noskova.

semifinals after Jasmine

AP MALAGA (SPAIN)

The five-time Grand Slam winner then went back on the court after a short break to help Katarzyna Kawa beat Katerina Siniakova, the world's top-ranked doubles player, and Bouzkova 6-2, 6-

"Let's enjoy this one. For sure it was an exhausting day and some really tough matches, but I am really happy we won that last one," Swiatek said.

She added that she hadn't played doubles in three years and praised Kawa's wellplaced passing shots in the doubles lane as key to victory

Swiatek showed no sign that she was worn down by the back-to-back matches that

States' 18 titles. ITALY EYES SHOT AT CONSECUTIVE FINALS

The fourth-ranked Paolini, a finalist at Wimbledon and the French Open, defeated Moyuka Uchijima 6-3, 6-4 to level the tie 1-1. She then helped Sara Errani beat Shuko Aoyama and Eri Hozumi 6-3, 6-4 to seal the quarterfinal win.

Japan took the early lead Shibahara when Ena defeated Elisabetta Cocciaretto 3-6, 6-4, 6-4. Uchijima stole Paolini's first service game. But that was only a blip in an otherwise dominant showing by the Italian. Paolini broke

Uchijima four times and hit 17 forehand winners to secure the straight-set victory. In doubles, the Italians broke the Japanese four times and made just 14 unforced errors to 23 by their rivals.

"Japan is a tough cookie, as you say in English," Italy captain Tathiana Garbin said. "They played with a lot of courage so it was fun to watch this kind of level. My players, they played unbelievable doubles, so we

# England by five wickets in 4th T20



**AP** ■ GROS ISLET (ST. LUCIA)

Shai Hope and Evin Lewis made half centuries in a rapid 136-run opening stand West completed a record run chase to beat England by five wickets in the fourth Twenty20 international. and come out of the power

and Lewis made 68 from 31 balls, with seven sixes and four fours, in a partnership which lasted only 9.1 overs but enabled the West Indies to reach a winning target of 219 on Saturday. The West Indies' confident

start was shaken when Lewis, Hope and Nicholas Pooran fell to consecutive balls in the 10th over. But captain Roston Chase put the innings back on track with 38 from 23 balls and Sherfane Rutherford competed the chase with successive sixes and an over

to spare. There were 32 sixes in the match, 16 from each team. "We had to assess the

conditions. That's one thing we struggled with in the first three games in the power play," Hope said. "We've been losing some early wickets so the main thing was to try and understand

England already had won the five-match series after winning the first three matches by eight wickets, seven wickets and three wickets respectively.

Every match in the series and in the previous threematch one-day series has been won by the team winning the toss.

After being sent in, Phil Salt and Jacob Bethell who both have deep roots in the Caribbean made swift half centuries as England made 218-5 to equal the highest first innings total at the Darren Sammy Stadium.

Bethell who was born and raised in Barbados made an unbeaten 62 from 32 balls

while Salt who was born in Wales but raised in Barbados made 55 from 35 balls at the top of the order.

Will Jacks (25), Jos Buttler (38) and Sam Curran (24) contributed England's innings of 218-5. The West Indies made a speedy start in pursuit of that total. Hope reached his half century from 23 balls, the West Indies were 69-0 after the power play and their hundred came up in only 7.3 overs.

Lewis was more watchful than Hope at first but when he began to hit out it was with enormous power. He reached his half century from 26 balls and the longest of his sixes traveled 105 meters.

The century partnership between Hope and Lewis came from only 45 balls and what was the best remedy, to they had looked understand the conditions impregnable until Lewis played an awkward shot to a from Rehan Ahmed which he skewed to Dan Mousley.

Hope was run out next ball for the second time in consecutive matches and Pooran was bowled first ball as the West Indies slumped to 136-3

Powell restored some of the early momentum with his 38 before falling lbw to John Turner in his T20 debut. The West Indies needed 21 from the the last three overs with five wickets in hand, then 15 from two.

