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Delhi Police fails yet another rape victim in the Capital

SAUMYA SHUKLA ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

CASES THAT HAUNT

SWAROOP NAGAR RAPE CASE (2023)

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

HAUZ KHAS VILLAGE RAPE CASE (2017)

In February 2017, a woman was raped by an acquaintance she had met at a party in the upscale Hauz Khas Village in Delhi. After the party, the accused offered her a ride home but instead took her to a secluded location and assaulted her. The accused was later arrested.

CHHAWLA GANG RAPE AND MURDER (2012)

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

NIRBHAYA GANG RAPE (2012)

A 23-year-old physiotherapy intern was brutally raped and assaulted on a moving bus by six men, including a juvenile, on the night of December 16, 2012, which shook the entire nation. The attack

left her with severe internal injuries, and she succumbed to her injuries on December 29, 2012. All the accused were arrested and charged with sexual assault and murder.

KHOONI DARWAZA RAPE CASE (2002)

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

eventually left bleeding on the road.

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

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

National counter-terrorism policy soon: HM

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

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



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

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

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

Get ready to pay double penalty for stubble burning

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

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



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

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



Ruckus continues in J and K Assembly

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

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



Terrorists kill two Village Defence men

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Two members of the Village Defence Group (VDG) were reportedly shot dead by terrorists in the upper reaches of Kishtwar on Thursday. The bodies of two VDG members have not been recovered by the police till late evening. According to police, the slain VDG members have been identified as Nazir Ahmed S/O Mohd Khalil and Kuldeep Kumar S/O Amar Chand both residents of Ohli Kuntwara. Unconfirmed reports claimed both the VDG members were kidnapped during the day and their dead bodies, with marks of bullet injuries, were found in the evening. A lesser-known terrorist outfit Kashmir Tigers has also claimed responsibility for the attack while releasing images in social media.

Summer breaks rechristened 'partial court working days': SC

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has rechristened its traditional summer vacations as "partial court working days". The change assumes significance in the wake of the recent criticism from various quarters that the top court enjoys long breaks. The development was a part of an amendment in Supreme Court Rules, 2013, which have now become Supreme Court (Second Amendment) Rules, 2024, notified on November 5. "The length of the partial court working days and the number of holidays for the court and the offices of the court shall be such as may be fixed by the Chief Justice and notified in the official gazette so as not to exceed ninety-five days excluding Sundays," read the notification. It further stated that the Chief Justice may appoint one or more judges to hear during partial court working days or holidays, all admissions, after notice, regular matters of urgent nature or such other matters "as the Chief Justice may



direct". The existing system had the Supreme Court taking the summer and winter breaks each year. The SC, however, was not fully closed during these periods. During summers, "vacation benches" were set up by the Chief Justice to hear important and urgent matters. Notably, the term "vacation judge" has now been replaced with "judge" in the newly-amended rules. According to the recently-published 2025 Supreme Court calendar, partial court

working days would start from May 26, 2025 and end on July 14, 2025. Chief Justice DY Chandrachud had asserted that judges remained dedicated to their work even during vacations. "Judges are not galling or goofing off during vacations. They are deeply committed to their work, even on weekends, often attending functions, visiting high courts, or engaging in legal-aid work," he had remarked at an event. In May, a top court bench of Justices B R Gavai and Sandeep Mehta said people criticising the apex court over long vacations did not understand that judges didn't have holidays even on weekends. The SC's view was prompted by Solicitor General Tushar Mehta sharing a similar sentiment. "All those who criticise that Supreme Court and high courts are on long vacations, they don't know how judges work," Mehta said when the court was hearing a lawsuit filed by the West Bengal government accusing the CBI of going ahead with its probe without securing the prerequisite state nod.

CHHATH PUJA BLESSINGS



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

PTI

Who ate my samosa? CID probe ordered

PTI ■ SHIMLA

Samosas and cakes meant for Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu were served to his security staff instead, the goof-up snowballing into controversy and necessitating a Criminal Investigation Department (CID) probe that termed it an "anti-government" act. Those responsible acted according to their own agenda, a highly placed official in the CID said in his note on the October 21 incident when the chief minister was visiting the CID headquarters. The brouhaha started when three boxes of the refreshments were brought from Hotel Radisson Blu in Lakkar Bazaar to be served to the chief

minister who had gone to the CID headquarters to attend a function. However, the eatables were served to the CM security staff, according to the enquiry report conducted by a deputy SP rank officer. The report stated that an officer of IG rank had asked a sub-inspector (SI) of police to get some eatables from the hotel for the CM's visit. The SI in turn directed an assistant SI (ASI) and a head constable to bring the refreshments. The ASI and head constable exchanged several hands in the process. Interestingly, a highly placed official in the CID department wrote in his noting that all persons named in the enquiry report have acted in anti-CID and anti-government manner due to which the items could not be served to the VVIPs. They acted according to their own agenda, the note added.

chief minister, they said they were not included in the menu. The enquiry report said only the said SI, who deputed the ASI and the head constable with the task of getting the snacks from the hotel, was aware of the fact that the three boxes were for Sukhu. The lady inspector, to whom the food items were handed over, did not ask any senior officer and sent the refreshments to the mechanical transport (MT) section which deals with refreshments. The three boxes of refreshments exchanged several hands in the process. Interestingly, a highly placed official in the CID department wrote in his noting that all persons named in the enquiry report have acted in anti-CID and anti-government manner due to which the items could not be served to the VVIPs. They acted according to their own agenda, the note added.

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■ NEW DELHI

In an impressive feat of efficiency during the ensuing festive season of Chhath, Indian Railways this week recorded a historic milestone by transporting more than three crore passengers on one single day - November 4, 2024 - which adds up to more than the population of Australia and New Zealand. The passengers were transported from various regions of the country like Delhi, Mumbai, Surat, Bengaluru, Chennai and maximum number were bound to destinations in Bihar and Jharkhand where the Chhath festival is celebrated with great fervor and spirit. "Three crore passengers boarded railways which is more than the population of Australian and New Zealand combined. A total of 120.72 lakh (19.43 lakh reserved and 101.29 unreserved non-suburban) passengers were carried in November 2024. The 180 lakh suburban traffic tackled by Indian Railways is the



highest record-breaking day for Indian Railways or could be a world record which will be verified in due course," a Railway spokesperson told The Pioneer. Approximately 7.5 Crore passengers were carried by national transporter to Bihar, Eastern Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand during the festive period, Durga Puja, Diwali, Chhath,

beginning October 1 to November 5 through special trains. Railways had to put in service a record 7666 special passenger train services to clear the rush during this period. In the same period last year 4,429 trips were operated. "This is 73 per cent more than last year," the spokesperson added. To cater to the returning passengers,

the Railways has scheduled a substantial number of special trains, ensuring smooth travel for the thousands of people returning from festive destinations. From November 8 to November 11, 2024, the Indian Railways will run special trains to manage the Chhath Puja return rush. The official said anticipating a similar rush for return journeys since Friday onwards a meeting was held at the Railway Board to channelise the process for safe and sure return and onwards journeys for which two railway divisions in Bihar, Samastipur and Danapur, have been asked to spruce up the arrangements. "Enhanced crowd management by putting in additional staff, security personnel, and volunteers deployed at stations to manage the large crowds and maintain order to avoid any Mumbai type mishaps on the platform. Special control rooms have been set up to monitor train punctuality, track delays, and ensure seamless coordination between stations and divisions," added the railway official.

Classifieds

BEDKHALI NOTICE

I Sunder Manjhi S/O Booth Nath Manjhi R/O #25, Anand Colony, Ward No.7 Rajpura Tehsil Rajpura Distt Patiala Declare That My Daughter Sapna W/O Gaurav Kumar Is Out Of My Control. So I Disowned Her From All My Movable And Immovable Properties. Anybody Dealing With Her On Their Own Risk.

I Rajinder Kumar S/O Bikram Singh R/O Harike Tehsil Patti Distt Taran Tam Declares That My Son Rohit Kumar Is Out Of My Control. So I Disowned Him From All My Movable And Immovable Properties. Anybody Dealing With Him On Their Own Risk.

I, Rajesh Kumar S/O Puran Chand r/o Village Jhanjhari, Tehsil Nlkoheri, Distt. Karnal declare that my son Bhavesh Kumar & his wife Preeti Sharma are out of my control. I disown them from my movable and immovable properties. In future the person having dealings and relations with them will himself be responsible. There will be no responsibility for me or any member of my family.

We, Ramesh Rani W/O Sh. Kharati Lal and Kharati Lal S/O Sh. Nand Lal R/O H.No. 684/26, Gandhi Nagar, Rohtak declare that our son Mahesh Kumar and his wife Risha are out of my control. So we disown them from our all moveable/immovable properties. Any body dealing with them at own risk. We or our family are not responsible for any type of their any acts.

I, Balwinder Singh S/O Des Raj R/O 16/6 Saini Mohalla, Pehowa, Kurukshetra My Son Gagandeep is out of my control. I, disown them from all my moveable and immoveable properties. If Anybody deals with them at Their Own risk.

I Baldev Singh s/o Gurmukh Singh R/O H.No. 2668 Sector 28-C Chandigarh hereby Disown my Son Baljeet Singh ur Happy from my all m lovable/ immovable properties . He is out of my control. If anybody deal (criminal, financial etc.) with him will do so at own risk/ responsibility . I shall not be responsible for his any deeds .

We Banarasi Lal S/O Paji Ram and Kailash Rani W/O Banarasi Lal R/O H.No. 38 Chandarpuri Near DRM Office Machhonda tehsil Ambala Cantt distt. Ambala that my son Sandeep Gahlot, his wife Pooja and his daughter Ritika Gahlot are out of my control so we disown them from all our moveable immoveable properties. In future anybody dealing with them at their own risk, we and our family members will not be responsible.

I, Sat Pal s/o Charan Das R/O House No. 2497, Sector-71, S.A.S. Nagar (Mohali), declare my son Parvesh Kumar, is out of my control. So, I disown him from my all moveable/ immovable properties. Anybody deals with him, I will not responsible their any kind of act.

मैं, उमदेव पुत्र रिसाला निवासी गाँव इंलूकवाँ, जिला जींद, सूचित करता हूँ कि मेरा बेटा उमेश मौर मेरे कहे से बाहर है। इसलिए मैं उसे अपनी तमाम चत्त -असल संपत्ति से बेदखल करता हूँ। इसके द्वारा किए गए किसी भी प्रकार के लेनदेन/करज आदि की मेरी कोई जिम्मेवारी नहीं होगी।

PUBLIC NOTICE

I Ram Dulari Spouse of No.5736176P, Rank Hav Balbir Singh Rawat R/O #449B Saini Vihar Phase-1 Baltana Zirakpur, SAS Nagar Mohali (Punjab) i have changed my name from Ram Dulari to Ramdulri Devi. And Date of Birth 27-05-1943 to 10-11-1944. for all future document.

I No. 14813670X, Ex-sep preet kamal singh R/O - Bhalliana, PO - Bhalliana, Teh - dodra, Distt - shri muktsar sahib Declares that Name of my father is wrongly given in my army records a Manjit singh but his correct name is Manjeet Singh, My father adhar card No. 564339714050

I, Daler Singh S/O Tarochan Singh R/O Village Waryah, Po-Hayat Nagar, Pin Code-143521. Tehsil-Distt- Gurdaspur, Punjab, India. Declare That My Given Name As Daler And My Surname As Singh.

I, Abhishek Bhandar S/O Satish Kumar R/O W.No. 15 GTB Nagar Khanna (Ludhiana) declare that in my 10th class & 12th Class certificates my father name Satish Kumar Bhandar and my mother name Suman Bhandar wrongly mentioned. But my father correct name is Satish Kumar and my mother correct name is Suman Bala. So amended my father name and my mother name in my 10th Class & 12th Class Certificates.

I, Kamaljit Kaur W/O Raghubir Singh VPO Jalota Tehsil Dasuya Distt Hoshiarpur Pin 144205 declare that in my Passport No V7013007 My Name Kamaljeet Kaur, my husband name Raghubir Singh and also my Date of Birth 20-10-1973 has written wrongly. Actually correct spelling of my name as Kamaljit Kaur, my husband name Raghubir Singh and My Date of Birth is 04-04-1975 as per documents record.

I, Kamaljit Kaur W/O Surinder Pal R/O 413 Arya Nagar Mohalla Kartarpur (Jalandhar) declare that in my daughter school record her name wrongly entered Riya Pal. But my daughter correct name is Riya Pal. So amended my daughter name from Riya Paul to Riya Pal in her school record.

