









IN BRIEF

Min chairs UDD meeting for US Nagar

DEHRADUN: The Urban Development minister Prem Chand Aggarwal said while chairing a meeting of the Urban Development Directorate in Udhm Singh Nagar district here on Tuesday that bus stations are being built at Kichha and Khatima at the cost of Rs 9.63 crore and Rs 8.27 crore respectively. He further said that the works on these constructions are nearly complete. He added that constructions of Pant Park in Kashipur and Deen Dayal Park in Khatima have already been completed. Besides, the work of building a leper ashram in Khatima at the estimated cost of Rs 1 crore has been completed too. Also, he directed the officers concerned to complete construction of 1872 EWS houses under the Prime Minister Awas Yojana by March 31, 2025.

Venkateshvara University felicitates women power

DEHRADUN: Shri Venkateshvara University and the Women Welfare department of Uttar Pradesh Government hosted jointly Venkateshvara Veerangana Samman Samaroh 2024 in the university's Meerut campus on Tuesday to mark the centenary of the Kakori train action which refers to the loot of the British treasury at Kakori station by the revolutionaries to shore up funds for the freedom movement. During the event, a number of accomplished women from the fields of education, art, literature, sports, nursing, medicine, police and administration were felicitated. Among the dignitaries present on the occasion were the chairman of the Venkateshvara Group of Institutions Sudhir Giri and the pro-chancellor of Shri Venkateshvara University Rajeev Tyagi. Addressing the felicitation programme, Giri said that respect for the brave and accomplished women had been an important part of the country's sanatan culture. In his address, Tyagi said that they felt proud to honour the women who have done remarkable works in multiple fields.



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IIT Roorkee, Kyoto University launch joint research lab on healthy aging

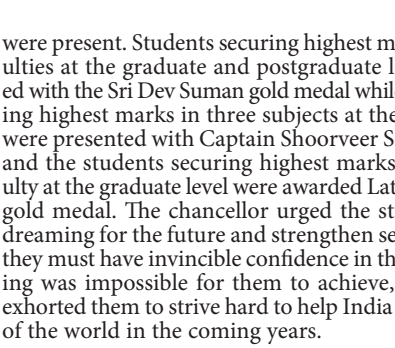
DEHRADUN: The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Roorkee announced the inauguration of the joint lab at Kyoto University, Kyoto, Japan on Tuesday. The lab has a focus on healthy aging starting with eye vision in collaboration with Narayan Netrayalaya. This KU-IITR joint initiative aims at performing transformational research and innovation combining



areas of Biology, Chemistry, AI/ML, Water and Dietary-habits. The director of IIT Roorkee, Prof Kamal Kishore Pant lauded the event, saying that the joint lab marked a milestone in IIT Roorkee's journey to expand its global footprint and impact. The president of Kyoto University, Nagahiro Minato said that by combining their strengths in the fields of chemistry and bioinformatics, IN-CBI would create a foundation for groundbreaking discoveries and lasting societal impact. The deputy chief of mission, Embassy of India, Tokyo R Madhu Sudan conveyed his congratulations on the initiative, stating that the establishment of the IN-CBI lab reflected the deepening India-Japan scientific partnership.

5th convocation held at Sri Dev Suman Uttarakhand University

DEHRADUN: The fifth annual convocation of Sri Dev Suman Uttarakhand University was held at its premises in Rishikesh on Tuesday with the Governor Lt Gen (ret'd) Gurmit Singh having presided over it as the chancellor. A total of 21230 students were awarded bachelors' (17,827) and masters' (3,403) degrees while 81 students were awarded gold medals at the ceremony. The Higher Education minister Dhan Singh Rawat and the State Finance minister Prem Chand Aggarwal were present. Students securing highest marks in all three faculties at the graduate and postgraduate levels were presented with the Sri Dev Suman gold medal while the students securing highest marks in three subjects at the postgraduate level were presented with Captain Shoorveer Singh Panwar medal and the students securing highest marks in Commerce faculty at the graduate level were awarded Late Nandram Purohit gold medal. The chancellor urged the students to continue dreaming for the future and strengthen self-control. Besides, they must have invincible confidence in themselves that nothing was impossible for them to achieve, he added. He also exhorted them to strive hard to help India emerge as the Guru of the world in the coming years.



KU's Hindi researcher felicitated at VIBHA 2024

NAINITAL: The head of the Hindi department of Kumaun University's DSB campus Prof Nirmala Dhaila Bora and the teachers of the department expressed happiness over a research scholar of the Hindi department Arvind Kumar having participated in the national researcher conference organised by the Bharatiya Shikshan Mandal Yuva Aayam titled 'Vision for Developed India (VIBHA) - 2024' and felicitated on the occasion by the former vice-chancellor of Indira Gandhi Open University, Prof Sumitra Kukreti. Hailing the researcher's achievement as a special one for the university's Hindi department, Prof Bora said that this would inspire other researchers. The three-day national researcher conference 2024 was held at SGT University Gurugram from November 15 to 17 inaugurated by the RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat. Nobel laureate Kailash Satyarthi, the Navy Chief Admiral Dinesh Kumar Tripathi and yoga guru Baba Ramdev along with the vice-chancellors of various universities and directors of IITs were among the participants.

Adi Shankaracharya's seat reaches Jyotirmath

PNS ■ JYOTIRMATH

Following the closure of Badrinath Dham on Sunday, the seat of Adi Shankaracharya reached the winter abode of the lord at the Narsinh Mandir in Jyotirmath to the accompaniment of the army band the devotees on Tuesday. The local residents and other devotees welcomed the procession with a shower of flowers. The procession was welcomed by devotees at various locations. Udhav and Kuber will spend the winter at Pandukeshwar, where they will be ceremoniously worshipped during the six months when the main shrine is closed to the public. The seat of Adi Shankaracharya was brought to Jyotirmath by the Rawal, Dharmadhikari and others.



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Post-mortem house capacity to be expanded at district hospital

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

With the expansion of the post-mortem house at Deen Dayal Upadhyay District Hospital, the capacity for storing bodies will increase from four to six, the medical superintendent of the hospital Dr VS Chauhan said. This decision was made in response to a recent tragic incident in Dehradun where six young adults lost their lives. The Dehradun police faced challenges in managing the bodies of the deceased due to limited space. In light of this situation, the chief medical officer has taken the initiative to expand the post mortem house at the district hospital.



expand the post mortem house by adding an additional deep freezer. This change will bring the total number of deep freezers to three. Consequently, with this increase from the previous four, the post mortem facility will now be able to hold six bodies simultaneously. Chauhan said that the post mortem falls under the CMO's jurisdiction and that there is no electricity supply from the district hospital, making undisturbed electricity supply challenging in that area. In light of this situation, on the instruction of the CMO, the hospital administration will now provide round-the-clock electricity to the post mortem house. It is anticipated that a new deep freezer will be installed soon, allowing for the completion of pending post-mortems. He added that with the expansion, a new accessway will be built for the post-mortem room.

Stating this, Chauhan added that the CMO has recently decided to expand the facility at the district hospital's post mortem house. Initially, only two deep freezers were available, resulting in the hospital administration being able to accommodate only four bodies at a time. In light of this, the CMO has made the decision to

NORTHERN RAILWAY TENDER NOTICE
Tender Notice No-03/04/05/07/09/10-SNT-SMC/MB-2024-25 Date: 18.11.2024
Sr. Divisional Signal and Telecom engineer/Moradabad for and on behalf of President of India invites Open tenders through E-Tendering system for the following works-

ICICI Home Finance Corporate Office: ICICI Home Finance Company Limited ICICI HFC Tower, Andheri - Kurla Road, Andheri (East), Mumbai - 400059, India
Branch Office: 3rd Floor, Shop No. 21/A2, Rajpur Road-2, Near Cross Road Mall, Dehradun UK- 248001.
Notice for sale of immovable assets through Private Treaty

IIFL FINANCE CIN: L67100MH1995PLC093797
Regd. Office: IIFL House, Sun Infotech Park, Road No. 16V, Plot No. B-23, Thane Industrial Area, Wagle Estate, Thane - 400604

PUBLIC NOTICE OF E-AUCTION OF GOLD ORNAMENTS
It is hereby notified to all concerned borrower(s) in specific and the public, in general, that we, IIFL Finance Limited ("IIFL") are auctioning gold ornaments of defaulted customers who neither regularized their loans nor paid the outstanding amount despite being informed through registered auction notices and repeated reminders.

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# 70 per cent reduced violence in disturbed areas: HM Amit Shah

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ GANDHINAGAR

Union Minister of Home Affairs, Amit Shah, on Tuesday said the BJP-led government at the Centre has successfully brought down violence in Jammu and Kashmir (J and K), North-East and Naxal-hit areas by 70 per cent in the last 10 years. Making this assertion at the inaugural event of the 50th All India Police Science Conference (AIPSC) at the Rashtriya Raksha University in Gandhinagar, he expressed confidence that the coming decade will make the Indian criminal justice system the most scientific and fastest in the world. "For years, three regions were considered very disturbed-Kashmir, North-East, and Naxalite-affected areas. We have made significant improvements in the security of all these three regions. Comparing the data of the last 10 years with the period before that shows that we have been successful in reducing violence by 70 per cent," Shah said. "I believe this is a very big achievement. A large number of people have wholeheartedly supported the government's efforts to reduce this (violence)," he said. Even in terms of controlling the narcotics trade, the seizure of drugs has increased six times in the last 10 years as compared to what it was a decade ago, he said. Shah said that following the implementation of three new criminal laws this year, justice will be delivered to people from the Supreme Court (SC) level within three years from the date of registration of an

FIR. "The coming 10 years is the time to make India's criminal justice system the most modern, most scientific and fastest. Ever since I was born, I have heard taunts that one gets delayed justice from the court. I want to assure you that after the implementation of the three new criminal laws, one will get justice from the SC within three years of the FIR registration at any police station in the country," he said. The three new criminal laws - Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) and the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam (BSA) -- came into force from July 1, 2024, replacing the British-era Indian Penal Code (IPC), Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) and the Indian Evidence Act, respectively. India became the fifth largest economy from the 11th a decade ago, Shah said, adding that he was confident of India becoming the third largest economy before April 1, 2028. According to him, in the last 10 years, India progressed to lead the world in every area, whether in terms of economy, technology, security, education, research and development, or infrastructure and trade, and the progress has only increased the country's challenges. He said that India conducted its elections smoothly and handled the COVID-19 pandemic well to the surprise of the world. "When the world recognises our strengths, our challenges grow. And we will have to prepare ourselves by keeping these challenges in mind," he said.



# Space X launches ISRO satellite

PTI ■ BENGALURU

The country's latest communication satellite, GSAT-N2 was successfully launched by billionaire Elon Musk-founded SpaceX from Cape Canaveral in the US, ISRO's commercial arm, NewSpace India Limited (NSIL) has said. The communication satellite will enhance broadband services and in-flight connectivity across the Indian region, NSIL said. As the satellite was heavier than ISRO's current launch capabilities, it had to opt for a

foreign launch vehicle, top space scientists and former chiefs of the country's space agency said. K Sivan, former ISRO chairperson said, "The satellite was a heavier one beyond the capability of ISRO launch vehicles. That is why it has gone outside." The 4,700kg GSAT-N2 High-Throughput Satellite (HTS) onboard a Falcon 9 rocket was injected into the desired orbit. "NSIL's GSAT-N2 HTS communication satellite successfully launched from Cape Canaveral, USA on 19th November 2024."

