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Violence erupts at Sambhal mosque survey, three dead



Police and security personnel stand guard amid protest by locals during a second survey of the Jama Masjid, claimed to be originally the site of an ancient Hindu temple, in Sambhal, Sunday, November 24, 2024. Police used tear gas and "minor force" in the face of stone pelting by locals on Sunday as tension escalated during the survey of the Mughal-era mosque. PTI

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■
LUCKNOW

Tensions flared into violence on Sunday as a court-mandated survey of the Mughal-era Jama Masjid triggered clashes between locals and police resulting in the deaths of three individuals. Over 40 people including policemen were reported injured in the violence. Eyewitnesses say that during a second survey of the mosque, a mob attacked police personnel with stones and set vehicles ablaze. The police responded with tear gas and a baton charge to control the situation. Over 20 police

officers and more than two dozen civilians were injured in the clashes, with reports of three deaths adding to the unrest. According to police, violence erupted when a crowd of nearly a thousand gathered outside the mosque to prevent a survey team, led by a court-appointed advocate commissioner, from entering. As tensions escalated, some individuals in the crowd reportedly began pelting stones at the police, leading to retaliation with tear gas. Amid the chaos, over ten vehicles were set ablaze. "Some miscreants in the crowd resorted to violence. The police used minor force

and tear gas to bring the situation under control. Those involved will be identified and strict action will be taken," said Krishna Kumar Vishnoi, superintendent of police. District Magistrate Rajendra Pesia confirmed that approximately ten individuals were detained. Videos circulating on social media show scenes of stone-pelting and vehicles engulfed in flames. "Three people identified as Naeem, Bilal and Nauman have been killed. Some policemen including the gunner of the superintendent of police have also been injured," Moradabad Divisional Commissioner

Aunjaneya Kumar Singh said. Despite the unrest, the survey, which commenced at 7:30 am, was completed as planned. Advocate Vishnu Shankar Jain, representing the petitioners, stated that the survey team conducted a detailed examination of the site, supported by videography and photography in compliance with court directives. The report is set to be submitted by November 29. The controversy stems from a court case filed by a Hindu group claiming that the Jama Masjid was originally the Harihar temple. Following a court directive, a commissioner was appointed to survey the site. Last Tuesday, the court-appointed team conducted an initial survey, including videography and photography, lasting about two hours. However, the second survey attempt on Sunday sparked violent protests. The court commissioner is expected to submit a detailed report to the court by November 29. Samajwadi Party (SP) chief Akhilesh Yadav criticised the Uttar Pradesh (UP) government and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), accusing them of deliberately orchestrating the violence. "The mosque was already surveyed earlier. Sending the team again, unprepared, was a deliberate attempt to provoke unrest and divert attention from pressing electoral issues," he alleged.



All party meeting ahead of Winter session of the Parliament. Ranjan Dimri/The Pioneer

BJP win dampens Opposition plans

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

Winter session of Parliament anticipated to begin on a stormy note on Monday at the backdrop of latest controversy around Adani Group with the Opposition ready to flex its muscles, is now likely to be dampened after BJP's morale booster Assembly results in Maharashtra, by-polls of Uttar Pradesh and last month's Harayana success to its kitty. The Opposition on Sunday asked the Centre to allow discussions in the Parliament on the US prosecutors' bribery charges against the Adani Group even as Union minister Kiren Rijiju made it clear that the matters to be taken up in the two houses will be decided by their authorised committees with the consent of the respective chair. Following the customary all-party meeting on the eve of the Parliament's Winter Session commencing Monday, Rijiju told reporters that the government has appealed to all the parties to ensure smooth conduct of

business in the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha. Forty-two leaders from 30 parties attended the meeting, which was chaired by senior BJP leader and Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh. The meeting was attended by BJP President JP Nadda, Congress leader Jairam Ramesh, DMK's Tiruchi Siva, Akali Dal's Harsimrat Kaur Badal and LJP (Ram Vilas) MP Arun Bharti, among others. The government has listed 16 bills for consideration in the Winter Session. The bills pending in the Lok Sabha include the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, which has been listed for consideration and passage after a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) of the two houses submits its report on it to the lower house. The panel is mandated to submit its report on the last day of the first week of the winter session. On the Congress party's demand to hold discussions on the Adani issue on priority, apart from a host of other matters, including the Manipur unrest, Rijiju said the business advisory

committees of the two houses will take a call on the subjects of Parliamentary business with the consent of the Speaker of the Lok Sabha and the Chairperson of the Rajya Sabha. Raising the matter at the meeting, Congress' deputy leader in the Lok Sabha, Gaurav Gogoi, dubbed the Adani issue as a scam, saying the government should not reject or ignore their demand on any technicality as it concerns Indian institutions and investors. Billionaire industrialist Gautam Adani, whose conglomerate includes a host of companies covering power to ports sectors, has been charged by US prosecutors for allegedly being part of a scheme to pay USD 265 million (about Rs 2,200 crore) bribe to Indian officials in exchange of favourable terms for solar power contracts in four Indian states. Congress leader Pramod Tiwari also said the government should set aside other businesses to take up a discussion on the issue on priority.

Accused in policeman murder killed in encounter

SAUMYA SHUKLA ■
NEW DELHI

A day after a Delhi Police constable was killed while on duty, the main accused in the case was shot dead in an encounter by police personnel in south Delhi's Sangam Vihar area early Sunday morning. The encounter comes a day after Kiran Pal, 28-year-old constable in the Delhi Police, was stabbed to death by three people on Saturday while on night patrolling duty in southeast Delhi's Govindpuri area. Two of the three accused, Deepak Max (21) and Krish Gupta (18), were arrested later that day. According to a senior official of the Delhi Police's Special Cell, the third and the main accused in the murder of constable Kiranpal lost his life in an armed encounter with a joint team of local police and special cell. A senior police officer of special cell said that the third accused, Raghav, who stabbed Pal with a knife was hiding in Sangam Vihar. "Late evening on Saturday, information was received regarding the whereabouts of the prime suspect, identified as Raghav alias Rocky, a resident of D-Block, Sangam Vihar.

Odisha is on journey of progress: PM



■ Quotes Bhima Bhoi's poem
■ Odisha Parba concludes in Delhi

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR
Prime Minister Narendra Modi, attending the grand finale of the 7th Edition of the Odisha Parba in New Delhi on Sunday, lauded the Parba, calling it "a beacon of India's cultural depth, uniting the nation through its roots and creativity". Modi praised Odisha's rich

heritage, highlighting its devotion, wisdom, and creativity as epitomised by figures like Dasia Bauri, Salabega and Jagannath Das. Quoting Santha Kabi Bhima Bhoi's poem "Mo Jivana Pachhe Narke Padithau, Jagata Uddhara Heu", the PM highly praised the State's legacy of selflessness and resilience.

Modi also recognised Odisha's maritime heritage, from ancient trade to modern progress in ports, mining, metals and agriculture. He noted Odisha's world-renowned Sambalpuri, Kotpad and Bomkai textiles, Odishi dance and seafood as symbols of its cultural richness. Minister of Railways and Electronics and IT Ashwini Vaishnav highlighted Odisha's unique essence, stating, "Our Odia language, gifted by Lord Jagannath, embodies sweetness and richness un-

paralleled. Odisha's strides in semiconductor programmes and technological development are paving the way to remarkable heights." Union Minister for Education Dharmendra Pradhan reflected on the State's dynamic contributions, saying, "Odisha embodies the vision of 'Viksit Bharat' with its youths spearheading startup initiatives and preserving the profound legacy of Odia culture and heritage through the disciplined efforts of the Odisha Samaj."

In Gajapati Man 'tortured, confined' by wife for days

PNS ■ PARALAKHEMUNDI

A woman allegedly brutally assaulted, tortured, and kept her husband locked up for eight days under dire conditions before he was rescued by police.



jecting her husband to torture, alleged the man's family. Kastantin's family reported it to police, following which the latter rescued Kastantin from the locked room. The man was given primary treatment in Birikot, but his

condition was found to be critical, following which he was shifted to the Mohana Community Health Centre. Doctor Sameer Tripathy narrated the man's ordeal after learning it from him. "He was not provided regular food but rather only once about every four days. The patient is currently stable but in a very weak state and is unable to walk. His condition will be monitored after giving injections and IV fluids and further steps will be decided accordingly." No statement from the man's wife or police has been obtained yet in connection with the incident.

PATANJALI

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Huge sex racket unearthed in BBSR

23 Bangladeshi girls lured, forced into prostitution
PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

An alleged large sex racket involving Bangladeshi girls has come to the fore in State capital Bhubaneswar. At least 23 women from Bangladesh are entangled in the sex racket. The women are believed to be victims of a larger human trafficking operation. They were allegedly lured to Bhubaneswar with promises of lucrative employment, offering daily wages of Rs 2,000. However, upon arrival, they were exploited and abused.

The modus operandi is the agents contact customers through WhatsApp and other social media platforms. The agents then send pictures of the girls from which the customer has to choose one. Later, the customer is made to pay an advance payment before he goes to the hotel where the girl is waiting. The matter came to light after a minor girl was rescued near Link Road in Cuttack, leading authorities to scrutinise how these young women were recruited from Bangladesh and brought to Odisha. Similarly, another sex worker, apprehended during a



police raid, confessed to being trapped against her will. She described the situation as being part of an organised sex racket. "We are victims," she lamented, shedding light on the persistent torment they endured. This revelation has prompted questions regarding the involvement of some masterminds operating the

network. They have been accused of keeping these women in captivity for years. Investigations are underway with authorities striving to dismantle this oppressive framework and bring those responsible to justice. Police are actively tracing the operations of local agents who may have facilitated this activity. City DCP Pinak Mishra said, "We are keeping a close tab on such illegal activities in the twin city. We have enough intelligence about such activities. Strict action will be taken as per law against anyone found engaged in such illegal activities."

In Cuttack Bangladeshi girl forced to work in massage parlour

Rescued by police
PNS ■ CUTTACK

Police have rescued a minor girl of Bangladesh who was allegedly trafficked to Odisha on the pretext of employment and later forced to work in a massage parlour in Cuttack. Deprived of her salary after working for months, the victim fled the parlour and was wandering around Link Road when the Madhupatna police rescued her. The girl alleged that she was brought from Bangladesh to India by an acquaintance she met on Facebook who promised her a job. The individual initially took her to Kolkata

before shifting her to Bhubaneswar and subsequently to Cuttack, where she was forced to work in the massage parlour without any payment. Police found her alone near Link Road in Cuttack and placed her under the care of the Child Welfare Committee, which is investigating the matter in coordination with the local authorities. Efforts are being made to confirm her nationality through communication with the Bangladesh High Commission, given her lack of identity documents. Additional efforts are underway to identify and apprehend those responsible for the alleged trafficking. CWC Chairman Pramod Acharya said, "The Madhupatna police had rescued the girl on November 10. She was produced before us and we learnt that she is a Bangladeshi. But she does not have an identity proof or any travel documents." Cuttack DCP Jagmohan Meena said, "She was rescued from Link Road and handed over to the CWC. Prima facie, it is a case of illegal migration as she doesn't have any documents with her. We have informed the Bangladesh High Commission. Further probe is on."

Subhadra Yojana 20L women get aid in 3rd phase

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR
More than 20 lakh women received financial assistance of Rs 5,000 as the Odisha Government released the first instalment of the third phase of the ambitious Subhadra Yojana in a special programme held at Sundargarh on Sunday. Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi released more than Rs 1,000 crore in the third

phase of the first instalment in the presence of Deputy CM Pravati Parida. With the release of the third phase, as many as 80 lakh women in the State have been covered under the new BJP government's ambitious scheme which aims at empowering women of the State. Notably, Subhadra Yojana was one of the major promises made by the BJP for women in its election manifesto.

BBSR rly station work completion likely by Aug

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR
The redevelopment work of the Bhubaneswar railway station is progressing at a fast pace with the target completion date set for August 2025. The ambitious project, aimed at transforming Bhubaneswar into a major rail hub, promises to deliver a host of advanced amenities synonymous with modern global travel. The new station aims to enhance passenger experience with state-of-the-art facilities. It will feature modern waiting lounges, premium passenger services and improved platforms to accommodate increased capacity and ensure passenger comfort. East Coast Railway Chief Engineer Akshay Saxena has reportedly expressed confidence for the project's timely

completion. "The station is a significant leap forward, aiming to meet the standards expected by today's discerning travellers. It is very passenger-friendly with all modern equipments. This is a green building and is 100% disabled-friendly. It is seamlessly integrated into all the vehicles including taxis and autos so that passengers can board the train easily," explained Saxena. "With the best of facilities, the railway station will give the feeling of an airport with food courts and recreational spaces," he added. The redevelopment is seen as a pivotal step in enhancing Bhubaneswar's connectivity. Once completed, the station is expected to serve as a blueprint for railway modernisation projects across India.

AIBOC State unit holds EC meet

In wake of decision of assn for campaign over various issues
PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The All India Bank Officers' Confederation (AIBOC) State Unit convened a meeting of its executive committee on Friday to discuss the action plan for State committees. Odisha State secretary of AIBOC Amitava Das and State unit president Bailochan Sahu chalked out the action plan in alignment with AIBOC Working Committee decisions. On the occasion, vice-president of the Central Committee of AIBOC Arun Kumar



Bishoyi addressed the members to stand united and remain in a state of readiness for the sustained movement to secure their rightful demands. Notably, the working committee of AIBOC had organised a meeting on November 12 at Mumbai and resolved to launch a vigorous campaign to address several concerns affecting bank officers. In the current banking scenario, public sector banks (PSBs) are facing acute shortage of man power, which impacts service quality and heightens staff stress. PSB employees are increasingly facing verbal and physical assaults while performing their duties. PSBs also execute most of the government flagship schemes but their officers remain under relentless pressure. Absence of work life balance adversely affects their physical and mental health, the members said.

DFS has also issued new directive for premature retirement. Social security post retirement has become a nightmare for bankers as NPS, being a market driven scheme, has shown inconsistent returns due to market fluctuation. The AIBOC is demanding the immediate implementation of 5-day banking which is a standard practice in many organizations such as Central Government, RBI and LIC etc. The union has also demanded the appointment of Employee Directors and Non-Workmen Directors to bank boards as mandated by law, to ensure employee representation in decision making process.

BJD Minority Cell decries Waqf Bill

BJP defends Centre's move
PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Biju Janata Dal (BJD) Minority Cell staged a demonstration in front of the Raj Bhavan here on Sunday opposing the proposed Waqf (Amendment) Bill by the Central Government. The party demanded withdrawal of the Bill and urged a reconsideration of the measure of mandating other community members into the Waqf committee. A memorandum



addressed to the President of India was also submitted to the Sub-Collector of Khordha. In the memorandum, the BJD Minority Cell said the proposed changes in the Waqf Bill have "far-reaching implications" on the autonomy, protection and governance of Waqf properties which are considered sacred and integral to the religious and social welfare of the Muslim community. BJD Minority Cell president and Rajya Sabha member

Munna Khan stated, "The Central Government is trying to take over Waqf properties and, hence, trying to introduce several amendments and bills." In response, BJP State president Manmohan Samal criticised the BJD's act. He said the Union Government is committed to ensuring justice for all without appeasement of any particular group. "99.9% of the country is already supporting the Bill in its entirety. Justice will be done and injustice will be repealed," stated Samal.

Ratna Bhandar repair to end by Jan 31

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR
Repair work of the Jagannath Temple's Ratna Bhandar would commence in a day or two and be completed by January 31, informed Law Minister Prithviraj Harichandan on Sunday.

He said, "We are hopeful that the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) will start the repair and restoration work in a day or two. As per the planned schedule, the repair, inventory and audit of the gold and other valuable jewellery will be completed by

January 31." Once the repair work of the treasure trove of the temple is complete, the jewellery would be shifted from the temporary storage to its original place. Subsequently, an inventory and audit would be conducted, the minister informed. Meanwhile, the ground penetrating radar (GPR)-GPS survey report clearly shows that there are no hidden chambers in the Ratna Bhandar. So, the main focus now lies on the structural repair, said ASI Superintendent DB Gadnayak.

'Enforce total prohibition in State'



Nabakrushna Choudhury birth anniv held
PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

A function was organised by the Milita Odisha Nishanibaran Abhiyan (MONA) here on Saturday to observe the 123rd birth anniversary of Odisha's late Chief Minister Nabakrushna Choudhury. In the meeting, many eminent people opined that total prohibition should be enforced in the State. For this, sincerity is required at the government level. It was de-

termined that a signature campaign would be carried out in the State and 10 lakh signatures would be collected to demand a liquor-free Odisha. The campaign would end on January 30, 2025 and a memorandum regarding this would be submitted to Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi. The function was presided over by MONA president, freedom fighter and former MLA Padmasharan Nayak. Sambad founder Soumya Ranjan Patnaik was the chief guest and former minister Padmanabha Behera and Prajapita Brahmakumari Odisha chief sister Leena were the honorary guests.

CONTEMPORARIES

Why air pollution fails to breathe life into poll agendas?

As one ambles through the hazy avenues of Delhi or surveys the smog-blanketed skies of numerous Indian cities, a grim reality settles in: the air we breathe is slowly becoming unbreathable. However, paradoxically, this existential crisis fails to galvanise political discourse or electoral agendas. While political parties jostle for votes, promising free electricity, subsidised food or transformative infrastructure, the menace of air pollution remains conspicuously absent from their manifestos. Why, one wonders, does this silent killer responsible for an estimated 1.7 million deaths annually in India fail to muster the political will to combat it?