CHANGE OF NAME

मैं, सोनिका सिंघल पत्नी पुरूशोत्तम सिंघल निवासी 47, गोबिंदपुरी रोड, प्रोफेसर कॉलोनी, यमुनानगर अपना नाम सोनिका से बदलकर सोनिका सिंघल करती हूँ। भविष्य में मुझे सोनिका सिंघल के नाम से जाना जाए।

I, Shakuntla, Adhar Card No 332985233568, W/O Ashok Saini, R/O H. No. 86, Punjab Furniture House, Out Side Chandana Gate Kaithal, Tehsil And District Kaitthal, Informs That I Have Changed My Name From Shakuntla To Shakuntia Devi. Call Me Shakuntia Devi In Future.

I, Harpreet Kaur Kairon W/O Gurinder Singh R/O H No. 40 Sector 21-A, Chandigarh have changed my name from Harpreet Kaur Kairon to Harpreet Kaur.

I, Army no. 1480703-M Rank NK(TS) Dalip Singh S/O Samunder Singh R/O Bhattu Kalan, Distt. Fatehabad declares that in my army record my wife's name wrongly mentioned as Umedh Kawar and Son's name wrongly mentioned as Satyander Singh while my wife's actual name is Umed Kanwar and my son's actual name is Satinder Singh as per their Adhar card and other documents. Now, I want to make it correct in my army service record.

I, Manju Bala W/O Sunil Chadha R/O 28-A, Near Ruchira Paper, New Professor Colony, Jagadhri, Distt Yamuna Nagar, after marriage I have changed my name from Manju Bala to Manju Chadha.

I hitherto known as Ravinder Singh Ruhil Son of Dilbag Singh Ruhil residing at Polangi (53), Rohtak Haryana-124401 have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Ravinder Singh.

I, Surinder Singh S/O Pritam Singh R/O H No. 5 New Colony, Khuda Lahora, Chandigarh have changed the name of my minor daughter from Parachit to Prachi.

I, Surjit Lal s/o Late Shri Haveli Ram, resident of House No 4006, Sector 46D, Chandigarh have changed my name from Surjit Lal to Surjit Lal Arora for future references.

I, Naresh Rana s/o Shree Ram Pal r/o #642 Jundia Gate Karnal have changed my name from Naresh Kumar to Naresh Rana. In future I should be known as Naresh Rana.

I Amanjeet Saini S/O Raj Kumar R/O Vill. Kalyana, Teh. Shahabad (M.) Distt. Kurukshetra, I declare that I have changed my name Amanjeet to Amanjeet Saini. All Concerned please note.

I, Ompati, Mother of NO. 16019032A HV ER Sajan Kumar R/O Dighal, Hajaraj, Haryana, Pin-124107 have changed my name from Ompati to Ompati Devi & my actual D.O.B is 01/01/1945 vide Affidavit dated 08/11/2024 before notary public, Sonipat, Haryana

I, Jyoti D/O Sunil Mor R/O 126, Sector-15, Sonipat, Haryana has changed my name to Jyoti Mor for all purposes.

I, Mohita D/O Jitender Luthra R/O 12/612, Laxmi Nagar, Sikka Colony, Sonipat, Haryana has changed my name to Mohita Luthra for all purposes.

I, Jitender Kumar S/O Dharam Chand R/O 12/612, Laxmi Nagar, Sikka Colony, Sonipat, Haryana has changed my name to Jitender Luthra for all purposes.

I, Pooja Luthra W/O Jitender Luthra R/O 12/612, Laxmi Nagar, Sikka Colony, Sonipat, Haryana has changed my name to Pooja Rani for all purposes.

I, Vipin Kumar Jindal S/O Om Parkash Jindal R/O H.No. 628 Sector 5, Kurukshetra District Kurukshetra, Haryana 136118 have changed my name from Vipin Kumar Jindal to Vipin Jindal. Note all concerns.

I, Anita (old Name) Aadhar No. 2218 1970 9371 W/O Sh. Balbir R/O Vill. & P.O. Alewa Distt. Jind (Haryana) Pin 126111 have changed My Name from Anita to Neeta Vide Affidavit 07.11.2024 before Tehsildar Alewa

I Savitri Devi W/O Kumar Dev r/o village Nalva PO and Tehsil Kasauli District Solan HP have changed my name from Sumitra Devi Katoch to Savitri Devi. And correct date of birth is 20-6-1961 . All Concerns please note.

I, Surender Kumar S/O Mam Raj, R/O Village Kanalsi, Mehar Majra, Tehsil Jagadhri, District Yamuna Nagar - 135101, Haryana, INDIA, have changed my name from Surender Kumar to Surender.

I, Sanjay Kumar S/O Sh. Bishambhar Dass R/O # 926, Ward no. 30, Old Hamida, Yamunanagar have changed my name from Sanjay Kumar to Sanjay Sharma.

I, Anjana W/O Sh. Harpal Singh R/O Village Jairampur Khalsa, P.O. Khadri, Distt Yamunanagar have changed my name from Anjana Tanwar to Anjana.

I, Jasvinder Kaur W/O Gurbachan Singh R/O V.P.O. Balachaur, Distt Yamunanagar have changed my name from Jasvinder Kaur to Jasvinder Kaur.

I, Shiv Shanker S/o Lachhi Ram R/O Anaz Mandi, Loharu, Bhiwani, Haryana have changed my name from Shiv Shankar Singhal to Shiv Shanker. In future I shall be known as Shiv Shanker.

I, Sanjay Kumar Pandita S/O. Shamboo Nath Pandita S/O. House No. 702, Street No. 13, Block D, Phase 3B1, Distt. SAS Nagar Mohali, Punjab. I Have Changed My Name From Sanjay Kumar Pandita To Sanjay Pandita.

I, Sangeeta Pandita W/O. Sanjay Pandita R/O. House No. 702, Street No. 13, Block D, Phase 3B1, Distt. SAS Nagar Mohali, Punjab. I Have Changed My Name From Sangeeta Pandita To Sangeeta Raina.

I, Naveen Kumar S/O Ram Gopal Naggar R/O H No. 3524 Maloya Colony, Chandigarh have changed my name from Naveen Kumar to Naveen Kumar Naggar.

I, Lakhveer Singh S/O Karnail Singh R/O VPO Ghoranab, Tehsil Lehra, Sangrur, Punjab-148031 have changed my name from Lakhveer Singh to Singh is my surname and Lakhveer is my given name.

I, Varinder Singh S/o Jaspal Singh R/O 2548/14, Ward No. 27, Tehsilpura, Amritsar, Punjab have changed my name from Varinder Singh to Singh is my surname and Varinder is my given name.

I, Veena Sharma W/o Mangat Ram Khajuria, Resident of VPO.Bamial, Tehsil & District Pathankot-145027, Declare That I Have Changed My Name From Veena Sharma to Veena Sharma, Please Note.

I, Meena Mahajan W/O Pardeep Mahajan Resident of H.No.14/114 Street-B Friends Colony Pathankot, Declare That I Have Changed My Name From Meena Mahajan to Megha Mahajan. Please Note.

I, Ritesh S/O Sh. Raj Kumar Jain, R/O H.No. 403, Scheme No. 6, Gandhi Nagar, Jind, have changed my name from Ritesh to Ritesh Jain.

I, Rupali Jaswal, D/O Ramesh Paul, W/O Ankit Bamola, # 264 Kishangarh, Chandigarh Have Changed My Name To Rupali Bamola.

I Km Suman Panwar D/O Pavendra Singh Panwar R/O H.No 329a Near Shiv Mandir Jaggi Garden Ambala , Haryana 134007 Have Changed My Name From Km Suman Panwar To Suman Panwar.

I Sonu W/O Sanjay Kumar R/O Village Ghasitpur, Post Office Kuldeep Nagar, Ambala Cantt Have Changed My Name From Sonia Alias Sonu To Sonu . All Concerned Please Note.

I, Sonia W/O Vikas Kumar R/O Village Khaira Po Bargat Tehsil Babain Distt Kurukshetra 136156 Have Changed My Minor Daughter's Name From Jasmeen Chahal To Jasmine.

I, Anita W/O Rajiv Kumar R/O 59 Shivpuri Colony Ambala Haryana, Have Changed My Name From Anita To Anita Rani.

I Manjeet Kaur W/O Kulveer Singh R/O Vpo Matheri Shekhar Tehsil & Distt Ambala Have Changed My Name From Manjit Kaur To Manjeet Kaur.

I Amit Mittal S/O Mam Chand Mittal R/O H.No 304/6 , Naya Bans, Ambala City Have Changed My Name From Amit Kumar Mittal To Amit Mittal.

I, Tanuj Behl S/O Sh. Pushpinder R/O H.No. 31, Green Park, Yamuna Nagar, Tehsil Jagadhri, Distt. Yamuna Nagar I Have Changed My Name From Tanuj Behl To Tanuj. All Concerned Note.

I, Nitika W/O Puneet Singal R/O H. No. 1031, Near New Grain Market, Sector 14 P, Hisar Haryana declare that I have changed my name from Nitika to Nitika Singal for future purpose.

I, Krishan Kumar S/O Sh. Ram Ditta R/O House No. 1527, Sector 14, Hisar (Haryana) declare that I have changed my name from Krishan Kakkar to Krishan Kumar for all future purpose.

I Neeraj Singhal s/o Sushil Singhal, resident of House No. DC 100/10, Near Ish Hospital, Padav Mohalla, Tehsil Samalkha, District Panipat. Already my name is Neeraj Kumar, now I have changed my name Neeraj Kumar to Neeraj Singhal. All concerned note please.

I Satish Mittal S/O Ramkishan R/O House No. 236-A, Latif Garden, Panipat have changed my name from Satish Mittal to Satish Kumar for all future purposes.

I, Ranjeet Trilok Singh, S/O Trilok Singh, R/O Singh Niwas, Ward No. 6, near Johar village, Tpara Tehsil, Kalka, District Panchkula, Haryana, I have changed my minor daughter's name from Tashi Ranjeet Kaur Singh to Tashi Ranjeet Singh.

I, hitherto known as Jasvir Mukhtiar Kaur W/O Surinder Singh R/O VPO Talwandi Araya District Hoshiarpur, Punjab, Presently residing Via Fustangno 1 Castelleone, 26012, CR Italy, have changed my name as Jasvir Kaur and now my given name is Jasvir and my surname is Kaur. It is certified that I have complied with other legal requirements in this connection.

I Sonu Kumar s/o Prem Kumar r/o # H. No. 47, Adarsh Nagar, Ward No 3, Sri Muktsar Sahib, Have declared that I, known by Sonu @ Rock both names are mine All concern note it

I Ritu Passey W/O Vikas Vadehra R/O D-54 Gulmohar City Extension Dera Bassi Tehsil Dera Bassi Distt Mohali Have Changed My Name From Ritu Passey To Ritu Vadehra

I Service No. 3408515L, Hav, Baljeet Singh S/O Mazar Singh R/O Vill. Tarmala, Distt Sri Muktsar Sahib Punjab, Declare That In My Service Record My Father Name Singh Which Is Incorrect. His Actual And Correct Name Is Mazar Singh.

I Santosh Sharma w/o Lt Sub Clk S.K. Sharma r/o Jind (Hr.) declare that names of my daughter in my husband's service document were Pushpa, Jyoti and Pooja. In personal documents her names are Pushpa Sharma, Jyoti Sharma and Pooja Sharma. In future she be known as Pushpa Sharma, Jyoti Sharma, Pooja Sharma as per her personal records.

I Jaswinder Singh son of Nasib Singh resident of village Kabulpur sub tehsil Ghanour tehsil Rajpura district Patiala have changed my name from Jaswinder to Jaswinder Singh.

I, Mayank Jain S/O Surinder Jain R/O 942, Urban Estate, Sector-9, Karnal, Haryana-132001 have changed name of my minor daughter Mishka Jain aged 03 years to Vaanya Jain.

I, Javed Ahmed S/O M Y Sheikh R/O Flat No 129, C-6 Block, Gulmohar City Extension, Haibatpur Road, Po-Mubarakpur, Derabassi, Sas Nagar (Mohali), Punjab-140201 have changed name of my minor daughter Naira Ahmed aged 07 years to Naira.