GSAT-N2 weighing 4700 kg has been injected into the desired Geo-synchronous Transfer Orbit (GTO) and ISRO's Master Control Facility (MCF) has taken control of the satellite. Preliminary data indicates satellite in good health," NSIL posted on X. The second Demand Driven satellite of NSIL, GSAT-N2 is a Ka-band HTS that will enhance broadband services and in-flight connectivity across the Indian region, NSIL said. GSAT-24 was NSIL's first demand driven satellite and launched from

Kourou, French Guiana on June 23, 2022. "This satellite (GSAT-N2) featuring multiple spot beams and wideband Ka x Ka transponders, aims to support a large subscriber base with small user terminals, boosting system throughput through its multi-beam architecture which allows frequency reuse," NSIL said. The satellite has a mission life of 14 years and is equipped with 32 user beams, comprising eight narrow spot beams over the Northeast region and 24 wide spot beams over the rest of India.

# Divisions lead to defeat: Rajnath Singh



PTI ■ HYDERABAD

Rajnath Singh, defence minister, stressed the importance of unity in the country, saying divisions have always led to defeat. He also asserted that securing the country's culture is as important as keeping the borders safe. "Whenever our unity has weakened, invaders have tried their best to destroy our civilisation and our culture," Singh said. Therefore, a pledge of unity should be taken by learning from history, he added. "Those who divide, they try to divide in many ways, including into different religions, castes and sects," the minister said. "But, you should not get divided. You should neither divide nor divide others, the whole country has to stay together. We have to stay united. If we avoid division, we will move towards development and build a developed and strong India," Singh said. He was speaking at 'Koti Deepotsavam', an event of mass lighting of 'Deepam' during the Hindu month of Kartik organised by a private TV channel here Monday night. Quoting from ancient scriptures, he said unity is the

strength of society. By ensuring unity, the light should be spread not just in the country but the whole world as India sees the entire world as one family, Singh said. "The government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi is also focused on cultural revival. Cultural development is also important for a country along with political, economic and social development, he said. If a nation loses its culture, then that country suffers, Singh added. "As the defence minister, it is my responsibility to ensure that the country's borders remain safe under our leadership. But, in my view, keeping the country's culture safe is as important as ensuring the safety of the borders," he said. India is not just a political entity but it also has a cultural identity of thousands of years due to which we are known and accepted all over the world, the Defence Minister said. No country is made up of just a piece of land and its people, rather a nation is made up of its culture, he said. "If hatred is filled among the people of a country towards their culture, that country would get divided at some point in time," he said.

# Bihar government seeks classical status for Maithili

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ GANDHINAGAR

The Nitish Kumar government in Bihar has written to Union home minister Amit Shah seeking the grant of classical language status to Maithili. The letter by state education minister Sunil Kumar, dated November 18, was shared on X by Janara Dal (United) (JD(U)) working president Sanjay Kumar Jha, a close aide of the Bihar chief minister. "I thank Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on behalf of residents of Mithila region for the formal request made by the Bihar education department, to the Centre, for grant of classical language (shastriya bhasha) status to Maithili," Jha wrote on the micro-blogging site. The Rajya Sabha MP disclosed that he had broached the issue last month, with officials of the Union Ministry for Culture.

# Giriraj Singh echoes BJP dog whistles in poll bound Jharkhand



PTI ■ BENGALURU

Attacking the ruling Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM)-Congress coalition in Jharkhand, Giriraj Singh, Union textiles minister, on Tuesday claimed that Chief Minister Hemant Soren wants to turn the state capital, Ranchi, into Karachi. Speaking to reporters in Patna, Singh urged the people of Jharkhand to vote for the safety of women. "Hemant Soren and Congress

want to turn Ranchi into Karachi, and Dumka, Deoghar and Sahibganj districts into Bangladesh. The Congress and its allies want to divide us. I urge people, a day before the final phase of polling in Jharkhand, to vote for the safety of their bahubeti," he said. Polling for 38 Assembly seats in the second phase will be held in Jharkhand on Wednesday. Accusing the Congress and its allies of dividing the people, Singh said, "They are talking

about vote-jihad. Their basic motive is to divide the votes of the majority community. People must not allow this to happen." Asked about Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge likening the BJP and RSS to poison, he said, "Although he is a puppet in the Congress, he should not use such unparliamentary and derogatory words. In fact, Congress leaders use poisonous words in their speeches with a motive to divide the voters into communal lines." Addressing a rally in Sangli in Maharashtra on Sunday, Kharge said, "If there is anything which is politically the most dangerous in India, it is the BJP and RSS. They are like poison. If a snake bites the person (who is bitten) dies, such a poisonous snake should be killed." On the allegations of religious conversions in Buxar, Motihari, Begusarai and Lakhisarai districts of Bihar, Singh said strict action must be taken against preachers indulging in such activities.

# SP writes to ECI over burqa checks

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ LUCKNOW

A day before polling begins for nine assembly seats in Uttar Pradesh, the Samajwadi Party (SP) has written to the Election Commission (EC), raising concerns over alleged misuse of power by police officials during past elections. The party has demanded that Muslim women voters not be subjected to burqa removal during the voting process. The letter, submitted by the SP on Monday, requested the EC to issue a written directive to Returning Officers, District Magistrates, General Observers, and police officials to ensure that police personnel refrain from verifying voter ID cards on polling day. According to the SP, this responsibility lies solely with polling officers. The SP alleged that during the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, police officers at polling stations intimidated Muslim women voters by forcing them to remove their burqas for identification. The party claims this led to many voters leaving without casting their ballots, significantly reducing voter turnout in affected areas.



The by-election is being viewed as a battle of prestige for both the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the opposition SP. While the results will not impact the formation or collapse of the government, their political significance is immense. This is the first major electoral test for the BJP after the SP-Congress alliance inflicted a blow to the NDA in Uttar Pradesh during the general elections. Campaigning for the nine assembly seats ended at 5 p.m. on Monday. Voting will take place on Wednesday,

November 20, from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. These by-elections were necessitated by various reasons, and the notification for them was issued on October 18. Despite the official announcement a month ago, all parties had been preparing for the contest for several months. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has actively overseen the BJP's campaign, delegating seat-wise responsibilities to ministers as early as July. The BJP has fielded candidates on eight of the nine seats, while its NDA ally Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) is contesting the Meerapur seat. The BJP has anchored its campaign on development and Hindutva, projecting its governance track record and ideological commitments. In contrast, the SP has focused on consolidating its PDA alliance, which targets backward classes, Dalits, and minorities. As the state braces for polling day, political observers anticipate that the by-election results will carry significant implications for the BJP and SP ahead of the 2027 Assembly elections.

# Punjab by-poll a litmus test for sitting MPs, wives and AAP government

PTI ■ CHANDIGARH

Punjab's ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) would like to register victories after its dismal performance in the Lok Sabha election while the Congress and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) are also going all out for triumph in the by-elections to four assembly segments going to polls on Wednesday. By-polls to the four Assembly segments -- Gidderbaha, Dera Baba Nanak, Chabbawal and Barnala -- will take place on November 20 from 7 am to 6 pm and counting will be held on November 23. By-polls were necessitated after MLAs representing them were elected to the Lok Sabha. Of the four Assembly segments, Gidderbaha, Dera Baba Nanak and Chabbawal were earlier held by the Congress, and the Barnala seat by the AAP. 45 candidates, including three women, are in the fray for the by-polls and 6.96 lakh voters are eligible to exercise their

franchise at 831 polling stations. More than 6,400 Punjab Police personnel and 17 companies of the Central Armed Police Forces have been deployed for peaceful elections, they said, adding that there will be 100 per cent webcasting of all polling stations. Campaigning for the by-polls to four Assembly segments ended on Monday evening. The bypolls will decide the fate of key contestants, including Manpreet Singh Badal, BJP nominee and former Punjab finance minister, Congress' Amrita Warring, Jatinder Kaur, AAP's Hardeep Singh Dimpy Dhillon, Dr Ishank Kumar Chabbawal and BJP's Kewal Singh Dhillon, Sohan Singh Thandal and Ravikaran Singh Kahlon. Amrita Warring is the wife of Amrinder Singh Raja Warring, Punjab Congress chief and Ludhiana MP while Jatinder Kaur is the spouse of Gurdaspur MP and former



Punjab deputy chief minister Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa. The Gidderbaha constituency in Muktsar district is set to see a fierce three-cornered fight. The seat fell vacant after Raja Warring, who was a Congress MLA, was elected to the Lok Sabha from the Ludhiana seat in the 2024 Parliamentary elections. Congress' Amrita Warring, who is contesting

for the first time, BJP's Manpreet Singh Badal and AAP's Hardeep Singh Dimpy Dhillon are in the fray. Shiromani Akali Dal (Amritsar) (SAD) has also fielded Sukhraj Singh, son of one of the 2015 Behbal Kalan police firing victims. Raja Warring was elected Gidderbaha MLA in 2012, 2017 and 2022.

Manpreet Singh, who earlier represented this seat four times on SAD tickets, is looking to wrest this Assembly segment for BJP this time, after 12 years. His uncle and five-time Punjab chief minister late Parkash Singh Badal had represented Gidderbaha five times. Similarly, Hardeep Dhillon, who lost this seat twice to

Warring in 2017 and 2022, would also want to register victory. He had joined the AAP after quitting the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) in August. The Barnala seat will see a multi-cornered contest with the AAP fielding Harinder Singh Dhaliwal, Congress nominating Kuldeep Singh Dhillon and BJP Kewal Singh Dhillon. Shiromani Akali Dal (Amritsar) has fielded Govind Singh Mann, who is the maternal grandson of former MP and party chief Simranjit Singh Mann, while AAP rebel Gurdeep Singh Bath is fighting as an independent candidate. This seat fell vacant after Gurmeet Singh Hayer, who was an AAP MLA, was elected from the Sangrur Lok Sabha seat. He had won the Barnala seat in 2017 and 2022 assembly polls. In the Chabbawal reserve Assembly segment, the AAP has fielded Dr Ishank Kumar Chabbawal, the son of AAP's Hoshiarpur MP Raj Kumar

Chabbawal. The BJP has fielded former Akali MLA and former minister Sohan Singh Thandal, who quit the SAD last month, while the Congress named Ranjit Kumar, who had unsuccessfully contested the 2024 Lok Sabha polls from Hoshiarpur as a Bahujan Samaj Party candidate. The Chabbawal by-election was necessitated after Raj Kumar Chabbawal, who was a Congress MLA but later joined the AAP, was elected to the Lok Sabha from Hoshiarpur. The Dera Baba Nanak seat will witness a three-cornered fight with Congress' Jatinder Kaur, the wife of Gurdaspur MP Sukhjinder Randhawa, AAP nominee Gurdeep Singh Randhawa and BJP's Ravikaran Singh Kahlon, who switched over from the SAD, in the fray. The Dera Baba Nanak is considered a Congress bastion as Sukhjinder Randhawa represented this seat in 2002, 2012, 2017 and

2022. The seat fell vacant after Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa, who was the Congress MLA from here, was elected from the Gurdaspur parliamentary seat. The SAD has opted to stay away from the by-polls. The party took the decision not to participate in the by-polls after Sukhbir Singh Badal, who has now resigned as the SAD president, failed to get any temporary relief from the Akal Takht, which declared him 'tankhaiya' (person guilty of religious misconduct), for the 'mistakes' committed by his party and government from 2007 to 2017. The by-polls are being seen as a litmus test for Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann whose government has completed a two-and-half-year term. The victory will be important for Mann given his party's dismal performance in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls in which it could win just three of 13 Parliamentary constituencies.

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PAPER WITH PASSION

## Time for reckoning

Today Maharashtra will vote to decide its future leadership and political trajectory

Maharashtra, one of India's most politically significant states, votes for all 288 Assembly seats today. This election comes at a time of heightened political fragmentation and social unrest, making its outcome crucial for both state and national politics. A key issue in this election is the split within the Shiv Sena, a party long associated with Maharashtra's regional pride. The party is now divided into two factions: one led by Uddhav Thackeray, aligned with the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) coalition of the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) and Congress, and the other by Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, supported by the BJP. This division has significantly eroded the party's traditional voter base, creating uncertainty about its performance in this election. Adding to the complexity is the Maratha reservation demand. The Maratha community, constituting about 30 per cent of the state's population, is pushing for inclusion in the Other Backward Classes (OBC) category to access job and educational quotas. Protests, led by figures like Manoj Jarange Patil, have brought this issue to the forefront, with the ruling BJP-Shiv Sena alliance attempting to address it through policy measures. However, the unresolved tensions could influence voter sentiment, especially in rural areas.