S JYOTIRANJANA

India's air pollution woes are emblematic of its unbridled urbanisation and industrial expansion. According to the World Air Quality Report 2023, 22 of the world's 30 most-polluted cities are in India with Delhi steadfastly retaining its ignominious distinction as the most-polluted capital. The Air Quality Index (AQI) routinely plunges into the "hazardous" category, particularly during the winter when the trifecta of stubble burning, vehicular emissions and industrial discharges coalesce with meteorological fac-

tors to form a dense, noxious smog. The implications are staggering: children grow up with stunted lung capacity, respiratory illnesses proliferate, and the elderly face increased cardiovascular risks. The economic cost, as per a 2020 study by the Lung Care Foundation, amounts to a jaw-dropping 1.4% of India's GDP annually. To its credit, the Indian government has taken strides, albeit incremental, towards addressing air quality. The establishment of the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) in 2021 was a laudable step, designed as a multi-state, statutory body to coordinate air quality improvement across Delhi-NCR and adjoining States. The CAQM has deployed measures such as bans on certain

industrial activities, restrictions on construction during high-pollution periods and promotion of electric vehicles (EVs). Additionally, the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) aims to reduce particulate matter (PM) pollution by 20-30% by 2024, compared to 2017 levels. States like Maharashtra, Gujarat and Tamil Nadu have initiated region-specific action plans to curb industrial emissions while Delhi's "Odd-Even" vehicular policy and smog tower installations represent more localised efforts. However, these initiatives often fall prey to the Sisyphean challenge of enforcement. Take, for instance, the much-touted Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) in Delhi-NCR. While GRAP delineates actions based on AQI levels, ranging from closing schools to halting industrial operations, its efficacy is undermined by sporadic implementation and the absence of a long-term, systemic strategy. The Indian judiciary, in its capacity as a sentinel of Constitutional rights, has periodically stepped in to address air pollution. The Supreme Court's ban on firecrackers during Diwali, its directions to curb stubble burning and its monitoring of vehicular emis-

sions standards (e.g., the Bharat Stage VI norms) are noteworthy. Similarly, the National Green Tribunal (NGT) has issued orders to regulate construction activities, vehicular movements and industrial pollutants. Despite such interventions, the judiciary's episodic activism often fails to address the systemic nature of air pollution. A case in point is the 2019 Supreme Court order on stubble burning, which, while well-intentioned, did little to address the economic plight of farmers who lack viable alternatives to crop residue disposal. Judicial decrees, though imperative, cannot substitute for coherent policy frameworks and sustained political commitment. Addressing air pollution is a Sisyphean task, compounded by a multitude of challenges. Firstly, air pollution transcends State boundaries, necessitating a unified, federal approach. However, the turf wars between Central and State agencies as well as the lack of accountability mechanisms, often stymie progress. Secondly, measures to curb pollution frequently pit environmental imperatives against economic interests. Industries resist stringent emission norms; farmers pro-

test bans on stubble burning; and the automobile sector grapples with the transition to EVs, all of which reflect the difficulty of balancing growth with sustainability. Thirdly, perhaps the most insidious challenge is the inertia of the populace. While pollution impacts every citizen, its effects are insidious, slow and often invisible. Unlike floods or earthquakes, air pollution lacks the immediacy of a headline-grabbing calamity, allowing it to evade collective outrage. Fourthly, reliable, real-time data is critical for informed policymaking. However, India's air quality monitoring infrastructure is woefully inadequate with just 300 monitoring stations for a population exceeding 1.4 billion. The conspicuous absence of air pollution from electoral agendas is symptomatic of deeper socio-political dynamics. Unlike caste, religion or economic inequities, air pollution does not align neatly with India's vote-bank politics. It impacts all demographics, albeit with greater severity for vulnerable groups, making it a less potent mobiliser of electoral sentiment. Further, politicians, driven by the exigencies of five-year election

cycles, often prioritise short-term gains over long-term objectives like clean air. Planting trees, for instance, lacks the immediate optics of inaugurating a flyover. Another important reason why it's a non-issue in elections is public apathy. As despite its ubiquity, air pollution remains a "silent killer" that fails to generate sustained public pressure. To extricate ourselves from this asphyxiating quagmire, India must embrace a multi-pronged, systemic approach: 1. The CAQM and NCAP must be empowered with greater enforcement capabilities, adequate funding and clear accountability mechanisms. Collaborative platforms that bring together states, industry stakeholders, and civil society are imperative. 2. Subsidies for EVs, bio-decomposers for stubble management and renewable energy adoption can catalyse change while minimising economic disruptions. 3. Public awareness campaigns, akin to the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, can foster a culture of individual responsibility. Initiatives such as "Green Credits" for pollution-reducing activities could incentivise citizen participation. 4. Courts must avoid overstep-

ping into policymaking, leaving the formulation of air quality strategies to democratically-accountable institutions. Simultaneously, lawmakers must craft robust, science-backed legislation to combat pollution. 5. India can draw inspiration from countries like China, which, despite its massive industrial base, has achieved remarkable reductions in air pollution through stringent enforcement, technological innovation and public participation. It is high time that clean air transcends the realm of environmentalists and becomes a cornerstone of political discourse. In the words of the Upanishads, "Yat Bhavati Tat Bhavati" (what we experience is shaped by what we do). India must summon the political will, public awareness and institutional resolve to combat this scourge. (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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CB to probe attack on MLA Himanshu Sahoo

Police hold flag march in Jajpur; 40 platoons deployed

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR/JAJPUR

The State Government on Saturday ordered a Crime Branch (CB) inquiry into the recent attack on Dharmasala BJP MLA Himanshu Sahoo.

Anticipating a law and order situation, prohibitory orders under Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) have been enforced in the Jajpur police station area and the Biraja Haat area after tension gripped



Jajpur district.

Tension has been sparked following the attack MLA Sahoo, coupled with disputes at Biraja Haat and the arrest of Bhaba Prakash Das, the brother BJD leader Pranab Prakash Das.

Given the escalating ten-

residents.

BNSS 163 has been enforced within Jajpur and the Biraja Haat area to ensure peace, aiming to maintain public order. Furthermore, 40 platoons of police have been strategically deployed across the city to deter further disturbances.

We will call for a meeting with the farmers' representatives of Biraja Haat. We must reach an amicable solution so that everything goes smoothly without affecting the Biraja Project," the Collector said.

Likewise, the DIG said, "We just conducted a flag march. Efforts are on to maintain peace and tranquility in the district."

sions, police conducted a flag march in Jajpur city. High-ranking officials, including Eastern Range DIG Satyajit Naik and Jajpur District Collector P Anvesha Reddy, along with Superintendent of Police Yashpratap Shrimal, have appealed for peace to the

Gambling racket busted in Nuapada

80 held; Rs 29 lakh seized

PNS ■ NUAPADA

In a crackdown on Saturday night, police busted a large gambling den operating in an building in the Janka area of Nuapada district.

At least 80 people involved were arrested while authorities seized Rs 29 lakh cash and 74 mobile phones from the spot.

According to police, the gambling den was operating

in the area for a long time. The gambling den attracted a huge number of players, including local businessmen, who arrived with cash to play the card game.

The DGP received a tip-off about the illegal gambling den operating in the area. The information was verified and a raid was subsequently conducted.

A case has been registered in this connection and further investigation was ongoing to ascertain the involvement of others in the gambling racket.

Protecting tribal rights: Nayak's legacy recalled



As 125th Birth Anniv of martyr celebrated in B'pur

PNS ■ BRAHMAPUR

The 125th birth anniversary of Veer Saheed Lakshman Nayak was celebrated with great reverence by the Pujya Puja Samiti at the Lakshman Nayak Smruti High School premises on Friday in Brahmapur.

The event commenced with a floral tribute at the statue of the freedom fighter, followed by a memorial meeting chaired by Samiti secretary S Sambasiba Rao.

Saheed Lakshman, remembered for his relentless fight against the oppression of poor farmers, labourers, Dalits and tribal communities during British rule, sacrificed his life for justice and equality. His

life's mission extended beyond ending colonial rule to eradicating injustice, exploitation, and superstition, which he fought for until his last breath.

Speakers at the event emphasized Nayak's legacy as a source of inspiration for protecting natural resources and tribal rights. In today's context, the fight to safeguard Odisha's forests, rivers, mountains and mines resonates deeply with Nayak's vision of justice.

Notable attendees included president of the Human Rights Protection Forum Gagan Chandra Mallick, along with Surendra Nath Panda, Subanshu Samantaray, Alak Nath Mishra, Kedarnath Choudhury, Ranjit Kumar Samantaray, Pramod Kumar Panda, and Gauri Shankar Mohanty, who shared their perspectives on Nayak's enduring impact.

32nd Kalinga Baliyatra ends at Paradip



Singer Sonu Nigam makes spellbinding performance

PRASANTA ROUT ■ PARADIP

The 32nd Kalinga Baliyatra Festival, held in Paradip, concluded on Thursday, November 21 with a grand celebration that showcased Odisha's ancient maritime heritage and its progress towards development.

Addressing the gathering on

the festival's final evening, Governor Raghubar Das remarked, "This festival not only revives the glorious trade traditions of Utkal but also highlights Paradip as a center of growth and development. I am proud to be part of such a vibrant event."

The festival, organised under the chairmanship of Kalinga Baliyatra Committee chairman and District Magistrate J Sonal, featured several distinguished speakers, including Steel, Mines and

Balangir child sale

Forged documents prepared for deal; 3 held

PNS ■ BALANGIR

Chilling details have unfolded in a child sale case that took place in Balangir district a few weeks ago. The newborn was sold off on November 2 with the deal struck soon after its birth.

A set of documents have revealed two separate birth certificates were created for the same baby. While one certificate listed the parents as Rajkumar Mittal and Abha Mittal, the other mentioned Aruna Nag and Amrut Nag.

Surprisingly, both certificates were signed by Auxiliary Nurse Midwife (ANM) Mamata Bhoi, leading authorities to suspect her involvement in the selling of the child.

The incident occurred in Sana Gurjibhata village under the Lathor police station. As per the details revealed, Aruna Nag gave birth to the baby girl, her sixth child, on November 2 at the Sunamudi sub-center under Khaprakhol block.

Due to extreme poverty,

Aruna was reluctant to take her baby home. Taking advantage of her helplessness, a local pharmacist, identified as Alok Agarwal, crafted the deal.

One Rajkumar Mittal and his wife from Madanpur-Rampur in Kalahandi district arrived at Aruna's residence and took custody of the newborn.

Later, the District Child Welfare Committee investigated and subsequently filed a police complaint on November 13.

Additionally, during

Deputy Chief Minister Kanak Vardhan Singh Deo's visit to the village on November 19, Aruna admitted that poverty forced her to sell the baby, The Deputy CM ordered an immediate investigation and action.

Within three days, police arrested three key accused, Mamata Bhoi (ANM), Rajkumar Mittal and Alok Agrawal. The three have been remanded to judicial custody. District Collector Gaurav Shivaji Isalwar confirmed that further investigations are underway.

64-year-old UTP dies in Bonai

Old age ailment suspected behind his demise

PNS ■ SUNDARGARH

A 64-year-old under-trial prisoner (UTP) died in Bonai special jail in Sundargarh district on Thursday.

Johan Minz, a resident of Mahinsichapal under K Balang police station in Bonai sub division along with his younger son Adam Minz (35) had been imprisoned in the Special Jail, Bonai in the year 2021 on the charges of killing his elder son. Murder accused Johan and Adam, had been under trial prisoners since then and both had been kept

in one cell with some other inmates in the jail.

According to jail official, Johan was weak due to his old age and his son Adam was taking care of him in the cell.

On Thursday, after daily routine, around 10 am, Johan slept on the floor in his cell but when his son Adam called him, he did not get up. Soon, Adam called the jail officials and they reached there. Bonai jailer SS Beura also reached there. Johan was taken to Bonai sub divisional hospital where the doctors declared him brought dead. The body of deceased Johan has been kept in the morgue house. The daughter and wife of deceased Johan were informed about death of Johan.

At Brahmapur Hundreds join BJD during membership drive



PNS ■ BRAHMAPUR

The Biju Janata Dal (BJD) organised a massive membership drive here on Friday, witnessing an overwhelming participation of leaders, supporters, and party enthusiasts from across Ganjam, Gajapati, Boudh, and Kandhamal districts.

The event was graced by prominent leaders and former Ministers Debi Prasad Mishra, Atanu Sabyasachi Nayak, and Pradeep Amat as chief guests. Their presence added fervour to the occasion, as they addressed the gathering, emphasizing the need for unity and grassroots mobilization ahead of the upcoming elections.

BJD MLAs, MP candidates, Brahmapur Mayor

Sanghamitra Dalai and Deputy Mayor E Vivek Reddy were among the dignitaries present. Leaders from Youth BJD and Student BJD also actively participated, highlighting the significant role of youth in strengthening the party's outreach.

Speaking at the event, the leaders stressed the importance of expanding the party's membership base and bringing more individuals under BJD's umbrella of progressive governance and development-oriented policies. The membership drive, part of the BJD's ongoing Statewide campaign, was hailed as a grand success, with hundreds of new members enrolling and pledging their support for Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik's vision for Odisha.

Funds crunch Ramathirtha croc breeding centre on verge of closure

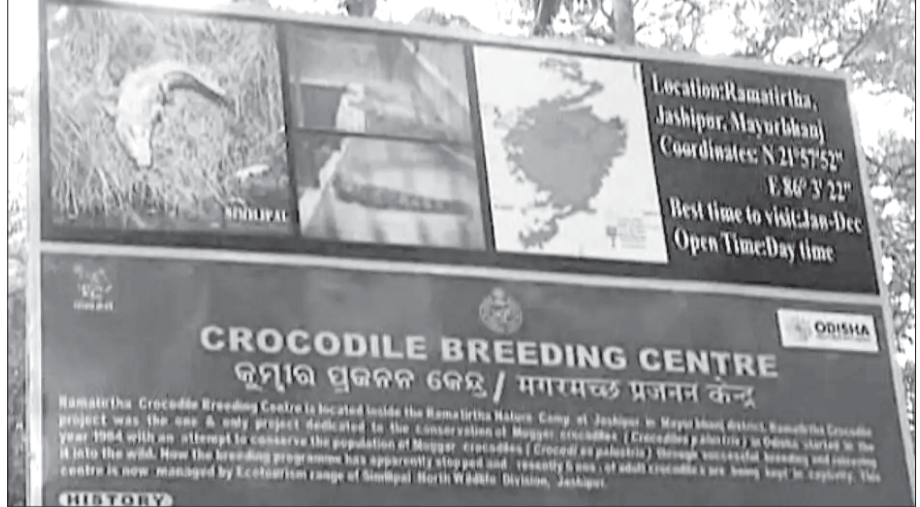
PNS ■ BARIAPADA

The Ramathirtha Crocodile Breeding Centre in Mayurbhanj is nearing closure due to alleged lack of funding.

Once a hub for mugger crocodile conservation, the centre now faces a decline. The breeding center had been a major attraction, drawing tourists and wildlife enthusiasts equally.

Even the pond, where the crocodiles once used to swim, has nearly dried up. Lack of employees and adequate funding has allegedly led to the current condition.

Moreover, tourists who were once able to witness the massive populations of crocodiles here are now disheartened to see the present state of the facility. "I couldn't get to see many crocodiles now. Earlier when I had visited, there used to be a huge population of crocodiles. The enclosures had both tiny and bigger crocodiles," a



tourist recounted. The center's significance extends beyond its role in crocodile breeding. A 1975 survey had indicated a drastic reduction in the crocodile population in the State, leading to the establishment of the breeding center in 1979.

Experts from Tamil Nadu were brought along with the mugger crocodiles. With assistance from the experts,

crocodiles were introduced and bred successfully. It then helped revitalize the population in the area. Following the success of the project, the rivers in Similipal Wildlife Sanctuary thrived with the presence of these mugger crocodiles. However, over the years, things have changed now due to the alleged neglect.

Minister of State for Forest, Environment & Climate

Change Ganesh Ram Singkhuntia said, "We will consult with specialists to ensure the successful revival of the center and its programmes, with a focus on breeding and protection of the mugger crocodile."

"After a few crocodiles escaped the enclosure, the project was halted keeping the safety of people into consideration," he added.

Khariar hospital's NBSU best unit in State

Honoured at Nat'l Newborn Week fest

AJIT PANDA ■ NUAPADA

The New Born Stabilisation Unit (NBSU) at Khariar Sub-Divisional Hospital in Nuapada district has been recognized as the best-performing unit in Odisha. The NBSUs in Patnagarh, Balangir, and Padmapur, Bargarh, secured the second and third positions, respectively. These top-performing units were felicitated during a State-level ceremony in Bhubaneswar on Thursday, coinciding with National Newborn Week 2024.

Odisha currently has 46 NBSUs spread across 30 districts, established under the Directorate of Family Welfare and the National Health Mission (NHM). These units are critical in stabilizing sick and low-birth-weight newborns.

Highlighting the success of the Khariar NBSU, Superin-



tendent of Khariar Sub-Divisional Hospital Dr Ranjit Rout said, "NBSUs provide comprehensive care, including thermal care, nutritional support, infection prevention, management of complications, and follow-up treatment. Kangaroo Mother Care (KMC) is also offered, significantly enhancing newborn health outcomes."