I, Ayaan Khan S/O Swaran Singh, R/O # 361, Sante Majra Colony, Sec-4, Kharrar, Sas Nagar(Mohali), Punjab-140301, do hereby solemnly affirm & declare that I have embraced Sikhism & renounced Islam w.e.f. 06/11/2024. I have changed my name to Amritpal Singh.

I Pinki Rani W/o Sh. Anuj Kumar R/O H.No. 58, Ward No. 1, Hussaini Road, Tehsil Naraingarh, Distt. Ambala do hereby solemnly affirm & declare that I have changed my name from Pinki Choudhary to Pinki Rani . All Concerned note.

I Anuj Kumar S/O Sh. Surinder Singh R/O H.No. 58, Ward No. 1, Hussaini Road, Tehsil Naraingarh, Distt. Ambala do hereby solemnly affirm & declare that I have changed my name from Anuj Choudhary to Anuj Kumar. All Concerned note.

I, Neelam W/o Sunil Kumar r/o #476-C, Brahmanand Colony, Nissing, Sub Tehsil Nissing, Distt. Karnal (Haryana) have changed my name from Neelam to Neelam Gupta.

I, Sohan Singh s/o Gurnam Singh r/o VPO Lukhi (414), Tehsil Thanesar, Distt. Kurukshetra (Haryana) have changed my name from Sohan Singh to Sohan.

I, Rajni Devi w/o Suneet Bansal R/O House No.140, Sector 13, Urban Estate, Kurukshetra have changed my name from Rajni Devi to Rajni Bansal.

I Vibhu S/o Sh. Mukesh Kumar R/O 79, Matl Dass Nagar, Mahesh Nagar, Ambala Cantt.have changed my father name from Rajesh kumar To Mukesh Kumar Vig.

I Rohtash S/o Inder Pal R/O Vill Ganeshpur, Distt. Ambala. have changed my Name from Rohtash Kumar To Rohtash.

I Sahib Singh Sraw S/O Late Jaspal Singh R/O Vill Dadupur Head Distt. Yamuna Nagar.have changed my Name Sahib Singh Sraw to Sahib Singh

I, Ashwini Mahesh Surve Wife of Service No. 15723224L, Rank - Hav, Name - Surve Mehesh Sudam, Unit - 2 CSR(A) Permanent residing at Village & PO - Bhongawali, Tehsil - Bhor, Distt - Pune, State - Maharashtra, Pin - 412205. I have changed my name from Surve Ashwini Mahesh to Ashwini Mahesh Surve.

I Visakha Devi Alias Vishakha Devi W/o Johni Rana R/O Village Munak sub tehsil Ballah Distt Karnal have Changed my name from Visakha Devi to Vishakha Devi. Visakha Devi and Vishakha Devi is the name of same Person.

I Gursewak S/o sh. Sahab Singh R/O Village Darar Distt. Karnal have changed my name from Gursewk to Gursewak. All concerned please Note.

I, Smt. Punam Rani W/O JC-163547M Lote Nb Sub Jnag Chand R/O VPO Bajwara Kalan (Moh. Pipli) Tehsil & Distt. Hoshiarpur have changed my name from Punam Rani to Poonam Rani.

I Anil Kumar S/O Rajkumar Father Of Robin R/O Gali No 3, Near Govt. Tubewell, Bhattu Road, Shiv Nagar Tehsil Fatehabad, District Fatehabad, Haryana 125050 Have Changed My Minor Son Name From Robin To Robin Banwer.

I, Kamla Devi w/o Sh. Vishwajeet R/O #2311-B, Sector 42-C, Chandigarh, have changed my name from Kamla Devi to Kamal Jeet. Concerned Note.

I, Amandeep Singh S/O Dalbir Singh R/O Jalandhar VPO - Naurangpur, Tehsil & Distt Pathankot (Punjab) have changed the name of my daughter from Niraj Jaggi to Neeraj Jaggi vide Affidavit No. IN-PB77343087094523W Dated 07-11-2024 before Executive Magistrate Pathankot (Punjab).

I, Lakhbir Singh Gill S/O Ajit Singh R/O Village Sabhra District Tarn Taran have changed my name from Lakhbir Singh Gill to Lakhbir Singh

I, Ritu Kapoor W/O Ravinder Kumar R/O H.No.E-4/1009, Japani Mill, Chheharta Near Bharat Hospital, Amritsar, Punjab-143105, have changed my name from Ritu Kapoor to Ritu

I, Naresh Kumar and Naresh Saini S/O Sukhdyal R/O 32-B, Gali No.8, Jagdambay Colony, Majitha Road, Amritsar declare that above both name's are mine

I Neha Kaur D/O Ranjit Singh R/O Near Pani Vali Tenki Goidwala Sahib, Tarn Taran Have Changed My Name From Neha Kaur To Given Name Neha Surname Kaur

I, Jagwinder Singh Lehal S/O Balbir Singh R/O Saido Lehal Po Tarsika District Amritsar Have Changed My Name From Jagwinder Singh Lehal To Jagwinder Singh

I, Jagir Kaur Lehal W/O Balbir Singh R/O Saido Lehal Po Tarsika District Amritsar Have Changed My Name From Jagir Kaur Lehal To Jagir Kaur

I, Suman Sharma W/O Raman Kumar Sharma, VPO Behdala, Tehsil & Distt (Una, HP) have changed my name to Suman Lata.

I Raman Kumar S/o Brahma Nand Sharma, VPO Behdala, Tehsil & Distt (Una, HP) have changed my name to Raman Kumar Sharma.

I, Jai Pal Aggarwal S/O Sain Dass Aggarwal R/O.H.No.12-B, Rose Avenue, Maqbool Road, Amritsar Punjab have Changed my name from Jai Pal to Jai Pal Aggarwal

I, Kamaldeep Singh S/O Pargat Singh R/O Village Mukandpur, P/O Bhiolwal Via Chawinda Devi, Amritsar have Changed my name from Kamaldeep Singh To Kamaldeep is my given name and Singh is my surname

I, Navjeet Singh S/o Balbir Singh R/O Missarpura Batala, Punjab have changed my name from Navjeet Singh to Navjeet is my Given Name and Singh is my Surname

I Army No. 15161411W Rank HAV Name Santosh Kumar Shukla, Resident of 245 K, 170 Hardi Bhag 1 Shahpur, Rewa, Madhya Pradesh 486331, have changed my Daughter Name from kushi to khushi. Vide Affidavit No. IN- PB76900686240042W, Dated 06-11-2024, Before Distt. Court, Amritsar.

I, Jantri (Aadhaar Card No. 3900-8073-5910) W/O Raj Singh R/O H.No. 398/21, Hafed Road, Sukhpura, Rohtak, Haryana - 124001 declare that Jantri and Jaywanti both name are the same woman and both the names belong to the same woman.

I Naina D/o Sh Rakesh Goyal resident of 3794/3 Samania Gate Patiala declare that my name is Naina instead of Sunaina. Hence my name should be pronounced as Naina for all purposes.

I, Althathi Rajyalaxmi is wife of Army No. 2616942K, Sep, Althathi Rajesham of Unit RP Sec, HQ Company 25 RR BN (Madras) Pin-934525 co 56 APO, resident of 7-79/1, Devunigudam, Dasturabad, Adilabad, (Andhra Pradesh) 504202 have changed my name from Rajyalaxmi to Althathi Rajyalaxmi & Date of Birth from 04-08-1994 to 04-08-1995 Vide Affidavit Notary Ferozepur.

I, Sarbati W/O Late Sh Hawa Singh and mother of No. 10495129F, Ex Naik Krishan Kumar R/O VPO - Pughthala , Teh. - Ganaur, District - Sonipat (Haryana) have changed my name from Sarashwati to Sarbati vide affidavit dated 07 Nov 2024 before Sonipat (Haryana) Court. In future I should be known as only Sarbati.

I, Promila W/O No. JC-325828H, Ex Sub Maj Sanjay Kumar R/O VPO - Pughthala , Teh. - Ganaur, District - Sonipat (Haryana) have changed my name from Promila Saroha to Promila vide affidavit dated 07 Nov 2024 before Sonipat (Haryana) Court. In future I should be known as only Promila.

I, Sarabjit Singh S/O Jasant Singh R/O Agwan Road Kalanaur, Gurdaspur, Punjab 143512. Have Changed My Name From Sarabjit Singh To Sarbjit Singh.

I, No 19000473K Rank Ex Sep (MACP Hav) Name Davinder Singh son of Dalbir Singh - Ghuman of Vill - Nangal, PO - Ghuman, Tehsil - Batala, Distt -Gurdaspur (PB) PIN - 143514 have changed the name of my daughter's name from Tammanna to Gurnakshideep Kaur and her Date of Birth from 27 July 2011 to 19 July 2011 vide Affidavit dated 25 Oct 2024 e-Stamp paper No IN-PB74039023307077W before Executive Magistrate, Shri Hargobindpur (PB).

I, JC-448869N Ex Nb Sub Joginder Singh resident of VPO - Naurangpur, Tehsil & Distt Pathankot (Punjab) have changed the name of my daughter from Niraj Jaggi to Neeraj Jaggi vide Affidavit No. IN-PB77343087094523W Dated 07-11-2024 before Executive Magistrate Pathankot (Punjab).

I, Smt Jatinder Kaur wife of JC-501964K Ex Nb Sub (Clk SD) Late Joginder Singh resident of Near Gurudwara Sahib, Deriwral Road, Village Dheera Jattan, Post Office Pathankot, Tehsil & Distt Pathankot (Punjab) have changed the name of my daughter from Kushpreet Kaur to Khushpreet Kaur vide Affidavit No. IN-PB77273744189567W Dated 07-11-2024 before Executive Magistrate Pathankot (Punjab).

I, Leena Vishnu Pawar Spouse of No. 15775725A Rank Hav (DVRMT) Name Gamre Raj Maruti presently residing at Vikas Nagar, Sankalp Nagar, Mayur Apt., Flat no 8, A-Wing, Dehu Road, Pune - 412101 State - Maharashtra, have changed my name from Leena Vishnu Pawar to Reena Raj Gamare vide Affidavit No CT 195396 dated 21 Oct 2024 before Executive Magistrate Pune City (Maharashtra).

I JC- 572378L Subedar Harpal Singh Unit 9 Mahar C/O APO, I hereby declare that my daughter's Name written on my military record as Prawindra kaur, which is incorrect, whereas in the civil documents of my daughter her name is written as Prawinder Kaur, Kindly consider my daughter name Prawinder Kaur in my military record as per her civil documents. Affidavit No.54AA873171 Date 07/11/2024

I JC- 572378L Subedar Harpal Singh Unit 9 Mahar C/O APO, I hereby declare that my father's date of birth in my military record written as 01 December 1947 which is wrong, whereas in civil documents of my father his date of birth is written as 01 January 1943, kindly consider date of birth of my father in my military record as 01 January 1943 as per his civil documents. Affidavit No. 54AA873172 Date 07/11/2024

I, Nirmal Singh S/o charan Singh, village Kila Farm Asmanpur Tehsil Pehowa, Kurukshetra by Mistake My Wife' Name in my Passport is kuwinder Kaur but as per all My documents the Correct Name is Kulwinder Kaur.

I, Ram Lal and Satpal Singh S/O Ajit SinghR/O 625/13, Kesav Vihar, Pehowa, Kurukshetra are known by both names. And both these names are mine

I, Indra Rani W/O Ramesh Chand r/o 134/8, Near Civil Hospital Pehowa,Distt. Kurukshetra, Haryana, India, my some documents mentioned name is Indra Rani and some documents mentioned as Indu Sangar.Both name are mine. I

CM announces free of cost cataract surgeries at all Govt & empaneled private hospitals in Hry

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini on Thursday announced that cataract surgeries will now be provided free of cost to patients at all 26 government hospitals and 15 empaneled private hospitals across the state. "This move is aimed at making essential eye care more accessible to the people of Haryana," he added.



Besides, Saini announced the launch of tele-consultation services by specialists at PGIMS Rohtak, modeled on the successful telemedicine services at PGIMER Chandigarh. This service will allow residents of the state to access consultations from medical specialists at no cost, benefiting a large number of people, particularly in rural and remote areas. The number of calls being received daily in Haryana has seen a significant increase, with the average rising to 1,700 calls per day. In a bid to further improve healthcare access and services, the state government has set an ambitious target to increase the number of calls to 7,000 per day. Currently, the total number of Outpatient Department (OPD) visits across Haryana stands at approximately 1 lakh per day.