The BJP-led alliance faces further challenges from agrarian distress in regions like Vidarbha and Marathwada. Falling crop prices for key produce such as cotton and onions have caused financial strain on farmers, traditionally a significant voting bloc. The MVA has capitalised on this dissatisfaction, highlighting the BJP's failure to protect Maharashtra's economic interests, including the recent relocation of major industrial projects to Gujarat. This election also reflects national-level dynamics. The results will test the BJP's ability to maintain its dominance amid growing opposition unity and could signal the strength of the Congress and its allies. A victory for the MVA might energise the national opposition, while a BJP win could consolidate its position. With a fragmented political landscape, Maharashtra's election promises to be closely contested. Its outcome will likely shape not only the state's future but also set the tone for national politics in the coming years. The political landscape of the state stands at a crossroads today. With a deeply fragmented Shiv Sena, intense debates over Maratha reservations, and agrarian distress weighing on rural voters, this election carries stakes far beyond the state's borders. The outcome would indeed be a pointer to the prowess of the BJP at the national level and the resilience of the INDI alliance. Besides the state is an economic powerhouse and whosever rules the state also enjoys the support of corporate world to keep its momentum going.

### PICTALK



Folk dancers perform during the celebration of the 297th foundation day of 'Pink City', Jaipur

## Buddhas in the boardroom: How meditation can counter burnout

Meditation, once reserved for monks, is emerging as a transformative practice for professionals, helping them fight burnout

With increased screen time, back-to-back meetings and the constant scramble of the hustle culture, we need to consider — whether are we running the show, or just running. Workplace burnout is the price often paid for juggling high expectations, tight deadlines and the need to be available for work all the time — while disregarding personal health and well-being.

**Understanding workplace burnout:** Burnout is beyond the feeling of tiredness at the end of a busy day. It's a state of chronic physical and emotional exhaustion, coupled with detachment, cynicism and reduced performance. The WHO officially recognised burnout as an occupational phenomenon, signifying its critical impact on modern work-life. It affects mental clarity and emotional resilience and can even have physiological repercussions on heart health and sleep patterns.

**Why meditation:** Amid the workday, meditation offers an oasis — a moment to pause, reflect, and realign. The practice, often associated with



monks and mountain retreats, is now being rediscovered in the boardroom. The reason is simple: meditation fosters the ability to be present, grounded and conscious of one's thoughts and actions. Research has shown that regular meditation can alter brain activity, shifting it from the limbic system (responsible for our fight-or-flight responses) to the prefrontal cortex (the centre for rational thinking and calmness). This neurological shift translates to a greater sense of control over stress, enabling clearer decision-making and enhancing focus. Yoga emphasises how yogic, breathing and meditation techniques can lead to transformative wellbeing. Studies on Yoga have reported a positive impact on holistic wellbeing, with participants reporting reductions in anx-

ety, stress, and burnout by 72-82 per cent. This makes it an effective, research-backed solution for integrating meditation into workplace wellness.

**Transforming work culture through yogic practices**  
The tangible benefits of meditation go beyond stress relief. In practice, this means a more focused team, resilient in the face of challenges, and more open to collaboration. Some organisations are already creating environments where wellness isn't a perk but a pillar of their work culture. We need Buddhas in the boardroom.

**How meditation rewrites your life script:** Meditation is more than sitting in silence; it's about training the mind to be resilient. Techniques such as deep breathing, guided protocols and visualisation help individuals develop a heightened state of non-judgemental awareness, balance emotions, and build a strong mental framework to manage stress effectively. One standout programme is YOI, which has garnered attention for its multifaceted approach to wellbeing. Imagine being able to handle feedback with-

out feeling criticised or meeting a deadline without feeling panic — meditation offers a gateway to equanimity. As game-changers in the corporate world, meditative practices build the mental stamina to bounce back from setbacks, maintain composure under pressure, and approach situations with a growth mindset.

**Meditation at work**  
Meditation in the workplace doesn't require a meditation mat or a designated room; it just requires an integration of intention, emotion and awareness. Here are some strategies to help you get started: A few minutes of breathing or focusing on your senses can help reset your mental state. Begin your meetings with a minute of silence or guided breathing. It helps everyone clear their minds and be more present. As the world continues to spin, meditation serves as a reminder — that the power to pause and find a balance lies within.

(The writer is, mental health researcher and the founder of Yoga of Immortals; views are personal)



ISHAN SHIVANAND

In a moving tribute to late Ratan Tata, Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke of the many dimensions of the industrial icon's personality that endeared him to the people. Pursuit of excellence and empathy were among the most dominant traits in late Ratan Tata leading him to pilot the Tata conglomerate towards greater heights of success and expansion. Under his two decades of stewardship, the Tata group witnessed a phenomenal spread of its global footprints and established itself as a vibrant brand.

Perhaps like many others from West Bengal, Ratan Tata's passing brought to my mind the Singur — Tata Nano factory episode. Those dark days of lost opportunities, signified a major recal, for the hope of an industrial regeneration in the state. A party and government which had, for over three decades patronised, militant trade unionism had suddenly decided to reverse that trend. It was ironic to see it clamber for investment in a feverish pitch after having presided over the de-industrialisation of the state.

The destruction of Bengal's once formidable industrial might is a map of the CPI(M) rise in the state. Howrah, once famed as the 'Sheffield of the east', turned into West Bengal's principal industrial graveyard under the communists. As early as the 1920s Dr Ambedkar had seen through and realised the oft-duplicious approach of the communist-led trade-unionism. In the pages of his Bahishkrut Bharat he wrote how communists were 'trying to capture the labour movement in the country' and that 'the main aim behind the strike' was 'not to improve the economic conditions of workers but to train them for revolution.' He could foresee the cancer that was trying to claw into India's industrial entrails.

Let us recall how then West Bengal Chief Minister Jyoti Basu had sanctioned protests against the Metro Rail project. The communist-driven frenzied trade-unionism destroyed several iconic public undertakings such as the Haringhata Milk



Dairy, set up by Dr BC Roy had created a milk supply chain across the state while generating thousands of jobs. Much like Mamata Banerjee who has refused to enlist West Bengal in the Centre's 'Aspirational District Project' and remains lukewarm to the 'Ekalavya Vidyalaya' scheme, Basu in 1986, had forbade the setting up of Navodaya Schools in the state. In 1974, three years before he came to power as Chief Minister, Basu had organised a relay protest in front of the Hongkong Bank regional office in Kolkata to stall the installation of computers. Yet ironically the same Jyoti Basu in 1994, commissioned Arthur Anderson, a multinational business consultant, to carry out a study of the chances of West Bengal's industrial revival based on foreign investment. But progress was halting, it lacked a roadmap.

Thus, when Ratan Tata decided to invest in the state it was a whiff of more than fresh air, it was a long-needed gush of wind for breathing fresh life into a dying industrial ethos. A hopeful Tata had then said that he had 'scanned the country and looked at various locations before deciding to locate this rather revolution-

MUCH LIKE MAMATA BANERJEE WHO HAS REFUSED TO ENLIST WEST BENGAL IN THE CENTRE'S FLAGSHIP 'ASPIRATIONAL DISTRICT PROJECT' AND REMAINS LUKEWARM TO THE 'EKALAVYA VIDYALAYA' SCHEME, BASU IN 1986, HAD FORBADE THE SETTING UP OF NAVODAYA SCHOOLS IN THE STATE

**UKRAINE TO USE LONG-RANGE MISSILES**  
Madam — If this news is true that finally, US President Joe Biden has given the green signal to Ukraine to use long-range American missiles against Russia, then it is very good news for Ukraine. Because for the last one and a half years, Ukrainian President Zelensky was asking for permission to use these long-range weapons. Otherwise, this weapon will remain just a showpiece and one day Russia will capture it and then it will start using it to capture some third country.

This decision is also necessary because the Biden administration is now a guest for only two months. The president who will come after him, Trump, has already announced that he will stop giving any kind of help to Ukraine. The second big reason for Biden's change of heart seems to be that with the support of Russia, about 10 thousand combat soldiers of North Korea have taken up the front against Ukraine. In such a situation, Ukraine should have gotten this permission at all costs. The news of Biden's decision came after meetings with the leaders of South Korea, Japan and China in the last two days. The inclusion of North Korean troops was the main topic of the talks, which took place during the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in Peru. Europe was already ready to give permission. But America was not ready. It is said that American missiles will be able to hit up to 300 kilometers inside Russia at three times the speed of sound, which even Russia's anti-missile equipment will not be able to intercept.

Jang Bahadur Singh | Jamshedpur

**VIOLENCE ESCALATES IN MANIPUR**  
Madam — Apropos of the headlines on Manipur violence (November 18), the resurgence of violence in Manipur goes unabated. The violence and sabotage look beyond control. The MLAs and ministers of different political parties are being attacked and their houses are ransacked. The democratic fabric in Manipur has been destroyed by the extremists and irate

## India tests hypersonic missile



India's hypersonic missile technology has received a shot in the arm after a long-range hypersonic missile was tested by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO). With a range exceeding 1500 km, the missile is intended to carry wide-ranging payloads for all three services of the Indian armed forces. These indigenously developed missiles are special because they travel with a speed five

times that of sound at sea level, at approximately 6200 km per hour, and at a mile per second. Hypersonic missiles are extremely difficult to detect, making enemy radars nigh impossible to spot them before they are too close for comfort. Their maneuverability and ability to fly at lower altitudes separate them from the ballistic missiles that follow a set path. Hypersonic missiles can also be partially projected into orbit via a glide vehicle through the fractional orbital bombardment system (FOBS) unlike the ballistic missiles, though the latter can travel faster. Till now, Russia, China and the United States possess full-fledged hypersonic capabilities, while Germany, France, Japan, Australia, Iran and Israel are on course to follow suit. India has, thus, joined the elite 'hypersonic group.' Kudos to ISRO for another feather in the cap.

Ganapathi Bhat | Akola

mobs. Education, health, development and civic administration are in peril. The elected government has turned dysfunctional and there are threats and possibilities of destabilising the state government. It is quite apparent that the efforts of peace in the first phase of violence have failed despite the newly elected state government post-violence.

Earlier, there were reports of missionaries inciting violence in the state. The Manipur violence has affected neighbouring states of Assam, Tripura and Nagaland. In fact, the Manipur violence has a secessionist motive and the disruptive and separatist forces behind the Manipur violence are based across the borders. It is, therefore, imperative that President Rule may be imposed in the state and the assembly may be suspended till normalcy returns and the political atmosphere is congenial for restoration of the assembly and the government. The Manipur mayhem should not be taken as political mileage by the opposition parties. The India-Myanmar border should be sealed with immediate effect,

though this is practically very difficult.

Vinod Johri | Delhi

**KAILASH GAHLOT QUILTS AAP**  
Madam — Gahlot resigned from AAP, citing the party's shift from focusing on public welfare to prioritising political ambitions. In his resignation letter to AAP National Convener Arvind Kejriwal, Gahlot stated that instead of fighting for people's rights, the party had increasingly been focused on its own agenda. He also expressed dissatisfaction with controversies like the 'Sheeshmahal' row, questioning whether AAP still upheld its core identity as the party of the common man. AAP responded by alleging that Gahlot's resignation was influenced by pressure from central agencies investigating him, a claim Gahlot dismissed. The BJP believes that Gahlot's entry strengthens its position as it prepares to challenge AAP in the upcoming elections.