Operational for over a decade, the Khariar NBSU has achieved remarkable results, with 70-80% of admitted newborns successfully discharged each month. In 2024 alone, 563 children were admitted, out of

which 392 were discharged successfully, while 27% required referrals to higher centers.

According to government report, Statewide, the proportion of successfully discharged newborns from NBSUs has improved from 68% in 2017-18 to 71% in 2022-23. The referral rate to higher centers ranges between 24% and 26.5%. To address challenges in underperforming units, the Odisha government partnered with the Norway India Partnership Initiative (NIPI) in 2020 to provide technical support for improving quality

and performance. Dr Mahendra Majhi, a child specialist at Khariar SDH, leads the medical care at the unit, supported by a full-time nurse trained in Integrated Management of Neonatal and Childhood Illnesses (IMNCI). The team ensures round-the-clock service for newborns in need.

Periodic reviews by the Family Welfare Directorate and NHM have played a crucial role in enhancing the performance of NBSUs across Odisha, addressing gaps and ensuring the consistent delivery of quality care.

Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue to be held in Delhi on January 11-12: PM Modi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday announced that a "Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue" will be held on January 11-12 here and said the initiative was part of efforts to connect youngsters having no political background with politics. He said Swami Vivekananda's 162nd jayanti on January 12 would be celebrated in a very special way next year. On this occasion, a "Maha Kumbh" of young minds will be held at Delhi's Bharat Mandapam on January 11-12 and the initiative will be called the Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue.

"Crores of youths from all over India will participate in it. Two thousand such youths selected from villages, blocks, districts and states will gather at Bharat Mandapam for the Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue," Modi said. In the 116th episode of his monthly "Mann Ki Baat" radio broadcast, Modi also called on people to celebrate inspiring stories of the Indian diaspora who made their mark globally, contributed to freedom struggles and preserved "our heritage". "You might remember that from the ramparts of the Red Fort, I urged such youths to join politics, none of whose family members or even the entire family have had a political background. To connect one lakh such youths, new youths, to politics, many special campaigns will be run in the country. The Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue is one such effort," he said. Noting that experts from the country and abroad would be present for it, Modi said many national and international personalities would also be there and he would be present for as much time as possible. The prime minister also hailed the National Cadet Corps (NCC) and noted that the NCC name reminded one of their school and college days. "I myself have been an NCC

cadet, so I can say with full confidence that the experience I got from it is invaluable for me. The NCC instils a spirit of discipline, leadership and service in the youth," he said. The compassion and energy of India's "Yuva Shakti" in helping senior citizens is commendable, Modi said and cited the example of a young person from Lucknow helping the elderly submit digital life certificates. He also talked about a person from Ahmedabad who is warning and making the elderly aware about cyber-crimes, including digital arrests. "I had discussed digital arrest in the last episode of 'Mann Ki Baat'. The elderly are the most common victims of such crimes. In such a situation, it is our responsibility to make them aware and help them stay safe from cyber fraud," he said. "We have to explain to people again and again that there is no provision of digital arrest in the government; this is a blatant lie, a conspiracy to



trap people. I am happy that our young friends are participating in this work with full sensitivity and motivating others as well," Modi said. Talking about his recent visit to Guyana, Modi said thousands of kilometres away from India, a 'mini India' dwelled there. "Around 180 years ago, people from India were taken to Guyana to work in the fields and for other tasks. Today, people of Indian origin in Guyana are leading the country in every field -- be it politics, business, education or culture. The President of

Guyana, Dr Irfan Ali, is also of Indian origin and is proud of his Indian heritage," he said. "When I was in Guyana, a thought struck my mind that I am sharing with you. Just like Guyana, there are lakhs of Indians in dozens of countries across the world. Their ancestors have their own stories of decades; even those over 200-300 years ago. Can you be on the lookout for such stories of how Indian immigrants made their mark in different countries?" he said. "How they took part in their freedom struggle! How they

kept their Indian heritage alive! I want you to find out such true stories, and share them with me. You can also share these stories on the NaMo app or on MyGov with #IndianDiasporaStories," the prime minister said. Modi also highlighted an extraordinary project underway in Oman and said numerous Indian families had been living in the country for many centuries, with most of them who settled there being from Kutch in Gujarat. These people created important trade links and, even today, they have Omani citizenship but Indianness is ingrained in their persona, he said. "With the support of the Indian Embassy in Oman and the National Archives of India, a team has started the work of preserving the history of these families. Thousands of documents have been collected under this campaign so far. These include diaries, account books, ledgers, letters and telegrams. Some of these documents even date back to the

year 1838. These documents are full of sentiments," he said. The "Oral History Project" is also an important basis of this mission and, in this mission, senior people from there have shared their experiences, he said. A similar "Oral History Project" is being carried out in India as well, he added. Under this project, history enthusiasts are collating the experiences of the victims during the country's Partition, the prime minister said. "Now, there are very few people left in the country who have witnessed the horrors of Partition. In such a situation, this effort has become even more significant. The country that preserves its history, its future is also secure. With this very thought in mind, an effort has been made in which a directory has been created to preserve the history of villages," Modi said. Talking about the Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam campaign, Modi said people from all over the country participated in it with great enthusiasm.

"I am very happy to tell you that this campaign has crossed the important milestone of planting 100 crore trees. Hundred crore trees, that too, in just five months," he said. Modi pointed out that the campaign was now spreading to other countries as well. "You must have noticed that as soon as someone mentions a 'government office', a picture of a pile of files emerges in your mind. You must have seen something similar in films, too," he said. "So many jokes are made on these piles of files in government offices; so many stories have been written. These files used to gather dust after lying in offices for years and years, and would start accumulating dirt," he added. A special Swachhata Abhiyan was launched to remove such decades-old files and scrap and this campaign brought amazing results in government departments, he said, adding that the cleanliness drive freed up a lot of space in offices.

Army Chief's Nepal visit culminates in stronger defence, bilateral ties

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Army Chief General Upendra Dwivedi's five-day official visit to Nepal has culminated in stronger defence and bilateral ties. He returned to New Delhi on Sunday after a resoundingly successful visit, army said here. The visit, which exceeded all stated objectives, further solidified the robust defence cooperation, cultural ties, and mutual respect between the two nations. It underscored the shared commitment of the Indian and Nepali Armies to fostering peace, security, and partnership in the region. During his visit, the Army chief engaged extensively with Nepal's political and military leadership. He held high-level meetings with President of Nepal Ram Chandra Paudel, Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli and Defence Minister Manbir Rai. He also engaged in meaningful discussions with General Ashok Raj Sigdel, chief of Nepal Army along with other senior military officers. These interactions were charac-



terised by exceptional openness and mutual respect, reflecting the shared commitment to strengthening bilateral relations. Strengthening India-Nepal ties was a central theme of the visit. General Upendra Dwivedi and his Nepalese counterpart discussed aspects of mutual interest and avenues to strengthen bilat-

eral defence cooperation. General Dwivedi was briefed by the Director General of Military Operations (DGMO) of the Nepali Army and engaged in high-level discussions with other senior military leaders. These discussions focused on enhancing military bonds, joint exercises, training cooperation, and capability development, rein-

forcing the shared commitment to global peace and security. As a gesture of friendship between the two armies, the Indian Army presented Valour Mount horses and Sentinel dogs to the Nepali Army. General Dwivedi was conferred the Honorary Rank of General of the Nepali Army by President Paudel. This

unique tradition underscores the deep-rooted historical and cultural ties between the Indian and Nepali Armies. Enlightening the future leaders at the Nepal Army Command and Staff College in Shivapuri, the visiting Army chief delivered a lecture on "The Changing Character of War". He emphasised on strengthening and deepening the engagements for mutually building the competencies & capabilities of both Armies. He attended an Ex-Servicemen Rally at the Pension Paying Office in Pokhara, interacting with Gorkha veterans and Veer Naris of the Indian Army. The bond between the veterans and the Indian Army was very visible and thriving, reflecting their strong ties. This visit, marked by comprehensive discussions and mutual respect, has reinforced the strong partnership between the Indian and Nepali Armies. The outcomes of the visit are expected to usher in a new era of collaboration, with a greater focus on defence cooperation, cultural exchange, and regional security.

CRPF sets up three new forward bases in Chhattisgarh's hardcore naxal areas

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ RAIPUR

The Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) has opened three new forward bases in the "hardcore" Maoist violence affected districts of Chhattisgarh's Bastar region to provide security forces with "strategic" hubs for launching intensified anti-Naxal operations. The forward operating bases (FOB) have come up in Tumpalpad and Rayagudem in Sukma district and Kondapalli in the adjoining Bijapur district. These bases have been made operational over the last week or so, officials told PTI. The central force is working on a strategy to make inroads into "hardcore" Naxalite areas of the state where the final battle against Left Wing Extremism (LWE) is concentrated. The FOBs act as launching pads for all security forces, including the CRPF and state police units, to launch specific and intelligence-based anti-Naxal operations in core areas, they said.



All these three villages in the two districts of Bastar region have served as the logistical centres for the Maoists for decades. Kondapalli, as per LWE theatre experts, used to be an important recruitment centre for the "most vital" PLGA battalion no. 1 of the Maoists. The village located on the banks of river Talperu also served as a training area for the Maoists. Similarly, Tumpalpad, on the banks of the Chintavagu river, served as a halt area and corridor for the Naxals, the experts said. The Tumpalpad FOB was operationalised by the 74th battalion of the force while the Kondapalli base has been created by the 170th CRPF unit.

The specialised jungle warfare unit of the CRPF, Command Battalion for Resolute Action (CoBRA), provided active security to the teams which created these FOBs, the officials said. These FOBs will act as physical barriers and curb the free movement of Naxals in these areas called as 'no go' territories for government authorities and security forces till now, they said. The CRPF has created more than 40 such FOBs in Chhattisgarh over the last three-four years as the toughest anti-Naxal operations combat remains concentrated in Bastar that borders Odisha and Telangana.

Centre issues guidelines for disability reservation to ensure uniformity

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre has issued comprehensive guidelines to streamline reservation and identification of posts for persons with at least 40 per cent disabilities, mandating periodic identification of such posts and formation of committees to assess them. The guidelines also state that if a post is deemed suitable for them, all subsequent promotional posts will also be reserved for persons with disabilities. The guidelines are in line with the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016. The move comes after the Delhi High Court flagged inconsistencies in implementation of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016 and criticised entities like the Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan (KVS) for unauthorised actions in identifying posts. The high court earlier this month observed that KVS had overstepped its authority by independently identifying posts for PwBDs and highlighted inconsistencies in the understanding of the Act among various departments. The court mandated the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD) to establish uniform guidelines. The updated guidelines aim to ensure inclusivity, fairness, and uniformity in the employment of persons with disabilities across central government establishments. The new guidelines also ask ministries and departments to form committees, including representatives with dis-



abilities, to assess all posts for their suitability. A comprehensive review of identified posts is required every three years to incorporate technological advancements and evolving job requirements. The guidelines also mandate a four per cent reservation in direct recruitment and promotions across categories, including blindness, locomotor disability, hearing impairment, and intellectual disabilities. Additionally, they emphasise timely filling of backlog vacancies, wide publicity to ensure accessibility, and a three-year validity period for exemptions from reservation policies. The government has also clarified that exemptions from reservation are valid for a maximum of three years and must be periodically reviewed. The move aims to ensure fairness while leveraging advancements in assistive technology. Effective immediately, these guidelines supersede all previous instructions on the matter, except notifications issued in 2021 and 2022. Arman Ali, Executive Director, National Centre for

Promotion of Employment of Disabled People (NCPEDP), said identifying posts suitable for persons with benchmark disabilities is not just about fulfilling reservation mandates; it's a stepping stone to enabling career growth. Extending this process to promotional positions ensures that persons with disabilities are not confined to entry-level roles but have equal opportunities to advance in their careers. "It's important to emphasise that the one per cent reservation for different categories of disabilities does not imply any hierarchy or chronology. While these measures needed to be enforced more effectively in the past I welcome this step as a positive move towards inclusivity. The formation of expert committees and their regular meetings must be strictly adhered to," he said. "I see the two most crucial tasks of the committee are to ensure the inclusion of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities which is the most important part and to have people with disability have a seat on the table," he said.

Ex-CJI Chandrachud removed fear of law from political defectors: Raut

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut on Sunday slammed former Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud, alleging that he had removed the fear of the law from politicians who defected from parties in Maharashtra. Raut claimed that by not deciding on the disqualification petitions, Chandrachud kept doors and windows open for defections. The Shiv Sena (UBT) leader's statement comes after his party faced a severe drubbing in the state assembly elections, as it managed to clinch only 20 out of 95 seats it contested as part of the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA). The performance of the



party's alliance partners was no better, with the Congress winning only 16 out of 101 seats and NCP (SP) getting only 10 out of 86 seats it con-

tested. Talking to reporters, Raut alleged, "He (Chandrachud) has removed the fear of the law from defectors. His name will be written in black letters in history." Following the split in the undivided Shiv Sena in 2022, the party's faction headed by Uddhav Thackeray filed petitions in the Supreme Court on the disqualification of party MLAs who defected along with Eknath Shinde. The apex court put the onus on the assembly Speaker to decide on the disqualification petitions, which he did earlier this year, declaring the Sena bloc led by Shinde as the "real political party". Raut alleged that the results of the assembly election were pre-decided. If the then CJI had decided on the disqualification petitions on time, the outcome would have been different.

"We are sad but not disappointed. We will not leave the fight incomplete. Division of votes was also a factor, and the RSS played an important role in the election. The poisonous campaign impacted us negatively," he said. He said the swearing-in ceremony for the new government should be held in neighbouring Gujarat. Meanwhile, in his weekly column "Rokhthok" in the party mouthpiece "Saamana", the Shiv Sena (UBT) leader claimed that it was time to offer condolences to the Election Commission, which turned a blind eye to the use of money power. "The courts have been in the ICU for a long time," he alleged.

Cong's performance shocking, worst-ever in Maharashtra polls, says Chavan

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Senior Congress leader and former Maharashtra chief minister Prithviraj Chavan on Sunday said his party's defeat was "shocking" and dubbed it as the "worst-ever" loss in the state assembly polls. Talking to PTI, Chavan said the Mahayuti government's Ladki Bahin Yojana, for providing financial assistance to women, clicked with voters in rural areas while polarisation hit the opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi's (MVA) prospects in urban parts of the state. "It is difficult to say whether there was a wave or tampering," said Chavan, who lost from his Karad South seat. The results of the November 20 polls to the 288-member state assembly were announced on Saturday. Several bigwigs from the MVA, including Chavan, were defeated. The Congress, which contest-

ed 101 seats as part of the MVA, posted its worst-ever defeat by managing to win only 16 seats. Chavan said he was expecting to win his Karad South seat in Satara district by 5,000 to 6,000 votes. But, all MVA nominees in the district lost by nearly a margin of 40,000 votes, he noted. BJP's Atul Bhosale defeated the former CM in Karad South by a margin of 39,355 votes, as per the results announced by the Election Commission on Saturday. Chavan said that in the 1977 Lok Sabha polls, Congress' tally of 20 out of 48 seats in Maharashtra was the lowest ever. "This is a shocking defeat and is the worst-ever in the assembly polls," he said, referring to the just concluded state elections. Chavan said he had spoken to All India Congress Committee in-charge for Maharashtra Ramesh Chennithala, who has left for Delhi to discuss the state results with the Congress leadership.

Chavan said that in the 1977 Lok Sabha polls, Congress' tally of 20 out of 48 seats in Maharashtra was the lowest ever. "This is a shocking defeat and is the worst-ever in the assembly polls," he said, referring to the just concluded state elections. Chavan said he had spoken to All India Congress Committee in-charge for Maharashtra Ramesh Chennithala, who has left for Delhi to discuss the state results with the Congress leadership.



Puri Jagannath temple administration urges ASI to start repair work of Ratna Bhandar

PTI ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) has requested the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) authorities to immediately take up the repair, maintenance and conservation work of the entire Ratna Bhandar (treasury) in the 12th century shrine in Puri. SJTA chief administrator Arabinda Padhee on Saturday said the temple administration will extend all its cooperation to ASI in the repair and maintenance of the Ratna Bhandar. "We have received the report of the Ratna Bhandar's GPR-GPS survey conducted by the ASI", Padhee said. He said the SJTA has all along been careful about the stability and security of the temple. Earlier, the ASI had conducted the GPR-GPS survey of the 12th-century shrine's Ratna

Bhandar (treasury) with the assistance of Hyderabad-based NGRI (National Geophysical Research Institute). Padhee said the ASI has given a 45-page report on the survey. "There has been indication of damage done to the floor and wall of the Ratna Bhandar. However, the technical report needs to be studied further by our team," he said. Ratna Bhandar was reopened in July this year after 46 years for an inventory of valuables and the repair of its structure, officials said.



Yogi Adityanath's by-election win paves way for 2027 dominance

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has emerged stronger after the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) clinched a decisive 7-2 victory in the state's by-elections. This triumph not only revives the BJP's morale following its disappointing performance in the Lok Sabha elections earlier this year but also cements Yogi's leadership ahead of the 2027 assembly polls.

"This is a booster dose for our workers," said Vijay Bahadur Pathak, a senior BJP leader. "The results show that when we work unitedly under Yogi

ji's guidance, the BJP is unstoppable."