Presiding over a review meeting of the Health, Ayush, and Medical Education and Research Departments, the Chief Minister emphasized that his primary goal is to make quality healthcare facilities accessible to all citizens across the state. Health, Medical Education and Research and Ayush Minister Arti Singh Rao was also present in the meeting. While taking stern action on a complaint against Agarwal Nursing Home, Kurukshetra for allegedly charging patients cash for treatment under the Ayushman Bharat Yojana, the Chief Minister ordered the suspension of the hospital's empanelment with the scheme, effective immediately. He made it clear that any hospital found charging cash payments or requiring advance payment signatures from patients or their family members will have its empanelment immediately revoked. Saini also suggested setting up a revolving fund for the timely payment to hospitals for treatment provided under Ayushman Bharat Yojana. Around 45 lakh eligible families are getting health coverage of Rs five lakh per family per year. There are a total 1227 empaneled hospitals in the State including 502 public and 725 private hospitals.

While reviewing the functioning of civil hospitals across the State, the Chief Minister underscored the importance of patient satisfaction as the primary goal of the healthcare system. He directed that all doctors and paramedical staff be strictly available during their designated duty hours to ensure that patients do not face undue delays in receiving care. The Chief Minister further emphasized the need for improved communication and patient support. In this regard, he directed that a toll-free helpline number be established in all civil hospitals to provide timely assistance and address any concerns or grievances from patients.

Health Centres (PHC) and 25 Community Health Centres (CHCs) would be established in a phased manner. In the meeting, the Chief Minister also accorded his approval to provide 5 percent of the total out of the 20 per cent corpus fund as bonus to the government doctors who are treating the Ayushman Bharat Patients in public hospitals under the surgical package. Saini also directed that a provision of 10 percent of the budget be allocated to provide hi-tech facilities in the Obstetrics and Gynecology wards of all hospitals for newborn babies and pregnant women. He emphasized that his aim is to ensure that people no longer need to seek treatment at private hospitals.

The Chief Minister directed that a Digital Inventory Portal linked with CM Dashboard be established on priority basis. The portal will provide real-time information on the availability of medical equipment such as ICUs, ultrasound machines, X-ray machines, CT scanners, and more. The Digital Inventory Portal will also help track the daily utilization of these services, ensuring better resource management and service delivery. He also directed to ensure the round-the-clock availability of cardiologists and other related staff in Cathlabs established in government hospitals. The Chief Minister stated that a comprehensive plan should be put in place to ensure that every district hospital is equipped with an ICU. Currently, six hospitals are

the State, the Chief Minister underscored the importance of patient satisfaction as the primary goal of the healthcare system. He directed that all doctors and paramedical staff be strictly available during their designated duty hours to ensure that patients do not face undue delays in receiving care. The Chief Minister further emphasized the need for improved communication and patient support. In this regard, he directed that a toll-free helpline number be established in all civil hospitals to provide timely assistance and address any concerns or grievances from patients.

Posts of 777 Medical Officer would be filled up soon
The Chief Minister said that to further strengthen the health care system and meet the demand of doctors, 777 Medical Officers would be recruited in the State before December 31. Besides, to further strengthen rural health infrastructure, 825 health facilities including 718 Sub Health Centres (SHC), 82 Primary

Political Row Heats Up as Bittu, Amrita Warring Clash Over Gender-Biased Remarks

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

The political arena in Punjab on Wednesday turned into a battlefield of words as a public spat between Union Minister Ravneth Singh Bittu and Punjab Congress president Amrinder Singh Raja Warring grew more personal. The controversy ignited over a viral video of Warring's remarks about his wife and Congress candidate Amrita Warring denounced as "gender-biased". Amrita Warring, determined to set the record straight, came to her husband's defense, accusing Bittu of misinterpreting the remarks and using them for political mileage. Her response has added fuel to an already intense Gidderbaha by-election campaign.

The controversy erupted after Raja Warring, during a public meeting in Gidderbaha, joked about his wife Amrita's

campaign commitments, saying, "My wife hits the ground for her campaign daily from 6 am to 11 pm. She's away from me... someone please arrange a cook for me." The remark, intended humorously, was widely criticized as "gender-biased," with opponents arguing it reinforced outdated stereotypes about women's roles. Bittu condemned the comment, accusing Warring of belittling women's contributions to society.

Amrita Warring, in a video statement, passionately defended her husband, addressing Bittu directly. She called the Union Minister's criticism misplaced and argued that Warring's comments were made in a lighthearted tone to emphasize her dedication to her campaign.

"From 6 am to 11 pm, I am present with the people. That's all my husband wanted to convey, and he did so humorously," she explained. She further

admonished Bittu, stating, "This does not go down well with his profile as a Union Minister. I would like to ask Prime Minister and Home Minister why they chose a person with such a mentality to hold such a position."

The video, which has drawn considerable attention, featured Amrita accusing Bittu of having a narrow view on women's involvement in politics. She added, "What I am in politics today is because of Raja ji."

He supported me in all my ventures, including my NGO, Aasra Foundation. When I got the Congress ticket, Bittu accused Raja (Warring) of promoting nepotism. Does he have a problem with women contesting elections? His repeated remarks make me question his commitment to gender equality."

The initial remark that sparked the controversy was Warring's comment during a

Gidderbaha rally, where he jokingly mentioned his wife's busy schedule, suggesting that he may soon need someone to cook for him. Bittu condemned the comment, asserting it "dis-respects not only his wife but also women at large." He called it a "gender-biased" statement that reinforces outdated stereotypes and undermines the daily efforts of countless women who balance their careers and families.

The dispute has quickly escalated, with Bittu questioning Warring's ability to respect women's roles in society. "Such remarks are harmful as they diminish the hard work, independence, and resilience of women who contribute both personally and professionally," he stated.

He emphasized the importance of challenging such attitudes to uphold equality and ensure women do not face stigma or judgment in their pursuits.

Stage Set for Grand Oath-Taking Ceremony of Newly-Elected Sarpanches of Punjab

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

In a grand celebration of democratic values, Punjab's Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann will administer the oath of office to over 10,000 newly-elected sarpanches (village heads) on Friday at Cycle Valley in Dhanansoo village in Ludhiana. This large-scale event, expected to draw thousands of spectators, marked a significant moment for grassroots governance, affirming the importance of panchayats as pillars of democracy. Arvind Kejriwal, former Delhi Chief Minister and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) national convener, will be the chief guest, adding to the ceremony's prestige. Kejriwal's presence underscored AAP's commitment to promote transparent, people-centric governance across states where the party holds influence.

This historic event, organized by the Punjab Government, will see 10,031 newly-elected sarpanches from 19 of Punjab's 23 districts taking the oath of office, marking a symbolic affirmation of their responsibilities towards the development of their communities. The remaining four districts — Sri Muktsar Sahib, Hoshiarpur, Barnala, and Gurdaspur — will hold their oath ceremonies after by-elections in four Vidhan Sabha constituencies — Giddarbaha, Chabewal, Barnala, and Dera Baba Nanak. In these recent Panchayat elections, over 13,000 Sarpanches and 81,808 Panches were elected across the state, marking one of the most inclusive elections for village leadership in Punjab's history.

The Mann Government has already garnered significant attention by conducting these Panchayat elections without party symbols — a progressive step aimed at reducing local groupism and promoting unity. By removing party symbols from the election process, the government intended to prevent divisive politics in rural areas, hoping to foster a cooperative approach to village administration. The move aligned with the Chief Minister's call for citizens to rise above parochial differences, which resonated strongly as 3,037 panchayats, including the Ferozepur district with 336 unanimously selected panchayats, embraced the initiative. This approach aimed at strengthening Punjab's panchayati raj system, setting a strong foundation for future rural development.

Punjab's Panchayat elections have also highlighted the state's dedication to conduct free, fair, and transparent polls. This is the first time candidates contested without party affiliation, encouraging communities to focus on local issues and avoid external political influences. The state government's clear stance on encouraging unanimous selections in panchayats has seen tangible outcomes, with districts like Ferozepur, Gurdaspur, and Tarn Taran leading the way in uniting communities for collective growth. These achievements signify a shift towards harmonious local governance, where villages prioritize development over factionalism.

Speaking about the upcoming ceremony, Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann expressed confidence in the arrange-

ments made to accommodate the thousands of attendees expected at the venue. "Our aim is to make this event memorable while ensuring everyone can participate comfortably," he stated.

Authorities have implemented comprehensive traffic management plans and ample parking facilities to facilitate the large gathering. The Chief Minister emphasized that this event would set a precedent for how future democratic ceremonies should be conducted, seamlessly blending order and accessibility.

Additionally, Mann shared his pride in the event's reflection of Punjab's vibrant democracy. "Our newly elected leaders represent the hopes and aspirations of their communities. This is more than an oath-taking ceremony — it is a testament to the resilience of our villages," he said. Mann's administration has ensured that the event reflects a sense of unity and progress, aligning with their vision for rural revitalization.

Kejriwal's Political Engagements in Punjab

Following the oath-taking ceremony, Kejriwal is expected to actively campaign for AAP candidates in the ongoing by-elections in the Chabewal and Dera Baba Nanak constituencies on November 9. Party officials have reportedly finalized all arrangements for his Punjab tour, underscoring the strategic importance of these by-elections in expanding AAP's influence within the state. Kejriwal's agenda reflects his party's focus on fortifying its presence in Punjab, especially in regions of heightened electoral significance.

Punjab farmers decry Centre's decision to double fines for stubble burning

MONIKA MALIK ■ CHANDIGARH

In response to the Central Government's decision to double fines for stubble burning, farmer unions in Punjab on Wednesday expressed staunch opposition, questioning the fairness of penalties that hold them solely accountable for air pollution in the Delhi-NCR region.

The increase, driven by worsening air quality, has seen fines soar to Rs 30,000 for farmers owning over five acres of farmland, with smaller landholders facing a similarly steep rise. However, Punjab's farmers argued that they are being unduly penalized without adequate government support for crop residue management.

The Union Ministry of Environment's notification, issued after a Supreme Court mandate, raised the fines from Rs 2,500 to Rs 5,000 for those with less than two acres, and from Rs 5,000 to Rs 10,000 for land between two and five acres. Although the government aims to curb farm fires, which contribute to seasonal pollution, farmers asserted that lack of access to crop management equipment forces them to burn stubble as a last resort.

"Those farmers who possess crop residue management machinery do not need to burn stubble at all," said Bharti Kisan Union (Ekta Ugrahan) general secretary Sukhdev Singh Kokrikalan, adding, "But not all of us can afford this machinery, and the Government has failed to make it universally accessible." Punjab reported over 5,000

Farmers Argue...

- **Lack of machinery support:** Farmers argue they are being fined without having access to necessary CRM machinery
- **Financial burden:** Small farmers can't afford expensive machinery, making stubble burning their only option
- **Unfair targeting:** Farmers blamed for pollution, while industries and transport, which contribute more, are ignored
- **Insufficient machinery distribution:** Only 30% of the required machinery provided to farmers, leaving most without alternatives
- **Fertilizer shortages:** Shortage of fertilizers like DAP complicates farmers' ability to manage crop residue effectively
- **Ineffectiveness of fines:** Increasing fines won't solve problem; financial support and machinery needed
- **Need for Crop Diversification:** Farmers advocate for crop diversification and Govt support to reduce stubble burning
- **Time Constraints Between Crops:** The short window between paddy and wheat sowing forces farmers to burn stubble to clear fields quickly

farm fires from mid-September to early November, a marked decrease from the previous year's figures. Despite these efforts, farmer leaders contended that they are unfairly scapegoated for pollution, while other major polluters remain unchallenged. "Industries account for 51 percent of Delhi's air pollution, and transportation adds another 25 percent. Why target only us?" questioned Kisan Mazdoor Morcha leader Sarwan Singh Pandher.