Akhilesh Krishnan | Vashi

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



ANIRBAN GANGULY

# West Bengal's lost opportunity

Tata Nano factory's relocation from West Bengal to Gujarat is a poignant reminder of how political myopia derailed a golden opportunity for Bengal's industrial revival



MUCH LIKE MAMATA BANERJEE WHO HAS REFUSED TO ENLIST WEST BENGAL IN THE CENTRE'S FLAGSHIP 'ASPIRATIONAL DISTRICT PROJECT' AND REMAINS LUKEWARM TO THE 'EKALAVYA VIDYALAYA' SCHEME, BASU IN 1986, HAD FORBADE THE SETTING UP OF NAVODAYA SCHOOLS IN THE STATE

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



## FIRST COLUMN

### A DIET FOR PEACE: KINDNESS OVER CRUELTY

The food we consume shapes not just our physical health but also our thoughts, actions and the world



RAJYOGI BRAHMA KUMAR NIKUNJ JI

It has been rightly said that we are what we eat because the kind of food that we eat has a direct impact on how we think and therefore it's crucial to what we become finally. Recent studies made by modern medical science have suggested that the human body is not naturally designed to digest and assimilate non-vegetarian food. That is why today most medical practitioners recommend a healthy vegetarian diet to their patients who are suffering from lifestyle disorders. Along with scientific studies, individual researchers made all over the world have also clearly pointed out that when an animal is killed for meat, it experiences fear, anxiety and pain. Its hormonal secretions are then passed on to its consumers. Such a diet is therefore unhealthy both for the body and the mind. In many religions, a non-vegetarian diet is strictly forbidden not just because it causes pain and suffering to other living creatures but also because it is the source of vicious thoughts and attitudes to its consumers. In other words, non-vegetarian food is a gateway to a non-vegetarian lifestyle, a way of living where vices dwell comfortably. One must understand that human cruelty towards animals is nothing but a way of inviting cruelty onto the self. Also, the current trend of mass consumption of flesh by human beings highlights the way we look at other living beings and our desire to subjugate them.



From a broader perspective, the mass consumption of non-vegetarian food is a way of heaping sin upon the human community. No peace marches, diplomatic dialogues and conferences can bring peace to the planet when we are burdening it with the desperate cries of hapless creatures. For what we sow, so shall we reap. It is so ironic that the largely meat-eating developed countries of the world have stringent laws when it comes to treating a pet and it is ensured that if the pet is hurt, the owner can even be imprisoned. However, in these very countries, millions of animals are killed every day for food and yet no one goes to jail. Isn't it surprising that so many animal lovers continue to be non-vegetarians because they are unable to connect with the cruelty that goes behind, in the making of such food? Even more surprising was a weird recommendation to find humane methods of animal slaughter made by some so-called animal sympathisers. But the contention here is what can be more inhuman than nourishing an animal to kill it one day. It is a breach of morality by all standards. What is more cruel than subjecting generations of animals to a life of stifling captivity that only leads them to a merciless end? And what is more cruel than killing animals in front of each other? While one is bleeding to death, the other watches in horror and waits for its turn. It is a great pity that even sympathetic humans are left with such little kindness that all they can think of is designing a better way to kill. It's high time that all of us should ask ourselves a question: why does our conscience need a rational argument, sanctioned by a research institute in the West, to realise that killing other living creatures is a form of cruelty?

Why do we need facts and figures to understand that cruelty can never be a bringer of any form of health - be it mind, body or the environment & bring peace and harmony to the world? Can't we realise that a heart that heaves no sigh at the sight of violence cannot be a source of compassion for other fellow men? So how do we expect people who do not nurture the feeling of kindness for other living beings to nurture feelings of brotherhood and forgiveness for their community? Aren't we just walking on one path while seeking another's destination? Just give it a thought and then decide whether to Kill or Heal. Learn to live above self when life is precious to all. Let there be the right to live for all & not just Human Rights, then only world peace will descend.  
*(Writer is a spiritual educator & popular columnist; views are personal)*

# Delhi discoms in crisis: Debt and regulatory gaps



UTTAM GUPTA

A convoluted tariff regime, under-recoveries, power theft, and unpaid subsidies are threatening the sustainability of the Delhi discoms



Delhi Government is looking at various options to address twin problems facing its three power distribution companies (discoms) namely BSES Rajdhani Power Limited (BRPL), discom for South & West Delhi; BSES Yamuna Power Limited (BYPL) — discom for Central & East Delhi; and Tata Power Delhi Distribution Limited or TPDDL - discom for North Delhi. These are (i) "Regulatory Assets" or RAs of Rs 27,200 crore lying in the books of these discoms; (ii) an equally staggering amount of Rs 26,500 crore they owe to power generation and transmission companies viz. Indraprastha Power Generation Co. Ltd (IPGCL), Pragati Power Corporation Limited (PPCL) and Delhi Transco Limited or DTL at the end of September 2024. The discoms are expected to sell electricity to the consumers at tariffs —duly approved by the Delhi Electricity Regulatory Commission (DERC) — that are set in a manner such that the revenue generated from sale at these tariffs fully cover the power purchase cost plus the cost of wheeling and distribution. The requirement is mandatory under the Electricity Act, of 2003. But, this is rarely complied with. Under a highly convoluted regime, the tariff charged from households (HHs) consuming up to 200 units a month is Rs 3 per unit which is just about half of the average cost leading to an under-recovery of Rs 3 per unit. Including levies adding to 44.6 per cent, the shortfall comes to Rs 4.3 per unit (3x1.446). For HHs consuming between 201 and 400 units, the tariff is Rs 4.5 per unit implying an under-recovery of Rs 1.5 per unit. Including the levies, this comes to Rs 2.2 per unit. These under-recoveries are cross-subsidised by charging more from industries and businesses for which the tariff can go up to a high of Rs 16 per unit. The irony is that despite charging exorbitant rates from industries and businesses, a good slice of under-recoveries from HHs consuming less than 400 units a month remains uncovered. Additionally, the Delhi government doesn't want the latter to even pay the small tariff of Rs



THE IRONY IS THAT DESPITE CHARGING EXORBITANT RATES FROM INDUSTRIES AND BUSINESSES, A GOOD SLICE OF UNDER-RECOVERIES FROM HHS CONSUMING LESS THAN 400 UNITS A MONTH REMAINS UNCOVERED

3 per unit (courtesy, of Kejriwal's freebies). Thus, discoms are told not to raise any bill on HHs consuming up to 200 units even as HHs consuming up to 400 units get a flat deduction of Rs 800 per month from the bill amount. Though the government promises to reimburse them for these subsidies from the state budget, this promise is held more in breach. This increases discoms' losses which are compounded by large-scale power theft. Where do RAs fit in? RAs are created when state electricity regulatory commissions (in this case, DERC) accept that the tariffs don't cover discounts' purchase costs but don't raise rates. The gap between the cost and revenue generated from sales at tariffs (albeit unrevised) for supplied power, is booked by discom as receivable and classified as RA. This is contrary to the Electricity Act (2003) and the National Power Tariff Policy (NPTP) which says that "tariffs must reflect costs and regulatory assets should not be created". In December 2022, the Ministry of Power (MoP) even warned against creating a pile of RAs. But, all these regulations/warnings have fallen on deaf ears. All losses incurred by discoms in Delhi during the last 11 years or so have been shown in their books as RAs. Regrettably, the RAs persist despite subsisting mechanisms to enable discoms to offset cost escalation by suitable increases in tariff. As per the order issued by MoP on November 9, 2021, discoms are allowed to impose a surcharge known as PPAC (Power Purchase Agreement Cost). Levied as a percentage of the 'total energy cost and fixed charge component' of the electricity bill, the surcharge is meant to compensate them for variations in the fuel and power procurement cost. Effective from July 2023, the DERC had last increased PPAC vide its order

dated June 22, 2023, by 9.42 per cent for BYPL, 6.39 per cent for BRPL and 2 per cent for TPDDL. The current PPACs for these discoms are 31.6 per cent, 27.08 per cent and 33 per cent respectively. Moreover, DERC has allowed discoms to levy a surcharge of eight per cent. This is intended to plug any shortfall in revenue vis-à-vis the cost still left unplugged after collection of PPAC. Despite these two impositions, the discoms continue to report a substantial shortfall in their revenue from the sale of electricity which is manifest in cumulative monumental RAs of Rs 27,200 crore. It is a manifestation of several glaring pitfalls: (i) the Delhi government isn't reimbursing discoms for the subsidies they give to target consumers on its behalf; (ii) large-scale power theft continues unabated; (iii) discoms have been submitting inflated bills/claims and other financial wrongs; (iv) inefficiencies get full protection. Hesitant to sanction tariff hikes against these extra/unjustified costs, DERC chooses the easy option of putting all these under RAs. The idea of creating RAs is flawed. When a discom petitions DERC to allow any cost increase in tariff, the latter can either reject or accept. In case of acceptance, it should take the process to its logical conclusion by sanctioning the requisite tariff hike and notifying it. It can't leave things hanging in the air by accepting but not 'approving' and 'notifying' the tariff hike. Unfortunately, this is what the DERC has been doing for over a decade. This has dangerous consequences. First, once recorded in their books as RAs, discoms will leave no stone unturned in recovering the money say by getting sanction of a steep hike in tariff to make up for the entire cumulative deficit in revenue. Indeed, the matter had gone right up to the Supreme Court

(SC) which in an order given in early 2023 had directed the DERC to let discoms recover their RAs. This could lead to a 100 per cent hike in tariff. So, the regulator decided to contest that order. Second, until such time the requisite tariff hike is actually sanctioned by the DERC, the RAs can't be treated as an asset. Hence, there remains every possibility of the loans taken from banks and financial institutions (FIs) for funding them becoming non-performing assets (NPAs). Moreover, the banks/FIs may not give more to discoms and their suppliers namely IPGCL/PPCL/DTL more loans. Third, the discoms can leverage the ambiguous classification (neither outright rejection of a claim for tariff hike nor approval) to present claims to the DERC which the latter may not be willing to accept. This leads to substantial claims getting bogged down in legal disputes at the appeal level or in higher courts. To conclude, providing for RAs in the books of discoms is a bad practice. Apart from discoms, it also puts the power generators and transmission companies at serious risk. It can impair the balance sheet of banks and FIs who have given loans to them. It could mean a steep hike in tariffs on supplies to industries/businesses besides HHs consuming more than 400 units a month. To cap it all, it provides a 'cover up' for financial irregularities and corruption. The practice must be shunned. As for the RAs already piled up, a thorough enquiry should be ordered to look into irregularities followed by recovery of money from those found guilty. The discoms should be 'unshackled' from the controls of the State government. If the latter wants to subsidize or provide free power to certain consumers, the money should be given to them directly.  
*(The writer is a policy analyst; views are personal)*

# Delhi's air quality crisis: Action taken for now, but long-term solutions are crucial

## The city faces an urgent need for sustainable, long-term strategies to tackle pollution at its root

The air quality in Delhi has recently deteriorated to dangerously high levels. To address this issue swiftly and effectively, the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) has implemented Stage 4 of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP). This stage involves measures such as restricting bus services, pausing construction work and mining activities, and transitioning primary school classes to online learning. Although these steps are crucial in addressing the current pollution issue promptly, they alone cannot effectively address the underlying factors contributing to air pollution in the long term. It is crucial to prioritise short-term solutions for relief; however, we must not



EILIA JAFAR

overlook the factors that contribute to pollution in the long term as well. One significant factor is the dust produced during construction activities. While the temporary suspension of construction operations following GRAP guidelines is a move in the right direction, it also underscores the urgency of implementing more environmentally friendly building

methods. Germany and Sweden serve as examples of nations that have successfully implemented construction practices. For instance, Germany prioritises the use of low-carbon concrete, whereas Sweden focuses on promoting energy-efficient structures with improved insulation and solar innovations. India has the opportunity to implement strategies to minimise dust and emissions from construction activities and promote sustainable development. The need for transformation in transportation is crucial to address the issue of pollution in Delhi caused by road dust and vehicle emissions. Although the metro system has advanced to some extent in Delhi, there are still areas

with connectivity that need attention. Expanding the metro network and integrating buses can lead to a decrease in private car usage. Moreover, promoting the adoption of electric vehicles (EVs) could play a role in reducing emissions. Providing benefits such as tax incentives, toll discounts, and even offering parking for EVs could potentially increase their attractiveness to commuters. Biking is becoming more popular as an eco-friendly option in Delhi; however, the city's infrastructure doesn't fully support it yet. Although smart bikes are being introduced in some areas, which is a move forward, the absence of marked biking lanes and safety precautions deters many people from bik-



ing. Cities such as Copenhagen and Amsterdam serve as models for incorporating biking into urban environments. Delhi could take inspiration from its approach by investing in infrastructure for cyclists, such as bike lanes and bike-sharing services, to enhance the safety and convenience of cycling for its residents. Encouraging the use of sustainable building methods is crucial too!

