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MONEY 10
MARKETS STAGE RECOVERY;
SENSEX RECLAIMS 79K
LEVEL, NIFTY SURGES



RESULT DAY: WINNER TAKES IT ALL

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■
NEW DELHI/MUMBAI/RANCHI

One-and-a-half months after an interesting day of counting of votes for the Haryana Assembly elections which ultimately retained the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government for a third straight term with initial trends showing a massive lead by Congress, another season of a bitterly contested election, in Maharashtra, and Jharkhand, as well as bypolls in Wayanad Lok Sabha seat, and Assembly segments in Uttar Pradesh, will conclude on Saturday afternoon with the declaration of results. While Wayanad is set to pave the way for Congress candidate Priyanka Gandhi to Lok Sabha who shall join her brother Rahul and mother Sonia in the Parliament, stakes are high for BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA), and Congress-led INDIA bloc in both states, as well as a battle of prestige in the by-polls of Punjab, Kerala, Uttarakhand, and a crucial one in Uttar Pradesh, post the BJP's dismal performance in this year's General Elections. The results of Uttar Pradesh by-polls will be a huge contributing factor in setting a narrative for the next Assembly polls in the state, due in 2027. By-elections to 48 Assemblies constituencies and two Parliamentary constituencies spread across 15 states were also held simultaneously. The Elections for the 81-seat Jharkhand Assembly took place on November 13 and 20, while Maharashtra, which has 288



Security personnel stand guard outside a strong room ahead of the counting of votes for the Maharashtra Assembly elections, in Nagpur, Maharashtra. PTI

Assembly seats, went to polls in a single phase on November 20. But in Maharashtra fissures have emerged within the ruling BJP Shiv Sena combine Mahayuti and the Opposition Congress, Shiv Sena (Udhav) Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) as who will head the next government with several contenders for the chief minister's post currently held by Shiv Sena's breakaway faction Eknath Shinde who toppled Congress and NCP backed Uddhav Thackeray regime. According to media reports from Mumbai, Maharashtra

Congress remarks that voting trends suggest the Congress will get the maximum number of seats has not gone down well with alliance Shiv Sena (UBT), whose tall leader Sanjay Raut insisted the chief ministerial face will be decided by all alliance partners jointly once the MVA secures majority. The Rajya Sabha MP said if the Congress high command has told State Congress chief Nana Patole that he will be the Chief Ministerial face then the national party's president Mallikarjun Kharge, and its top leaders Rahul Gandhi, Sonia Gandhi

and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra should announce the same. On the MahaYuti side, Shiv Sena MLA and party spokesperson Sanjay Shirsat said the Assembly elections were contested with Chief Minister Eknath Shinde as the face. "Voters have shown their preference for Shinde through voting. I think it is Shinde's right (to be the next CM) and we are confident that he will be the next CM," Shirsat said. However, BJP leader Pravin Darekar batted for Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis for the top post. "I think if anyone from the

BJP is becoming the CM then it will be Devendra Fadnavis," he said. On the other hand another partner NCP advocated for their party chief and Deputy CM Ajit Pawar for the coveted job. Down South, elaborate arrangements have been made for the counting of votes in the three bypolls in the state, Wayanad Lok Sabha and the Palakkad and Chelakkara Assembly seats. Wayanad seat attracted national attention due to the electoral debut of Priyanka Gandhi, who is contesting against Communist Party of India (CPI) veteran Sathyan Mokeri and BJP's Navya Haridas. The UP by-elections are seen as a litmus test for the BJP's organisational discipline and electoral strategy. While the party hopes for favourable results, senior leaders are bracing for potential fallout if outcomes fall short of expectations. For by-polls to Punjab's four Assembly seats, Gidderbaha, Dera Baba Nanak, Chabbewal (SC) and Barnala, the ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), Congress and BJP are looking to register victories in these seats. Congress on Friday also appointed observers for Maharashtra and Jharkhand to oversee the post-election scenarios. Senior party leaders Ashok Gehlot, Bhupesh Baghel and G Parameshwara will be AICC observers to Maharashtra, while Tariq Anwar, Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka and Krishna Allavuru have been named observers for Jharkhand.

Centre opposes ex-SC judges panel

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

The Centre on Friday opposed in the Supreme Court a proposal to form a committee of former SC judges to oversee the implementation of measures to curb stubble burning, a key contributor to Delhi-NCR's air pollution. The suggestion was put forth before a Bench of Justices Abhay S Oka and Augustine George Masih, hearing a case related to the rising pollution in Delhi-NCR, by senior advocate and amicus curiae Aparajita Singh. Meanwhile, the Bench said it would consider on November 25 whether or not to ease the anti-pollution GRAP-IV restrictions in Delhi-NCR keeping in view the drop in air quality index levels. The amicus said the judges had previously dealt with air pollution and stubble burning issues. A Bench headed by former Supreme Court's Justice Madan B Lokur had



File photo: Ranjan Dimri/The Pioneer

heard pleas related to pollution and the role of stubble burning as a contributing factor in the past. In 2020, a bench headed by the then CJI Justice S A Bobde set up a panel headed by Justice Lokur to deal with the issues relating to stubble burning. The order was later recalled. On Friday, the amicus curiae proposed that a committee of these judges could monitor and hear all stakeholders, including farmers and government authorities, for a

comprehensive approach to address the crisis. "A committee of experienced judges familiar with these issues could efficiently oversee the situation and hear individual grievances," said Singh. The proposal, however, was met with strong resistance from Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati, representing the Centre. Bhati asserted the Centre and the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) were taking adequate measures and that adding another oversight layer would be counterproductive. "We strongly oppose this suggestion. There is no need for an additional judicial committee as your lordships are already monitoring the situation. We are answering all concerns, correcting shortcomings, and making progress," said ASG Bhati while opposing the creation of "any more tier". The amicus clarified her suggestion was for a fact-finding committee, but Bhati countered the statement, saying the government was already working with the available data and frameworks to address the issue effectively. Continued on page 2

Temperature falls, AQI rises

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

Residents of the National Capital Region (NCR) woke up to a cold morning with a minimum temperature of 11.3 degrees Celsius on Friday. The air quality also plunged to a 'severe category' reaching an AQI of 401 by the evening, as a clear sky and bright sun failed to neutralise the cocktail of slow winds, dipping temperatures. Out of 38 monitoring stations in the city, 19 have already reported AQI levels in the "Severe" category. Jahangirpuri recorded the highest AQI at

445. By the evening fog engulfed the National Capital, reducing visibility which led to disruption of road, rail and flight operations. This November, Delhi has already seen seven "severe" pollution days. Last year's winter experienced four similar episodes. An AQI of 400 or higher is classified as "severe" and poses significant health risks. The PM2.5 concentration is currently 68.1 times the World Health Organization annual PM2.5 guideline value. Continued on page 2