The BJP's campaign focused on unity, encapsulated in Yogi Adityanath's rallying cry, "Batenge to katenge" (If we divide, we will be cut). The slogan resonated deeply, underscoring the party's collective strength. Prime Minister Narendra Modi reinforced this message during a campaign in Maharashtra, stating, "Ek hain to safe hain" (If we are united, we are safe). Political analyst Rajesh N. Bajpayee highlighted the impact of this messaging. "The BJP's narrative of unity struck a chord with voters and played a key role in their victory. It's a



lesson in disciplined, cohesive campaigning."

The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), often the BJP's ideology backbone, amplified its support for Yogi Adityanath during the by-elections. Unlike its limited involvement in the Lok Sabha elections, the RSS fully backed Yogi's leadership in these by-elections, emphasizing societal cohesion.

"Yogi ji's vision aligns with our principles," said a senior RSS functionary during a high-level meeting in Mathura. "His leadership is crucial for the BJP's continued success in Uttar Pradesh."

Opposition in Turmoil

While the BJP celebrated, the

opposition struggled. The Samajwadi Party (SP), touted as the BJP's primary rival, secured just two seats. SP chief Akhilesh Yadav's reliance on caste-based vote banks failed to counter the BJP's development narrative.

"The SP's inability to tap into anti-incumbency sentiments is glaring," Bajpayee noted. "Akhilesh Yadav must rethink his strategy if he hopes to remain relevant."

The Congress performed dismally, opting to contest only a handful of seats. In Phulpur, Congress district president Suresh Yadav rebelled and contested independently, managing just 1,365 votes.

The Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) fared no better, with over 60% of its traditional vote bank shifting to other parties. The by-election results provide a glimpse into Uttar Pradesh's political future. While the BJP has regained its footing, the opposition faces an uphill battle to recalibrate and mobilize effectively before 2027.

As the dust settles, the by-polls have reaffirmed Yogi Adityanath's stature as a formidable leader. Whether the BJP can sustain this momentum will depend on its ability to address voter aspirations and maintain its narrative of unity and progress.

Shinde's party defeats Uddhav's outfit in 36 seats, loses in 14

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The Shiv Sena led by Chief Minister Eknath Shinde has trounced rival Shiv Sena (UBT) of Uddhav Thackeray in 36 assembly seats in Maharashtra, putting to rest the debate over which is the real party founded by late Bal Thackeray.

Shinde's Sena, a constituent of the ruling Mahayuti alliance, won 57 of the 81 seats it contested in the state polls, the results of which were announced on Saturday. The Sena (UBT), a partner in the opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA), managed to bag only 20 despite fielding 95 candidates. In 14 seats, it defeated Shiv Sena candidates.

In one of his biggest political gambles, Shinde rebelled against Uddhav Thackeray's leadership in June 2022 and aligned with the BJP along with his backers to become the chief minister. The move split the Sena, led to the collapse of the Thackeray-led MVA government and sparked almost daily bickering between the two factions.

Subsequently, Shinde got the party name and its 'bow-and-arrow' symbol from the Election Commission. Shinde had retained most of the sitting MLAs, who chose to be with him when he led



the rebellion two years ago. They delivered for him on Saturday when votes for the state polls were counted. Minister Abdul Sattar defeated Suresh Bankar in Sillod. Pradeep Jaiswal, who fought against Balasaheb Thorat, was the winner in Aurangabad Central. Sanjay Shirsat beat Raju Shinde in Aurangabad West seat, while Vilas Bhumre came on top in his fight against Dattatrey Gorde in Paithan. Chandrakant Sonawane, who replaced his wife and sitting MLA Lata Sonawane, defeated Prabhakar Sonawane of Sena (UBT) in Chopda. Sanjana Jadhav trounced Udayraj Rajput in Kannad, while Sanjay Bangar emerged victorious against Santosh Tarfe in Kalamnuri. Ganesh Dhattrak was bested

Ramesh Korgaonkar in Bhandup West. Murji Patel, who had earlier lost to Rutuja Latke in Andheri East, bounced back as the winner. Tukaram Kate defeated Prakash Phaterpekar in Chembur. Both Latke and Phaterpekar were sitting MLAs who had stayed with Uddhav. Bharat Gogawale got more votes than Snehal Jagtap to bag the Mahad seat, while Shambhuraj Desai trounced Bhanupratap Kadam in Patan. In coastal Dapoli, Yogesh Kadam defeated Sanjay Kadam. Minister Uday Samant won against Bal Mane in Ratnagiri, while Kiran Samant beat sitting MLA Rajan Salvi in Rajapur. Nilesh Rane, who switched from BJP to Shiv Sena before the polls, defeated sitting MLA Vaibhav Naik in Kudal. In Sawantwadi near Goa, Deepak Kesarkar got the best of Rajan Teli. Prakash Abitkar defeated KP Patil in Radhanagari. The Sena (UBT) won against the Shiv Sena in 14 seats. In Mehkar, Rambhau Kharat defeated Shiv Sena's Sanjay Bhaskar Raymulkar, while Nitin Bhiknrao Deshmukh was the winner in Balapur. Shiv Sena's Bhagwan Siraskar came third. Sunil Raut defeated Suvarna

Karanje in Vikhroli and his Sena (UBT) colleague Anant Nar was the winner in Jogeshwari West after a face-off with Manisha Waikar. Sunil Prabhu defeated Sanjay Nirupam in Dindoshi. Mahesh Sawant beat Sada Sarvankar in Mahim. Uddhav Thackeray's son and former state minister Aaditya Thackeray retained his Worli seat by defeating Milind Deora, who recently joined the Shiv Sena from Congress. Manoj Jamsutkar defeated Yamini Jadhav in Byculla. The vote share of the Sena (UBT) was 9.96 per cent compared to Shiv Sena's 12.38 per cent. The BJP-led Mahayuti alliance on Saturday retained power in Maharashtra, pocketing a whopping 230 of the 288 assembly seats, as the Congress-led Maha Vikas Aghadi's dream of wresting power fizzled, with the opposition combine managing to garner just 46 seats. The Election Commission announced that the BJP has won 132 seats, the Shiv Sena won 57, while the NCP got 41 seats. In the MVA, the Nationalist Congress Party (Sharadchandra Pawar) candidates won 10 seats, Congress won 16, while Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray) won 20 seats.

Will collectively introspect 'shocking' drubbing in Maharashtra polls: Congress

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM/NEW DELHI

A day after BJP-led Mahayuti retained power in Maharashtra, the Congress on Sunday said that the party and other partners of the Maha Vikas Aghadi will collectively introspect the reasons of their 'shocking' drubbing in the crucial polls.

The BJP-led Mahayuti alliance on Saturday won 230 of the 288 assembly seats in Maharashtra and the Congress-led Maha Vikas Aghadi managed to garner just 46 seats. AICC general secretary K C Venugopal said that the assembly poll results in Maharashtra was 'shocking' and 'unbelievable'.

"We don't understand what happened. It was not just the debacle of the Congress party but that of the entire alliance," he said. So, we will sit together and collectively introspect (its reasons), Venugopal added.

The Election Commission announced that the BJP had won 132 seats, the Shiv Sena 57, while the NCP 41 seats. In the MVA, the Nationalist Congress Party (Sharadchandra Pawar) candidates won 10 seats, Congress 16, while Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray) 20 seats. When asked whether the grand-old-party suspected any sabotage in the Maharashtra election results, the leader



said they were not raising any such allegation soon after the debacle.

"We suffered huge setbacks in the strongholds of Sharad Pawar, Uddhav Thackeray and that of the Congress. It is the failure of not just the Congress party but that of the entire alliance," he said. So, we will sit together and collectively introspect (its reasons), Venugopal added.

The Election Commission announced that the BJP had won 132 seats, the Shiv Sena 57, while the NCP 41 seats. In the MVA, the Nationalist Congress Party (Sharadchandra Pawar) candidates won 10 seats, Congress 16, while Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray) 20 seats. When asked about Priyanka Gandhi Vadra's huge majority win in Wayanad, the AICC general secretary said it was the result of collective

work of the entire party leaders and workers. "The party expected this huge majority in Wayanad. Soon after the polling, there was a huge concern about the majority. But, after the internal assessment of the party, we were sure that the low poll percentage would not impact Priyanka's majority," he said. He also made it clear that the Wayanad landslide tragedy and the subsequent issues would be one of the issues that would be raised by Priyanka in the Lok Sabha. Rejecting the opposition campaign that she would not visit Wayanad frequently, Venugopal said she would prove them wrong through her actions. He also said that Priyanka would continue her interventions in north Indian politics as well, along with being the MP of Wayanad.

Maharashtra poll results were rigged, alleges Congress

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

The Indian National Congress which was mauled by the BJP-led alliance in the election held to the Maharashtra assembly said on Sunday that the poll results were rigged and do not reflect the real feeling of the electorate.

"This is shocking and mysterious as we had scored a fantastic victory under my leadership in the Lok Sabha election held in June 2024. The results of the assembly election in Maharashtra is shocking and dubious. We have doubts about the authenticity of the electronic voting machines used in Maharashtra," said Ramesh Chennithala, veteran Congress leader who was in charge of the Maharashtra assembly polls.

Speaking to reporters at Thiruvananthapuram on Sunday, Chennithala said that he was entrusted the responsibility of Maharashtra elec-



tion by the High Command because it was confident that he could lead the party to impressive win, similar to the Lok Sabha win. "A thorough probe should be held about the poll results in Maharashtra. The changes in the poll prospectus over the last four months is shocking, unbelievable and against the will of the people," said Chennithala. When asked about the results of the Jharkhand assembly election which saw the INDI Alliance led by the Congress romping home and retaining power, Chennithala was eva-

sive. "May be the EVMs in Jharkhand performed well while those in Maharashtra were faulty," said the aging leader from Kerala who is a strong contender for the chief minister's chair after the 2026 assembly polls in the State. Chennithala said he was equally shocked over the poll results of Haryana which was won by the BJP. "The communist BJP had no chance of winning the Haryana election and we were confident of returning to power in the State. But Haryana result too was against the will of the people," said Chennithala. He also said that the Congress would take up the issue in the national level itself and investigate the factors behind the volte face in the will of the electorate. The Maharashtra poll result has come as a shocker to Chennithala because he fears that the outcome may dampen his chances as a strong contender for the top job in Kerala.

Didn't expect winning margin to be so huge: BJP's Ramveer Singh

PNS ■ LUCKNOW/MORADABAD

Like all politicians, BJP's Ramveer Singh dreamt of ending the losing streak of his party, but little did he know his victory would be so stylised, featuring a rout by 1.44 lakh votes of his nearest rival.

Singh won the Kundarki assembly constituency, a seat BJP had been losing since 1993, defeating Samajwadi Party's Mohammad Rizwan, who bagged 25,580. His victory assumed more significance as it came against an all-Muslim lineup in a constituency where around 60 per cent of the electorate comes from the community. Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath termed it a victory of nationalism.

"What was once a dream has become a reality today," he said on Saturday after the results were announced. Singh claimed that when the seat became vacant, he was approached by hundreds of Muslims, who urged him to contest the bypoll.



Bypolls in Kundarki were necessitated following the election of its sitting MLA, SP's Ziaur Rehman, as the Lok Sabha MP from Sambhal parliamentary constituency earlier this year. "I was expecting a victory margin of 50,000 to 60,000. But workers told me I would win by more than 1 lakh votes. People had a feeling of love towards me. They were disappointed by the SP, as

cases were framed against lakhs of people, and thousands of them were put behind bars during the SP rule from 2012 to 2017," Singh said. "When the seat got vacated, hundreds of Muslims came to me and asked me to seek a ticket. We will make you an MLA, we have made up our mind," they said. Because they requested, I remained active, and the party leadership also

listened to the voice of the people," he said. To Rizwan, who alleged that the elections were rigged, Singh said he was hiding his failure. "He can get the election conducted once again. He will know what his worth is," Singh said. On Saturday, when the results were announced, Rizwan contested the mandate, alleging booths were captured.

"It is not the defeat of the Samajwadi ... people did not vote here and the booths were looted," he told PTI. Rizwan served as Kundarki MLA in 2002, 2012, and 2017. The Muslim-dominated seat in west UP's Moradabad was a test of BJP's Hindu unity plank. The party's campaign in the bypolls largely revolved around 'Ram aur Rashtira' against the opposition Samajwadi Party's bid to consolidate the OBC-Dalit-Muslim vote bank. The win came as a salve for the BJP, which suffered a massive cut in seats in the Lok Sabha polls held earlier in the year. It won six of the nine Assembly seats in the state where bypolls were held on November 20. Adding to BJP's emphatic performance, its ally Rashtriya Lok Dal clinched Meerapur, the lone seat it contested. The Samajwadi Party emerged victorious on the remaining two seats -- Karhal and Sishamau.

Veg diet, alcohol abstinence, behaviour training: UP cops prep for 'pleasant' Maha Kumbh

PNS ■ PRAYAGRAJ (UP)

A strict vegetarian diet, alcohol abstinence and behavioural training are among the steps the Uttar Pradesh Police is taking to ensure its personnel act as "servants of faith" and create a pleasant experience for the devotees gathering in this holy city for the Maha Kumbh. The Maha Kumbh will commence on January 13 on the occasion of Paus Purnima and conclude on February 26 on Mahashivratri. Senior Superintendent of Police (Kumbh) Rajesh Dwivedi emphasised that the primary focus of the police, alongside maintaining security, would be to foster a welcoming environment for the pilgrims.

He said, "Our aim is to ensure that the devotees have a pleasant experience, and the police behave with warmth -- not just as enforcers of the law but as servants of faith." Police personnel to be deployed for the Maha Kumbh are undergoing behaviour-focused training at a designated facility within the mela area. External trainers are also being invited to impart lessons in etiquette and public service. So far, 1,500 police personnel have completed the training. By the time the mela commences, 40,000 personnel will have completed the exercise. Atul Kumar Singh, the training programme in-charge, said 700 police personnel were receiving training at a time, following a 21-day module.



The duration will gradually come down to 14 days as the mela draws closer, he added. Personnel such as Satish Kumar Yadav, a head constable from Mathura who will be deployed during the mela, expressed appreciation for the training. "I have learned the importance of courteous behaviour and how to assist the devotees during times of distress. The training also covered topics such as cybercrime prevention," he said. The force is also receiving expert instruction from the National Police Academy. Personnel trained there are now preparing trainers who, in turn, are equipping the larger police contingent for their role at the mela. In addition to behavioural training, the police are also

being instructed to maintain the Maha Kumbh's sanctity. District police chief Dwivedi reaffirmed the Maha Kumbh's strict policies regarding food and drink and said non-vegetarian food or alcohol would not be permitted in the mela ground. "The food in the police mess is entirely vegetarian and we have instructed all personnel to act in a manner that respects the devotees' faith," he said. New technologies will also be deployed at the Maha Kumbh this time. An AI chatbot -- Kumbh Sahayak -- is being developed to assist the devotees with information in more than 10 languages via the Bhashini app. This initiative is designed to bridge language barriers and provide instant support to the vast number of devotees.

The police will also deploy bilingual personnel and translators to assist non-Hindi speaking devotees. Mounted police on 160-170 horses will assist in crowd control, ensuring safety while maintaining a harmonious atmosphere. With cybercrime on the rise, the personnel were also briefed by domain expert Pawan Kumar. Security measures, including the use of cutting-edge technologies, are being incorporated to ensure both safety and a positive experience for the devotees. In preparing for the Maha Kumbh, the authorities are combining tradition with modern technology, ensuring that this once-in-a-lifetime gathering will be as safe, respectful and efficient as possible.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Mixed bag

Ruling JMM retains Jharkhand and the BJP-led Mahayuti, Maharashtra, indicating anti-incumbency is not at play right now

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), alongside its allies, achieved significant electoral victory in Maharashtra while the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) fought its way to victory in Jharkhand despite many handicaps proving once again that it is difficult to read the voters' mind. In Maharashtra, the BJP-led Mahayuti coalition, including factions of the Shiv Sena and the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), secured a decisive majority, capitalising on effective consolidation of OBC votes and strategic welfare schemes like direct cash transfers for women. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership and grassroots outreach programmes further bolstered their appeal. Meanwhile, in Jharkhand, the BJP failed to wrest power from the ruling alliance of JMM. It could not emphasise governance issues and leverage dissatisfaction with the Hemant Soren-led coalition. The JMM's success was amplified by strong voter mobilisation in tribal areas and development-focused messaging. In Maharashtra, the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) alliance, comprising the Congress, Shiv Sena (UBT), and the original NCP struggled with internal divisions and a lack of clarity on critical issues such as reservations for the Maratha community.

In Jharkhand, the BJP's limited reach and failure to address rural distress effectively diminished its appeal. The electoral outcome in Maharashtra underlines the BJP's ability to adapt and dominate state politics. All this while the Opposition struggled to regain voter trust. The NDA led by the BJP, achieved notable success in Maharashtra due to a combination of strategic alliances, effective voter outreach and targeted welfare initiatives. In Maharashtra, the BJP presented itself as a cohesive force with Eknath Shinde's Shiv Sena faction and Ajit Pawar's Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) group, ensuring a consolidated voter base. The party's focus on OBC consolidation, welfare schemes such as direct cash transfers for women, and the influence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership resonated strongly with voters. But it was different story in Jharkhand where the BJP could not harness dissatisfaction with the governance of the Hemant Soren-led coalition and failed to highlight local issues like unemployment and tribal welfare and banked more on its national agenda. The JMM also benefited from a grassroots campaign that addressed tribal and rural voter concerns, further solidifying its position. Similarly, in Maharashtra the opposition failed to effectively capitalise on the BJP's perceived shortcomings, such as economic challenges and allegations of governance lapses. In Maharashtra, the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) coalition, comprising the Congress, Shiv Sena (Uddhav), and Sharad Pawar's NCP, struggled with internal divisions and inconsistent messaging, particularly on sensitive issues like Maratha reservations. In Jharkhand, JMM and Congress were able to counter the BJP's narrative and present a compelling vision for change. These results indeed underscore the innate acumen of the voters to vote on the issues they deem important.