Providing incentives for individuals who build energy-efficient houses or utilise eco-friendly materials could greatly support sustainability efforts in communities worldwide. Numerous nations offer tax advantages or financial aid to developers who embrace green building strategies. India could introduce perks like discounts on energy-saving devices, offers on solar panel setups, or financial assistance for homeowners undertaking eco-conscious improvements. These initiatives would not only lessen the burden on energy reserves but also encourage environmentally responsible construction practices. Another helpful way to decrease the number of cars on the road is through carpooling initiatives, such as carpool

lanes and discounts for vehicles with passengers, which have proven effective in countries around the world. Introducing strategies in Delhi, such as designated carpool lanes or toll reductions for cars carrying two or more passengers, could play a role in alleviating traffic congestion and decreasing harmful emissions levels. By implementing these measures, not only would pollution be reduced, but it would also enhance the daily commute experience for numerous residents in the area. The call for action is critical now. The air pollution crisis in NCR intensified on November 17, 2024, as Delhi's average Air Quality Index (AQI) climbed to a hazardous 441 by 4 PM, classified as 'severe,' up from

419 the previous day. The harmful pollutants are linked to health concerns, such as respiratory illnesses and cardiovascular diseases. The Stage 4 actions outlined in the GRAP are crucial for providing relief; however, it is evident that a comprehensive long-term plan is essential to enhance the air quality in Delhi. By emphasising the enhancement of public transportation services, implementing infrastructure for cyclists, advocating for eco-friendly construction methods and encouraging carpooling, Delhi can strive to diminish pollution levels and establish a healthier and more sustainable environment for all residents.  
*(The writer is humanitarian and development professional; views are personal)*

45 pro-democracy activists sentenced in Hong Kong's biggest national security case

Forty-five ex-lawmakers and activists were sentenced to four to 10 years in prison Tuesday in Hong Kong's biggest national security case under a Beijing-imposed law that crushed a once-thriving pro-democracy movement.

held in July 2020 drew 610,000 voters, and its winners had been expected to advance to the official election. Authorities postponed the official legislative election, however, citing public health risks during the COVID-19 pandemic.

academic exercise and that the Scheme was absolutely untenable," the judgment read. "In order to succeed, the organisers and participants might have hurdles to overcome, that however was expected in every subversion case where efforts were made to overthrow or paralyse a government."



Police officers stand guard outside the West Kowloon Magistrates' Courts in Hong Kong on Tuesday. AP/PTI

PUBLIC NOTICE To be known to all that My Clients Anil Yadav S/o Bhadur Singh R/o B1/275 UG Floor Paschim Vihar New Delhi-110063 have debarred & disowned their Daughter Priyanka Yadav from their movable and immovable properties.

PUBLIC NOTICE It is for general information that I, AMREEN ALI D/O ASLAM R/O H.NO-332 B. GALI NO-16, BLOCK-H, GOPAL DAIRY, SANGAM VIHAR, TALIMABAD, PO PUSHPA BHAWAN, DISTT. SOUTH DELHI-110062 declare that name of my father has been wrongly written as MD ASLAM in my 10th and 12th class educational documents.

PUBLIC NOTICE Be it known to the public at large that my client Shakuntla Devi, W/o Ramphal, both permanent residents of R/o S-83/7-238, Indira Camp Begumpur, Mayiya Nagar, S.o. South Delhi, Delhi 110017, have disowned, debar and disinherited his son namely Rohit S/o Ramphal and her wife Ruchika from all their moveable and immovable properties and my client shall not be responsible for any immoral or moral activities from him and her wife, present or future from today.

PUBLIC NOTICE It is to declare that the legal heirs of Lt. Smt. Raj Dulari are her sons i.e. Sh. Manmohan Mehta and Sh. Anil Mehta only. Further Sh. Manmohan Mehta is the sole owner of the freehold property bearing no A-12, Pundrik Vihar Pitampura Delhi 110034 having absolute right vide registered Conveyance Deed dated 22.10.2024

Putin signs doctrine that lowers threshold for using N-weapons

Russian President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday signed a revised nuclear doctrine declaring that a conventional attack on Russia by any nation that is supported by a nuclear power will be considered a joint attack on his country.

which says that any massive aerial attack on Russia could trigger a nuclear response, reflects Putin's readiness to threaten use of the country's nuclear arsenal to force the West to back down as Moscow presses a slow-moving offensive in Ukraine.

so that it is "in line with the current situation". Putin first announced changes in the nuclear doctrine in September, when he chaired a meeting discussing the proposed revisions. The new version of the document states that an attack against his country by a nonnuclear power with the "participation or support of a nuclear power" will be seen as their "joint attack on the Russian Federation".

'e' Procurement NOTICE. No. 2394 / NAC Dt. 11.2024 Bid Identification No. RDL NAC -2/2024-25 Tender ID- 2024\_ORULB\_107063

PUBLIC NOTICE This is for public information that QRG Medicare Limited (Marengo Asia Hospitals, Faridabad), Plot No. 1, Sector 16, Faridabad-121002 is destroying patient medical records (excluding MLC, Death, ongoing court cases and KTP, LTP patients and New born baby IPD files) from April 2018 to September 2018 as per the hospital policy and other regulatory norms.

Brazilian police arrest five officers over alleged coup plot, plans to kill President Lula, others

Brazilian police arrested five officers accused of a coup plot that included plans to overthrow the government following the 2022 elections and kill President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, authorities said.

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"The objective was to prevent the inauguration of the legitimately elected government and undermine the free exercise of democracy and the authority of Brazil's judiciary," de Moraes said in the order. "These actions, peaking between November and December 2022, were part of a broader plan to carry out a coup d'etat," he added.

ATS INFRABUILD PRIVATE LIMITED REGD. OFF. : 711/92, Deepali, Nehru Place, New Delhi-110019

(Amounts in INR Lacs except per share data and ratios) Table with 4 columns: S. No., Particulars, For the Quarter ended (30.09.2024, 30.09.2023), For the Year ended (31.03.2024)

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(DETAILS OF THE CREDIT FACILITY/IES AVAILABLE BY THE BORROWER) Table with 5 columns: SI No, Loan No, Nature of Loan/Limit, Date of sanction, Amount

Several students hurt by vehicle outside school in China

Numerous children were injured by a vehicle outside an elementary school in central China's Hunan province on Tuesday, reports said. Hours after the incident, the casualty count was unclear and authorities had yet to clarify if it was an accident or a deliberate attack.

For and on behalf of the Board of Directors of ATS Infrabuild Private Limited sd/- Kashinath Jha Director DIN:09834435 sd/- Santosh Kumar Director DIN:09835334 Place: Noida Date: 14.11.2024





# Agriculture Minister sounds alarm on soil degradation, calls for urgent action

**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**  
Agriculture Minister Shrivraj Singh Chouhan on Tuesday expressed concern over soil degradation affecting 30 per cent of India's land and stressed the need for urgent measures to maintain soil quality for sustainable farming. Addressing a global conference on soil through video conferencing, Chouhan said improving soil health is crucial for achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) related to zero hunger, climate action and life on land. "We are producing more than 330 million tonnes of foodgrains annually and exporting worth USD 50 billion.



This success however comes with concerns, especially regarding soil health," the minister said. According to Chouhan, about 30 per cent of India's land is experiencing degradation due to rising fertiliser consumption, imbalanced use of fertilisers,

exploitation of natural resources and wrong soil management practices. The minister highlighted various government initiatives, including the distribution of more than 220 million soil health cards to farmers and the promotion of micro irrigation, organic and natural farming methods. However, he emphasised that more focused efforts are needed, particularly in view of rising temperatures, erratic rainfall patterns and climate change challenges. A new programme on modern agriculture will soon be launched to bridge the gap between scientists and farmers, Chouhan added. Speaking at the event, Niti Aayog member Ramesh Chand questioned the limited adoption of conservation agriculture and zero tillage methods in India and South Asia, despite their successful implementation in South American countries like Brazil and Argentina. While some NGOs and private companies are promoting regenerative agriculture and natural farming, these initiatives remain limited in scope, Chand told the conference, calling on the Indian Soil Scientists Society (ISSS) to spearhead larger-scale solutions. The conference was attended by ICAR Director General Himanshu Pathak, Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights Authority Chairperson Trilochan Mohapatra, and ISSS President H Pathak.

# FICCI reduces GST on EV batteries, charging services to boost affordability

**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**  
In order to keep EVs competitive there is a need to reduce GST on batteries and charging services, FICCI Electric Vehicle Committee Chair Sulajja Firodia Motwani said on Tuesday. Speaking at the sidelines of FICCI National Conference on EVs here, she also exhorted the need to enhance PM E-Drive corpus to support enhanced sales of EVs. "We would be making a recommendation to the GST council to rationalise the GST taxation on EV-related areas," Motwani said. Elaborating on the demands, she noted, "Currently the GST on charging services is still 18 per cent which we would request to bring down to 5 per cent so that charging becomes more affordable to the consumers." Secondly, the GST on batteries should also come down to 5 per cent, she added. "While EVs attract a GST of 5 per cent, GST on batteries is



18 per cent. The request is to reduce it to 5 per cent so that when consumers buy replacement batteries, it is more affordable," Motwani said. Meeting that these two reforms on GST will help a lot in making EVs more competitive for the consumers, she stated. While welcoming the PM E-Drive scheme, Motwani said that with rising demand there is a need to review the incentive amounts. "We believe that because the demand is growing, perhaps the incentive amounts have to be reviewed so that the budget under the PM E-Drive scheme

overall is enhanced to ensure that the total number of vehicles sold in the next two years are eligible for the incentive," she stated. She further said, "We do believe that PM E-Drive has great potential, and it will go a long way in further accelerating electric mobility." Motwani also emphasised that EVs should be part of priority sector lending. "We do believe there's a strong case to allow and to help having affordable financing for EVs that can make it more cost competitive for not just the classes, but for the masses," she said. FICCI President and Mahindra Group MD and CEO Anish Shah said electric four-wheelers currently have a 1.5 per cent penetration in India which indicates that "much work is needed". India has a history of leapfrogging other countries and the discussion shifts to the requirements for achieving this with EVs, he said.

# Government addresses steel import issues amid rising concerns

**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**  
The government is working to address the issues related to steel imports, Union Steel Minister H D Kumaraswamy said on Tuesday. The industry has apprised the ministry and it is aware of the issue, Kumaraswamy told PTI on the sidelines of FICCI's Conference - Accelerating E-mobility: Enablers and Imperative. "Some issues are there. They (steel players) are telling some substandard material is getting imported from some countries. For that we are working," he said. Domestic steel players have been consistently raising their concerns over rising cheap steel imports from select nations, affecting their competitiveness. Steel imports have risen by nearly 50 per cent in the first six months of FY25

compared to the same period last year, with China being the largest contributor, BigMint CEO Dhruv Goel said. "This surge is primarily driven by increased Chinese steel exports due to slowing domestic demand there. China's exports are projected to surpass 100 million tonnes in 2024, the highest in eight years," he said. Additionally, Vietnam has contributed significant incremental volumes to India. Exports from Vietnam benefit from the free trade agreement, which exempts them from import duties, Goel noted. According to BigMint data, India's steel imports were at 5.51 million tonnes (MnT) in April-September 2024-25, higher from 3.66 MnT in the year-ago period. Imports from China have surged to 1.85 MnT during that period from 1.02 MnT in April-September period of financial year 2023-24.