Canada dismisses report linking PM, Doval to criminal activities

PTI ■ OTTAWA

The Canadian government has dismissed a media report linking Prime Minister Narendra Modi, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and National Security Advisor Ajit Doval to criminal activities in Canada, including the alleged plot to kill Sikh separatist Hardeep Singh Nijjar, terming it as "speculative and inaccurate". The denial made by Nathalie G Drouin, National Security and Intelligence Advisor to Canadian Prime Minister, on Thursday came a day after India strongly trashed the report as "smear campaign". Quoting an unnamed senior national security official, "The Globe and Mail" newspaper on Tuesday reported that Canadian security agencies believe Prime Minister Modi knew about the killing of Nijjar and other violent plots. The official said Canadian and American intelligence tied the assassination operations to Home Affairs Minister Amit Shah. Also in the loop, the official said, was Doval and Jaishankar. Continued on page 2

Déjà vu for AAP, LG Saxena now praises CM Atishi

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

In a rare gesture, Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena praised Delhi Chief Minister Atishi on Friday, and said she is "a thousand times better" than her predecessor Arvind Kejriwal. The praise of Atishi comes amidst a backdrop of political friction between the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government and the LG over a range of issues, including governance, air pollution, and control of bureaucracy ever since he attained the office at Raj Niwas. These remarks have set the political circles abuzz about the CM's future since her former cabinet colleague Kaillash Gehlot, once close to AAP supreme, was also reportedly favoured by the L-G who just quit the party and joined BJP. LG Saxena made the remarks during the convocation ceremony of the Indira Gandhi Delhi Technical University for Women in the national Capital. "I am happy



Delhi Lt. Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena, Chief Minister Atishi, Vice Chancellor of the University of Delhi Yogesh Singh (L) and others during the 7th Convocation of the Indira Gandhi Delhi Technical University for Women (IGDTUW), in New Delhi. PTI

today that Delhi's CM is a woman, and I can confidently say that she is a thousand times better than her predecessor," the L-G said, glancing at Atishi who was present during the convocation ceremony and also addressed the students. In his speech, Saxena told the students, "As you move ahead, you have four guiding stars. First is your responsibility

towards yourself, the second is your responsibility towards your parents and family while the third responsibility is towards the society and nation building." "The fourth responsibility is to prove yourself as women who have broken the glass ceiling of gender and stand on par with others in all fields," he said. Continued on page 2

RHYTHM OF LIFE



Artists take selfies during 'Jangal Mahal Utsav', a festival to promote tribal arts and culture, in Kolkata. PTI

Ten Naxalites killed in Sukma

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
SUKMA

Ten Naxalites were killed in an encounter with security personnel in Chhattisgarh's Sukma district on Friday, a senior police official said. Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai hailed security forces and said the era of peace and progress has returned to the Bastar region, which includes Sukma. The gunfight broke out in the morning in a forest within the jurisdiction of the Bhejji police station when a joint team of security personnel was out on an anti-Naxalite operation, said Inspector General of Police (Bastar Range) Sundarraj P. The operation was launched based on inputs about the presence of Maoists belonging to Konta and Kistaram area committees of Naxalites on forested hills of Korajguda, Dantespuram, Nagaram and Bhandarpadar villages, he said. Bodies of 10 Naxalites have been recovered from the spot so far, he said. Besides, a cache of weapons, including an INSAS rifle, an AK-47 rifle and a Self Loading Rifle (SLR), were also seized, he said. The search operation by the District Reserve Guard (DRG) and Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) is still underway in the area, he added. Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai praised security forces and asserted that his government's priority is to establish peace, facilitate development and ensure the safety of citizens in the Bastar region. "Security forces gunned down 10 Naxalites in a major operation in Sukma district this morning. The state government has been working on the policy of zero tolerance towards Naxalism. Ensuring development, peace and safety of citizens in Bastar is the top priority of the state government. The era of peace, development and progress has returned to Bastar," Sai said in a statement.

BGT: Team India fights back, after a flop show

PTI ■ PERTH

Skipper Jasprit Bumrah made amends for his debatable toss call to bat first with a mesmerising opening spell that left Australia scurrying for cover at 67 for 7 and helped India make an emphatic comeback after a flop show with the willow on the opening day of the first Test of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy 2024. The match, which was billed as a battle between two out of form batting units, lived up to the prediction at least on the first day. As many as 17 wickets fell, which is the first time in seven decades for a Test match on Australian soil. The stand-in India skipper, much to everyone's surprise, opted to bat on a track with a liberal grass cover which generated appreciable seam movement and midriff high bounce. But neither the youngsters nor the seasoned ones in the

Indian line-up were up to the task. It was debutant Nitish Reddy's gutsy 41 and Rishabh Pant's 37, including an unbelievable sixer, that got India to 150 in 49.4 overs with Josh Hazlewood (4/29), Mitchell Starc (2/14 in 11 overs), Pat Cummins (2/67 in 15.4 overs) and Mitchell Marsh (2/12 in 5 overs) sharing the spoils. In the driver's seat when they came out to reply, Australia had no answer to Bumrah's (4/17 in 10 overs) quality that was on display. Defending a low first innings total cannot be a one-man show and Mohammed Siraj (2/17 in 9 overs) and debutant Harshit Rana (1/33 in 8 overs) stepped up to support their skipper. The lengths they hit were immaculate, around five metres from the stumps and on the off-stump channel. The live grass did the rest whenever the ball landed on the seam. Debutant Nathan McSweeney



PHOTO: PTI

(10) got a nip-backer and DRS ruled him leg before. Usman Khawaja (8) just froze in his crease once Bumrah decided to square him up by coming round the wicket. Virat Kohli, who had earlier dropped Marnus Labuschagne (2 off 52

balls), didn't make any mistake on this one. But it was out of form Steven Smith (0), who got a very difficult first delivery that zoomed in and dipped catching him plumb in front. Once Bumrah set the tone,

debutant Harshit, with a bustling action, got one that pitched on middle stump, drawing Travis Head (11) forward before it deviated to dislodge the off-bail. Australia were reeling at 31 for 4. Labuschagne took 24 balls to

get off the mark and also found himself at the receiving end of some heated words from an agitated Siraj. The Indian then pitched one up to Mitchell Marsh and the resultant edge was brilliantly snapped by KL Rahul before ending Labuschagne's 52-ball agony with an in-cutter. Bumrah then came for his final spell of the day to remove the rival skipper as India took control of the proceedings. But this resurrection was preceded by a horror show with the bat. Reddy's grit and Pant's brief daredevilry were the only saving grace against a disciplined Australia. Pant and Reddy had added 48 when rival skipper Cummins, who had dropped a skier, got a fuller delivery to straighten as the southpaw closed his bat face and the thickish leading edge flew to the second slip. Pant and Reddy were the only two players who were intent on a pushback. Among the

top-half, KL Rahul (26 off 74 balls) was ready to grind it out before getting a contentious caught behind decision. Young guns like Yashvini Jaiswal (0) and Devdutt Padikkal (0) looked completely out of place during a brilliant opening spell bowled in tandem by Starc and Josh Hazlewood. Virat Kohli (5) was done in by a short ball from Hazlewood. The star Indian batter couldn't remove his bat from the line of the ball and the resultant edge became a regulation slip catch. Rahul followed the basics during this course, playing the one coming into his body while leaving all other deliveries from length. He got out when Starc, back for his second spell, got one to move a shade and the snicko showed deflection although the batter suggested that his bat hit the pad at the same time when the ball went past the edge.