After edging towards the target in singles, Rutherford finally found the middle and blasted consecutive sixes from Mousely to clinch the

# West Indies chase down 219 to beat | McGrath urges Australia to 'go hard' on emotional Kohli

Pace legend Glenn McGrath Pfeels Australia have the "ammunition" to target an "emotional" Virat Kohli, who will be under pressure if he gets off to a poor start at the five-match Test series for the Border-Gavaskar Trophy, starting in Perth from November 22.

India have won the last four Test series against Australia, including two Down Under. However, they head into the much-anticipated five-Test assignment on the back of a 0-3 series whitewash at the hands of New Zealand at

"Without a doubt, especially after coming off a 3-0 loss



against New Zealand, you've got plenty of ammunition to back yourself up," Fox Cricket quoted McGrath as saying on CODE Sports'.

"So put the pressure on them and see if they're up for it," he

Kohli, who has been India's batting mainstay for over a emotions in check.

decade, has struggled with form in Test cricket recently. In the six matches he's played this year, he has averaged just With the injured Shubman Gill out of contention from the first Test and skipper

Rohit Sharma's participation also in doubt, Kohli will feel the pressure of leading the batting line up.
However, the 36-year-old has a penchant of eking out his best in Australia. Kohli has an

impressive average of 54.08 in the four Australia tours he has been a part of. And McGrath warned that targeting Kohli aggressively could also lift him, especially

if he manages to keep his

combined for 3 hours, 50

# Need to be proactive against Ashwin, and not allow him to settle: Smith

A ustralian batting talisman Steve ASmith wants to adopt a proactive approach against Ravichandran Ashwin in the upcoming Border-Gavaskar Trophy to avoid his struggles against the Indian spinner during the 2020-21

Ashwin had nicked off Smith thrice during that rubber, and later in 2023 the Indian off-spinner dismissed the Aussie twice as he could only make 22 runs

against his old foe.
"I don't like getting out to off-spin in Australia. But he's also a very good bowler and he came in with some decent plans. There were a couple of occasions where he got on top of me," Smith told the Sydney Morning Herald. "But then I got on top of him at the SCG when I was a bit more proactive (Smith made 131 and 81 at Sydney). So, that's key for me. Just be proactive against him and not let him settle and bowl the way



he wants to," he added. Ashwin's Test bowling average stands at a modest 42.15 in Australia compared to his home average of 21.57.

Smith hoped to land the first blow on the 38-year-old to gain an early upper hand in the five-match series, beginning at Perth from November 22.



The Tamil Nadu man recently said that he had worked out Smith after some initial struggles against him.

"I think I've kind of figured out what he does or how he bats, I've had an edge over him. I've had the wood over him, Ashwin had told Channel Seven. But Smith did not read too much into it.

"Ashwin and I have had some good battles over the years. When you have another player, they could have 10 innings against them.

'So, you're facing those mental challenges each game, and if it goes one way early, they will feel under pressure against that player. There's nowhere to hide in five games like there are in a two-game series," said the New South Wales man.

The 35-year-old, who is 315 shy of 10,000 Test runs, will bat at his favoured No. 4 slot against India after opening the innings for four Tests earlier this year. It was not a successful experiment and Smith hoped to hit the ground running early from a position where he made runs at an average in excess of 60. It always makes your summer better

when you start well. It gives you a lot of confidence. It's about not overthinking things. It's playing each ball as it comes and keeping it simple.

# US Open runner-up Fritz back in another big final and faces Sinner again for ATP Finals crown

Taylor Fritz is starting to make reaching big finals a habit. He feels like he belongs among the very best players in tennis, too.

The American followed his runner-up finish at the U.S. Open by beating Alexander Zverev 6-3, 3-6, 7-6 (3) on Saturday to play for the trophy at the ATP Finals.

"I have believed that I belong, that I'm one of the best players," Fritz said. "It's not results-based. It's more I can feel how I'm playing. This week is huge.

In Sunday's final, Fritz will will face top-ranked Jannik Sinner — the player he lost to in the U.S. Open final. Sinner also beat Fritz in straight sets in the group stage this week. Sinner advanced with a rapid 6-1, 6-2 win over Casper Ruud.