PICTALK



Artists dressed as clowns perform during the International Clown Festival, in Chennai

Emerging contours of artificial intelligence

The interplay between AI and human intelligence offers both challenges and opportunities, heralding a future where adaptability and innovation are key



VINAYSHIL GAUTAM

The foundation of understanding an organisation lies in understanding the role relationships within it. An individual may even, lose their identity in living up to the requirements of his organisational role. Illustratively, the President of an organisation is no longer just an individual who occupies that position. The person who occupies that position becomes the President of the organisation with the President's characteristics, the President's traits, and the President's attributes.

Being a true President may often require his acting in denial of his inclinations in favour of the role requirement. This issue has usually constituted the foundation of organisation analysis and operations. The theoretical basis of this thinking was laid out in 1952 by Elliott Jaques in his classical book "Changing Culture of a Factory." This was a report of 1948 and 1950 of a Glacier Metal Company, London. The Tavistock Institute of Human Relations was the sponsor.

The significance of the book lies, among other things, in the theoretical and operational implications of the research findings. The study went back to 1938. That is another story. Since then, few things have so fundamentally affected organisations understanding till the coming of artificial intelligence (AI). These are indeed seminal times in terms of understanding organisations. AI has affected how one looks at manufacturing, finance, logistics, and more. The expressions of job design have changed. If the basis of job design has changed, the understanding of organizational structure stands to change. The key issue is whether the fundamental changes through the new model of business products for increasing profit have impacted organisational operations. And how they have affected pricing, job market changes, and created or altered new revenue streams. Currently, the world of products and academia is dealing with a lot of jargonise. The popular references are two models, one is the platform-based model, other is the subscription model.



There may be several others but are yet to acquire significance. Many of them who would survive, would get modified, and much of them would evolve into something totally different. Time can tell. For the present, efforts are being made to understand business models and their impact on work conduct. An obvious outcome of AI is the redundancy of many tasks. As the character of tasks changes, the character of organizational models is open to change.

The whole approach of aggregation of organizational tasks into job designs has undergone a fundamental change. Many humanly rendered tasks have become redundant, and they have then been replaced either by machines or machine-led aggregation of skills. This whole process is akin to a major revolution in the understanding of the work. It needs to be realized that once such forces are generated, there is no reversal that can take place in its entirety. It also impacts job designs, which for whatever reason may not change. Put simply, the nature of the task itself has revolutionized organizations. Practically everyone needs to understand AI because there is nothing that can be quite untouched by that process. The overlapping jobs



THE WHOLE APPROACH OF ORGANISATIONAL TASKS INTO JOB DESIGNS HAS UNDERGONE A FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE. MANY HUMANLY RENDERED TASKS HAVE BECOME REDUNDANT, AND THEY HAVE THEN BEEN REPLACED EITHER BY MACHINES OR MACHINE-LED AGGREGATION OF SKILLS

would disappear, skill shifts would take place, and reskilling and upskilling would become the order of the day as never before. When such fundamental changes are let loose, job displacement is not just job displacement but the seedbed of new forms of job creation. The interesting thing is that AI acquires some human characteristics that are still in the domain of documentation, understanding, and interpretation. The bias in AI would have been the act of abbreviation and one might say, even the dispensation of organization fair play. Privacy and security are concepts that change, and nothing stays quite what it was even a quarter of a century ago. The upshot of all these is the creation of a paradigm of organization management, whether the top management may not be necessary at the top but acquire primacy even while imbibed in the heart of an organization. This would happen because of the ability of the AI specialist to affect the nature of the work itself. The chances are clear that AI as a service is on the way to acquiring a character of its own. For some AI will be the first language, and they will affect the running of the organization in a very critical manner. For the

rest, AI would be a second language, and everyone would need to understand a little bit of the nature of AI. Put simply, the future of work will be a diligent factor in many ways, which might be an outcome of the revolution of AI. The fascinating thing is to observe how the character of AI affects other functions of the organization like finance, marketing, the functioning of ports, and more. The above is not to say that pathways are clear and the shift in organisational nature is irrevocable. The AI is a job in progress. It's a work in progress that is still taking shape and a character that remains in service of organization management, will only gradually become clear. How this will roll out is difficult to predict, but one thing is clear: AI is here to stay. All in all, it will be interesting to observe how AI and human intelligence deal with each other and create an amalgam of human efforts for organizational growth. The future is here, and over time, it will take shape with better clarity and hopefully some predictability. (The writer is a well-known management consultant of international repute. The views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

ADANI GROUP CONTROVERSY

Madam— Adani Group Chairman Gautam Adani, his nephew Sagar Adani and six others were indicted by US prosecutors in New York on Wednesday (November 20) in an alleged Rs 2,029 crore bribery case that could be a much bigger blow for business than the Hindenburg report. Side by side, it could upset the group's global expansion ambitions, hinder capital-raising and tarnish the fundraising abilities of other Indian firms by association. Though the White House expressed confidence in the resilience of India-US ties despite allegations against industrialist Gautam Adani and his associates of orchestrating a \$265 million bribery scheme to secure state energy contracts. Even after all this, citizens of the country strongly believe that whether Adani paid the bribe or not is to be probed by the agencies. When Indian agencies failed, US court indicted him for the bribery. Let Adani & his companies defend themselves in the US courts. If Adani has invested in the non-BJP-ruled states, that is only for the minerals, forests, lands and other resources of those states. Where Indian compromised agencies failed, the US caught him on the wrong foot. Let him and his other conspirators face the music. Remember, the US laws are very strict in the cases of bribery or anti-competition laws. Let Adani face the music in the US courts and international financiers or hawala money suppliers. Whatsoever, for the clean image of the country, India must also set up a probe into this matter and be prepared to go by the evidence presented to the US regulators and courts to determine if there has been wrongdoing on our soil.

Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee | Delhi

MAHAYUTI WINS MAHARASHTRA

Madam — The Mahayuti alliance in Maharashtra has won the Assembly elections 2024 is a double booster for BJP after its recent surprise win in Haryana. It's a celebration time for the CM and Shiv Sena

Women's hockey team wins ACT



The Indian women's hockey team has created history once again by retaining the Asian Champions Trophy title after beating China. It would always be a moment of pride seeing Indian women securing victory in India's national sport, hockey. The title is extremely prestigious for all of us, and our women players deserve this victory

leader Eknath Shinde.

The magic wand of Sharad Pawar had lost its power while his breakaway factions of Sena and NCP led by Uddhav Thackeray and Sharad Pawar, had seen the downside quite significantly. The Shiv Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray termed the victory as note-jihad by attacking the BJP leader Vinod Tawde and alleged that cash for votes marred the end results. While all parties facilitate cash for votes, it's not that how much one bribe matters and, at the end, how much of welfare the party extends to the people that brings such a huge victory need to be respected. The BJP has used their arm of RSS to campaign to target women, farmers and OBCs in the last six months and has gained momentum by a constructive approach to focus on this landmark victory.

A P Thiruvadi | Chennai

LONG-TERM PLANNING NEEDED

Madam — This refers to the editorial, 'Cars the Main Culprit', wherein it was observed that the real culprit behind Delhi's toxic air is not stubble burning but the city's over-

whelming vehicular emissions. The Supreme Court, concerned about the health of the residents of the capital and commuters, has taken a commendable initiative to close schools up to class 12 and implement all the necessary restrictions of the Graded Response Action Plan-Stage 4. A section of the society is praising the commendable effort of the judiciary wholeheartedly.

The Aam Aadmi Party in Delhi has come under fire over the deteriorating air quality in the national capital. But instead of controlling the worsening conditions, the Aam Aadmi Party is bent on criticising the Modi government at the Centre. Before the upcoming Assembly elections, the Atishi government will have to show its work on the ground in Delhi. The Central and State governments should together take practical steps on a concrete action plan to reduce pollution and improve the environment in Delhi.

Yugal Kishore Sharma | Faridabad

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

Grey divorce: The new reality of modern relationships

Far from a rash dissolution of vows, grey divorce is reshaping societal views on commitment, showcasing that it can lead to new beginnings

The entertainment media is abuzz with news of AR Rahman's separation from his wife of many years, Saira Banu. It is not the first time that famous couples, married for several years, have called it quits. What was once anathema in the old scheme of things—namely, a marriage breakup—has now become a lot more common, giving rise to a new term in the nuptial dictionary: grey divorce.

All cases of middle-aged separation have been well-thought-out decisions, taken after life has given the couples all their due during their togetherness. The best of relationships can fray, the pristine love that couples vouched for can gather moss, and what seemed like a lifetime's vow can wither after many winters of frozen emotions. What was once considered unthinkable becomes inevitable in the narrative of two people who once thought they would grow old together and be each other's crutch when their feet faltered. What had been held sacred and secure slowly gives way, and couples arrive at a decision that is ironic, painful, and lib-



erating at the same time. We have now entered a new era of human relationships, where binding and breaking look like two sides of the same coin. While separation at a younger age is more common than parting at twilight or thereabouts, even long-standing unions are no longer immune to the reconfigurations of modern relationships. Grey divorce has come to symbolise not just the unravelling of a marriage but the assertion of individuality—a reclaiming of one's universe after years of compromise and shared existence. For couples who part ways after decades together, it is not a rash decision taken in the heat of conflict but the culmination of deep reflection and an honest appraisal of their shared journey. It is not about undoing the years they spent together or

dismissing the love they once held; rather, it is about recognising that their paths have diverged, their goals have shifted, and their needs have evolved in ways that no longer align. Marriage, in its ideal form, is a partnership where two people grow together while allowing each other room to flourish individually. But as life unfolds with its relentless demands and shifting priorities, it is not uncommon for this delicate balance to tilt. What once felt like a harmonious duet may start to sound discordant, not out of malice or neglect, but simply because human beings are not static.

Divorce in later years, though heart-wrenching, is often an act of self-preservation—a decision to honour the person each has become rather than clinging to a version of themselves that no longer exists. It is a painful shedding of skin that no longer fits, and like all transformations, it comes with its share of sorrow and scars. Yet, it is also an opportunity for renewal, a chance to readjust one's life with one's inner truth. Couples who choose to separate after years together are not betraying the

sanctity of marriage; they are embracing the courage to let go of something that no longer serves their mutual wellbeing. It is a quiet revolution in the way society views commitment—not as an unyielding contract but as a partnership rooted in growth, love, and respect, even when that means stepping away. While the process is undeniably painful, it also holds the promise of freedom and self-discovery. It allows individuals to reclaim their lives, find joy in their own company, and pursue paths that were perhaps once abandoned for the sake of togetherness. Grey divorce is not the undoing of a life lived together; it is the rewriting of two lives that are still unfolding. It reminds us that while love may not always last in its original form, the lessons it imparts and the growth it inspires are eternal. And in that, there is hope—a hope that even in endings, there can be beginnings. As Rahman said, they will eventually find meaning in the shattering. (The author is a columnist and children's writing coach based in Dubai; Views are personal)



ASHA IYER KUMAR



FIRST COLUMN

ONLINE PREDATORS

They exploit the anonymity and reach of digital platforms to target vulnerable individuals, particularly children



SHAINY SHARMA

The emergence of the internet has revolutionised the way an individual connects, communicates and accesses information. However, alongside its numerous benefits, this emergence has also given rise to various dangers, one of the most concerning being the presence of online predators - someone who uses the internet to exploit others for personal gain, often engaging in deceptive and manipulative behaviour. These individuals exploit digital platforms to manipulate, exploit and harm unsuspecting victims, often targeting vulnerable populations such as children and teenagers. Social media platforms, online gaming environments, chat rooms and even educational forums provide predators with access to potential victims. The motives range from financial fraud and identity theft to emotional manipulation, sexual exploitation and many more. The anonymity of the internet emboldens these individuals, allowing them to craft fake personas and deceive others without immediate risk of detection.

Online predators employ various strategies to target and exploit their victims. One of the most common is grooming, a process in which predators build trust and emotional connections over time. This tactic often begins with flattery, attention or shared interests making the victim feel valued and understood. Once the trust is established, the predator isolates the victim by discouraging contact with family or friends, making the victim more dependent on them. Not only this, but these predators also exploit vulnerabilities, such as low self-esteem, loneliness or a desire for acceptance. They use threats, blackmail or promises of love or gifts to control their victims. In some cases, the



predators coerce victims into sharing sensitive information or explicit content, which can later be used as leverage. Victims falling prey to an online predator can be devastating. They may experience emotional trauma, anxiety, depression and a loss of trust in others and if it's a minor then the outcomes are even worse affecting their development and relationships.

A combination of education, vigilance and robust digital safeguards and awareness campaigns can teach individuals, especially young people, about the risks of interacting with strangers online for they tend to put up in place as younger influencers who will share their lives on camera. And the importance of protecting personal information.

Technological solutions, such as parental controls, advanced privacy settings and reporting mechanisms, can also help deter predators. There is no denying that the threat of online predators is a sobering reminder of the darker side of the digital age. While the internet offers incredible opportunities for connection and growth, it also demands vigilance and responsibility from all users.

By understanding the tactics of online predators and implementing protective measures, individuals can work toward a safer online environment. Only when education, communication and technology unite to combat this pervasive issue, can society ensure that the Internet remains a tool for empowerment rather than exploitation.

If you suspect someone is being targeted by an online predator, report it to the authorities or an organisation like NCMCEC (National Centre for Missing & Exploited Children) through their CyberTipline.

(The writer is an educator; views are personal)

Trump 2.0: Stark challenges for the climate and global stability



B K SINGH

With promises to overhaul bureaucracy, impose steep tariffs and retreat from climate commitments, Trump's policies are set to reshape the US and the world

Donald Trump will take over as US President on January, 20 2025 and his pre-election promises would have economic and environmental consequences. On the economic front, countries worldwide would face still stronger dollars sucking money out of emerging markets, high protectionist tariffs imposed and consequent trade war slowing the growth and increasing inflation globally. His regime is not only committed to sacking thousands of bureaucrats and replaced by his supporters but has also announced a new department named the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) to be headed by Elon Musk and Vivek Ramaswamy to slash the bureaucracy.

No doubt it would disrupt the continuity of the functioning of government, and it would also lead to job losses. Nationwide federal government employs nearly 3 million people. Trump says Musk and Ramaswamy would dismantle government bureaucracy, slash excess regulations, cut wasteful expenditure and restructure federal agencies. While Musk has announced to cut \$2 trillion from the federal budget, Ramaswamy has proposed to eliminate the education department and FBI.

Internal Revenue Service as well as cutting the federal workforce by 75 per cent in a mass layoff. Trump has consistently maintained to levy a 10 per cent tariff on all imports in the US, 60 per cent on imports from China and 100 per cent on cars imported from China. This would mean cutting imports from many countries which may even result in trade wars. Capacities created in countries like China would be rendered unutilised. With limited domestic consumption in China, the country would face a backlash.

If all countries take action to cut on imports, it certainly boomerangs somewhere and exports would be adversely impacted in most cases. A 10 per cent tariff on imports would increase US prices of goods by at least 3 per cent and a continued trade war may even further raise the prices. While domestic producers in the US would welcome it, the consumers will have to pay more. Tariff is not the solution to all problems. Trump's idea to shift manufacturing back to the US may be hit by supply chain disruption on account of higher tariffs.

The job creation in the US may be impacted. In his first term, Trump increased tariffs on Aluminum and Steel to bring its manufacturing back to the US, but the goal was not achieved. His acceptance of higher prices to be paid by consumers, while protecting producers had also made consumers pay 18 per cent extra on Washing machines in 2018. Later some of Trump's tariff was increased by Biden too. It went up to 100 per cent on electric vehicles, 50 per cent on solar cells and 25 per cent on batteries from China. It had its impact on climate action too - the transition to cleaner energy was slowed down. Herbert Hoover, a Republican, US President nearly a century ago had similarly announced the imposition of tariffs, which ultimately culminated in the adoption of the Smoot-Hawley Act, of 1930 and increased tariffs by 40 to 60 per cent.

It led to a trade war and the US faced retaliation from its trade partners too. It triggered the great depression and the



IN HIS FIRST TERM, TRUMP INCREASED TARIFFS ON ALUMINUM AND STEEL TO BRING ITS MANUFACTURING BACK TO THE US, BUT THE GOAL WAS NOT ACHIEVED

worst economic crisis humankind has ever experienced. Presently global economy is already facing considerable headwinds, any trade war can have disastrous consequences. US's technological advancement for decades has placed it as the leading powerhouse in the world.

Its investment in research and development has been quite rewarding as evident from the fact that there have been more Nobel laureates in the last five or six years than the rest of the world put together have produced. With its technological superiority, the rest of the world is dependent on it economically too and the tariff policy would leave them behind in the trade war. So far China's growth has been manufacturing followed by exports. With the slowdown in exports, it is dealing with the problem of overcapacity of its industries and making efforts to boost domestic consumption. There has been budget constraint in Europe - money is spent on subsidies in several countries, causing growth retardation. Germany, to continue producing in the country has to match the US subsidy offering 900 million euros to Swedish battery makers Northvolt, which is experiencing sluggish growth of the economy. Subsidies continue to slow the growth globally.