Supreme Court reserves verdict on 1976 amendment to preamble of Constitution

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday observed the 1976 amendment to the Constitution adding terms socialist, secular and integrity to the Preamble underwent judicial reviews and it cannot say whatever Parliament did during the emergency period was all nullity. A bench of Chief Justice Sanjay Khanna and Justice Sanjay Kumar reserved its verdict on a batch of pleas filed by former Rajya Sabha MP Subramanian Swamy, advocate Vishnu Shankar Jain and others, challenging the inclusion of the words 'socialist' and 'secular' in the Preamble to the Constitution.

The CJI, however, said, "The subject amendment (42nd amendment) has been subjected to a lot of judicial reviews by this court. The Parliament has intervened. We cannot say that whatever Parliament did at that time (emergency) was all nullity." The words "socialist", "secular" and "integrity" were inserted into the Preamble to the Constitution under the 42nd constitutional amendment moved by the Indira Gandhi government in 1976. The amendment changed the description of India in the Preamble from a "sovereign, democratic republic" to a "sovereign, socialist, secular, democratic republic". Emergency in India was declared by the late PM Indira Gandhi from June 25, 1975 to March 21, 1977. The bench said it would pronounce its order on the issue on November 25. Former Rajya Sabha MP Subramanian Swamy, who filed a separate plea, pointed out even the subsequently elected union government led by Janata Party supported the inclusion of these words in the Preamble. He said the question was whether it should be added as a separate paragraph to the Preamble instead of saying in 1949, it was adopted as social-



ist and secular. Swamy said, "Not only the emergency Parliament adopted this but (it) was also subsequently supported by the Janata Party government's Parliament by a 2/3rd majority, in which this particular aspect of socialism and secularism was retained." He added, "The issue here is only this much - whether we would make out that this should come as a separate paragraph because we cannot say that in 1949 these words

were adopted. Therefore, the only issue that remains is, having accepted this, we can have a separate paragraph below the original paragraph." Swamy's plea contended the Preamble not only indicated the essential features of the Constitution but also the fundamental conditions based on which it was adopted to create a unified integrated community. During the hearing, the bench refused to refer the matter to a larger bench as sought by petitioner and said "being socialist" in the Indian sense was understood to be a "welfare state". The bench then noted, "The way, we understand socialism in India is very different from other countries. In our context, socialism primarily means a welfare state. That is all. It has never prevented the private sector, which is thriving well. We have all benefited from it." Justice Khanna said the word socialism was used in different contexts worldwide and in

India it meant the state was a welfare one and must stand for the welfare of the people and should provide equality of opportunities. He said the top court held "secularism" to be part of the basic structure of the Constitution in the 1994 S R Bommai case. Advocate Ashwini Upadhyay, who too has filed a petition said he was not against the concepts of "socialism" and "secularism" but opposed their insertion into the Preamble. The bench said Article 368 of the Constitution granted power to Parliament to amend the Constitution and it extended to the Preamble as well. "The Preamble is part and parcel of the Constitution. It is not separate," it said, making it clear the court won't go into the inquiry that the Lok Sabha in 1976 could not have amended the Constitution and that amending the Preamble was a constituent power, exercised only by the Constituent Assembly.

BJP fear sabotage, internal rift in Uttar Pradesh by-polls

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ LUCKNOW

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), still reeling from allegations of sabotage during the Lok Sabha elections, is now grappling with a similar situation in the recently concluded by-elections for nine Assembly seats in Uttar Pradesh (UP). Inputs received by the party's leadership about internal sabotage during voting have raised alarms, prompting an urgent review of the damage caused. Sources within the BJP reveal that saboteurs have been identified, with the most significant disruptions reported in Kundarki, Katehari, and Phulpur constituencies. Complaints began surfacing soon after candidates were announced for key constituencies including Majhawan, Katehari, Kundarki, and Sisamau. Despite efforts by senior leaders to address the unrest, opposition from within the party persisted. In some areas, the dissatisfac-

tion stemmed from ticket distribution. Former MPs, MLAs, and senior workers who were overlooked, in favor of candidates chosen based on caste equations, reportedly worked against the party's official nominees. Inputs also indicate that in Majhawan sabotage was not limited to BJP ranks. Workers from allied parties within the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) were allegedly involved in undermining the BJP's prospects despite public appeals from top alliance leaders for unity. The situation echoes the party's struggles during the Lok Sabha election, where infighting and candidate dissatisfaction proved costly. Aiming for a clean sweep of all 80 seats in UP, the BJP managed to secure only 36 seats. The Lok Sabha results reportedly caused friction between the government and the party organisation, with top leaders divided over the reasons for the defeat. These unresolved issues appear to have resurfaced in the

by-elections, amplifying internal discord. The by-elections are seen as a litmus test for the BJP's organisational discipline and electoral strategy, especially with the 2027 Assembly elections on the horizon. While the party hopes for favorable results, senior leaders are bracing for potential fallout if outcomes fall short of expectations. Insiders believe that if the by-election results mirror the Lok Sabha disappointments, the party could witness intensified blame games and a widening rift among its top brass. Despite the turmoil, BJP leaders remain optimistic about better-than-expected results. The by-elections are critical for the party to maintain its dominance in the state and rebuild its image ahead of future electoral battles. As the results approach, all eyes are on how the BJP addresses the internal challenges that threaten its cohesion and electoral prospects in one of India's most politically significant states.