# CCPA to bring regulatory framework for diamond industry to protect consumers interest

**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**  
The Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) will soon release guidelines on diamond sector to ensure explicit labelling and certification of all diamonds and prohibit the use of misleading terms in trade. The CCPA has organised a stakeholder consultation on consumer protection in the diamond sector to deliberate on the use of appropriate terminology for diamonds, an official statement said on Tuesday. The consultation, chaired by Nidhi Khare, Chief Commissioner, Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA), brought together key industry stakeholders and experts. "The CCPA will soon release a robust framework to ensure transparency, accountability, and consumer protection across the diamond industry," the statement said. The meeting addressed critical concerns regarding



the lack of standardised terminology and inadequate disclosure practices in the diamond sector. "These gaps have resulted in consumer confusion and misleading practices, especially concerning the differentiation between natural diamonds and lab-grown diamonds," it pointed out. Industry consensus emphasised the need for ethical marketing practices and consistent terminology to enhance consumer protection. "Comprehensive guidelines were proposed to mandate: Explicit labelling and certification of all diamonds, specifying their origin and production method; prohibition of misleading terms like 'natural' or 'genuine' for lab-grown products; accreditation systems to regulate and standardise diamond testing laboratories, curbing the rise of unregulated entities," the statement said. The consultation was a significant step toward building a transparent and

consumer-centric diamond market. During the consultation, the broad key aspects and prevailing Legal and Regulatory frameworks were discussed in detail. Citing an example, the CCPA said that The Legal Metrology Act, 2009, under Section 12, provides the unit of mass for diamonds, pearls, and precious stones as the carat (symbol: c), equivalent to 200 milligrams or one five-thousandth of a kilogram, ensuring standardised measurements for consistency in commercial transactions across the diamond industry. The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) Standard IS 15766:2007 mandates that the term "diamond" alone must exclusively refer to natural diamonds. Synthetic diamonds cannot be labelled as "diamond" without qualification and must be explicitly referred to as "synthetic diamonds," irrespective of the production method or

material used. To maintain market clarity, synthetic diamonds are also prohibited from being graded alongside natural diamonds. Under the Consumer Protection Act, 2019, a robust legal framework to safeguard consumer interests by preventing unfair trade practices and ensuring transparent labelling in the diamond industry is provided. This prohibits misleading descriptions or omissions that may confuse consumers. Further, Central Board in Direct Taxes and Custom (CBIC) reinforced these measures, mandating the explicit declaration of whether a diamond is natural or lab-grown, and if lab-grown, the production method—Chemical Vapor Deposition (CVD), High Pressure High Temperature (HPHT), or others—must be specified to ensure transparency and accountability in the diamond sector.

# 'Her Comfort' campaign to promote menstrual health awareness

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ GURUGRAM**  
Artemis Health Sciences Foundation (AHSF), in partnership with Pinkish Foundation, launched the 'Her Comfort' campaign to promote menstrual health awareness among adolescent girls in underserved areas of Gurugram. The initiative, launched at Govt. Senior Secondary School, Basai, aims to benefit 1,500 girls by providing hygiene kits and education to combat stigma and promote menstrual health. The kits include sanitary pads, undergarments, and educational materials for six months. Workshops will dispel myths and empower girls to manage their health confidently.

# Coal India Ltd receives Green World Awards 2024



**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI**  
Vinay Ranjan, Director, Coal India Limited (CIL), on Monday received the Green World Awards 2024 during much-awaited presentation ceremony at The Orangery, Kensington Palace, London today. The award was given by The Green Organisation, which began in 1994 and is an independent, non-political, non-profit environment group. Vinay Ranjan said that let's this moment inspire us all to take action, protect our environment, and ensure a sustainable future for generations to come. He thanked everyone who supported me on this incredible journey. The Certificate of Achievement was presented to Coal India Coal India Ltd in recognition of winning a Green World Award for their commitment to environment best practice. CIL, living up to its Corporate Citizen role is one of the largest spenders in the country under Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). Coal India as a corporate entity, it contributes to the country's economically and socially apart from its core role as energy provider.

# Foreign portfolio investor Emerging India Focus Funds settles case with Sebi

**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**  
Foreign portfolio investor Emerging India Focus Funds has settled a case pertaining to the alleged violations of FPI rules with capital markets watchdog Sebi after paying Rs 64.35 lakh as settlement charges. In a corollendum to its settlement order, Sebi on Tuesday said that the case concerns to non-compliance with the 'fit and proper' criteria for the period from October 13, 2022, to April 11, 2023. The latest order came after the applicant filed an application with Sebi proposing to settle the proceedings initiated against it, "without admitting or denying the

findings of facts and conclusions of law" through a settlement order. The Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) initiated adjudication proceedings against the applicant and issued a show cause notice in February for the alleged violations of FPI Regulations and Intermediaries Regulations. Pending adjudication proceedings, Emerging India Focus Funds filed an application with Sebi and paid Rs 64.35 lakh on November 13 to settle the alleged violations. "In view of the acceptance of the settlement terms and the receipt of settlement amount by Sebi, the instant adjudication proceedings initiated against applicant vide SCN (show cause notice) dated



February 29, 2024, is disposed of," Sebi said in its order passed on Monday. The SCN was issued to the applicant on account of revocation of license of its controlling shareholder - Emerging India Fund Management Ltd- by the Mauritius financial regulator Financial Services Commission

(FSC) after which the applicant was not in compliance with the 'fit and proper' criteria for the period from October 13, 2022 to April 11, 2023. Further, the applicant failed to forthwith inform Sebi and the Designated Depository Participant about the change in its eligibility status. EIFF replaced the controlling shareholder with a new fit and proper entity only in April 2023, sources said. Between April 2022 and April 2023, therefore, EIFF was in breach of Sebi regulations, and a show cause notice was duly served on them. This has now been duly settled. EIFF has only invested in mutual

funds in India since November 2021. Emerging India Focus Funds was named in the Hindenburg Research report, which alleged that the fund was used to inflate the volume as well as price of the Adani Group companies. Sources close to the development said that the case that has been settled with Emerging India Focus Funds (EIFF) has nothing to do with the Adani or Hindenburg report related to enforcement actions undertaken by Sebi. Specifically, this case does not form a part of the 24 cases that were reported to the expert committee set up by the Supreme Court after the Hindenburg Report of January 2023.

# IBL and BFIL sign MoU with Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare



**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI**  
IndusInd Bank Limited (IBL) and Bharat Financial Inclusion Limited (BFIL) on Monday announced a collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare (MoA & FW), Government of India, to launch the Bharat Sanjeevani Krishi Utthan initiative. This initiative aims to support the government's flagship program, "Formation and Promotion of 10,000 Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) providing a robust framework to empower FPOs across the country. This collaboration has been driven through BFIL and IBL's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives and aims to enhance agricultural productivity, promote

# Indic Wisdom raises funds to boost wood-pressed oil production

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI**

Indic Wisdom, a Mumbai-based manufacturer of high-quality wood-pressed oils on Tuesday raised funds in a Pre-series A round primarily led by Rockstud Capital along with other investors. A significant rise in consumer awareness about their health and a shift in preference towards natural, nutrient-dense food products is driving the demand for cold-pressed oils. These oils, renowned for their high nutritional content, including essential vitamins, antioxidants, and fatty acids, offer a superior alternative to refined oils, which often undergo processing that can strip them of valuable nutrients. Indic Wisdom Pvt. Limited traces its inspiration to India's egalitarian culinary traditions. Growing up with the belief that food should be natural and shared, Prajakta Khare & Kaustubh Khare founded Indic Wisdom to contemporise that



civilisational wisdom and invested in manufacturing to produce goodness at scale. It is strategically positioned to capitalize on the burgeoning market for premium cold-pressed oils. Their comprehensive product range, encompassing cooking oils, multipurpose oils, and specialty oils, caters to the diverse needs and preferences of health-conscious consumers. The founders bring over two decades of combined experience in digital transformation, artificial Intelligence, and onshore/offshore sales. Their expertise, honed through previous roles, is now dedicated to a singular mission: to modernize India's ancient culinary traditions through continuous innovation and knowledge expansion. By doing so, they aim to create products that promote global well-being. Prajakta Khare, co-founder of Indic Wisdom, says, "With Indic Wisdom, we want to take India's timeless tradition of prasad - food that is pure, sustainable, and meant for everyone - to the world. We are doing this by incorporating modern production best practices and quality standards in traditional food production practices."

# INBRIEF

**POWERGRID ACQUIRES FOUR MAJOR ISTS PROJECTS**  
Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (POWERGRID) has successfully acquired four Project Special Purpose Vehicles to execute Inter-State Transmission Projects related to transmission of renewable energy.

**55TH FOUNDATION DAY OF GNDU**  
Guru Nanak Dev University has taken new steps in the field of higher education. On the occasion of the 500th birth anniversary of Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji.

**HITS OPENS ADMISSIONS FOR 2025-26**  
**CHENNAI:** Hindustan Institute of Technology and Science, a NAAC A+ accredited institution renowned for academic and research excellence, has announced admissions for the academic year 2025-26. Alongside, the institution has unveiled a Rs. 5 crore merit-based scholarship initiative to support deserving students.

**GNDU'S MECHANICAL ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT PARTICIPATED IN SCIENCE FESTIVAL**  
**AMRITSAR:** The Department of Mechanical Engineering of Guru Nanak Dev University, participated in the Khalsa Science Festival, organized by the Society for Promotion of Science and Technology in India in collaboration with Khalsa College, Amritsar.

# India beat Japan 2-0, to face China in final of women's ACT hockey

**PTI ■ RAJGIR (BIHAR)**

Defending champions India continued their unbeaten run and defeated Japan 2-0 to enter the final of the women's Asian Champions Trophy hockey tournament here on Tuesday.

Vice-captain Navneet Kaur converted a penalty stroke in the 48th minute while Lalaremsiami struck from field play in the 56th minute for India, who had plenty of scoring chances including 13 penalty corners.

India will face China, whom they defeated in the league stages, in the final on Wednesday. Earlier, China beat Malaysia 3-1 in the first semifinal.

Malaysia will take on Japan in the third-fourth place match, while Korea finished fifth after beating Thailand



3-0 in the fifth-sixth place classification match.

The Indians continued their attacking game and put on early pressure on the Japanese defence, just like the last league game. The play was mostly inside the Japanese half as the Indian defence was hardly tested.

India had the first shot at the goal inside the initial five minute. Skipper Salima Tete's attempt was thwarted by Japanese goalkeeper Yu Kudo.

The Indians repeatedly penetrated the Japanese citadel and in the process secured two penalty corners in a span of two minutes but Kudo was alert under the bar to deny Navneet Kaur and Deepika.

Three minutes into the second quarter, India secured three back-to-back penalty corners but failed to find the back of the net.

It was raining penalty corners for the hosts as they got back-to-back set pieces in the 21st minute but Kudo produced a brilliant save with her fully-stretched right leg to deny Deepika again.

In the 24th minute, India earned a penalty corner followed by another in the next minute but failed to get past Japanese goalkeeper Kudo, as they also lacked in execution.

A minute after the change of ends, India secured two penalty corners but wasted both. In the 35th minute, Kudo again denied Deepika from a set piece.

In the 41st minute, Deepika stole the ball just outside the Japanese circle, but shot wide from a one-on-one situation with Kudo.

Seconds from the end of third quarter, Kudo once again pulled off a brilliant save to deny Uditra from another penalty corner.

In the 47th minute, India secured their 12th penalty corner but failed to breach Kudo.

But a minute later, India broke the deadlock through a penalty stroke earned by Deepika and Navneet made no mistake.