As the growth suffers, climate action also suffers. For instance, countries in the African subcontinent have vast potential for solar and wind energy, which has remained untapped so far. China's interest in Africa is going up through its Belt and Road initiatives; it has an eye on the natural resources of the continent. It is

to be seen whether Trump 2.0 can counter China in Africa.

In his election speeches, Trump has already sought to restore US manufacturing and has targeted to end the Chinese dominance in sectors like advanced information technology, high-end numerical control machinery, robotics, aviation equipment, maritime engineering technology, sophisticated rail equipment, energy-saving vehicles, electrical equipment, medical devices and agriculture machinery etc.

European business finds it now difficult to continue investing in China and India should try to leverage the churn to its advantage. President-elect has already announced Immigration hardliner Tom Homan for the deposition of illegal immigrants. He said that there is nobody better in policing and controlling US borders and there is no doubt that Homan will do a fantastic job which has been long awaited.

Homan also spoke to the press supporting the deportation of even US-born children of undocumented immigrants. Another Immigration hardliner Stephen Miller has been announced to be deputy Chief of Policy in the new administration. Unprecedented deportation is around the corner, which is bound to impact the labour force. What will happen to manufacturing? Also, his tax cut promise would lead to a fiscal deficit; the US has one of the highest fiscal deficits 22 per cent of GDP, more than four times as high as India.

The country is already under heavy debt and indebtedness would further increase the deficit. Despite a good chemistry between Trump and Modi, India

may not be spared of 10 per cent tariff, which may impact our imports. By 2028, when Trump's term ends, not only the US, but many other countries will be reeling under high inflation and poor growth. UN is also reconciled to accept a cut in US funding in Trump 2.0. A US retreat at the UN is likely to open the door for China, which has been building influence in global diplomacy. The best part of Trump's promises is that he would stop funding war. The end of war in West Asia and Ukraine is expected soon. The re-election of Trump has cast a shadow on the ongoing world climate summit in Baku, Azerbaijan. His withdrawal from the Paris Agreement in his first term and halting climate funding has slowed down the progress globally.

Trump in his election campaign has vowed to ignore any climate emergency. He has been categorical in his election speeches - abandon climate, drill, baby, drill. He has also joked in speeches that if the sea level rises, we will have more properties facing the sea. In some other speeches, he said that why should we be concerned if the sea level rises by a thousandth of an inch after thousands of years? Global leaders at Baku perceive the inaction and obstructions from the US and debate whether they can afford such inaction for four more years. They must work out the strategy and pursue advanced climate actions and goals. Barbados PM has invited Trump for a face-to-face meeting on climate.

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

Goa's timeless allure: Ultimate destination despite misleading claims

Recent reports claiming a decline in its popularity seem at odds with the reality on the ground

Goa has long been a dream destination for both domestic and international travelers. Its blend of scenic beauty and cultural richness has earned it a prominent place on the global tourism map. But is the charm of Goa fading? Is it losing its allure? Certainly not. In fact, anyone visiting Goa would find its flights fully booked well in advance, its hotels packed, and its beaches bustling with lively crowds. However, some media reports have suggested a decline in its popularity, which seems at odds with the reality and the figures.

For decades, Goa has been synonymous with sun-kissed beaches, lively shacks, and a carefree lifestyle that has charmed travellers from



DIVYA BHATIA

around the world. Beyond its picturesque coastlines lies a treasure trove of history, culture, and tradition waiting to be discovered.

Ironically, a report from the CEIC (China Economic Information Centre) claimed a drastic drop in foreign tourist arrivals to Goa, alleging a fall from 8.5 million in 2019 to just 1.5 million in 2023. This nar-

rative suggested that Goa was losing its allure to international competitors like Thailand, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam. Interestingly report is bereft of the details of the sources and how they were collected. Casting aspersions on the motive of the report in first place. These claims have been contested by Goa's Tourism Department, which points out significant discrepancies in the data. Official figures indicated approximately 450,000 foreign arrivals in 2023—a notable recovery post-pandemic-while domestic tourism surged to 8.17 million in 2023, surpassing the 7.12 million recorded in 2019. Altogether, Goa welcomed 8.62 million tourists in 2023, exceeding pre-pandemic levels. Addressing these concerns,

Tourism Minister Rohan A Khaunte has criticised the report, describing it as a deliberate attempt to misrepresent Goa's standing. "The numbers are manipulated to present a false narrative," he stated. "In 2023, we recorded 4.5 million international tourists and about 9 million domestic tourists. It's not just about quantity but the quality of tourism and the revenue it generates. Domestic tourists are now spending more, opting for premium accommodations." To further boost the international Khaunte stresses the importance of improving Goa's international connectivity, particularly with emerging markets in Southeast Asia, the West Asia and Europe. He revealed ongoing efforts to establish direct flight routes to



key destinations such as the UAE, Malaysia and South Korea. "These regions hold immense potential for quality tourism," he noted. In fact, Goa has gone notch up to promote tourism that is both sustainable and rejuvenating. In 2023, Goa launched a pioneering regenerative tourism campaign, emphasising sustainability across the pillars of economy, environment, and society. This initiative aims to go beyond sustainable prac-

tices, creating tourism models that leave a positive impact on local communities while offering unique, meaningful experiences for travelers. "Regenerative tourism is about ensuring that tourism not only sustains but enriches the local culture, economy, and environment," Khaunte explains. Despite its many strengths, Goa faces ongoing challenges. The lack of app-based taxi services and disputes among taxi operators have been longstanding grievances for visitors, often resulting in complaints about high fares. Additionally, while Goa offers accommodations catering to all budgets, from luxury to backpacker-friendly, the state has been criticised for expensive lodging options. Khaunte acknowledged these concerns,

emphasising the need for improved public transportation and better policies to enhance the tourist experience. Indeed the 'Unverified data without revealing the methodology employed and source makes the data suspect and report motivated. What sets Goa apart is its versatility. Whether you're seeking beach parties, adventure sports, spiritual retreats, or cultural festivities, Goa caters to a wide range of interests. This adaptability has been the cornerstone of its enduring appeal. Goa's enchanting landscapes and vibrant culture have long served as a cinematic muse, making it a favored backdrop for filmmakers worldwide. From Bollywood blockbusters to Hollywood thrillers, Goa's charm has been

immortalised on screen. Iconic films like *Ek Duje Ke Liye* (1981) was all about love in the Goan air, while *Dil Chahta Hai* (2001) redefined the idea of weekend getaways, inspiring a generation to explore its idyllic beaches. *Dear Zindagi* (2016) captured its serene vibe, while the *Golmaal* series (2006-2010) added a playful twist to its allure as a honeymoon destination. Even international cinema embraced its beauty, with *The Bourne Supremacy* (2004) using Goa as a stunning backdrop for its high-stakes drama. Whether on screen or off, the magic of Goa continues to captivate and mesmerise, unaffected by reports or negative propaganda.

(The author is travel writer and influencer; views are personal)

Markets may react to Assembly polls outcome: Analysts

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Global factors and FII activity will dictate trends in domestic equity markets this week while assembly poll results of Maharashtra and Jharkhand may impact stocks on Monday, say analysts. Stock markets witnessed a spirited recovery on Friday with benchmark Sensex and Nifty notching the best single-day gains in more than five months and offering relief after weeks of Correction. On Friday, Sensex jumped 1,961.32 points or 2.54 per cent to settle at 79,117.11 while Nifty soared 557.35 points or 2.39 per cent to 23,907.25. "On the domestic front, the outcomes of the Maharashtra and Jharkhand elections will

be crucial triggers. Especially Maharashtra where NDA witnessed a one-sided victory which is likely to boost bullish sentiment further. However, global factors continue to pose significant risks. Escalating tensions between Russia and Ukraine, alongside rising crude oil prices, have added to inflationary concerns," Santosh Meena, Head of Research, Swastika Investmart Ltd, said. A strengthening US dollar index and elevated US bond yields are weighing on the rupee, leading to record foreign institutional investor (FII) outflows. "The direction of FII flows will remain a key determinant for the markets following the recent correction," Meena added. The BJP on Saturday pulled



off a stunning performance in Maharashtra winning a record number of seats to propel the party-led ruling Mahayuti alliance to a landslide victory while the INDIA bloc stormed back to power in Jharkhand on the back of a spectacular showing by the JMM. Global oil benchmark Brent crude and the rupee-dollar trend would also influence trading in the stock market. Global triggers, including US economic data such as GDP growth rate, and FOMC (Federal Open Market

Committee) meeting minutes, will play critical roles in shaping investor sentiment, Meena added. "Overall, the political outcomes, particularly in Maharashtra, suggest a positive outlook for the Indian stock market, especially in sectors that benefit from infrastructure development and political stability," Palka Arora Chopra, Director, Master Capital Services Ltd, said. "Macroeconomic indicators, including GDP and infrastructure output, will garner significant attention. Participants remain focused on FII fund flows, given their ongoing selling spree," Ajit Mishra - SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said. Last week, the BSE benchmark zoomed 1,536.8

points or 1.98 per cent, and the Nifty climbed 374.55 points or 1.59 per cent. Most sectors, except energy, contributed to the rebound, with realty, auto, and FMCG leading the pack. IT and banking played a pivotal role in capping losses and driving the recovery in the benchmark. Broader indices also edged higher, with gains ranging between 0.9 per cent and 1.8 per cent. "On Monday, the market will react to the outcome of state assembly elections in Maharashtra and Jharkhand along with other global triggers including developments in the Russia-Ukraine war," Siddhartha Khemka, Head - Research, Wealth Management, Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd, said.

FPI selling spree continues in November at ₹26,533 crore, intensity of outflow reduces

PTI ■ NEW DELHI



Foreign investors have pulled out Rs 26,533 crore from the Indian equity market this month so far owing to increasing allocations to China, concerns over muted corporate earnings and elevated valuation of domestic stocks. While the sell-off continues, the quantum of net outflows has significantly reduced compared to October, when Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPI) withdrew Rs 94,017 crore (USD 11.2 billion) on a net basis. With the latest pull-out, FPI outflows on a net basis are Rs 19,940 crore in 2024 so far. Going ahead, the flows from foreign investors into the Indian equity markets would depend on the policies implemented under Donald Trump's presidency, the prevailing inflation and interest rate dynamics, the trajectory of the geopolitical landscape, and the third-quarter earnings performance of Indian companies, Himanshu Srivastava, Associate Director - Manager Research, Morningstar Investment Research India, said. According to the data, FPIs recorded a net outflow of Rs 26,533 crore so far this month (till November 22). This came following a net withdrawal of Rs 94,017 crore in October, which was the worst monthly outflow. However, in September, foreign investors made a nine-month high investment of Rs 57,724 crore. Concerns over the elevated valuations of Indian equities persist, prompting FPIs to redirect their attention toward

markets offering more attractive valuations, Srivastava said. Additionally, China continues to draw significant foreign inflows at India's expense, bolstered by its compelling valuation levels and the recent announcement of stimulus measures aimed at revitalizing its slowing economy, he said. Furthermore, India's sub-par corporate earnings and elevated inflation figures have raised concerns about potential delays in domestic interest rate cuts, he added. V K Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Financial Services, flagged investors' concerns surrounding FY25 earnings. He added that while the 'Sell India, Buy China' trade is over, 'the Trump trade' also appears to be on its last leg since valuations have reached high levels in the US. In terms of sectors, FPIs have been buying IT stocks while banking stocks have been resilient despite facing selling pressure, mainly due to support from domestic institutional investors. On the other hand, FPIs withdrew Rs 1,110 crore from the debt general limit and invested Rs 872 crore in the debt Voluntary Retention Route (VRR) this month until November 22. So far this year, FPIs invested Rs 1.05 lakh crore in the debt market.

Mobile industry seeks enhanced air cargo handling capacity

PTI ■ NEW DELHI



Mobile phone players want Indian airports to ramp up their existing cargo handling capacity to support a projected eight-fold increase in device exports to USD 180 billion by 2030, industry body ICEA said. India Cellular and Electronics Association (ICEA) Chairman Pankaj Mohindroo told PTI that the turnaround time at customs is a major hurdle for the electronics industry which delays shipments' processing further. "In China, while the factory to export take-off from the cargo terminal is achieved on Day 1, in India, the export take off happens only by Day 2. This is a glaring chasm especially when seen in the context of the volume of exports which in the case of China is more than 30 times electronics output (USD 959 billion) compared to India (USD 29 billion) in 2023," Mohindroo said. Electronics is already India's largest export in air cargo while it's ranked third overall behind engineering and petrol. "To keep pace with the expected growth in exports, concerted efforts are needed at the Central and State level. The infrastructure at current airports has already reached saturation levels as they are operating at 80-100 per cent of their capacity which calls for expansion of existing airports and developing new ones," Mohindroo said. According to ICEA, total electronics exports stood at USD 29.1 billion for the period from financial year 2023-24, out of which mobiles stood at USD 15 billion.

"To achieve the USD 500 billion of electronics production by 2030 requires airport capacities to increase parallelly to handle USD 180 bn of exports, the vast majority on an annual basis which would be 6 times higher than the current exports. By 2030, electronics will not only be India's top 2 exports (at the rate of USD 180-200 billion per year), but also significantly larger in terms of air cargo as compared to any other export from India," Mohindroo said. At present 55 per cent of total mobile phone exports from India are handled by Delhi, 30 per cent by Madras Airport and 10 per cent at Bangalore airport. Mohindroo said many airports lack adequate areas for essential cargo operations such as docking, unit load device (ULD) assembly, truck parking, and the smooth loading and unloading of goods. "Electronics products are highly sensitive to heat, water and other weather conditions. Also, they require to be sent with speed to ensure just-in-time production schedules. Thus, dedicated space that takes care of safety, security and ease of transport is critical for electronics," he said. Mohindroo said that the custom brokers, who are responsible for verifying packages before shipment, often operate in an unstructured and ad-hoc manner which further adds to delays. The Indian government is aiming to set up 50 more airports in the next five years to develop the country's airport ecosystem and help boost job creation. Recently, India's commerce ministry stated that the government is considering measures to provide tax incentives, rationalization of aviation turbine fuel prices, and infrastructure development for handling air cargo. Mohindroo said that the development of some of the airports including Noida International Airport, and greenfield airports in Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra are expected to expedite exports. Apple and Samsung are the top two mobile phone exporters from India. Majority of Apple's iPhones are made in Tamil Nadu while Samsung has one of the world's largest smartphone factories in Noida.

Mcap of 8 of top-10 most-valued domestic firms jumps ₹1.55 lakh crore; HDFC Bank, TCS sparkle

PTI ■ NEW DELHI



Eight of the top-10 most valued domestic firms together added Rs 1,55,603.45 crore in market valuation last week, with HDFC Bank and Tata Consultancy Services emerging as the biggest gainers, in tandem with firm trend in equities. Last week, the BSE benchmark zoomed 1,536.8 points, or 1.98 per cent, and the Nifty climbed 374.55 points, or 1.59 per cent. The BSE benchmark Sensex jumped 1,961.32 points, or 2.54 per cent, to settle at 79,117.11 on Friday. The NSE Nifty soared 557.35 points or, 2.39 per cent, to 23,907.25. From the top-10 pack, Reliance Industries and Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) were the laggards.

The market capitalisation (mcap) of Hindustan Unilever climbed Rs 13,239.95 crore to Rs 5,74,569.05 crore and that of ITC zoomed Rs 11,508.91 crore to Rs 5,94,272.93 crore. Bharti Airtel's mcap went up Rs 11,260.11 crore to Rs 8,94,068.84 crore and that of State Bank of India rallied Rs 10,709.55 crore to Rs 7,28,293.62 crore. However, the valuation of LIC declined Rs 11,954.24 crore to Rs 5,62,545.30 crore. The mcap of Reliance Industries dipped Rs 2,368.16 crore to Rs 17,13,130.75 crore. Reliance Industries remained the most valued domestic firm, followed by TCS, HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, Bharti Airtel, Infosys, State Bank of India, ITC, Hindustan Unilever and LIC.

Patanjali Ayurved's FY24 revenue up 23 per cent to ₹9,335.3 crore

PTI ■ NEW DELHI



Baba Ramdev-led Patanjali Ayurved's total income has risen by 23.15 per cent to Rs 9,335.32 crore in 2023-24, helped by other income which includes OFS of Patanjali Foods (earlier known as Ruchi Soya) and income from other group entities, according to RoC filing by the company. In FY24 Patanjali Ayurved's other income was at Rs 2,875.29 crore against Rs 46.18 crore in the year-ago period, according to financial data accessed through business intelligence platform Tofler. Its revenue from operations, which is mainly income from net sales, was down 14.25 per cent to Rs 6,460.03 crore for the financial year ended on March 31, 2024. Revenue was

impacted as Patanjali Ayurved transferred its food business to Patanjali Foods on July 1, 2022, which includes biscuits, ghee, cereals, and nutraceuticals. It reported a five-fold jump in its total profit to Rs 2,901.10 crore in FY24. Patanjali Ayurved reported a total profit of Rs 578.44 crore on a revenue of Rs 7,533.88 crore for the financial year that ended on March 31, 2023. The total income of Patanjali's Ayurved, a non-listed entity, which includes other income as well as at Rs 7,580.06 crore

in FY23. Patanjali Ayurved's advertising promotional expenses were also up 9.28 per cent to Rs 422.33 crore in FY24. Earlier this year in July, the Haridwar-based organisation Group announced the transfer of its entire home and personal care business from Patanjali Ayurved to another entity Patanjali Food for a consideration of Rs 1,100 crore. In July 2023 promoters of Patanjali Foods had launched a two-day OFS (offer for sales) to pare its total stake in the company by around 7 per cent to meet the minimum public shareholding requirement. This was oversubscribed more than two times. Patanjali Foods, a leading edible oil maker was acquired by Patanjali Group through an insolvency resolution process and Patanjali Ayurved is one of the promoters of it. It posted a total revenue of Rs 31,961.62 crore in FY'24 as against Rs 31,821.45 crore in the preceding year. Patanjali Ayurved mainly operates in the ayurvedic product & FMCG business comprising primarily hair care, skin care, dental care, home care, personal care, dairy products & bulk trading of food products etc. The group has manufacturing facilities across the country and has other contract manufacturing facilities at Dehradun & Manesar. Its sales are primarily in India through independent distributors, marketing federations exclusive stores etc.