He highlighted that the Central Government had provided only around 30 percent of the needed crop residue management machines, which include super seeders, straw choppers, and balers, leaving many farmers with no feasible option but to burn their

residue. Farmer unions argued that fines alone are not the answer and call for financial incentives for adopting stubble management practices. "Raising fines doesn't address the root problem," said Bharti Kisan Union (Kadian) chief Harmet Singh Kadian. "Small and marginalized farmers simply cannot afford crop management machinery. Without subsidies or proper funding, penalizing farmers is unjust," he said. Farmers also criticized the Government's handling of other sources of pollution, including industrial emissions, construction dust, and vehicular exhaust. They argued that fines do not address the seasonal spikes in air pollution during months when no stubble burning occurs. "Delhi's air quality is at its worst in January

when no stubble burning is happening. This shows that we're not the primary cause," pointed BKU Dakaunda general secretary Jagmohan Singh Patiala, adding that the government should focus on these persistent pollution sources. A deeper issue underscored by farmer leaders is the rapid timeline between paddy harvest and wheat planting, which forces many into a tight window to prepare fields. Without crop management solutions that suit this schedule, some farmers find burning is the only practical way to clear land quickly. "With such limited time, many of us have no choice but to burn stubble to prepare for the next crop," said Kokrikalan. He added that diversification of crops and increased investment in alternative residue management techniques would yield long-term benefits over punitive measures. Moreover, the Punjab Government has been criticized for inadequate assistance and delays in the supply of fertilizers, such as DAP, which exacerbates farmers' struggles.

"Fines alone are not a solution. They're an additional burden on farmers who are already coping with rising input costs and low procurement prices," Pandher emphasized, pointing out that many farmers have been waiting in markets for fair prices for their produce. With stubble burning in Punjab and Haryana often singled out as a major cause of Delhi's air quality crisis, farmer bodies argued that fines must be part of a broader, multi-faceted solution.

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A deeper issue underscored by farmer leaders is the rapid timeline between paddy harvest and wheat planting, which forces many into a tight window to prepare fields. Without crop management solutions that suit this schedule, some farmers find burning is the only practical way to clear land quickly. "With such limited time, many of us have no choice but to burn stubble to prepare for the next crop," said Kokrikalan. He added that diversification of crops and increased investment in alternative residue management techniques would yield long-term benefits over punitive measures. Moreover, the Punjab Government has been criticized for inadequate assistance and delays in the supply of fertilizers, such as DAP, which exacerbates farmers' struggles.

"Fines alone are not a solution. They're an additional burden on farmers who are already coping with rising input costs and low procurement prices," Pandher emphasized, pointing out that many farmers have been waiting in markets for fair prices for their produce. With stubble burning in Punjab and Haryana often singled out as a major cause of Delhi's air quality crisis, farmer bodies argued that fines must be part of a broader, multi-faceted solution.

Punjab strongly presents power & urban development demands before Centre

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Punjab Government on Wednesday presented a robust case for state's rights and developmental needs concerning Power and Urban Development during a crucial meeting with Union Minister Manohar Lal Khattar. Delegation, which included Punjab's Housing and Urban Development Minister Hardip Singh Mundian, Power Minister Harbhajan Singh ETO, and Local Government Minister Dr Ravjot Singh, met with Khattar at Punjab Bhawan to address several critical demands aimed at boosting state's growth in both sectors. Government emphasized urgency of resolving these issues to support ongoing and upcoming development projects. During high-level discussions, Ministers highlighted its rightful claims, including the demand for a Member Power from State to be appointed to the Bhakra Beas Management Board, following the revised rules of 2022. Delegation argued that under the new conditions, no candidate from the state would qualify, thus denying Punjab a key position that it had traditionally held. Additionally, Punjab reasserted its full right to the Shanan project in Himachal Pradesh, citing the Punjab Reorganization Act, which entitles the state to the project. With the demand for greater power supply growing amidst the limited capacity of Punjab's existing hydel and thermal power plants, State requested long-term power allocation from central sector plants to ensure sustainable energy availability. Punjab also put forth its commitment to promote renewable energy, requesting an increase in capacity of subsidized solar pumps for agriculture, specifically to 15 horsepower, to encourage solar energy adoption.

not only provides a serene environment for the puja but also highlights the importance of sustainability and cleanliness, he added. Anand Pandey, a devotee at Chhath Ghat, Sector 42 Lake said, "This is the only festival in which even the setting sun is offered prayers. The philosophy behind the thought is that birth is always followed by death and the rising sun is followed by the setting sun. We wait for this day throughout the year to offer 'arghya' to the setting and rising sun. The 'arghya' is offered with mixing milk in sacred Gangajal, symbolizing purity and devotion. We are blessed to get such a chance today to offer prayer to God Sun along with the family members."

BRIEFS

CM Saini offers Arghya to Sun during State level Chhath Mahotsav in Kurukshetra
Kurukshetra: Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini on Thursday offered Arghya to the Sun and performed the Maha Aarti and Puja Archana, praying for the prosperity, progress, and well-being of the citizens of Haryana and the country. Addressing the state-level Chhath mahotsav at Brahma Sarovar in Kurukshetra, he conveyed his warm wishes to the people of Haryana and the nation on the occasion of Chhath utsav. He highlighted the importance of the festival, describing it as one of the most sacred celebrations of Surya worship. He prayed that Chhath Maiya would bless the people with happiness, peace, and prosperity, and that the festival would bring fulfillment of wishes for all devotees. The state-level Chhath mahotsav also saw cultural performances by renowned folk artists.

Hry CM approves development projects worth Rs 18.17 crore for Ambala Cantt
Chandigarh: Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini on Thursday gave administrative approval for development projects worth Rs 18.17 crore for the Ambala Cantonment constituency, covering 92 various projects. An official spokesperson said that these development projects include the construction of roads, culverts, installation of RCC pipes, PVC pipes, IP blocks, and construction of sheds and walls, etc and other key works. In Ambala constituency, an RCC culvert will be built over the main drain on Firni near Pucca Talab in village Boh, Ward-1, MC Ambala Sadar, at an estimated cost of Rs 32.21 lakh. Additionally, a bitumen road will be constructed from the Jungle Wala Peer Army Forest to Daksha Property in Surya Nagar, Ward No. 4, MC Ambala Sadar, at Rs. 97.07 lakh.

Devotees offer 'arghya' to setting Sun on Chhath Puja

MANOJ KUMAR ■ CHANDIGARH

Thousands of people on Thursday offered 'Arghya' (prayers) to the setting Sun at Sector 42 Lake, Sarovar, Indra Colony, Manimajra and other places in Chandigarh on the occasion of Chhath Puja — one of the most important festivals of eastern part of India, especially Bihar, eastern Uttar Pradesh, and Jharkhand. Devotees will offer 'Arghya' to the rising Sun on Friday morning also.

On the third day of the four-day festivities, devotees from all parts of the tricity, along with their families, thronged the man-made Lake after 2 pm on Thursday to offer prayer with Sloop which consists of flowers, seasonal fruits, grass, sugarcane, radish and other newly harvested crops before the setting Sun for prosperity and happiness of their family members. The devotees

observed Nirjala fast throughout the day and in the evening went to the water reservoir. Devotees' relatives witnessed carrying bamboo basket full of fruits, sweets, thekua (made from whole wheat flour, jaggery and ghee) and other traditional food.

It was a picturesque view of the devotees standing knee deep in the waters and praying to Sun God till sunset. Later Arghya offered to the setting sun with milk and water.

Meanwhile, the Municipal Corporation, Chandigarh, had also made elaborate arrangements at the Sector 42 Lake with special lighting and cleanliness, keeping in view the spirit of the festival.

Traffic and security arrangements were also made by the UT police.

Various cultural programmes and performances were organized to enhance the festive atmosphere at the venues. Performers sang traditional Chhath songs on the



Chhath Puja festival was celebrated at the Lake in Sector 42 with thousands of people

occasion. The Chandigarh Municipal Corporation has developed a beautiful sarovar (water body) for performing the ritual at a green belt, Indra Colony, Manimajra. It was a zero-waste programme organised by the MC Chandigarh. According to MC officials, after the programme all the decoration flowers will be used



in the Arpan project of MCC and other residues of ritual puja of Chhat will be collected for recycling. Amit Kumar, Municipal Commissioner said that this unique celebration of

Chhath Puja exemplifies the commitment of the Chandigarh Municipal Corporation to creating inclusive and delightful experiences for its citizens. The initiative

with red sandalwood and flowers brings fame. By offering 'arghya' mixed with jaggery in Gangajal to the Sun, the deity blesses devotees with a son and good fortune.

At the same time, by offering water in a copper vessel along with red sandalwood, red flowers and perfume in the morning to the Sun God, one attains age, knowledge, fame and strength."

Moreover, the festivities commence with Nahai Khai (eating after bathing) on Tuesday and continue for four days with traditional rituals like lohanda or Kharna, Sanjha Arghya and it concludes with the final prayer and offering of the Subah Arghya.

On Friday morning, the devotees will offer their final heartfelt gratitude to the Surya Bhagwan (Sun God). With the conclusion of their prayer, they will go back home to break their day-long fast by eating prasad, or the food offered to the almighty Sun God.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

A turning point

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

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



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

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

Gen Z: Hyper-connected yet shallow relations

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

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



the bright exterior, but none see the broken girl within. Another story is of Arjun, a young man shaped by a chaotic home and constant content bombardment. Now 20, he spends hours scrolling through his feed, comparing himself to others who appear effortlessly perfect. "Everyone seems so complete," he said, "but I feel like I'm failing." In a crisis, Arjun realises he has no one to truly rely on. His friendships, based on memes and brief exchanges, feel hollow when life gets tough. The endless scrolling only deepens his loneliness, as he sees everyone's best moments while silently suffering through his worst. Rhea and Arjun's stories echo a painful truth for many in Gen Z. Friendships today are often shallow, based on convenience rather than commitment. They form and dissolve easily, leaving young people adrift in a sea of acquaintances who vanish when things get real. This generation's friendships are filtered through screens, built on quick likes and superficial messages. The traditional bonds of trust and time are slipping away, leaving behind connections that feel fleeting and, ultimately, empty.

What's missing here is depth — the kind of friendship that stands the test of hardship, that offers warmth and understanding beyond a screen. For Rhea, there's a wounded inner child who craves a friend who will listen and care beyond the "perfect" image she shows online. For Arjun, there's a desperate need to find a friend who sees his struggles, not just his shared posts. As a society, we need to understand that true friendship isn't about quick exchanges or temporary validation. It's about sharing real moments, both joyful and painful. It's about listening, being there, and caring without conditions. Perhaps, as Felice Buscaglia once said, "It's not enough to have lived." True living means creating joy, sharing love, and holding each other through life's storms. Until Gen Z learns to build friendships beyond the screen, they'll remain in search of bonds that can truly make them feel seen, safe, and understood. (The writer is a psychologist and mindset coach; views are personal)

KAVITA KABIRA



Donald Trump's historic comeback

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



KALYANI SHANKAR



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

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



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

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

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

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

TRUMP WINS AGAIN

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

ARTICLE 370 CONTROVERSY

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

Canada must take action



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

Trudeau government has been burning bridges with India after Nijjar's murder last year. On one side, he says that every Canadian has the right to practice his or her faith freely, but sadly, he cannot protect them and provide safety. When the Canadian government can appoint India-designate terrorists like Pannun, Sandeep Singh Sidhu, and Sgt Harinder Sohi in the government or government agencies, then nothing better can be expected out of the Trudeau government. Canada, which otherwise proudly claims to be a peace-loving nation, has to deal strictly with all those elements who are destroying communal harmony and public order. Trudeau cannot allow to spew venom against India in the name of freedom, and he will have to salvage India-Canada ties before it is too late. Bal Govind | Noida

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

INDIA BIDS FOR OLYMPICS

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

Olympiad. India's top sports administrators, including IOA President PT Usha, were at the Paris Olympics earlier in the year to lobby for the country's selection. There have been reports that India would push for the inclusion of indigenous disciplines like yoga, kho kho and kabaddi if the bid is successful. IOC President Thomas Bach had also supported India's case, claiming that there was a "strong case" for India to host the Olympic Games. In the process, India joined nine other countries that have expressed interest in hosting the 2036 Games. The 10 countries that have shown initial interest in hosting the 2036 Games include Mexico (Mexico City, Guadalajara-Monterrey-Tijuana), Indonesia (Nusantara), Turkey (Istanbul), India (Ahmedabad), Poland (Warsaw, Krakow), Egypt (New Administrative Capital), and South Korea (Seoul Incheon). Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee | Faridabad

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



FIRST COLUMN

UNDERSTANDING THE MIND OF GOD

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

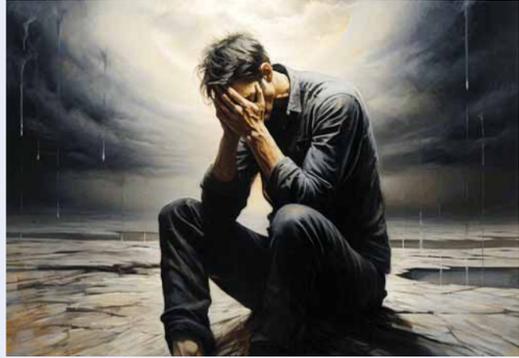


AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

We want to live a nice life, but we do not know how. Individually, we all try but come up short except for a few, who seriously take shelter of God. Because God only can make a difference. A big percentage of us, if not all humans, are aware of God but are unable to become serious about making a proper attempt to link with God – the Creator. I will try in this article to get you interested in getting started in this noble act. I am using similes and contrasts – the usual ways to compare. And I have chosen an example of a businessman for this purpose. God is the Creator; we are aware of this fact. A businessman is a prime mover for a business venture. God creates the entire solar system. In the case of a businessman, he starts small and tries to grow it into a vast business empire.