The goal seemed to have rejuvenated the Indians as they scored a fine field goal in the 56th minute.

Lalaremsiami slammed into the back of the Japanese goal after she was brilliantly set up by Sunelita Toppo's terrific run from the right flank.

Japan got a penalty corner in the dying moments, but failed to get past a rock solid Indian defence.

# Pulisic scores twice, US beats Jamaica 4-2 for 5-2 aggregate win in CONCACAF Nations League QF

**AP ■ ST. LOUIS (US)**

Christian Pulisic scored twice in the first half, Tim Weah got a goal in his return to the U.S. National team from a red card and the Americans beat Jamaica 4-2 for a 5-2 aggregate win in their CONCACAF Nations League quarterfinal.

Playing their first competitive matches under coach Mauricio Pochettino, the United States advanced to a semifinal on March 20 at Inglewood, California. The Americans won the first three editions of the tournament.

The U.S. Also qualified for next year's CONCACAF Gold Cup, while Jamaica will have to play a qualifier.

Pulisic put the U.S. Ahead in the 13th minute when he ran onto a long looping pass from Weston McKennie and kicked the ball past onrushing goalkeeper Andre Blake. Pulisic doubled the lead off a pass from McKennie that Tanner Tessmann dummied in the 33rd minute.



Yunus Musah and sent a shot just under the crossbar for his seventh goal.

Gray got his second goal in the 68th. Costa Rica took a 1-0 lead into its home match against Panama on Monday night. On Tuesday, Mexico is at home trying to overturn a 2-0 first-leg loss at Honduras and Canada is home with a 1-0 lead against Suriname.

Weah started in place of injured Johnny Cardoso after completing a two-game suspension for a red card against Panama in the Copa America last summer. That was the only change made by Pochettino from the first leg.

Defender Tim Ream, at 37 the oldest player on the roster, captained the Americans in his hometown of St. Louis.

Jamaica coach Steve McLaren, a former England manager, told the media that star Michail Antonio wasn't available because he lost his passport and couldn't get a U.

# Croatia, Denmark qualify for Nations League quarterfinals with draws

**AP ■ MADRID**

Denmark and Croatia completed the Nations League quarterfinals lineup after both sides secured draws.

Denmark went 0-0 in Serbia, and Croatia came from behind to share 1-1 with visiting Portugal.

They joined France, Italy, Germany, Spain, Portugal and the Netherlands in the last eight.

The quarterfinals will be held from March 20-23.

In Warsaw, Liverpool fullback Andy Robertson scored an injury time header to give Scotland a 2-1 win over Poland and send the host down into League B. Scotland has a playoff to secure its League A status.

Northern Ireland will step up to League B after topping its group. Northern Ireland let slip a two-goal lead but drew in Luxembourg 2-2. Romania hammered Cyprus 4-1.

San Marino will jump into Group C after beating Lichtenstein 3-1.

Scotland wins again

After going nine matches without a win, Scotland appeared rejuvenated as it condemned a Robert Lewandowski-less Poland to League B.

Scotland took just one point from its first four games in Group A1 but beat Croatia at home on Friday and was 1-0 up after three minutes in Warsaw.

Billy Gilmour's threaded pass found Ben Doak, who rolled the ball to John McGinn to score his second goal in four days.

Scotland hit the woodwork twice in the first half and its inability to open a greater lead almost cost it when Kamil Piatkowski lashed a stunning strike into the top corner of the net to equalize 14 minutes into the second period.

However, Scotland pushed forward for a winner and Robertson headed the decider in the third minute of stoppage time.

Croatia struggle

Croatia needed only a draw to secure qualification but it made the home fans in Split sweat before getting the point it needed against group winner Portugal.



With 32 minutes gone, João Felix brought down a superb 45-yard pass from Vitinha and slipped the ball under the advancing keeper to give the visitors the lead. When Andrej Kramaric hit the post and Josko Gvardiol had a 62nd minute goal ruled out for offside it looked like it might not be Croatia's night.

But Manchester City's Gvardiol got the equalizer just a few minutes later and Croatia held on to take the second quarterfinal spot from Group A1.

Spain beats Switzerland

There was little to play for in Tenerife, where Spain, top of Group A4, took on the already relegated Switzerland.

Coach Luis de la Fuente offered a first start to Barcelona midfielder Marc Casadó and gave debuts to Samu and Aitor Paredes in a much-changed Spain side.

But it was the two Bryans, Gil and Zaragoza, who got the goals that mattered for the European champions.

Pedri's first half penalty was saved but Yeremi Pino converted to put Spain ahead.

Joel Monteiro equalized for Switzerland after 63 minutes but Bryan Gil got Spain back in front five minutes later. Andi Zeqiri equalized again from the penalty spot with five minutes remaining but a stoppage time penalty from Bryan Zaragoza at the other end gave Spain all three points.

Denmark draws in Serbia

In Leskovac, Serbia controlled most of the game against Denmark but could not get the goal it needed to progress from Group A4. Dušan Vlahovic was in fine form for the home side but the Danes held out to take second spot, eight points behind winner Spain but two ahead of the Serbs, for which Strahinja Pavlovic was sent off near the end.

Northern Ireland steps up

Northern Ireland finished on top of Group C3 even though it blew a 2-0 lead in Luxembourg. Isaac Price opened the scoring after 19 minutes and the Standard Liege midfielder set up Conor Bradley for the second five minutes into the second half. The opener was Northern Ireland's 100th under coach Michael O'Neill.

However, even though the home side scored twice in the last 18 minutes, Northern Ireland ended its campaign with 11 points, two ahead of Bulgaria, which drew at home with Belarus 1-1. Luxembourg finished last.

Romania and Kosovo win

Romania finished on top of Group C2 with a 4-1 win over Cyprus. Daniel Birligea put Romania ahead after two minutes and Razvan Marin scored twice before Florinel Coman made it four.

Ioannis Pittas got Cyprus' goal and the Cypriots' Konstantinos Laifis was sent off 13 minutes from time.

Kosovo beat Lithuania 1-0 with an early goal from Muharem Jashari, who was also sent off on the stroke of halftime.

Kosovo finished second, three points behind Romania, but an asterisk remains over the final placings following the abandonment of Friday's match between the teams in Bucharest.

The Kosovo players alleged they were victims of pro-Serbian chants by the home fans and walked off the field in the final minute. UEFA has opened disciplinary proceedings.

# Mike Tyson-Jake Paul fight draws record betting for a combat sports event



**AP ■ LAS VEGAS**

Caesars Sportsbook, said the fight was on par with an NFL Monday night game.

"We knew there would be tremendous interest in the fight, as the betting suggested it was a generational matchup in customer demographics," Mucklow said. "Those old enough to remember a prime Mike Tyson got to live the nostalgia one last time, while those not old enough to know Iron Mike were firmly on the Jake Paul side of the counter."

DraftKings sports operations director Johnny Avello said the fight also was its most-bet boxing match.

"The bettors were yearning for Tyson to return to the ring even at 58 years old, and wanted to be a part of this moment with one of the icons of the sport," Avello said. "We'll see who Jake Paul fights next, but his matches have proven to create immense buzz and unprecedented action on our platforms."

The amount of betting can't necessarily be used to draw a direct comparison with betting on big fights in the past since so many major bouts, including Tyson's biggest fights, occurred before sports betting was legalized beyond Nevada in 2018. It's still not legal in 38 states. But the fight at AT&T Stadium in Arlington, Texas, still drew an enormous handle.

Most of the wagers at BetMGM Sportsbook were on proposition bets, with the most popular being on Tyson to prevail either by knockout, decision or a first-round KO. Though Paul was a -175 favorite, 67% of the tickets and 53% of the money at BetMGM was on Tyson.

"Paul winning was a good outcome for the sportsbook," BetMGM senior trader Alex Rella said.



# Bayern midfielder Palhinha faces weeks out after injury while with Portugal

**AP ■ MUNICH**

João Palhinha's year could be over early after the Bayern Munich midfielder was injured on Portugal duty.

Palhinha will "be sidelined for the coming weeks" after he tore a muscle in his right adductor, part of the hip and thigh area, Bayern said on Tuesday.

That kept Palhinha out of Portugal's 5-1 win over Poland in the Nations League on Friday and its 1-1 draw with Croatia on Monday.

He is set to miss tough games for Bayern including hosting Paris Saint-Germain in the Champions League next week, facing Borussia Dortmund in the German Klassiker on Nov. 30, and taking on defending champion Bayer Leverkusen in the German Cup on Dec. 3.

German media reported Palhinha was not expected to return until after the winter break. Bayern's last game before the break is Dec. 20.

Bayern could have to rely on Leon Goretzka, who has been a fringe player this season, because coach Vincent Kompany's other preferred defensive midfielder, Aleksandar Pavlovic, has yet to return following surgery on a broken collarbone last month.

Pavlovic has managed "some elements" of training with the rest of the team, Bayern said on Monday.

# PGA Tour approves reduction to 100 players keeping cards off FedEx Cup list

**AP ■ NEW YORK**

The PGA Tour policy board have approved eligibility changes that eliminate 25 cards through the FedEx Cup in the first reduction of jobs since the all-exempt tour began in 1983.

Starting in 2026, only the top 100 in the FedEx Cup are assured full status the following year.

The board voted on proposals from the 16-member Player Advisory Council aimed at giving everyone who earns a full PGA Tour card a chance to get into enough tournaments to have a fair chance at keeping their cards.

It also approved smaller field sizes — a maximum of 144 players, down from 156 —

for tournaments on one course with ample daylight hours. Another change was eliminating the four restricted sponsor exemptions, allocating them to what amounts to the alternate list.

Open tournaments still get unrestricted sponsor exemptions (typically four) they can give to whomever they want. With changes not taking effect until 2026, that makes next year even more cutthroat with more than 170 players who have cards trying to finish in the top 100.

"The PAC discussions were based on a number of guiding principles, including our belief that PGA Tour membership is the pinnacle of achievement in men's professional golf," said Adam Scott, a player director on the policy board who also serve on the competitions subcommittee of the PAC.

"The changes approved today will provide equitable playing opportunities for new young talent to be showcased, and positively refine the playing experience for our members."

It will be tougher than ever to get a PGA Tour card. Along with players having to finish in the top 100 — tournament winners still get a two-year exemption — the tour will award only 20 cards to the Korn Ferry Tour, along with cards for the leading 10 players not already exempt on the European tour and five from Q-school.

Players who came through the Korn Ferry and Europe



fall behind the top 100 and tournament winners in the priority list. Previously, they often had to go weeks at a time without a spot for them to play. Up until the early 1980s, only the top 60 were exempt and everyone else had to go through qualifying. Because players had a card that didn't guarantee starts, the PGA Tour switched to the all-exempt tour for the top 125 in 1983. That's been the

number ever since.

It's the latest significant adjustment to the tour since the disruption of Saudi-backed LIV Golf, which began in June 2022. In the last two years, the tour has created \$20 million signature events with limited fields and a postseason for only the top 70 players.

"The reality is that we're all playing under different circumstances than we were four years ago," PAC Chairman Camilo Villegas said in three weeks ago when the changes were proposed. "We had no competition. We were the best. All of a sudden we have competition and there are little shifts. The changes we're proposing make a better product. What does having a PGA Tour card mean?"

The tour also announced changes to the FedEx Cup points distribution that start in 2025, awarding more points to second place and decreasing points from 11th place and down. For signature events, the decrease starts after seventh place.

Monday qualifying will offer four spots only to 144-man fields, reducing the number to two spots for 132-man fields and none when only 120 players are in the field.

There also was the ongoing pace-of-play problem, which rules officials for years have argued was due primarily to too many players on the course. The field sizes would be 120 players before Daylight Savings Time, then up to 132 players and a maximum of 144 in the summer.