VBA eyes power in Maharashtra

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Seeking to create bargaining power ahead of the counting of votes in the Maharashtra Assembly polls, Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi (VBA) founder-president Prakash Ambedkar on Friday announced that if his party gets numbers it will support the party or group which is in a position to form the government in Maharashtra. Though a post in micro-blogging site X, 70-year-old lawyer-activist, Prakash Ambedkar -- who is the grandson of late Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar - sent out a message to both the political formations--BJP-led MahaYuti and the Congress-led Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA)--expressing his readiness to join hands with either of them provided it is in a position to form the government in the state. "If VBA gets the numbers tomorrow, to support a party or an alliance to form the government, we will choose to be with the one who can form the government. We will choose power! Hum saath me rehna chahenge!" Ambedkar wrote on "X". After the BVA chief's post on "X", his party spokesperson Siddharth Mokle clarified: "Our party president made it clear two days ago that the VBA is prepared to support any alliance provided our ideology is acceptable to them

Poonawalla joins nation-wide campaign against vapes

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The crusade against vaping must involve not just mothers but the whole society since these new-age nicotine delivery products are way more harmful than conventional smoking," said BJP National Spokesperson Shehzad Poonawalla, as he joined Padma Shri awardee Dr Deepa Malik at the launch of a nationwide campaign titled 'Please STOP This' aimed to combat the growing menace of novel nicotine delivery products such as vapes, e-cigarettes, heat-not-burn devices, and nicotine pouches among Indian children and youth. "I identify a 4S strategy to keep our kids safe from such new-age addiction," he said. "The whole of 'Samaj' or Indian society must step in for stopping this menace; While 'Sarkar' or the government has put into place stringent laws, we must ensure that implementing agencies and law enforcement agencies should crack down more strictly; we must also have a positive presence on 'Social Media' since our kids are on social media. We all need to be there too to drive out the negative messages that project vaping to look

"cool"; we must project positive activities, such as gymming or running, as cool things. Last, but extremely important is 'Sports' since it is the best panacea for keeping kids away from the menace of vapes and addiction to such dangerous new-age devices," Poonawalla added. 'Please STOP This' is an initiative of Mothers Against Vaping (MAV), a collective of concerned mothers dedicated to combating the growing crisis of novel nicotine delivery products such as vapes, e-cigarettes, heat-not-burn devices, and nicotine pouches among Indian children and youth. MAV's 'Please STOP This' campaign is powered by a study that exposes the alleged hidden agendas and tactics of multinational tobacco companies attempting to bypass the current ban on these products in India. The study, based on extensive research from available medical and non-medical sources, as well as past legal cases and media investigations, reveals strategies and tactics employed by manufacturers of these products to influence policy and alter public opinion.

CBI files new chargesheet in NEET UG paper leak

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

CBI has filed its fifth supplementary chargesheet in the NEET UG examination paper leak case on Friday against five persons, including key gang member Amit Kumar Singh of Bokaro who allegedly orchestrated and executed the leak, officials said. In the chargesheet filed before the special CBI court in Patna, the agency alleged that Singh was the key planner of the gang and was aided by Sudip Kumar and Yuvraj Kumar of Bokaro, Abhimanyu Patel of Nalanda and Amit Kumar of Patna in the distribution of the leaked papers to aspirants in Bihar and Jharkhand, they said. "With this, the total chargesheeted accused in this case stands at 45, and all of them are still in judicial custody," a CBI spokesperson said in a statement. The spokesperson said the chargesheet has been filed under various sections of the Indian Penal Code such as 120-B (criminal conspiracy), 109 (abatement), 409 (criminal breach of trust), 420 (cheating), 380 (theft), 201 (causing disappearance of evidence) and 411 (dishonestly receiving stolen

property) and under section 13(2) read with section 13(1)(a) of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 (as amended in 2018). The CBI took over the investigation on June 23. "Names of the candidates who are beneficiaries of the paper theft or unfair means and names of the MBBS student who had solved the stolen paper or who had appeared in the exam as impersonators have already been identified and shared with NTA/Ministry of Education," the statement said. The NEET-UG is conducted by the National Testing Agency (NTA) for admissions to MBBS, BDS, AYUSH and other related courses in government and private institutions. This year, the exam was conducted on May 5 at 4,750 centres in 571 cities, including 14 abroad. More than 23 lakh candidates appeared for the test. The Bihar Police launched a crackdown after getting inputs of an alleged leak of the paper and it soon snowballed into a major political issue. The Union education ministry handed over the probe to the CBI, which registered several FIRs, taking over probes from different states including Bihar. According to the CBI, the

paper was stolen from Oasis School in Hazaribagh by one Pankaj Kumar in connivance with its principal Ahsanul Haque and vice-principal Mohd Intiyaz Alam using sophisticated tools. Trunks containing NEET UG 2024 question papers were brought to the school and kept in the control room on the morning of May 5. Haque and Alam illegally allowed Kumar access to the room where the trunks were kept, the CBI has alleged. Using sophisticated tools, Kumar allegedly opened the trunks to access the question papers, it said. According to the CBI, the paper was solved in Hazaribagh on the morning of the examination on May 5 by a set of solvers studying MBBS courses at AIIMS Patna, RIMS Ranchi and a medical college in Bharatpur. The agency has arrested seven alleged solvers and seized the equipment used to open the trunk. "The solved paper was shared with certain selected students who paid money to the accused. All the solvers, who are MBBS students from reputed colleges, have been identified and most of them arrested. These solvers were brought to Hazaribagh as part of the conspiracy," the CBI spokesperson said earlier.

J and K to review reservation policy

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Against the contentious reservation policy, which allocated only 40 per cent of positions for open merit in government job recruitments, the Omar Abdullah-led government Friday conceded the demand by announcing the setting up of a cabinet sub-committee to take a holistic view in the matter ahead of addressing the genuine concerns of the common aspirants. The decision was taken during the cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Abdullah at his residence in Jammu. Briefing media persons the CM told reporters on the sidelines of a function in Srinagar that the cabinet today decided to constitute a three-member sub-committee to review the existing reservation policy. He said some serious concerns were raised after the reservation policy was tweaked ahead of the Assembly polls earlier this year. The newly formed government has been feeling the heat ever since assuming office last month. Newly elected legislators of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) led by Waheed Ur Rahman Para and National

Conference (NC) MP from Srinagar Aga Syed Ruhullah Mehdi were the most vocal voices in support of the urgent review of the reservation policy. Reacting to the cabinet decision, Ruhullah Mehdi on Friday said that the government is doing its job wherever it has clear powers and that the reservation policy won't be aimed at snatching somebody's rights but at rationalising it. He said open merit needs to be rationalised. "This is what I wanted to convey through my tweet. I wanted to convey to those demanding rationalisation that if the government won't take any decision on it, I will join them and accompany them in getting their demands addressed. I also told them that I will accompany them to the CM and ensure that their demands are met forthwith by the government," Mehdi said. In Jammu, minister for jal shakti and forests, Javed Ahmed Rana in a separate briefing said that critical issues, including employment, reservation, recruitment processes and development, were deliberated upon in the cabinet meeting. He said that the LG's speech during the session was thoroughly discussed.