Air India Express increases flight operations from NE destinations

PTI ■ GUWAHATI

Low-cost airline Air India Express has announced an increase in flight operations from three major destinations in the northeast - Guwahati, Agartala and Imphal - as part of its winter schedule. This is part of the airlines' expansion of winter services across the country, it said in a statement here. Air India Express has increased its operations to 106 weekly flights from 63 last winter, from Guwahati. It provides direct connectivity to eight domestic destinations of Agartala, Bengaluru, Chennai, Delhi, Hyderabad, Imphal, Jaipur and Kolkata. The airline also provides one-stop connectivity to 18 domestic destinations and six international destinations from Guwahati. In Imphal, the airline hiked

its weekly flights to 34 this season, an addition of 20 over last winter, the statement said. Since adding Agartala as a station in September 2024, the airline has increased its flights from 14 to 21 weekly, and connects two destinations - Guwahati and Kolkata - directly. It also offers one-stop connectivity from Agartala to 11 domestic destinations. "The expansion not only facilitates easier travel for those wishing to explore North East, but also strengthens Guwahati's role as a vital link with the rest of the country," Chief Commercial Officer (CCO) Ankur Garg said. "With our fleet now exceeding 90 aircraft and rapidly growing, we are well-positioned to support the evolving needs of emerging Indian cities," he added.

India's 26 major listed realty firms sell ₹35,000 crore worth properties in Q2

PTI ■ NEW DELHI



India's 26 major listed real estate firms have sold properties worth nearly Rs 35,000 crore during the September quarter with Godrej Properties reporting highest sales bookings. According to the data compiled from regulatory filings, the 26 major listed realty firms have reported a combined sales bookings of Rs 34,985 crore in the second quarter of the current fiscal year. Bulk of pre-sales (sales bookings) came from residential segment. In terms of sales bookings, Godrej Properties emerged as the largest listed player during July-September quarter with pre-sales of Rs 5,198 crore. Mumbai-based Macrotech Developers Ltd, which sells properties under the Lodha brand, reported sales bookings of Rs 4,290 crore during the quarter under review. Delhi-NCR-based Max Estates sold properties worth Rs 4,100 crore, while Bengaluru-based Prestige Estates Projects Ltd clocked sales bookings of Rs 4,022.6 crore during the quarter. Delhi-NCR based Signature Global achieved sales bookings of Rs 2,780 crore in the September quarter, driven by strong demand for its housing projects at

Gurugram. DLF Ltd, the country's largest realty firm in terms of market capitalisation, sales bookings declined sharply during the July-September period to Rs 692 crore as it did not launch any new housing project. Among other major listed players, Bengaluru-based Brigade Enterprises Ltd reported a sales bookings of Rs 1,821 crore during July-September period of this fiscal year, while Mumbai-based Oberoi Realty did pre-sales of Rs 1,442.46 crore. Mumbai-based Aditya Birla Real Estate sold properties worth Rs 1,412 crore. Bengaluru-based Puravankara Ltd and Sobha Ltd clocked sales bookings of Rs 1,331 crore and Rs 1,178.5 crore, respectively. Delhi-based TARC Ltd also performed well and achieved pre-sales of Rs 1,012 crore during the September quarter. There were many players that

reported sales between Rs 500 crore and Rs 1,000 crore during the second quarter of this fiscal year. Pune-based Kolte-Patil Developers Ltd sold properties worth Rs 770 crore, while Mumbai-based Keystone Realtors (Rustomjee brand) achieved pre-sales of Rs 700 crore. Delhi-based Ashiana Housing Ltd reported sales bookings of Rs 673 crore during the September quarter while Bengaluru-based Shriram Properties clocked pre-sales of Rs 568 crore. Mumbai-based firms Raymond Ltd and Sunteck Realty Ltd sold properties worth Rs 562 crore and Rs 524 crore, respectively. Among listed firms that booked less than Rs 500 crore, Ahmedabad-based Arvind Smartspaces sold properties worth Rs 464 crore during the July-September period. Mumbai-based Mahindra

Lifespace Developers Ltd achieved a sales bookings of Rs 397 crore. Mumbai-based realtors Aribhan Superstructures Ltd, Ajmera Realty & Infrastructure Ltd and Arkade Developers Ltd reported sales bookings of Rs 270.8 crore, Rs 254 crore and Rs 215 crore, respectively. Suraj Estate Developers sold properties worth Rs 107 crore, while Lucknow-based Eldeco Housing & Industries Ltd clocked pre-sales of Rs 102.9 crore. Mumbai-based Equinox India Developments Ltd (earlier Indiabulls Real Estate Ltd) achieved pre-sales of mere Rs 98 crore during the second quarter of this fiscal year. Sales bookings of many listed entities have declined in the second quarter of 2024-25 because of inauspicious Shraadh period, monsoon rain and also lack of regulatory approvals to launch their projects. For example, DLF Ltd's pre-sales plunged to Rs 692 crore in the September quarter from Rs 6,404 crore in the first quarter of this fiscal. Sales bookings data of many listed players was not available on the stock exchanges. Post-Covid pandemic, the residential real estate segment has revived strongly because of pent-up demand growing desire to have homeownership.

National Consumer Helpline to roll out AI-based features, partners with 1,000 firms



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

National Consumer Helpline (NCH) is set to introduce artificial intelligence-based features including speech recognition and multilingual chatbots as part of a major upgrade to its consumer grievance system. The helpline has also announced partnerships with over 1,000 companies to expedite complaint resolution. The new AI capabilities, dubbed NCH 2.0, will allow consumers to file complaints through voice input in their local languages, marking a significant technological transformation of the consumer protection platform that currently operates in 17 languages. The helpline has seen dramatic growth in usage, with monthly calls surging to 141,817 in January 2024 from 14,795 in January 2015. Monthly complaint registrations have tripled to 112,468 in 2024 from 37,062 in 2017. "These technological upgrades are aimed at making the

grievance filing process more seamless, efficient, and inclusive," the Department of Consumer Affairs said in a statement. The partnership programme, known as the Convergence Programme, has expanded to include major companies across sectors such as e-commerce, travel, education, and banking. The number of participating companies has grown nearly fourfold from 263 in 2017 to 1,009 currently. The department has identified several major companies with high grievance numbers, including Delhivery Ltd and Domino's Pizza, and plans to meet with them next week to discuss bringing them into the partnership programme. Consumers can access the helpline through multiple channels including a toll-free number (1915), WhatsApp, SMS, email, and a dedicated mobile app. Unresolved complaints can be escalated to the Consumer Commission under the Consumer Protection Act, 2019.



HEALTHY WINTER RECIPES

Winter is the perfect season to cozy up with nourishing, homemade meals that not only warm you up but also keep you energised. From vibrant power bowls to indulgent yet healthy treats, these recipes are packed with nutrients and flavour. Here are some curated for you!



AVOCADO POWER BOWL

Recipe by Chef at World Avocado Organisation

A creamy and nutrient-packed dish to kickstart your day with a burst of energy. **SERVINGS:** 2

INGREDIENTS: 1 small ripe avocado, 100g fresh or frozen mango, 1 handful of spinach, 1 small ripe banana, 2 tbsp ground almonds, 125ml milk of your choice (or coconut water). **OPTIONAL:** 1 tsp honey (to taste). **TOPPINGS:** Sliced kiwi, Flaked almonds, Berries, Pomegranate seeds, Fresh mint leaves. **EQUIPMENT:** Blender

METHOD: Add avocado, mango, spinach, banana, ground almonds, and milk to a blender. Blend until smooth. Add honey if desired. Adjust the consistency by adding more milk or water. Divide into two bowls and top with sliced fruits, nuts, and fresh mint leaves. Store leftovers in the fridge or freeze with a squeeze of lemon or lime juice to preserve the color. **PRO TIP:** Prepare in larger batches and freeze portions for quick meals during busy mornings!



PRUNES AND VEGETABLE SOUP

Recipe by Chef at Chilean Prunes

A comforting and fragrant blend of fruits, vegetables, and spices that's both unique and hearty. **INGREDIENTS FOR SYRUP:** 1L water, 120g sugar, 1 red apple peel, 1 lemon and 1 orange (sliced), 1 star anise, 1 clove, 1 vanilla piece, 5cm cinnamon stick, 1 dried prune, 1 dried fig, 1 dried apricot, 10 mint leaves. **INGREDIENTS FOR COOKED VEGETABLES AND FRUITS:** 100g each of chopped carrots, celery, fennel, apples, pears, pineapple, and violet aubergines; 100g each of fresh fruits: orange, banana, kiwi, cherries, apricots, peach, raisins, blueberries, currants, strawberries. **GARNISH:** Mint, celery leaves, tarragon, rosemary flowers, and flaked white chocolate. **PREPARATION:** Prepare syrup by boiling water with sugar, spices, and peels. Let it infuse for 10 minutes, then strain. Cook vegetables and fruits separately in the syrup until just tender. Combine all ingredients in a bowl, garnish with red fruits and herbs, and serve warm or chilled. **CHEF'S NOTE:** The syrup doubles as a flavourful base for other desserts!

DOUBLE CHOCOLATE PECAN COOKIES

Recipe by Chef at American Pecans

A guilt-free indulgence that combines rich chocolate with the crunch of pecans. **INGREDIENTS:** 1/3 cup chopped American pecans, 125g all-purpose flour, 50g caster sugar, 50g brown sugar, 75g soft salted butter, 1/2 tsp vanilla essence, 2 tbsp cold milk, 1/4 tsp baking soda (mixed with flour), 75g dark and milk chocolate (chopped). **METHOD:** Cream butter, sugars, and vanilla until fluffy. Add milk and mix well. Gradually fold in flour, then stir in pecans and chocolate chunks. Shape into cookies and bake at 180°C for 15 minutes. Sprinkle with flaky sea salt (optional) and cool before serving. **TIP:** These cookies pair perfectly with a warm cup of spiced tea or coffee!



WALNUT DALIYA HALWA (WITH JAGGERY)

Recipe by Chef at Chile Walnut

A traditional dessert with a nutty twist, perfect for winter nights. **INGREDIENTS:** 2-3 tbsp ghee, 1/4 cup Chilean walnuts (roasted), 1 cup broken wheat (daliya), 1/2 cup jaggery, 1 1/2 cups water, 1 tsp cardamom powder. **METHOD:** Heat ghee in a pan and roast walnuts until fragrant. Set aside. In the same pan, sauté daliya until golden. Add water and pressure cook for 2 whistles. Transfer cooked daliya to a pan, add jaggery, and stir until dissolved. Mix in cardamom powder and roasted walnuts. Simmer until the mixture thickens. Serve hot, garnished with additional walnuts. **QUICK TIP:** Adjust sweetness by altering the jaggery quantity as per your preference. Enjoy a Winter of Warmth and Wellness! These recipes are designed to provide comfort while nourishing your body. Whether you're looking for a quick breakfast, a unique soup, or a sweet treat, these dishes are sure to brighten up your winter days.



PREVENTIVE POWER FOODS

By KAVITA DEVGAN

If you're aiming to keep your blood sugar levels steady and support heart health, these super foods offer powerful preventive benefits. Incorporate them into your diet consistently for best results.

FOR BLOOD SUGAR CONTROL AND HEART HEALTH



FENUGREEK SEEDS (METHI SEEDS)

WHEN TO HAVE IT: Early morning. Fenugreek seeds help slow sugar absorption and stimulate insulin production. **FOR TRYING:** Add them to dals or soak 1/2 tsp of seeds in water overnight and have in the morning.



BARLEY

WHEN TO HAVE IT: Lunch. Rich in soluble fiber, barley slows down digestion, preventing blood glucose spikes. **FOR TRYING:** Boil soaked barley and have it for breakfast with walnuts, honey, and a sprinkle of cinnamon.

PUMPKIN SEEDS

WHEN TO HAVE IT: As a mid-meal snack. Pumpkin seeds, high in lignans and magnesium, improve insulin efficiency. **FOR TRYING:** Make seedy bites by roasting 50g musk melon seeds in ghee, adding 50g jaggery, and shaping into small balls.

APPLES

WHEN TO HAVE IT: As a mid-meal snack. Apples are rich in quercetin, which enhances insulin secretion and helps reduce insulin resistance. **FOR TRYING:** For a quick snack, chop an apple, add 30g pecans and 1 tsp pumpkin seeds, and sprinkle with cheese.

— The author is a Nutritionist and has used resources from American Pecan



ADDRESSING POLLUTION-RELATED ILLNESSES

By Dr P.N. ARORA

The rising air pollution is taking a toll on people's health, influencing everything from respiratory function to cardiovascular well-being. In urban areas like Delhi-NCR, where rapid urbanisation and population growth have surged, air pollution has emerged as a crucial public health concern. Following Diwali celebrations, Delhi is facing a significant pollution crisis, with a recent survey indicating that 69% of families in the capital and the National Capital Region (NCR) report health issues stemming from deteriorating air quality. The Air Quality Index (AQI) surged to a staggering 999 on the night of Diwali, marking one of the highest levels recorded in the area. These conditions are particularly pronounced during winters when a combination of vehicular emissions, construction dust, and seasonal crop stubble burning create a toxic haze that blankets the city. This persistent state of poor air quality poses an urgent challenge, demanding immediate attention to mitigate its far-reaching health implications. A recent survey by LocalCircles highlighted the significant health impact of air pollution on residents in Delhi-NCR. The findings revealed that 31% of families reported members suffering from breathing difficulties or asthma, while another 31% experienced frequent headaches. Additionally, 23% of respondents noted symptoms of anxiety or difficulty concentrating, and 15% reported trouble sleeping due to poor air quality. On a somewhat optimistic note, 31% of



families stated that no one in their household had encountered pollution-related health issues, underscoring the varied effects of air pollution across different households. Prolonged exposure to poor air quality has far-reaching consequences for public health, affecting multiple body systems and leading to a surge in pollution-related illnesses. One of the most immediate and visible impacts of poor air quality is on respiratory health. Long-term exposure can lead to reduced lung function and increased respiratory infection risk. Pollution caused due to poor air quality also leads to inflammation and oxidative stress, increasing the risk of heart attacks, hypertension, and other cardiovascular diseases. Besides, certain groups are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of air pollution. Children, with their developing lungs and immune systems, are at a heightened risk, as prolonged

exposure can lead to stunted lung growth and a higher likelihood of respiratory diseases later in life. Older adults also face significant risks, with their age-related susceptibility making them more prone to respiratory and cardiovascular issues. Additionally, individuals with pre-existing asthma and heart diseases experience more severe health impacts, often requiring increased medical attention during high-pollution periods. The government has also implemented several initiatives to combat poor air quality with a multifaceted approach. One of the initiatives is the imposition of GRAP, which outlines a series of measures to be enacted based on the severity of the air quality index. This plan includes a range of actions, such as controlling construction activities, enforcing vehicle restrictions, and promoting the use of public transport during periods of high pollution. Therefore, improving air quality requires collective action from both communities and individuals. Community initiatives, such as tree plantation drives, are vital in enhancing air quality. Trees act as natural air filters, absorbing pollutants and releasing oxygen. Engaging in proper waste disposal practices, including segregating waste and avoiding open burning of garbage, helps prevent the release of harmful toxins into the air. Thus, collaboration and commitment across all sectors are vital for achieving lasting improvements in air quality and safeguarding public health. — The author is the Managing Director of Yashoda Super Speciality Hospitals

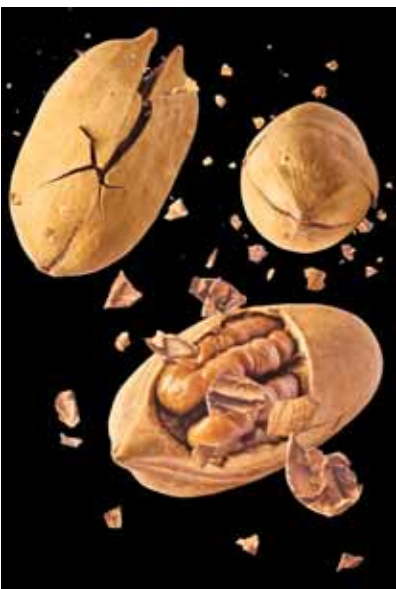


CINNAMON

WHEN TO HAVE IT: Early morning. Cinnamon contains hydroxychalcone, which helps manage fasting glucose levels. Add a pinch daily to your tea or sprinkle it over your breakfast cereal. **FOR TRYING:** Brew cinnamon tea by steeping 1/4 tsp of powdered cinnamon in a cup of boiling water for 10-20 minutes. Drink it early in the day to maximise its benefits.