Fritz became the first American finalist since James Blake lost the 2006 final to Roger Federer. The last American to win the elite eight-man event was Pete Sampras, who beat Andre Agassi in 1999.



"I trust my game and I trust my level and I don't feel nearly as uncomfortable in these situations anymore because I've been playing the top guys at big events a lot lately," Fritz "I'm getting more comfortable in the moment. I'm really, really confident in my game.

Fritz upbeat after loss to SinnerFritz came away encouraged from his 6-4, 6-4 loss to Sinner on Tuesday. felt much

break him in both sets," Fritz "He had an equal amount of chances, and he took his. He played the big points better than I did. It didn't feel anywhere near as one-sided as the Open." Sinner noted that Fritz

baseline. ... I had chances to

"played a great match." The difference was just a few points. Tomorrow will be very similar. ... But finals are more always different than group

Fritz trying to match GauffIf Fritz wins the trophy, it will mark an American sweep of the season-ending events after Coco Gauff won the WTA Finals last week.

Fritz's run in New York made him the first American man to reach a Grand Slam singles final in 15 years. He's playing at the ATP Finals for the second time. On debut two years ago, he beat Rafael Nadal in his opener and made

it to the semifinals, losing to Novak Djokovic. "It's awesome to come back and already go a step further," Fritz said. "I'm all about

always trying to do better than the year before." At the start of the week, Fritz told The Associated Press his "career has always been a very steady progression and just improving a little bit each year." Fritz has Zverev's numberIt was Fritz's fourth consecutive victory over Zverev, who replaced Carlos

rankings this week. "He's an uncomfortable player for me." Zverev said. "It's no secret.

Alcaraz at No. 2 in the

Fritz also beat Zverev at Wimbledon and the U.S. Open, plus the Laver Cup. Fritz will finish year at career

highFritz was already assured of finishing the year in the top five for the first time and he'll rise to a career-high No. 4 on Monday.

Zverev has seen Fritz's improvement up close — especially on one key stroke: "His forehand used to break down quite a lot. ... I feel like the ratio is a lot more towards

winners now."

It was a matchup of big servers between the 6-foot-5 (1.96-meter) Fritz and the 6-foot-6 (1.98-meter) Zverev, and when Fritz broke Zverev for 4-2 in the first set, it marked the first time that Zverev lost a service game in four matches in Turin.

Eventually, though, the match turned into a physical duel from the baseline. Fritz rallied

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from 0-40 and held his serve for 3-2 in the third after a nine-minute game full of long rallies - winning one such exchange that lasted 30 strokes. Fritz was then under pressure

one service game after another but somehow managed to keep holding. Fritz got ahead early in the tiebreaker and finished Zverev off with an audacious

on his first match point. Fritz finished with 15 aces to Zverev's 10 in a match that last 2 hours, 20 minutes. "I felt like statistically and

inside-out forehand winner

shot-wise, my level maybe was even higher than his until the important moments. That's where I kind of blew it," Zverev said. 'This one will hurt more than the other few.

**GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA** OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER

Sd /- Superintending Engineer M.I.Division, Sundargarh

MINOR IRRIGATION DIVISION, SUNDARGARH. 'e' Procurement Notice Bid Reference No. SE MID SNG 07/2024-25 Bid documents consisting names of Work, Estimated cost, Cost of tender paper, EMD, time of completion, Class of Contractor set of terms and conditions of contract and other necessary documents can be seen in exprovement conditions.

Civil works 01 (One) No Name of the works Rs. 50.85 lakh (Approximately) Estimated cost Period of completion: 03 (Three) Calendar months From dt.19.11.2024 at.10.00 AM to dt.03.12.2024 upto 5.30 PM. Dt.03.12.2024 up to 5.30 PM Last date / time of receipt of bids in the portal Dt.04.12.2024 at 11.00 AM onwards Date of opening of Technica Name and address of the OIT Superintending Engineer, Minor Irrigation Division, Sundargarh \* Further details can be seen from the e-Procurement market place http://tendersodisha.gov.in