Canada dismisses report linking PM, Doval to criminal activities

From page 1

In a statement issued by the Privy Council Office on Thursday, Drouin said, "On October 14th, because of a significant and ongoing threat to public safety, the RCMP and officials took the extraordinary step of making public accusations of serious criminal activity in Canada perpetrated by agents of the Government of India." However, he said, "The Government of Canada has not stated, nor is it aware of evidence, linking Prime Minister Modi, Minister Jaishankar, or NSA Doval to the serious criminal activity within Canada. Any suggestion to the contrary is both speculative and inaccurate." In a press conference on Oct 14, Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) Commissioner Mike Duheme warned of widespread violence, homicides and a public security threat linked to "agents" of the Indian government. Hours after Duheme's conference, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau told reporters, "I believe that India has made a monumental mistake by choosing to use their diplomats and organised crime to attack Canadians, to make them feel unsafe here at (their) home, and even more, to create acts of violence and even murder. It's unacceptable." On Oct 26, Canadian Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister David Morrison alleged that Indian Home Minister Shah ordered a campaign of

violence, intimidation and intelligence-gathering targeting Sikh separatists inside Canada. In New Delhi on Wednesday, referring to the The Globe and Mail report, External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said such "ludicrous statements" should be dismissed with the contempt they deserve and "smear campaigns like this only further damage our already strained ties." India-Canada ties remain deeply troubled over Canada's alleged support to Khalistani separatists and its accusation of India's involvement in the killing of Nijjar, who was gunned down in Surrey, British Columbia in June last year. India-Canada ties further nosedived last month after Canada linked Indian High Commissioner Sanjay Verma and some other diplomats to the murder. India has strongly rejected all the allegations made by Ottawa in connection to the case and subsequently recalled the high commissioner. The Canadian government had said the Indian diplomats were expelled from the country. India expelled Canadian Charge d'Affaires Stewart Wheeler and five other diplomats following Canada's allegations. New Delhi accuses Ottawa of doing next to nothing to stop the activities of Khalistani supporters who seek to undermine the sovereignty and territorial integrity of India.

Centre opposes ex-SC judges panel

From page 1

During the hearing, senior advocate Gopal Sankaranarayanan highlighted that changes in the timing of stubble burning, coupled with seasonal wind patterns, had worsened Delhi's air quality. The amicus curiae further flagged discrepancies in data reported by the CAQM and other sources regarding burnt areas in Punjab and Haryana. "The burnt area in Punjab has increased to 19.1 lakh hectare from 15.1 lakh hectare in 2021, a 24% rise. Similarly, Haryana's burnt area rose from 3.5 lakh hectare in 2021 to 8.3 lakh hectare in 2023. This contrasts with CAQM data, which claims a reduction in farm fires in Haryana," Singh said, raising concerns about the accuracy of official reports. The ASG defended the CAQM's methodology, arguing that reliance on unverified sensors

would undermine the process. The Bench observed that while satellites could detect farm fires, burnt area showed their exact extent. "We would like to have that data," it said. In an order on November 18, the top court directed the Centre and the CAQM to procure farm fire data using geostationary satellites, as opposed to NASA's polar-orbiting satellites, to ensure real-time monitoring. The SC noted that existing data from NASA satellites was limited to specific time windows and directed the involvement of ISRO in utilising stationary satellites for comprehensive day-long monitoring. The court will review compliance with these directions and the latest developments on stubble burning measures in its next hearing. The Supreme Court has appointed 13 lawyers as advocate commissioners to examine whether its earlier

directives to restrict the entry of trucks from neighbouring areas into Delhi amid the capital's pollution crisis is being properly enforced. The list include Pratyush Jain, Aditya N Prasad, Aditya Bharat Manubarwala, Manisha Chava, Abhinav Aggarwal, Shrishti Mishra, Manan Verma, Jatin Kumar, Mohit Siwach, Abhishk Budhiraja, Pranav Dhawan, Savi Nagpal and Sumit Kumar. Earlier, the Court was told that there are 113 entry points, but only 13 check points have strict vigil. The Court proceeded to appoint 13 lawyers who volunteered to act as advocate commissioners to go check these 13 points and see if the restrictions on entry of trucks are actually being enforced. The Court added that the Delhi government must take measures to monitor all entry points, and not just the 13 entry points where strict vigil measures are presently stated to be in place.

Temperature falls, AQI rises

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However, Delhi still ranked as the second most polluted city in the country, only behind Bihar's Hajipur (AQI 403). While Delhi's AQI was the worst in the country on Monday and Tuesday, with readings exceeding 450 in the "severe plus" category, it recorded the third-worst ranking on Wednesday before moving to the second place on Thursday. Earlier in the season, favourable conditions such as strong wind speeds and easterly winds contributed to better air quality. However, these same conditions are now linked to high Air Quality Index (AQI) readings. According to SAFAR-India, Alipur recorded an AQI of 389, while Anand Vihar recorded 410, Ashok Vihar 395, Bawana 411, Burari Crossing 369, Dwarka Sector 8 380, IGI Airport 357, ITO 344, Jahangirpuri 426, Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium 342, Lodhi Road 267, Mandir Marg 356, Mundka 402, Najafgarh 353, Narela 383, North Campus DU 346, Okhla Phase 2 374, RK Puram 372, Rohini 397, Shadipur 402, Siri Fort 359, Vivek Vihar 398, and Wazirpur 413 among others. The Decision Support System for Air Quality Management in Delhi pointed out the transport sector as the most significant contributor at 15.16 per cent. While the

residential sector contribution is 3.123 per cent, industries contributed 2.877 per cent, construction 2.148 per cent, energy sector 1.727 per cent, waste burning 1.348 per cent, and road dust 1.502 per cent. Keeping in view of restrictions imposed by the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) under the stage IV of the Graded Response Action Plan, the roads in Delhi witnessed reduction in traffic on most roads and intersections due to banning entry of trucks, BS 3 and BS 4 vehicles, staggering timings of government offices and work from home facilities. The city roads, which are usually jammed with the traffic flow especially in peak hours, were visibly deserted. Add/CP (Traffic) Satyaveer Singh Katara stated that the effect of these instructions including work from home for government employees and schools being shifted to online mode is evident as there has been about 25 per cent of reduction of traffic in Delhi. "The reduction is also helping in bringing down the aqi as is visible," he said. Further, complying to the orders of Supreme Court to the Delhi Police to ensure vigilance at entry points in the city for trucks, the officer added that they have deployed teams of traffic personnel at 13 different points including Badarpur, Ghazipur, Singhu border, Tikri border, Loni and Rangpuri border.

professionals across diverse fields in this era of technological advancements. In the first week of August, in a letter to the LG, Kejriwal, the then CM, had said his cabinet colleague Atishi would hoist the national flag in his place during the Delhi government's Independence Day programme but LG nominated Gahlot to do the honours. In an earlier tweet, LG had targeted the AAP government saying, "During the inspection of Rangpuri, Aya Nagar, Jaunapur area of South Delhi on the repeated requests of local residents. A horrific example of failure and mismanagement of the local government was once again seen. The mess of electric wires hanging dangerously, women holding pipes in their hands for drinking water, open manholes, heaps of garbage and sewer water flowing in the streets is unforgivable. The mismanagement that was seen here was also seen during the inspection of North-East Delhi and North-West Delhi."