A businessman is intrinsically small, i.e., will always remain small, no matter how big his business empire may become. God is incomprehensibly big and will always be. Our problem is to think of God to be a person like us, just as He incarnates to teach us what is proper for us. Our ignorance is not limited to this fact only but extends to what we know. A businessman falsely assumes that what he knows about a business is sufficient.

What happens? Many businesses fail. What he could have done? He could have prayed to God for guidance. God would have given him instructions through mediums, those around him. And the business would have succeeded, because God is omniscient, i.e., He



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

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

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

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

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

Trump 2.0: What lies ahead in his second term



NILANTHA ILANGAMUWA

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



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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



RAGHAVENDRA P TIWARI

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

The Central Government has taken several initiatives to ensure hassle-free access to quality higher education, especially regarding NEP-2020 implementation.

These include multidisciplinary and learning outcome-based curriculum for holistic learning; innovative pedagogy (experiential learning, internship, field immersion, etc); evaluation to test the learning outcomes; Academic Bank of Credits; Multiple Entry-Exit; Dual degree, joint degree and twin degree programmes; emphasis on Indian Knowledge System and Universal Human Values, etc. The latest edition to the long list is the PM-Vidyalaxmi scheme to provide collateral-free, guarantor-free financial loans to needy meritorious stu-

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

Trump has vowed to shake some of democracy's pillars

AP ■ WASHINGTON

American presidential elections are a moment when the nation holds up a mirror to look at itself. They are a reflection of values and dreams, of grievances and scores to be settled. The results say much about a country's character, future and core beliefs. On Tuesday, America looked into that mirror and more voters saw former president Donald Trump, delivering him a far-reaching victory in the most contested states. He won for many reasons. One of them was that a formidable number of Americans, from different angles, said the state of democracy was a prime concern. The candidate they chose had campaigned through a lens of darkness, calling the country "garbage" and his opponent "stupid," a "communist" and "the b-word." The mirror reflected not only a restive nation's discontent but childless cat ladies, false stories of pets devoured by Haitian immigrant neighbours, a sustained emphasis on calling things "weird," and a sudden bout of Democratic "joy" now crushed. The campaign will be remembered both for profound developments, like the two assassination attempts on Trump, and his curious chatter about golfer Arnold Palmer's genitalia. Even as Trump prevailed, most voters said they were very or somewhat concerned that electing Trump would bring the US closer to being an authoritarian country, where a single leader has unchecked power, according to the AP VoteCast survey. Still, 1 in 10 of those voters backed

him anyway. Nearly 4 in 10 Trump voters said they wanted complete upheaval in how the country is run. In Trump's telling, the economy was in shambles, even when almost every measure said otherwise, and the border was an open sore leeching murderous migrants, when the actual number of crossings had dropped precipitously. All this came wrapped in his signature language of catastrophism. His win, only the second time in US history that a candidate won the presidency in non-consecutive terms, demonstrated Trump's keen ear for what stirs emotions, especially the sense of millions of voters of being left out — whether because someone else cheated or got special treatment or otherwise fell to the ravages of the enemy within. That's whom Americans decisively chose. The centuries-old democracy delivered power to the presidential candidate who gave voters fair warning he might take core elements of that democracy apart. After already having tried to disrupt the peaceful transfer of power when he lost to President Joe Biden in 2020, Trump mused that he would be justified if he decided to pursue "the termination of all rules, regulations, and articles, even those found in the Constitution." This, in contrast to the oath of office he took, and will again, to "preserve, protect and defend the Constitution" as best he can. One rough and decidedly imperfect measure of whether Trump might mean what he says is how many times he says it. His direct threat to try to end or suspend the Constitution was largely a one-off. But the 2024 campaign was thick with his vows, rally after rally, inter-

view after interview, that if realised would upend democracy's basic practices, protections and institutions as Americans have known them. And now, he says after his win, "I will govern by a simple motto: promises made, promises kept." Through the campaign, to lusty cheers, Trump promised to use presidential power over the justice system to go after his personal political adversaries. He then raised the stakes further by threatening to enlist military force against such domestic foes — "the enemy from within." Doing so would shatter any semblance of Justice Department independence and turn soldiers against citizens in ways not seen in modern times. He's promised to track down and deport immigrants in massive numbers, raising the prospect of using military or military-style assets for that as well. Spurred by his fury and denialism over his 2020 defeat, Trump's supporters in some state governments have already engineered changes in how votes are cast, counted and affirmed, an effort centered on the false notion that the last election was rigged against him. On Tuesday, Trump won an election in the time of a Democratic administration. The effort to revise election procedures will now be fought out by states in his name. Yet another pillar of the system is also in his sights — the non-political civil service and its political masters, whom Trump together calls the deep state. He means the generals who didn't always heed him last time, but this time shall. He means the Justice Department



people who refused to indulge his desperate effort to cook up votes he didn't get in 2020. He means the bureaucrats who dragged their heels on parts of his first-term agenda and whom Trump now wants purged. Trump wants to make it easier to fire federal workers by classifying thousands of them as being outside civil service protections. That could weaken the government's power to enforce statutes and rules by draining parts of the workforce and permit his administration to staff offices with more malleable employees than last time. But if some or all of these tenets of modern democracy are to fall, it will be through the most democratic of means. Voters chose him — and by extension, this — not Democrat Kamala Harris, the vice president. And by early measures, it was a clean election, just like 2020. Eric Dezenhall is a scandal-manage-

ment expert who has followed Trump's business and political career and correctly predicted his wins in 2016 and now. He also foresaw that the criminal cases against Trump would help, not hurt, him. Sussing out what Trump truly intends to do and what might be bluster is not always easy, he said. "There are certain things that he says because they cross his brain at a certain moment," Dezenhall said. "I don't put stock in that. I put stock in themes, and there is a theme of vengeance." So it remains to be seen whether America will get two special days Trump has promised. Upon taking office again, he said, he'll be a "dictator," but only for a day. And he's promised to let police stage "one really violent day" to crack down on crime with impunity, a remark his campaign said he didn't really mean, just as his peo-

ple said he wasn't serious about subverting the U.S. Constitution. The voters also gave Trump's Republicans clear control of the Senate, and therefore majority say in whether to confirm the loyalists Trump will nominate for top jobs in government. Trump controls his party in ways he didn't in his first term, when major figures in his administration repeatedly frustrated his most outdoor ambitions. "The fact that a once proud people chose, twice, to demean itself with a leader like Donald Trump will be one of history's great cautionary tales," said Cal Jillson, a constitutional and presidential scholar at Southern Methodist University whose new book, "Race, Ethnicity, and American Decline," anticipated some of the existential issues of the election. "Donald Trump's actions will be as divisive, ill-considered, and mean-spirited in his second term as in his first," he said. "He will undercut Ukraine, NATO, and the U.N. abroad and the rule of law, individual rights, and our senses of national cohesion and purpose at home." From the political left, any threats to democracy were not on the mind of independent Sen. Bernie Sanders of Vermont when he offered a blistering critique of the Democratic campaign. "It should come as no surprise that a Democratic Party which has abandoned working people would find that the working class has abandoned them," he said in a statement. "Will they understand the pain and political alienation that tens of millions of Americans are experiencing?" He concluded: "Probably not." For his part, Trump says he is intent on restoring democracy, not tearing it down. There was nothing democratic, he and his allies assert, in seeing military leaders defy the elected commander in chief, whether the issue was troop deployments or his wish for a splashy military parade. Or in seeing Democratic presidents establish immigration policy and vast student loan relief though executive action, bypassing Congress. But that case is built from the ground up on the lie of a stolen 2020 election, his machinations to stall the certification of that vote and his mob's bloody attack on the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021. He comes to office intending to pardon some of the people convicted for that riot and perhaps clear himself of criminal cases against him. Guardrails remain. One is the Supreme Court, whose conservative majority loosened the leash on presidential behavior in its ruling expanding their immunity from prosecution. The court has not been fully tested on how far it will go to accommodate Trump's actions and agenda. And which party will control the House is still yet unknown. The Republican's victory came from a public so put off by America's trajectory that it welcomed his brash and disruptive approach. Among voters under 30, just under half went for Trump, an improvement from his 2020 performance, according to the AP VoteCast survey of more than 120,000 voters. About three-quarters of young voters said the country was headed in the wrong direction, and roughly one-third said they wanted total upheaval in how the country is run. By Trump's words, at least, that's what they'll get.

I concede this election, but not the fight: Harris

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Shortly after conceding the presidential race to Donald Trump, Vice President Kamala Harris urged supporters to accept the election results and pledged to ensure a peaceful transfer of power to the Republican leader. In an emotional concession speech at her alma mater Howard University, 60-year-old Harris said the "light of America's promise will always burn bright" and vowed to keep up the "fight" that fuelled her campaign. "My heart is full today — full of gratitude for the trust you have placed in me, full of love for our country, and full of resolve," she said in an attempt to lift the spirits of her supporters. "The outcome of this election is not what we wanted, not what we fought for, not what we voted for. But hear me when I say, the light of America's promise will always burn bright," she added. "I know folks are feeling and experiencing a range of emotions right now. I get it. But we must accept the results of this election," she said, adding that a fundamental principle of democracy is to accept the election outcomes. Harris said she spoke to President-elect Trump and congratulated him on his victory. "I told Trump that we will help him and his team in their transition and that we will engage in a peaceful transition of power," she said. "In our nation, we owe loyalty not to a president or a party but to the constitution of the United States," she added. "While I concede this election, I do not concede the fight that fuelled this campaign," Harris said. Harris also called on her supporters not to give up their fights to protect the country's foundational principles. "Sometimes the fight takes a while, but that does not mean we will not win; the important thing is don't ever give up"



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

thing is don't ever give up," she said. In the election, 78-year-old Trump pulled off an incredible comeback wrestling 291 electoral college votes as against Harris' 223 in a fierce contest that almost left the Americans with two world views. While Harris projected herself as an "agent of change," Trump constructed a campaign on people's concerns over economy and immigration. "The fight for freedom, opportunity, for fairness and dignity of all people will continue,"

Harris said in her address. The vice president said she will never give up the fight for democracy, rule of law and for equal justice. "The fight for our freedom will take hard work, but as I always say we like hard work; the fight for our country is always worth it," she said. "I know many people feel like we are entering a dark time, but for the benefit of us all, I hope that is not the case," she added. The mood at the rally was incredibly sombre. The crowd of what appeared to number several thousand was very quiet. Harris campaign aides stood to one side of the stage as she spoke and exchanged hugs, including Jen O'Malley Dillon, David Plouffe, and Brian Fallon. Former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and DC Mayor Muriel Bowser were seen conversing in the crowd. Several of Harris's younger family members were wiping away tears as they left the rally.

Biden calls Trump to congratulate him on his victory

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

US President Joe Biden on Thursday made a phone call to president-elect Donald Trump and congratulated him on his victory, the White House said. Biden also spoke over the phone with Vice President Kamala Harris and congratulated her on her historic campaign, the White House said. In his call with Trump, Biden expressed his commitment to ensuring a smooth transition and emphasised the importance of working to bring the country together. "He also invited president-elect Trump to meet with him in the White House. The staff will coordinate a specific date in the near future. Tomorrow, President Biden will address the nation to discuss the election results and the transition," the White House said. "President Joe Biden called President Donald J. Trump to congratulate him on his victory and extended an invitation to the White House to ensure a smooth transition between the current administration and the incoming administration. President Trump looks forward to the meeting, which will take place shortly, and very much appreciated the call," Steven Cheung, Trump Campaign Communications Director, said. Meanwhile, President Joe Biden on Wednesday applauded Vice President Kamala Harris for leading a historic campaign under extraordinary circumstances. "What America saw today was the Kamala Harris I know and deeply admire. She's been a tremendous partner and public servant full of integrity, courage, and character," Biden said in a statement. "Under extraordinary circumstances, she stepped up and led a historic campaign that embodied what's possible when guided by a strong moral compass and a clear vision for a nation that is more free, more just, and full of more opportunities for all Americans," he said. "As I've said before, selecting Kamala was the very first decision I made when I became the nominee for president in 2020. It was the best decision I made. Her story represents the best of America's story. And as she made clear today, I have no doubt that she'll continue writing that story," he said. "She will continue the fight with purpose, determination, and joy. She will continue to be a champion for all Americans. Above all, she will continue to be a leader our children will look up to for generations to come as she puts her stamp on America's future," Biden said.