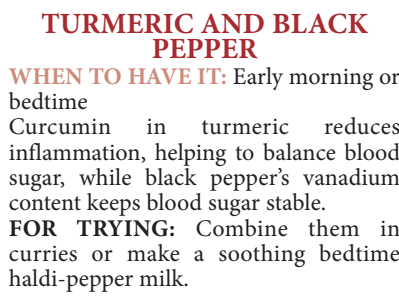
INDIAN GOOSEBERRY (AMLA)

WHEN TO HAVE IT: Anytime during the day. Amla, high in vitamin C, stimulates insulin-secreting cells in the pancreas. **FOR TRYING:** Enjoy an amla daily or try this chutney: Boil 2 deseeded amlas, grind with half a cucumber and 2 green chillies, and mix with 1 tsp mustard oil and salt.



AMERICAN PECANS

WHEN TO HAVE IT: As a mid-meal snack. Pecans are low in carbs, high in fiber, and rich in protein, helping regulate blood sugar and lower LDL cholesterol, which supports heart health. **FOR TRYING:** Make a healthy dip: Blend 1/2 cup pecans, 1 cup hung curd, mint, coriander, garlic, salt, and pepper.



TURMERIC AND BLACK PEPPER

WHEN TO HAVE IT: Early morning or bedtime. Curcumin in turmeric reduces inflammation, helping to balance blood sugar, while black pepper's vanadium content keeps blood sugar stable. **FOR TRYING:** Combine them in curries or make a soothing bedtime haldi-pepper milk.



BITTER GOURD

WHEN TO HAVE IT: Anytime during the day. Bitter gourd (karela) has a compound similar to insulin that helps reduce blood sugar levels. **FOR TRYING:** Include bitter gourd in your meals twice a week or drink karela juice 3-4 times weekly.



Rishabh Pant becomes most expensive IPL buy at ₹27 crore

PTI ■ JEDDAH (SAUDI ARABIA)

Rishabh Pant became the most expensive player in the history of IPL as Lucknow Super Giants splurged a humongous Rs 27 crore to buy the flamboyant India keeper-batter in the tournament's mega auction here on Sunday. The amount LSG spent for Pant ensured Shreyas Iyer's record of being the tournament's costliest player lasted barely a few minutes after Punjab Kings broke the bank to buy the India batter for Rs 26.75 crore. Moments before Pant emerged as the most expensive player, Iyer surpassed the record held by Australian pacer Mitchell Starc, who was bought by Kolkata Knight Riders for Rs 24.75 crore in the last auction. Pant went to LSG after his former franchise Delhi Capitals did not use the Right to Match card to buy him back. Starc got a much lower price this time and was sold to Delhi Capitals for Rs 11.75 crore,



while England's Jos Buttler went to Gujarat Titans for Rs 15.75 crore. Among others, left-arm seamer Arshdeep Singh's consistency earned him a massive bid of Rs 18 crore, also from Punjab Kings via the Right to Match card, while South African speedster Kagiso Rabada was bought for Rs 10.75 crore by Gujarat Titans. Iyer, the former Kolkata Knight Riders captain, started with a base price of Rs two crore. Delhi Capitals had the bid at Rs 26 crore for him but PBKS raised the amount to get the player. Chennai Super Kings started with the first bid for Arshdeep, whose base price was also Rs two crore. Eventually, after an intense bidding war, the seamer was bought back by Punjab, who exercised the right to match option to complete the deal, having released him earlier. This is the second time an IPL auction is being held outside the country after last year's event in Dubai.



I played with fearless mindset, took brave decisions: Yashasvi

PTI ■ PERTH

Yashasvi Jaiswal termed his "fearless mindset" and ability to take "brave decisions" as the catalysts behind his exceptional hundred against Australia in the ongoing first Test, here on Sunday. Jaiswal made a 161 in only his second innings on Australian soil and added 201 runs for the opening wicket with KL Rahul (77) to lay the foundation of India's imposing 533-run target. "It was a very special moment for me. I always wanted to tour Australia and do well and this knock is very important for me," Jaiswal said in the post-day press meet. "I always wanted to play with a fearless mindset. I always believe in myself and take brave decisions. So, it was an amazing experience to play against such quality bowlers in their country, and it's special to score a hundred against the world's best," he added. Jaiswal, who was dismissed for an eight-ball duck in the first innings, said the focus was on negating the new ball spell by Australian quicks. "The wicket was seaming a bit more in the first innings. In the second innings we were discussing how to play the new ball better — which balls to leave and which to play. So, it was important for the team that I play the new ball better," Jaiswal said he had set small targets for himself in the second essay. "I never thought I would get this big a hundred, as my goals were small, taking it session by session. Then I had a good partnership with (KL) Rahul bhai. He was guiding me during the partnership, so that was helpful." So, what was the conversation between him and Rahul during the alliance? "We have been playing together for a while, we all know each other well and talk between ourselves in the dressing room. "Whenever I felt nervous in the middle, Rahul bhai was telling me to remain focused and calm. It was helpful because you are going to get some good balls in these kinds of pitches," he said. The left-hander said the team was prepared to tackle the bounce at Perth. "We knew that the ball would bounce here. We were prepared for the bounce. We had a nice camp here ahead of this Test. We were practicing in similar conditions with the same kind of mindset as how we can score runs in these conditions. It's all about practicing hard and learning what shots to play here," he explained. Jaiswal brought up his fourth Test hundred with a remarkable ramped six off pacer Josh Hazlewood. The 22-year-old said he was mentally prepared for it. "To be honest, I knew he was going to bowl a bouncer because the field was set like that and I was ready for the bounce, and I was ready to play that shot. Happy that I pulled it off and carried on for some more time," he said. "Virat paaji is incredible" Virat Kohli brought up his 30th Test hundred a while after Jaiswal reached the landmark, and the youngster said it was a privilege to watch and play alongside the star batter. "I have seen Virat paaji making runs at Perth (in 2018) on TV. Now, I have seen it live too. He has been doing it for a long, long time. So, he is just incredible.

Justin Greaves scores first century as West Indies lead Bangladesh by 410 runs



AP ■ NORTH SOUND

Justin Greaves scored a patient maiden century in only his third test before West Indies declared at 450-9 on the second day of the first test against Bangladesh. Greaves, who finished 115 not out, had a previous highest score in tests of 33 and only one century in 43 first-class matches before compiling a composed hundred from 181 balls, batting at No. 6. He completed the first century of West Indies' innings after Mikyle Louis was out for 97 and Alick Athanaze for 90 on the first day. Bangladesh was 40-2 at stumps, trailing by 410 runs when bad light stopped play with seven overs left in the day. Shahadat Hossain was 10 not out and Mominul Haque on 7. The tourists lost Mahmudul Hasan Joy (5) and Zakir Hasan (15) in 20 overs before the close.

brought up his century. Otherwise, he took 52 runs from singles, 38 from twos and nine from threes in an excellent example of running between wickets. His batting form had been hinted at by the fact he scored four centuries in domestic one-day matches in West Indies. "It was a fantastic effort," Roach said. "He's one who wants to learn ... I've had big hopes for him from the time he started." Roach also restrained his attacking instinct, hitting two boundaries and scoring at a strike rate of 32.6 as he played a vital support role to Greaves. When Roach came to the crease, Greaves was only 18 after resuming Saturday at 11 not out. The pair came together in the 87th over after Alzarri Joseph (4) was brilliantly caught in the gully by Zakir Hasan from the bowling of Hasan Mahmud. They built their partnership diligently, ticking off milestones. Greaves reached his half century from 88 balls and by lunch the West Indies had recovered to 336-7, scoring at a steady three runs per over. Brief rain breaks failed to disturb the batters' concentration. Roach finally was out in the 134th over when the total was 401-8. Mahmud delivered a ball outside off stump which beat Roach's shot as it curled back to hit middle. Greaves was 98 when Roach was out but kept his concentration and avoided the fate of Louis and Athanaze who both fell just short of maiden centuries. He reached his personal milestone four balls later, raising his bat to acknowledge the applause of the crowd. "Me and Justin are from the same country and he understands my batting ability so he just backed me in the situation and obviously it paid off," Roach said. "We're good mates, we have very good conversations at the cricket and outside cricket so that's what helped us in the middle." The 30-year-old Greaves, playing his first test for 10 months, hit only four fours, including the boundary that

Hyderabad FC host Odisha FC

PTI ■ HYDERABAD

Hyderabad FC will play hosts to Odisha FC in the Indian Super League here on Monday as both sides seek to climb up the ladder to strengthen their positions in their respective first matches after the international break. After a tough campaign last year, Hyderabad FC have shown increasingly encouraging signs by securing two victories and a draw in their seven matches thus far. Their seven points place them at the 11th spot and with the sixth-placed Punjab FC merely five points ahead (12), the home team can begin thinking towards bridging the gap with the higher-ranked opponents. Odisha FC, positioned ninth in the table, have nine points from eight games. Head coach Sergio Lobera has been amongst the most competitive tacticians in the competition regardless of the team that he has been at the helm of, and the Spaniard would hence want better



results with consistent performances from the Juggernauts. This away fixture gives them the opportunity to begin maximising points in the matches coming their way. Hyderabad FC believe in making early inroads into the opposition's defence, ensuring that they set the tone for the flow of the proceedings. This has resulted in them netting 43 per cent of their goals in the opening 15 minutes of the matches in ISL 2024-25, with three out of their seven strikes so far coming in this phase of the game.

Will they push Odisha FC back with an early breakthrough here too? Interestingly though, Hyderabad FC play their best away from home. That explains their concerning home form, since they have not registered a victory in the previous 15 matches in their backyard. In fact, their last win at the stadium came back in February 2023 against Mohun Bagan Super Giant by a 1-0 margin. Having worked on their impediments this year, can they brush aside this concern to go on an upward surge? Odisha FC have recorded eight sequences of 10+ open play passes per game in ISL 2024-25. This is the highest such average by any team and it clearly suggests that Hyderabad will have to strategise through which they can secure points despite not having possession for a large chunk of the game, since Odisha FC prefer keeping the ball.

Virat Kohli doesn't have anything to prove, his contribution is unparalleled: Kapil Dev

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Legendary Kapil Dev said Virat Kohli doesn't have anything to prove and his contribution is "unparalleled" after the Indian batting star made his 30th Test hundred against Australia in the ongoing first Test at Perth on Sunday. Kohli (100 not out) joined young gun Yashasvi Jaiswal (161) in rewriting record books as they put Australia to swords on the third day of the Test with their respective tons powering India to a huge 533-run lead. Kohli also surpassed batting legend Sachin Tendulkar (6) for hitting most centuries by an Indian batter with his seventh ton Down Under. "People who have to criticise will criticise. If a big player takes a lot of time to bounce back, (the) media's job is (to do) that," Kapil told PTI at the Vishwa Samudra Golden Eagle Golf Championship. "One has to see his ability and talent. He's a big, big player. He doesn't have to prove anybody, prove me or prove

(it to the) media." "What he's done for cricket is amazing. We should all say, well done (to him). (Even) if he doesn't get too many runs, it's (also) okay. But what he's given to cricket is unparalleled," Kapil added. Kapil said he was happy to see the mix of young and senior Indian batters making their mark. "I don't like to compare. I just want to see our youngsters coming out and playing well. The new records are (always) going to be made. (But) it's important (for) the youngsters to come out and take the responsibility, represent the country and perform better," he said. "Don't compare any player with anybody. It's unfair, (they play in) different conditions, different eras. Today's youth are far more intelligent. They are much more ruthless and they have much more confidence," he said, referring to Jaiswal. The 1983 World Cup-winning captain said Indian cricket "is in the right place" as new players like Harshit Rana and

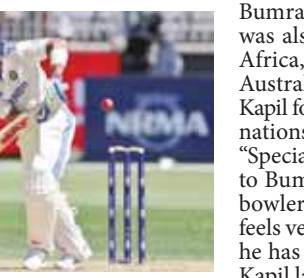
Verstappen captures 4th F1 championship

AP ■ LAS VEGAS

Max Verstappen cruised to a fourth consecutive Formula 1 championship by finishing fifth in the Las Vegas Grand Prix. Verstappen needed only to finish ahead of Lando Norris and McLaren to give Red Bull a fourth straight driver championship. The Dutchman started fifth but was already up to second by the 10th lap around the street circuit that includes the famed Las Vegas Strip on Saturday night. Norris, who had to score at least three points more than

Verstappen to extend the championship fight, finished sixth. Verstappen needed only to finish higher than Norris to win the title, which he did with two races remaining on the season. "Max Verstappen you are a four-time world champion," team principal Christian Horner said on the radio. "That is a phenomenal, phenomenal achievement. You can be incredibly proud of yourself as we are." Verstappen, only the sixth driver in F1 history to win at least four titles, sounded unusually emotional on the radio.

Bumrah's 11th five-for in Test cricket was also his seventh in SENA (South Africa, England, New Zealand and Australia), which put him at par with Kapil for most five-wicket hauls in these nations. "Special congratulations must be given to Bumrah because it is very rare that bowlers are chosen as captains and it feels very good to see him lead the way he has done," Kapil told the media. Kapil lauded Bumrah for bringing fast bowling back into the discussions in the country. "I need not say anything — his records show (how good he is). He is the top bowler in the world, what else do we need?" he said. "I hadn't thought before that a fast bowler would be discussed so much in India but that is happening today and I feel happy and proud about that," he added. Kapil said India's performance was contrary to the exceptions given the team was recently trounced 0-3 by New Zealand at home.



Nitish Reddy have also made a good beginning. "I just want to say it's great to see the youngsters coming out and expressing themselves. It's good, Indian cricket is (in) the right place," he said. Kapil also praised Jasprit Bumrah for leading India's fight from the front in the Perth Test and said the visitors have so far performed beyond expectations. Bumrah, the stand-in captain for the Perth Test, led the team's charge towards a vital 46-run lead in the first innings returning 5 for 30, as Australia were bowled out for a mere 104.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
Office of the Superintending Engineer
Bhanjanagar (R&B) Division, Bhanjanagar.
(Phone/Fac: (06821) 241133 / E-mail: sembngr@vsnl.com)

INVITATIONS FOR BIDS (IFB)
E-Procurement Bid Identification No. S.E.-BNJ-R&B-20 / 2024-25.

1. Name of work	:- Electrical Work
2. No. of works	:- 4 Nos. Electrical Work
3. No. of Covers	:- Single Cover
4. Estimated cost	:- Rs. 21.49 to 34.54 lakhs
5. Period of Completion	:- Three Calendar Month.
6. Date of line of availability of bid document in the portal	:- From 12.00 Noon of dated 27.11.2024 to 5.00 PM. of dated 06.12.2024.
7. Last date/time for receipt of bids in the portal	:- Up to 5.00 PM. of dated 06.12.2024.
8. Date of opening of bid documents	:- At 11.00 A.M. of Juled 07.12.2024.
9. Class of Contractor	:- "HT" Elect. Contractor
10. Name and address of officer-inviting Bid	:- Superintending Engineer, Bhanjanagar (R&B) Division, Bhanjanagar

Further details can be seen from e-Procurement portal www.tendersodisha.gov.in. The Addendum/Condigendum if any will be hosted in the website only.
OIPR-34015/11/0010/2425

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER
RURAL WORKS DIVISION, BHANJANAGAR

"e" Procurement Notice for Road Works
Identification No. Online Tender / 08 / RWDBNJ/2024-2025

No. 4645 **Date: 05.11.2024**

1. Name of the work	:- Building Works
2. Total Number of works	:- 14 (Fourteen) Nos.
3. Estimated cost	:- 7.00 Lakhs to 37.38 Lakhs
4. Class of Contractor	:- 'D', 'C' & 'B' Class of Contractor
5. Period of Completion	:- 03 (Three) to 06 (Six) Calendar Months
6. Other details	:-

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No	Availability of tender online for bidding
Superintending Engineer, R.W.Division, Bhanjanagar	Online Tender/08/RWDBNJ/2024-2025	From 29.11.2024 at 10.00 A.M. To 09.12.2024 upto 3.00 P.M.

Further details can be seen from the website: - www.tendersodisha.gov.in
OIPR-26174/11/0010/2425

Additional Chief Engineer
R.W.Division, Bhanjanagar

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER
MINOR IRRIGATION DIVISION, JHARSUGUDA.

"e" Procurement Notice
Bid Identification No. SE MID JSD 04/2024-25
emijharsuguda@gmail.com
No. 2443/ MID // date.21.11.2024

The Superintending Engineer, M.I. Division, Jharsuguda on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites percentage rate bids through e-procurement to be received in online mode only for the works as detailed in the table below.

1. Name of the works:	Civil Construction work
2. Total No. of works:	07 (Seven)Nos.
3. Estimated Cost:	Rs. 8.47 Lakh to Rs.25.18 Lakh
4. Class of Contractor:	As mentioned against work
5. Period of completion:	As mentioned against work
6. Date & time of Availability of Bid Document in the Portal:	27.11.2024 to 06.12.2024 during office hours
7. Last date/Time for receipt of Bid in the Portal:	06.12.2024 during office hours
8. Date/Time of Opening of Technical Bid:	07.12.2024 at 10.00 AM. at Office of the S.E., MI Divn. Jharsuguda.
9. Name & Address of the Officer Inviting the Bid:	Superintending Engineer M.I. Division, Jharsuguda
10. Mode of Payment of Bid Cost & Bid Security:	Online OIPR-3229/11/0004/2425

Superintending Engineer
M.I.Division, Jharsuguda.