# Australia have to leave Kohli alone, hope he doesn't bring the intensity: Shane Watson



I've got nothing but respect for Virat, he's a champion: Lyon

PTI ■ PERTH

Virat Kohli has been struggling for form of late but veteran Australia spinner has nothing but respect for the Indian super star, who he says is a champion you can not write off.

Kohli has been enduring a lean patch over the past few months. In his last 60 Test innings, he has managed just two centuries and 11 half-centuries. This year, he has averaged only 22.72 across six Tests, and in the three games against New Zealand, he could manage only 93 runs.

But Lyon remains wary of what Kohli could do in the five-match Test series beginning here on Friday. "Overall, look at his record. You don't write off champions. I've got nothing but respect for Virat," Lyon was quoted as saying by cricket.Com.Au. "I want to get him out, there's

no point in hiding behind that, but it's challenging. It's been pretty amazing competing against him for so many times. "Him and Smithy (Steve Smith) are probably the best two batters in our last era of this last decade," said the 36-year-old off-spinner with 530 wickets from 129 Tests.

Lyon is one of the four members of the current squad who were part of Australia's last successful Test series against India in 2014-15. India have won the last two series in Australia but they have come here after a shock 0-3 loss at home against New Zealand. Lyon doesn't believe that India are vulnerable this time around. "They're dangerous all the time. They're a side full of superstars. They've got so much experience, but talented youth as well and you can never write off that," said Lyon, who took 22 wickets when Australia toured India in 2023.



Australia since 2011, amassing 1,352 runs at an average of 54.08, including six centuries and four fifties, with a top score of 169. While this would be his fifth tour Down Under in the longest format, Kohli's best outing came during the

2014-15 series when he aggregated 692 runs in four Tests at an average of 86.50, including four hundreds and a half-century. These remarkable numbers are not lost on Watson. "We have seen that when he has had success in Australia, he is up

and above for everything in the middle. Every ball he is up for every single moment. "You can see the fierce intensity he brings, and if he gets that, then it shuts everything else out. That is when he is at his absolute best.

"If there is stuff happening around and that intensity is not there, that is when you will see the not-so-best version of Virat. So from an Australian perspective, let's hope we get to see that version of him," Watson said.

Kohli's performance in the red-ball format this year has been below par, managing just 250 runs in six Tests at an average of 22.72. "Smith wasn't actually batting at his best as an opener" When the discussion turned to Australian batting, Watson backed Steve Smith to bring the very best of him against the formidable Indian bowling attack. Smith will be back at his usual number four slot after struggling as opener following the retirement of David Warner. "Steve wanted to open. He was super keen to take up a new challenge. But, one thing with that opportunity he had was he wasn't actually batting at his best at that time," Watson noted. "So, he got an opportunity to open, and Steve Smith at his very best would have made the most out of it because he just loves scoring runs, whether it is opening or at No. 4. You could see it a few times he got out when he was opening - his game and his technique was a little bit off." For the marquee series against fierce rivals India, the Australian selectors have picked 25-year-old uncapped Nathan McSweeney to open the innings alongside Usman Khawaja.

PTI ■ PERTH

Former all-rounder Shane Watson has advised the Australian team to avoid getting into confrontations with Virat Kohli in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy as he feels the intensity the celebrated Indian batter derives from provocations brings the best out of him.

Going through a lean run of form, Kohli has enjoyed great success in Australia in the past and will look to regain his touch in the five-match Test series, which gets underway on Friday at the Optus Stadium here. Provoking the Indian batting mainstay has often proved to be counterproductive for the Australians, and Watson has experienced it himself. "The one thing that I know of Virat is... Because the fire burns so brightly and deep inside him, the intensity he brings to every ball that he is engaged in a game has been superhuman," Watson was quoted as saying on the Willow Talk podcast. "But, there have been in recent times where moments in this career that fire has started to go out because it is just so hard to maintain that intensity in every moment he is involved in a game. "And, that is where Australia have to leave him alone and hope he doesn't bring the intensity -- nine out of 10 intensity -- to every ball." Kohli has played 13 Tests in



## Pant rejects Gavaskar's assessment, says did not leave DC due to disagreement over retention fee

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Rishabh Pant on Tuesday rejected the legendary Sunil Gavaskar's assessment that the India wicketkeeper-batter left Delhi Capitals due to disagreement over his retention fee ahead of the mega auction of the Indian Premier League.

Pant, who captained Delhi Capitals last year after making a comeback from a horrific car accident, is among the marquee players who were not retained by their franchises.

He is expected to be one of the most sought-after players when the auction takes place in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia on November 24 and 25. "My retention wasn't about the money for sure that I can say," Pant wrote on X, responding to a broadcaster video showing Gavaskar talking about the auction dynamics. Gavaskar said while he expects Delhi



Capitals to rope in Pant once again, he also wondered if there was a disagreement over the fee between the franchise and the player. "The auction dynamics are completely different; we don't really know how it will go. But what I feel is that Delhi

would certainly want Rishabh Pant back in the squad," Gavaskar told Star Sports. "Sometimes, when a player is to be retained, there is talk between the franchise and the player and franchise about the fees that are expected." "As you can see, some of the players who

have been retained by the franchise, they've gone for more than say, what the No 1 retention fee deduction would be. Clearly I think, maybe there was some disagreement over there," he said. Gavaskar said Delhi Capitals will have to look for a new captain as well if Pant is not there in the roster. "My feeling is that Delhi would definitely want Pant back because they need a captain as well. If Rishabh Pant is not in their squad then they have to look for a new captain. My feeling is (that) Delhi would definitely go for Rishabh Pant," he said.

Pant, along with other former captains Shreyas Iyer (Kolkata Knight Riders) and KL Rahul (Lucknow Super Giants), is listed at a base price of Rs 2 crore each among marquee Indian players. Pant has always been a part of the Delhi franchise since his IPL debut in 2016, scoring 3,284 runs at 35.31 with one century and 18 fifties in 111 matches.

## Kane believes 2026 World Cup won't be his England swansong

AP ■ LONDON

Captain Harry Kane believes the 2026 World Cup will not be his last appearance for England. There is increasing scrutiny about the 31-year-old Kane's future, even though he extended his all-time England scoring record to 69 goals in 103 appearances as Ireland was beaten 5-0 on Sunday at Wembley Stadium. The Bayern Munich striker was surprisingly omitted from the 3-0 win against Greece last Thursday. A statue and mural of Kane were unveiled on Monday at the east London home of his former youth team Ridgeway Rovers. The British Press Association asked him if the 2026 World Cup is his last shot at glory for England. "I

don't think so," he said. "I think there's a perception when you get to your 30s that you're coming to an end, but for me I'm performing at the highest level I've ever performed and feel as good as I've ever felt, so it's about taking in the moment. "I don't like to look too far ahead, and in my career I never have. "The World Cup (in the U.S., Mexico and Canada) is going to be exciting. In America it will be an incredible occasion and ultimately it's about trying to win that, looking at where you are, where to improve and it will be no different in a couple of years." Kane started playing at Ridgeway Rovers at age five, and liked his statue. "It's pretty special to be honest, these are things I

didn't think of when I was young. It all began here and it was the building blocks of my career. This is a great inspiration for the boys and girls who play." Asked what it will take for him to have a statue outside Wembley, alongside Bobby Moore, England's 1966 World Cup-winning captain, Kane said, "I think we need to win a major tournament. "We've come close on a couple of occasions and the next step is for me and the other boys to win. We have a new coach coming in March (Thomas Tuchel). He'll be great for us, he has vast experience in the big competitions, he'll bring a great energy to the team and he'll put his own stamp and identity on the way we play tactically.

## India's confidence 'damaged' but Australia won't underestimate visitors: Labuschagne

PTI ■ PERTH

A shattering defeat to New Zealand on home soil would have caused a "little bit of damage" to India's confidence but Australia will not make the mistake of underestimating the visitors, said charismatic batter Marnus Labuschagne here on Tuesday.

The world No. 2 India are heading into the five-Test Border-Gavaskar series, starting here on Friday, following their whitewash at home, which ended their 12-year unbeaten run in their own backyard. Australia's middle-order mainstay Labuschagne believes the loss to the Kiwis would have dented India's confidence. "It's really hard to judge. They played in completely different conditions — spinning conditions — but having India come here off the back of a loss at home is something that's never

happened before (in my career)," Labuschagne told the media. "I think that is a good thing in terms of... They are probably a little bit lower on confidence, not coming off a Test victory, losing to New Zealand 3-0. I think that's going to do a little bit of damage to their confidence." However, Labuschagne insisted that Australia, who have lost each of their last four series to India both home and away, will have to guard against complacency. "They're a quality line-up and they're one of the best teams in the world. So you can never underestimate a team like that," he said. India staged an incredible comeback on their last Australia tour in 2020-21 to win 2-1, despite the absence of regular skipper Virat Kohli and injuries to several other frontline players along the way. "That's what happened in 2021 — the likes of (T) Natarajan played,



(Mohammad) Siraj got his first crack in Australia, Washington Sundar played," Labuschagne recalled. "They had all these guys that were probably a little bit new — Shubman (Gill) played those couple of games (in the 2020-21 series) — so there were new faces around," he added. With India set to take the field without regular captain Rohit Sharma and No. 3 batter Gill in the first Test at the Optus Stadium here, Labuschagne said India have enough talent in their ranks to meet all challenges. "They're a quality line-up and they've showed that over a period of time. You can't ever underestimate the depth of Indian cricket," he said. "Anyone that gets the opportunity to play for India have had to do a lot of hard work and find their way into that side... To actually play for a team like that, you have to be a very good player," Labuschagne added.

## Shastri confident 'world class' Jaiswal will return from Australia as a better batter

PTI ■ PERTH

Former India head coach Ravi Shastri is confident that the "already world class" Yashasvi Jaiswal will return from the Australian tour as a significantly improved batter, no matter the challenges he encounters along the way. Shastri said if Jaiswal can adapt to the challenging Perth pitch, known for its lively bounce, the young opener will play with freedom later on in the series. "I think he'll be a better player when he leaves Australian shores. Already he's world class," Shastri said at a Fox Cricket event. "You saw what he did against England (and) just the freedom with which he plays. "I think once he adapts to these conditions — it's not going to be easy to adjust in Perth with that bounce, no

matter how talented you are. You have got to be prepared to do the hard yards. "But if he can see that phase through, I think he'll entertain. He will love these pitches. He's someone who score pretty freely as well." Hailed as one of Indian cricket's brightest young talents, the 21-year-old made a dazzling start to his Test career. He cemented his spot in the team with a stunning series performance against England earlier this year. "He's come up the hard way, so you can see that hunger and passion, not just in his eyes, but when he's out there in the middle, fielding in the slips. He wants to be involved in the game." Having led India to two series victories in Australia, Shastri knows firsthand that defeating the Aussies on their



home turf is no easy feat. "It's going to be tough," Shastri said. "As I found out on my three tours here as a coach, you have to be at your best. Your A game has to come to the park very early if you want to catch Australia on the wrong foot. "You don't want to give an inch. I think that is the only way. There is no other way you can play. You've got to, or you're not going to get an inch. "You have got to understand very early what to expect from the media as well, because they'll be behind the Australian team. But if you can get your boys to get out there and play as hard as it gets be ready for some tough cricket and perform, the media will respect you. "You will see Kohli firing in the start of the series' Virat Kohli has been enduring

a lean patch across all formats in recent months, with just two centuries and 11 half-centuries in his last 60 Test innings. However, despite these struggles, Kohli boasts a remarkable record in Australia. Having toured Down Under four times, the right-hander averages an impressive 54.0, and Shastri has once again backed the veteran batter to excel in the upcoming series. "You mellow with age, don't you? But I think at the start of the Test series, you might just see (Kohli) firing again. He needs to be, I'd like to see him (like that) again," Shastri was quoted as saying by news.Com.Au. "In the face, that's Kohli. Come Australia, he'll get his juices going. It's (about) how he starts off, and for Australia, it's with Steve Smith."