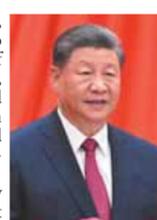


US should find 'right way' to manage differences, says China

PTI ■ BEIJING

Chinese President Xi Jinping on Thursday congratulated President-elect Donald Trump on his election victory and called for China and the US to find the right way to manage the differences by strengthening dialogue and communication. Trump won the US presidential election for a second term on Wednesday in one of the most remarkable comebacks in American electoral history. Xi, in his congratulatory message to Trump, called for the two countries to strengthen dialogue and communication, properly manage differences and expand mutually beneficial cooperation, official media reports here said. "I urge China and the US to expand mutually beneficial cooperation," Xi said. "I call for the right way for China, and the US to get along in the new era," he said, adding that both

the countries, the top two economies of the world, should strengthen dialogue and communication. History teaches that China and the United States gain from cooperation and lose from confrontation. Xi said, noting that a stable, sound and sustainable China-US relationship serves the two countries' shared interests and meets the aspirations of the international community. He expressed the hope that the two sides will uphold the principles of mutual respect, peaceful coexistence, and win-win cooperation, strengthen dialogue and communication, properly manage differences



and expand mutually beneficial cooperation. Also on Thursday, Chinese Vice President Han Zheng congratulated J D Vance on his election as vice president of the United States, state-run Xinhua news agency reported. As the results of the US presidential elections poured in on Wednesday pointing to a sweeping victory for Trump, who pursued a tough policy against China in his first term including clamping tariffs on over USD 380 billion Chinese exports to the US, Beijing reacted guardedly and said that it respects the choice of the American people. Our policy towards the United States has been consistent and we will continue to view and handle the China-US relations in accordance with the principles of mutual respect, peaceful coexistence and win-win cooperation," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Mao Ning told a media briefing here.

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

PTI ■ LONDON

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer touched upon a range of topics, including defence and regional security, during his congratulatory phone call with US President-elect Donald Trump after a "historic" election victory. During the call on Wednesday evening, both leaders agreed to work towards strengthening the "incredibly strong" US-UK special relationship and committed to ensure the bilateral ties continue to thrive. "The Prime Minister offered his hearty congratulations and said he looked forward to working closely with President-elect Trump across all areas of the special relationship. From defence and security to growth and prosperity, the relationship between the UK and US was incredibly strong and would continue to thrive for many years to come, the leaders agreed," a Downing Street

spokesperson said. Starmer is said to have also reflected on the situation in the Middle East and "underscored the importance of regional stability". They went on to discuss their recent meeting at Trump Tower when Starmer was in New York for the United Nations General Assembly. "The leaders fondly recalled their meeting in September, and President-elect Trump's close connections and affinity to the United Kingdom and looked forward to working with one another," Downing Street added. The phone call came after a heated first exchange between Starmer and the newly elected UK Leader of the



Opposition Kemi Badenoch in the House of Commons. The Conservative Party chief challenged the Labour leader over his party volunteers having flown in to support the campaign of Trump's Democrat rival Kamala Harris. "I am very sure that President Trump will soon be calling to thank him for sending all of those north London Labour activists to campaign for his opponent," Badenoch taunted. "It is absolutely crucial that we have a strong relationship — that strong, special relationship, forged in difficult circumstances — between the US and the UK. We will continue to work, as we have done in our four months in government, on issues of security, our economy and global conflict," Starmer responded. Earlier, Starmer had been forced to stress that any party activists in the US during the election campaign were there as volunteers on their own time.

European leaders assess how Trump will affect their fortunes

AP ■ BUDAPEST (HUNGARY)

Around 50 European leaders, including Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte, will be reassessing their trans-Atlantic relations in the hope that Donald Trump's second US presidency will avoid the strife and political pitfalls of his first administration. Further compounding an already complicated situation, Germany — Europe's troubled economic juggernaut — sank into political crisis after German Chancellor Olaf Scholz fired his finance minister. It raises the spectre of an election in a few

months and yet another standoff between the emboldened hard right and the establishment parties in Europe. Those two combined "adds even more pepper and salt to this situation," Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk said. But the US election fallout still took centre stage. "Our relationship with the US is essential and we are ready to deepen it," European Council President Charles Michel said. The 27 nations from the European Union bloc will be meeting in a separate summit as soon as other leaders from the United Kingdom,



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

Turkey and the Balkans leave in the evening. During his election campaign, Trump had threatened anything from a trade war with Europe to a withdrawal of NATO commitments and a fundamental shift of support for Ukraine in its war with Russia — all issues that could have ground-breaking consequences for nations across Europe. Summit host and ardent Trump fan, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban, said early Thursday he already had a phone call with the incoming president overnight, announcing that "We have big plans for the future!"

So did hard-right Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, who lauded the "deep and historic strategic partnership that has always tied Rome and Washington." That partnership came under constant pressure during Trump's first term, from 2017-2021. "Trump's administration slapped tariffs on EU steel and aluminum in 2018, based on the claim that foreign products, even if produced by American allies, were a threat to US national security. Europeans and other allies retaliated with duties on US-made motorcycles, bourbon, peanut butter and jeans, among other items."

The impact of the US election result could be felt in Europe for years to come, on issues including the wars in Ukraine and the Middle East, as well as migration and climate change. Among the leaders due to attend on Thursday is Zelenskyy, who is expected to make another plea for more aid as his country finds off Moscow's invasion. The timing is laden with significance as Trump has vowed to end the war "within 24 hours" of being elected — something leaders in Kyiv interpret as an impending evaporation of US support following Trump's win.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Australia plans social media ban for children under 16

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

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

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

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

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

SCBA seeks comprehensive immigration reform in US

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

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

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



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

Large airstrikes hit Beirut suburbs as Israel expands Gaza operations

AP ■ BEIRUT
Several large airstrikes hit Beirut's southern suburbs early Thursday, including one on a site adjacent to Lebanon's only international airport.

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

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

news network says the Israeli military has extended the order shutting down its bureau in the occupied West Bank.

Indian consulate in Canada cancels consular camps due over security issues

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Scholz fires his finance minister, coalition collapses

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

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

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

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

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Advertisement for 'THE PIONEER'S CLASSIFIED' featuring a 'CHANGE OF NAME' notice and various public notices, including lost and found items and legal solutions.

Supreme Court orders liquidation of grounded Jet Airways' assets



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

Markets snap rally ahead of Fed interest rate decision



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

HDFC raises lending rate on select maturity

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

Vedanta, Oil India bag critical mineral blocks

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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



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

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

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

JK Lakshmi Cement reports revenue drop

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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



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

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

Nissan cuts jobs as sales tank

AP ■ TOKYO

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



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

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

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

ED searches premises of Amazon, Flipkart vendors

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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



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

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

Scindia rules out spectrum auction pitch by Ambani, Mittal

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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



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

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

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

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

INBRIEF

VIT-AP UNIVERSITY HOSTS IHEF 2024

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

POWERGRID POSTS PAT

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



THE RAMAYANA

A CONTEMPORARY REVIVAL

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

BY KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

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

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

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

Lord Anjaneya (Hanuman) was the mascot of the 1997 edition of the South East Asian Games held in Jakarta. This shows the kind of reverence with which the commander of the Monkey Brigade is held in Indonesia, the country with the largest Muslim population in the world. Nicholaz Kazanas, director, OMILOS Meleton Cultural Institute, Greece, in his 2011 lecture held at Madras University, said that the Rig Veda is the oldest published literature of science and culture in the world and the Ramayana and Mahabharata are not mere epics but chronicles of events.

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

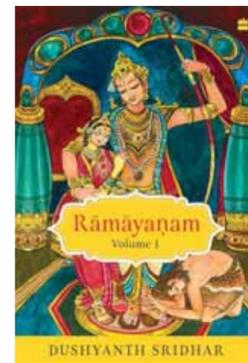


which were telecast through Doordarshan, these epics would have been forgotten long ago. I can still remember the cynicism on the faces of the Left Liberals when these works were aired by Doordarshan. Our contempt for our own culture and tradition inspired Wendy Doniger, the modern-day Lucille Ball (of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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

NEW ARRIVALS

NOVEMBER MUST-READ
Publisher: Niyogi Books

Citizen Charles

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

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

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

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

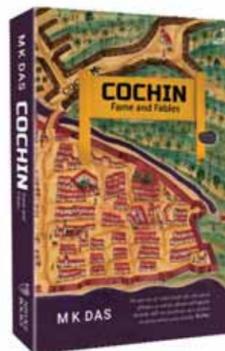
From Port to Cultural Gem

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



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

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



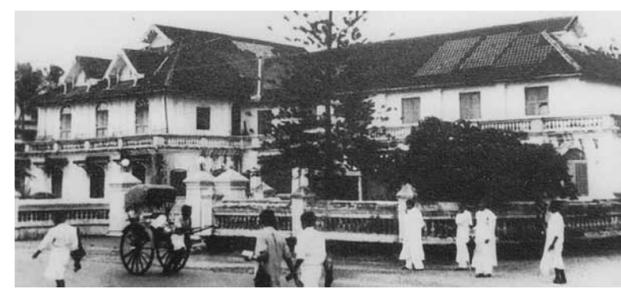
ABOUT THE BOOK

Book : COCHIN : Fame and Fables
by M K DAS

Publisher : Niyogi Books

₹795.00

Pages : 300



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

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

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

PTI ■ DURBAN

As India firmly embraces a transition phase, a clutch of second line stars such as Sanju Samson and Abhishek Sharma will be hoping for a breakaway series in the four T20Is against South Africa, starting with the first contest here Friday. It is imperative for them to shed the tag of sidekicks and establish themselves as the first-choice players in this format. The recent home T20I series against Bangladesh was a precursor. Samson received a chance to open consistently against the neighbours, and he made most of it slamming a 47-ball 111. In the post-Rohit Sharma era in T20Is, Samson would like to further buttress his claim for a regular opening slot with a few fruitful outings against the Proteas. This is an important series for Abhishek as well. The dashing left-hander showed his impressive skills while hammering a 47-ball hundred against Zimbabwe at Harare in July, but his other six international innings have produced - 0, 10, 14, 16, 15, 4. Abhishek will be keen to be more consistent to safeguard his place, and he will also be looking to be more penetrative with his left-arm spin. Tilak Varma offers a similar case. The left-hander has somewhat fallen off the radar after making a solid beginning to his T20I career against the West Indies in August 2023.



Since then, his 12 outings in the shortest format have produced just one fifty and has not featured in the blue jersey after appearing against Afghanistan earlier this January. So, the Hyderabad will be keen to impress the selectors with some meaningful efforts against the Africans, and he has also started using his off-spin more regularly.

This series also offers an excellent opportunity for wicketkeeper batter Jitesh Sharma, who has slipped a few rungs below in the pecking order, and spinner Varun Chakravarthy, who impressed against Bangladesh taking five wickets, to keep themselves afloat over the competition. The selectors will also closely monitor how a new-look pace bowling unit

- Arshdeep Singh, Avesh Khan, Vyshak Vijaykumar and Yash Dayal - fare against South Africa. While Arshdeep and Avesh have their moments at the top-level, Vyshak and Dayal will look to carry their success in domestic circuit and in the IPL to international cricket. Ramandeep Singh, who was retained by Kolkata Knight Riders after a productive IPL

2024, will be eager to replicate his success here. Ramandeep brings to the table exciting multiple skillsets - a daring batter down the order, useful medium pacer and a gun outfielder. The seniors in the side like skipper Suryakumar Yadav, all-rounders Hardik Pandya and Axar Patel, the only member from the Test side

here, will be hoping for a strong outing so that India can apply some balm over the wounds from their recent home series defeat against New Zealand.