Déjà vu for AAP, LG Saxena now praises CM Atishi

From page 1

"Young bright women graduating today will be breaking barriers, redefining gender roles, and stepping into a rapidly changing world with technical expertise and determination. Their bright, young minds are a testament to the innovation and resilience needed to lead in this era of transformation," L-G said on social media platform. "These young women carry not only the promise of bright futures but also a new-

found responsibility to contribute to their parents and families, society, and nation-building. This convocation marks a celebration of progress and the vital role women play in shaping a technologically advanced and equitable future," he mentioned. The AAP and BJP have been at loggerheads over a range of issues, including governance, air pollution, and control of bureaucracy. Recently, Raj Niwas and the AAP led Delhi government were at loggerheads over the

issue of reemployment of over 10,000 civil defence volunteers to tackle air pollution. Kejriwal tendered his resignation in September and said that he would seek a "certificate of honesty" from the public in light of the corruption charges he faced. Kejriwal had proposed Atishi's name as the chief minister at a meeting of the legislature party and it was unanimously accepted. The roots of the recent confrontation can be traced back to March 5, 2014, when

14 AAP members, including leaders, former journalist Ashutosh (then party member) and Shazia IImi, were arrested following clashes outside the BJP national headquarters. The altercation left 28 people injured, including 13 AAP activists and 10 BJP supporters. The clashes were sparked by protests against the detention of Kejriwal in Gujarat on March 4, 2014. Meanwhile, Atishi, in her address, expressed her appreciation for IGDTUW's role in providing qualified

professionals across diverse fields in this era of technological advancements. In the first week of August, in a letter to the LG, Kejriwal, the then CM, had said his cabinet colleague Atishi would hoist the national flag in his place during the Delhi government's Independence Day programme but LG nominated Gahlot to do the honours. In an earlier tweet, LG had targeted the AAP government saying, "During the inspection of Rangpuri, Aya Nagar, Jaunapur area of

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HM holds meet with senior police officers

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah held a meeting with senior Delhi Police officers on Friday here to review the law and order situation in the national capital. According to senior police officials, Shah underscored the importance of making every Delhi resident feel safe, stressing that it is the personal responsibility of every police officer to ensure public confidence in the city's security. According to the officials he held a meeting to review the city's law and order situation. The meeting was attended by the Home Secretary, Director of the Intelligence Bureau, Delhi Police Commissioner and other senior officials. The Home Minister highlighted that protecting children, women and senior citizens must remain a top priority for the Delhi Police. He reiterated the need for the force to act



decisively, ensuring a secure environment that reflects the government's commitment to public safety in the capital. During the meeting, the home minister emphasised the gov-

ernment's "zero tolerance" policy towards crime, stating that no lapses in maintaining law and order in the national capital would be tolerated, the official said.

Shah directed the police to develop special action plans targeting key areas related to public safety and to launch focused campaigns. He further stressed that the police force

must work to instill a sense of security among citizens while creating fear among criminals. This comes amid the AAP attacking him relentlessly for the crime taking place in the city and Delhi witnessing a spate of extortion-related shootings in the last few months. Police sources also said that the senior officers gave power-point presentations related to their units. Recently, Shah appreciated the Delhi Police for the crackdown against illegal drug trade in the country. In October, Shah said the Narendra Modi government is committed to building a "drug-free Bharat" by protecting the youth from the scourge of drugs. "I congratulate Delhi Police for the series of successful operations seizing drugs worth Rs 13,000 crore, including the recent one with Gujarat Police recovering cocaine worth Rs 5,000 crore," Shah said.

City witnesses season's coldest night on Friday at 11 degrees Celsius

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The national Capital witnessed the second season's coldest night on Friday at 11 degrees Celsius with the city expecting to see slight increase in minimum temperatures in the coming days. On Thursday, Delhi recorded the season's coldest night so far at 10.2 degrees Celsius. The falling temperatures have triggered people to take out their blazers and scarves as the city is witnessing colder days. According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), the night time temperature recorded on Wednesday was 11.2 degrees Celsius, while Tuesday night saw a low of 12.3 degrees Celsius, making them the third and fourth lowest of the season so far. The city, covered in a blanket of fog and smitten by chilly wind, saw a maximum tem-



perature of 27.2 degrees Celsius, a degree above the normal. The humidity levels fluctuated between 97 per cent and 71 per cent during the day, according to the weather department. The IMD has forecast moderate fog for Saturday, with the maximum and minimum temperatures expected to settle at 28 degrees Celsius and 12 degrees Celsius. According to the Air Quality Early Warning System for

Delhi, there has been a slight rise in minimum and maximum temperatures over Delhi/NCR during the past 24 hour. "The Maximum and Minimum temperature over Delhi is in the range of 25 to 27 degrees Celsius and 9 to 12 degrees Celsius respectively. The maximum temperature was below normal by 1 to 3 degrees Celsius and the minimum temperature was near normal most places over the region," the bulletin said.

Kejriwal launches election campaign 'Revdi Pe Charcha' ahead of Assembly polls

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Propping up its saggy image due to corruption charges, AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal on Friday launched a fortnight long election campaign titled 'Revdi Pe Charcha' beginning November 25 ahead of the Delhi assembly election next year, even as the party faces internal turmoil. Slamming Prime Minister Narendra Modi's repeated criticism of free services, Kejriwal said, "Yes, we are proudly offering these six 'revdis' to the Delhiites. He also challenged to implement a free power scheme in the states ruled by the BJP-led NDA. Kejriwal's campaign name played on the BJP jibe on the party's freebies or 'revdis' given to the people. Launching the campaign, Kejriwal said the party's district and booth-level office bearers will reach out to voters, distributing pamphlets about the free facilities ('revdis') provided by the AAP



government. During the campaign, AAP leaders and workers have planned to hold 65,000 small public meetings across the national Capital's 70 assembly constituencies apprising the public of their free services. Pamphlets detailing these benefits, referred to as 'revdis,' will also be distributed. The initiative is designed to bring AAP's achievements directly to the people, especially its popular 'freebies' or