On a personal level, four players - Arshdeep, Avesh, Jitesh and Vyshak - will want impact outings here after not getting retained by their respective franchises ahead of the IPL mega auction November 24 and 25.

All other 11 players in the side have managed to get a retention from their IPL teams.

South Africa will be looking to add a touch of revenge to the series after losing to India in the T20 World Cup final in June, the last time these two sides met.

Teams (from)
India: Suryakumar Yadav (C), Abhishek Sharma, Sanju Samson (WK), Rinku Singh, Tilak Varma, Jitesh Sharma (WK), Hardik Pandya, Axar Patel, Ramandeep Singh, Varun Chakravarthy, Ravi Bishnoi, Arshdeep Singh, Vijaykumar Vyshak, Avesh Khan, Yash Dayal.

South Africa: Aiden Markram (c), Ottneil Baartman, Gerald Coetzee, Donovan Ferreira, Reeza Hendricks, Marco Jansen, Heinrich Klaasen, Patrick Kruger, Keshav Maharaj, David Miller, Mithali Pongwana, Nqaba Peter, Ryan Rickelton, Andile Simelane, Lutho Sipamla (3rd and 4th T20Is), and Tristan Stubbs.

Jurel shines, Rahul fails as India A flounder bounce test



PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Dhruv Jurel showcased his sound technique and cool temperament while wickets fell like ninepins at the other end in another shoddy batting display by India A on the opening day of the second unofficial Test against Australia A at the iconic MCG on Thursday. Jurel (80 off 186 balls), who came to bat in the third over scored nearly half of India A's paltry first innings total of 161 in 57.1 overs with only other batter to cross 20-run mark was Devdutt Padikkal (26). Veteran KL Rahul (4), opening the batting, done in by a peach of a delivery from Scott Boland (1/51 in 15 overs). Michael Neser (4/27 in 12.2 overs), one of the finest and unluckiest among contemporary Australian pacers, dealt a telling blow in the opening over from which India A couldn't recover. At stumps, Australia A were 53 for 2 in reply with Mukesh Kumar again looking best among Indian bowlers. What stood out during the day was Jurel's composure and ability to play late, using soft hands. When there was extra bounce, he would quickly loosen his bottom hand grip to ensure that the ball didn't go to slip or gully region. He judged the length perfectly and the flicked six off Boland was a

treat to watch. While Rishabh Pant is the first-choice wicketkeeper batter, Jurel's ability to leave deliveries on length should put him in a better position than Sarfaraz Khan in the middle-order batter role. It was also the day when one got an indication that India senior team might bank on Rahul's experience of opening the innings if Rohit Sharma skips a match. However, Boland got him with a perfectly pitched up delivery that straightened to take his outside edge. But Rahul would be any day better than Abhimanyu Easwaran (0) who is increasingly looking out of sorts at this level. This was after Neser bowled a hostile opening over with Easwaran left in a complete tangle to a well-disguised short ball that ballooned to gully. In-form Sai Sudharsan (0) then got a Neser delivery that was aimed at his midriff and he tried to fend it, resulting in a regulation catch in the slips. Skipper Ruturaj Gaikwad's suspect technique got exposed when he jabbed with hard hands at a delivery that bounced a tad extra from length to be caught at slips. Nitish Reddy (16) played the most indiscreet shot as he tried to dance down the track to counter the steep bounce, getting ousted by Beau Webster.

Sinner and Alcaraz headline the ATP Finals with Djokovic out

AP ■ TURIN (ITALY)

Jannik Sinner and Carlos Alcaraz are poised to add another entry into their rapidly developing rivalry when the ATP Finals open Sunday without any members of the Big Three for the first time in nearly a quarter century. The top-ranked Sinner and No. 3 Alcaraz evenly split the year's Grand Slam titles between them with two apiece and it would be fitting if the pair meet again in Turin. And since Alcaraz was overtaken by Alexander Zverev in the rankings this week, the Spaniard could be placed in the same round-robin group as Sinner. The draw for the eight-man event is scheduled for later Thursday. After the round-robin stage, the top two finishers in each group advance to the semifinals. The other qualifiers are: Zverev, Daniil Medvedev, Taylor Fritz, Casper Ruud, Alex de Minaur and Andrey Rublev. The big name missing is that of defending champion Novak Djokovic, who withdrew on Tuesday due to an unspecified injury.



23 years since Djokovic, Federer and Nadal missed the finals. Not since 2001 has the finals been held without at least one of Djokovic, Roger Federer or Rafael Nadal. This season also was the first since 2002 without at least one Grand Slam title for a member of that trio. Djokovic has won the ATP Finals a record seven times. He beat Sinner for the title last year. Federer, who announced his retirement in 2022, won the event six times after making his debut in 2002; Nadal, who is retiring after

playing in the Davis Cup the week after finals, was the runner-up twice at the finals but never won it. Sinner withdrew from last week's Paris Masters due to a virus and showed up early in Turin for training. "This is for me the main event of the end of the year," Sinner said. A final decision in Sinner's doping case is still pending. As an Italian, Sinner will be the main focus of attention in Turin. It's the first time that Sinner will be playing at home since it was announced before his U.S.

Open title that he had tested positive in two separate drug tests earlier in the year. A decision to clear Sinner of wrongdoing was appealed by the World Anti-Doping Agency in September and the Switzerland-based Court of Arbitration for Sport is expected to make a final ruling on the case early next year. Alcaraz has won all 3 of his official meetings with Sinner this year. Sinner opened this year by winning the Australian Open to become the first Italian man to win a Grand Slam singles title in

nearly a half-century - since Adriano Panatta raised the French Open trophy in 1976. Alcaraz then claimed the French Open and Wimbledon titles to raise his career total to four Grand Slams. Sinner responded by winning the U.S. Open. Alcaraz won all three official meetings with Sinner this year and holds a 6-4 advantage in their career head-to-head rivalry. Last month, Sinner beat Alcaraz in the Six Kings Slam exhibition in Saudi Arabia. Zverev won in Paris last week and looks for a 3rd title at finals. The only two players in the field to have won the finals are Zverev and Medvedev. Zverev won in London in 2018 and in Turin in 2021; while Medvedev triumphed in 2020 - the final year the event was held in London. Zverev enters in solid form coming off a title at the Paris Masters. Fritz is looking to add another big result after his maiden Grand Slam final at the U.S. Open; Ruud was a finalist in 2022; De Minaur is making his tournament debut; and Rublev is making his fifth straight appearances.

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

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Captain Harmanpreet Kaur is the lone entry from India in the 50-player shortlist for the Women's Big Bash League (WBBL) Team of the Decade, which was released on Thursday. The shortlist comprises cricketers who have played a minimum of 60 WBBL matches prior to this season. The list will be pruned to 12 by a selection panel of experts after taking into account public voting. The public voting will be open between November 11-24 on the Big Bash App. The Team of the Decade will honour the greatest players from across the 10-year history of the WBBL. The selection panel is being chaired by Cricket Australia Director Clea Smith, and also includes Mel Jones, Lisa Sthalekar, Matthew Mott, Quentin Hull, Laura Jolly and Alistair Dobson. Public voting will be given equal importance and the panel will then review and combine those votes with their own selections to finalise the 12-player side, to be announced at the WBBL 10 final on December 1. The final XI will have a



maximum of three overseas players in keeping with league's rules. **WBBL Team of the Decade shortlist:** Sarah Aley, Samantha Bates, Suzie Bates (International), Alex Blackwell, Nicole Bolton, Nicola Carey, Lauren Cheatle, Sarah Coyte, Hannah Darling, Sophie Devine (International), Mignon du Preez (International), Jess Duffin, Rene Farrell, Ashleigh Gardner, Heather Graham, Nicola Hancock, Grace Harris, Laura Harris, Rachael Haynes, Alyssa Healy, Sammy-Jo Johnson, Jess Jonassen, Marizanne Kapp (International), Harmanpreet Kaur (International), Delissa

Kimmince, Alana King, Heather Knight (International), Meg Lanning, Lizelle Lee (International), Katien Mack, Hayley Matthews (International), Tahlia McGrath, Tegan McPharlin, Sophie Molineux, Beth Mooney, Ellyse Perry, Rachel Priest (International), Georgia Redmayne, Amy Satterthwaite (International), Megan Schutt, Natalie Sciver-Brunton (International), Molly Strano, Annabel Sutherland, Stafanie Taylor (International), Dane van Niekerk (International), Elyse Villani, Georgia Wareham, Amanda-Jade Wellington, Laura Wolvaardt (International), Danni Wyatt-Hodge (International).

Barcelona, Inter and upstart Brest win again in Champions League

AP ■ Paris

Barcelona and Inter Milan won again in the Champions League though both former title holders are looking up in the standings toward upstart newcomer Brest. Aston Villa started the week atop the 36-team table but its winning run ended on Wednesday after a bizarre penalty was awarded when defender Tyrone Mings picked up the ball in the area at Club Brugge, resulting in a 1-0 loss that sent the English club plummeting to eighth place. Paris Saint-Germain, in its first season without Kylian Mbappé, trails far behind in 25th after Atletico Madrid scored in stoppage time to seal a 2-1 win for the Spanish team at Parc des Princes. Barcelona's blistering scoring form continued in a 5-2 win at Red Star Belgrade - a seventh straight win since the start of October at a rate of

four goals per game. Robert Lewandowski scored twice and has 21 this season. Inter Milan stifled Arsenal in a 1-0 win at San Siro sealed by Hakan Çalhanoğlu's penalty in first-half stoppage time. Inter is unbeaten on 10 points and in fifth place, one below Brest which won 2-1 at Sparta Prague. The French debutant looks sure to advance to the knockout phase starting in February. Atalanta won 2-0 at Stuttgart to stay unbeaten on eight points and Salzburg got its first goals and points in a 3-1 win at Feyenoord. Bayern Munich won 1-0 at home to Benfica in a game that was delayed 15 minutes by crowd congestion and then was played in a muted atmosphere because of a medical incident for a fan. Shakhtar Donetsk playmaker Heorhiy Sudakov had a fine assist and an even better goal in a 2-1 win for the Ukrainian champion against Young Boys. Shakhtar's No. 10 showed why he is expected to



be the club's next big-money sale. Liverpool, which on Tuesday routed Bayer Leverkusen 4-0, leads the standings at the midway point of the eight-round program. Liverpool is the only team with four straight wins, while

five teams have four losses. They are Leipzig, Sturm Graz, Young Boys, Red Star and Slovan Bratislava. Two Italian teams - Inter Milan and Atalanta - have yet to concede a goal in four games. Another Italian side,

Bologna, is the only team with no goals scored. **Villa slides** Villa had led the standings in the new league-phase format after three straight wins without conceding a goal - and it took a bizarre incident

before goalkeeper Emiliano Martinez was eventually beaten. Mings was punished for picking up the ball when Martinez seemed to restart play with a goal kick passed forward to his teammate.

Mings walked a couple steps to gather the ball with his left hand and returned to place it in the six-yard box. "It's the biggest mistake I witnessed in my career," Villa coach Unai Emery said. "It has only happened one time in all my life. Today." Brugge captain Hans Vanaken placed the 52nd-minute spot-kick to Martinez's left as the World Cup-winning Argentina goalkeeper dived to his right. **Bayern and Dinamo** It was the standout result of the inaugural week of the new Champions League in September: Bayern Munich 9, Dinamo Zagreb 2. It was the first time a team had scored nine times in a game in the 32-year Champions League era, and Dinamo fired its coach two days later. Since then? Bayern lost twice, including a 4-1 rout at Barcelona, and Dinamo won twice. At the end of play Wednesday, Bayern was 17th

on six points, one place below Dinamo on seven. If those placings hold until January, they meet again twice more in the knockout playoffs round. **Next up** The fifth round in three weeks' time has perhaps the stellar attraction of 144 games in the league phase: Liverpool vs Real Madrid. That game on November 27 is a rematch of the 2022 and 2018 finals, both won by Madrid, and the 1981 European Cup title match that Liverpool won. There is another final rematch: Bayern Munich hosts PSG on November 26 in a repeat of the pandemic-season final played in August 2020 without fans in Lisbon. Also, sixth-place Barcelona hosts Brest, a fixture which might have been overlooked when the draw was made in August yet the French team is currently fourth. Only the top eight teams in January advance directly to the round of 16 in March.