'revdis', which have been a cornerstone of the party's governance. Free power till first 200 units, 20,000 litre free water, free education, mohalla clinics, free bus ride for women and the free pilgrimage scheme for elderly will be highlighted by the AAP teams visiting households during the campaign. The emphasis of the campaign would be that the BJP would throw these "facilities" in the bin if people vote for

them. "Delhi's governance is split: half under us, half under BJP and over past decade, we've delivered electricity, water, schools, hospitals, roads, CCTV cameras, streetlights, and sewage systems, while BJP has only stalled progress," he said. He alleged that the BJP wants to stop all the free facilities in the national capital. "The BJP is in power in 20 states and not even in a single state do they provide any of these free 'revdis'. This is because they don't have the intention; only AAP knows how to provide these facilities," Kejriwal said. He further said that AAP workers will ask the voters what the BJP has done for Delhi in the last 10 years since "the national capital is a half-state and the central government has as many powers as we do". All the BJP has done in the past decade is to halt the AAP government's developmental works, Kejriwal added. Backing Kejriwal's announce-

ments, Delhi Chief Minister Atishi said in a post in Hindi on X, "Arvind Kejriwal has spent people's tax money on public instead of keeping it in his pocket. But all this will stop if the BJP comes to power (in Delhi)." "The people of Delhi will have to make Arvind Kejriwal their chief minister once again to save the free facilities," she added. AAP has been in campaign mode after the Lok Sabha elections with senior leaders, including Kejriwal, holding a series of 'padayatra' and MLAs reaching out to households through 'Your MLA at Your Doorsteps' among others. AAP has 59 seats in Delhi assembly while BJP has seven seats. AAP got 62 seats in 2020 assembly election and the BJP got 8, but two AAP MLAs including Chhatrapur MLA Kartar Singh Tanwar and Rajendra Pal Gautam resigned from the assembly citing differences with the party

BJP slams Kejriwal's 'Revdi' politics

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi BJP on Friday slammed former Chief Minister and AAP Convener Arvind Kejriwal's 'Revdi' politics, saying it looks like he is distributing 'charity'. Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva said, "It is the duty of every government to ensure that welfare schemes reach every citizen but Kejriwal's language makes it seem like he is distributing 'charity'." He added that in states governed by the BJP, all central government schemes have been implemented effectively, contributing uniquely to societal progress. "However, Delhi remains an exception, as a corrupt government here has prevented the implementation of many central government schemes due to political rivalry," he claimed, adding that welfare schemes should be accessible to all, yet Kejriwal's tone suggests he is distributing "charity".



He questioned why Kejriwal, who claims to provide free electricity, does not extend the subsidy to everyone. He also asked why electricity rates in Delhi are so high, with industrialists having to pay Rs 18 per unit. "Additionally, the Kejriwal government is exploiting Delhiites under the guise of surcharges," he alleged, adding that the situation regarding water is no different. Sachdeva also criticized the Kejriwal government for the mismanagement in school infrastructure. Talking about healthcare, he questioned the so-called free services claimed by Kejriwal. Appointments for

tests in government hospitals are given years later, and expired fake medicines are being distributed. He asserted that the benefits of welfare schemes are the right of every Delhiite, and the BJP will ensure these rights are upheld once in power. "If BJP comes to power, we will implement all central government schemes in Delhi and expand the scope of welfare programs in the state," he added. South Delhi BJP MP from an election manifesto committee convener Ramvir Singh Bidhuri claimed that AAP supremo came to power by lying and now seeing his power slip away, he has started scaring the public. "Arvind Kejriwal has cheated the public in the name of freebies. BJP will not only keep all the current concessional schemes in place but will actually deliver the benefits of these schemes to the public because Kejriwal's claims are completely hollow," he said.

Significant rise of 10,000 challans across city markets for improper parking

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The improper parking across 14 markets in the national Capital saw a significant rise of more than 10,000 challans in this year as of October 31 as compared to the same period last year with the Delhi Police issuing more than 49,000 challans according to official data. According to the data, the challans issued this year for 10 months marks a rise of 26.2 per cent from the last year. According to a senior traffic police official, the 14 markets that showed such an increase include Karol Bagh, Sadar Bazar, Chandni Chowk, Kamla Nagar, Gandhi Nagar, Vikas Marg, Sarojini Nagar, Green Park, Lajpat Nagar, Yusuf Sarai, Mahipalpur, Rajouri Garden, Tilak Nagar, and Sector-10 Dwarka. The traffic cops issued 39,100 challans till October 31 in 2023, which rose to 49,348 this year. "These 14 markets witness high daily footfall. The figures clearly indicate an intensified crackdown on parking violations in these busy commercial hubs,"



the official said, adding that the fine for improper parking in the national capital is Rs 500. Additionally, police towed away 28,935 vehicles from these locations till October 31 this year as against 22,928 vehicles towed away in the same period last year. Another official said that more than 39,000 vehicles have been prosecuted for improper parking at the city's four major railway stations until October 22 this year. The highest number of 14,949 challans was issued around the Old Delhi Railway Station,

followed by 13,122 challans around New Delhi Railway Station, 8,089 challans around Hazrat Nizamuddin Railway Station, and 3,527 challans around Delhi Cantt Railway Station. At the Old Delhi Railway Station, 5,526 challans were issued to auto-rickshaws, 1,070 to buses, 1,145 to taxis, 3,596 to e-rickshaws and 3,612 to other vehicles. The police also towed away 1,460 vehicles from these railway stations, with the New Delhi Railway Station accounting for the highest numbers at 757.

Rai urges Chief Secretary to personally oversee GRAP enforcement across city

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Environment Minister Gopal Rai on Friday wrote to the Chief Secretary, urging him to personally oversee Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) enforcement and coordinate execution with all departments to sustain air quality improvements in the national Capital. Rai said, "The collective efforts of all departments are crucial to safeguarding the health and well being of Delhi's citizens. I urge you to personally oversee the coordination and execution of these measures. Let us ensure that the recent improvements in air quality are sustained and further enhanced." He stated that as you are aware that the Air Quality Index (AQI) in Delhi recently reached alarming levels, crossing 450 (severe plus), posing severe health risks to the residents of Delhi. "While the AQI has shown some improvement in last few days, we must not allow our efforts to slow down or weaken. The situation continues to demand urgent



and sustained action from all concerned departments," the minister stated. Further, he wrote, "In this regard, I feel that we have to ensure strict implementation of GRAP Guidelines and all departments must rigorously implement the measures outlined under the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) without exception." "This includes restricting vehicular emissions, controlling construction dust, and curbing industrial pollution and all other actions as proposed and directed during various meetings taken in order to implement Winter Action Plan-2024," he said, adding that at the departments

must submit daily reports on their actions and progress in implementing GRAP guidelines. He added that this data will be critical for monitoring the effectiveness of measures and identifying areas requiring additional focus. "The enforcement mechanisms being followed by various departments must be further intensified. Strict penalties should be imposed on violators of pollution control norms, including unauthorized construction and demolition activities, open burning of waste, burning of Parali and other activities contributing to air pollution," Rai stated. "At the departments of Delhi Government be directed to actively engage in spreading awareness among citizens through FWAs, Trade and Market Associations, Citizens Group and NGOs etc regarding their role in reducing pollution, such as limiting vehicle use, avoiding open burning of materials, and adopting eco-friendly practices," he added.

BJP leader Goel writes to Vaishnav seeking regulation or ban on online gambling

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Former Union Minister and senior BJP leader Vijay Goel on Friday wrote to Union Minister of Information and Technology Ashwini Vaishnav, demanding the government to immediately ban or regulate online gambling in view of its increasing addiction among the youth of the country. In the letter, he highlighted the alarming issue of youth being drawn towards destruction through online gaming and expressed concern that children and young people often unknowingly drift into online gambling while engaging in online gaming activities. According to him, the dream of earning immense money with just a single click on a mobile phone is driving the youth into a frenzy. Goel stated that, in many cases, even the parents of the children



remain unaware that their child is engaging in gambling rather than gaming. He demanded from Vaishnav that online games should be regulated or banned immediately. "Also, by talking to the cricketers and players appearing in their advertisements, they should be stopped from doing such misleading advertisements. So that the safe and bright future of our young generation can be ensured and their energy can be used to make a constructive contribution to the development of the country instead of gambling," he said.

HC directs MCD, police to remove deficiencies, illegal activities from Chandni Chowk

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Friday directed the MCD and police to remove the deficiencies and illegal activities going on in Chandni Chowk area and termed it a "shocking state of affairs". The high court perused the photographs in the area and noted that people are engaging in gambling there while the Delhi Police is not doing anything. "People are doing gambling there. It seems they are drug addicts there. What are police doing, are they aware of the ground reality. How can people stay there (in public spaces). Your (PWD) officers are not doing their job and there is a lot of 'hafta' collection going on there. Police officials don't know anything, it seems the police have become helpless. This gives bad name to police,"

said a bench of Chief Justice Manmohan and Justice Tushar Rao Gedela. The bench said it was of the prima facie view that the deficiencies and illegal activities must be attended to and removed by the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) and the Delhi Police in accordance with the law as expeditiously as possible. It directed the MCD, Public Works Department (PWD), Shahjahanabad Redevelopment Corporation Limited (SRDC), Delhi Police and Traffic Police to file their status reports within two weeks. The court also asked the deputy commissioner of police concerned and a senior officer of the PWD to be personally present in the court on the next date of hearing, that is, December 13. The court was hearing a public interest litigation filed by



Chandni Chowk Sarv Vyapar Mandal highlighting the highly neglected, disturbing and pathetic state of affairs in the area of Chandni Chowk Redevelopment Project from Lal Quila Road up to Fateh Puri Masjid and its surrounding areas, including metro stations. Perusing the photographs placed by the petitioner, the court said "these are shocking state of affairs". The petitioner sought directions to the city authorities to ensure that all the damage and illegal activities in the area are

removed in a time bound manner. Senior advocate Sanjeev Ralli, appearing for the petitioner organisation, submitted that there was a total failure, neglect and lack of attention on the part of authorities, including the MCD, PWD, Delhi Police and Traffic Police, which keep on shifting their responsibility by blaming each other. He said till the time the court was monitoring the situation there was no problem but the day when the court closed the petition, it started deteriorating. "Due to this, huge public money of over Rs 140 crore spent on the redevelopment project was going waste on account of serious deficiencies and damage," the plea said. The bench said it was unfortunate that beat officials were regularly going on the spot but just for their weekly collection. "PWD has to make some

arrangements. It is not making adequate arrangements for homeless people. Nothing has been done that is why these homeless people are staying here on roads," it said. The court said that it stopped monitoring for a few months and the situation deteriorated. The deficiencies mentioned in the petition included damage to the infrastructure, lack of maintenance and hygiene, public spaces occupied by homeless, vagabonds, drug addicts and stray cattle. It also said there has been illegal and unregulated vending activities and encroachments in the no hawking and no-vending zones and thousands of unregulated rickshaws have been plying on Chandni Chowk road. The court was earlier dealing with a public interest litigation on the Chandani Chowk redevelopment project.

LG distributes appointment letters to 702 newly recruited Government employees

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena on Friday distributed appointment letters to 702 newly appointed government employees in various Delhi Government Departments and civic bodies at an event organized at Vigyan Bhawan. According to officials, these appointments have been made in Delhi Government departments like Education, Health, Training & Technical Education, Delhi Transport Corporation and Delhi Fire Services. "Out of the 702 appointments, 232 appointments have been made in the Health Department, followed by 200 in Education Department, 119 in the Planning and 88 in Training & Technical Education Department," a senior official



said, adding that apart from this, appointments were also made in Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) and New Delhi Municipal Corporation (NDMC). He added that these recruitments will fulfill the vacant posts and improve the functioning in these departments. "The appointees include women, people with disabilities, and candidates from reserved categories as per laid down norms," the official said. "Distribution of permanent

appointment letters assumes significance as LG, ever since taking over the office in May, 2022, has been emphasizing upon permanent recruitments in government departments over contractual and ad hoc appointments," another official said, adding that approximately 22,000 permanent appointments have been made by DSSSB and UPSC in the last two years at his behest. He said, "Today's event was the sixth such event in the last two years."

BJP leader demands apology from Congress over baseless allegations

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

BJP leader Vinod Tawde has demanded an apology from Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and the Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi for making "false and baseless" allegations against him in the cash-for-votes incident in Maharashtra, saying if they do not he would sue them for defamation. He sent a legal notice to Congress seeking apology in 24 hours.

Tawde was accused by Bahujan Vikas Aghadi, a regional party, of distributing Rs 5 crore to woo voters, with its members barging into a hotel room on November 19 in a Mumbai suburb, where the BJP leader was present. The former Maharashtra minister and BJP national general secretary claimed innocence, saying the alleged amount was not recovered in the probe by the Election Commission and police.



"The Congress only believes in spreading lies, and this incident is a proof of the party's low level politics to dent me and my party's image," Tawde said. The two Congress leaders and the party spokesperson Supriya Shrinete seized on the row to accuse the BJP of using money power to influence the November 20 assembly polls in the state. The legal notice sent to the three claimed that they were aware that they were pushing

a "totally false story fabricated" by them. "You all have deliberately, mischievously with the sole intention of damaging the reputation of our client intentionally fabricated the story distribution of money. You all have published false, baseless allegations against our client on various media for tarnishing his image in the eyes of right thinking people in the society," the notice read. The Congress leaders were in a "great hurry" to damage

Tawde's reputation, they did not bother to check the fact and or despite knowing the entire fact they made the false, baseless allegations, it said. "The entire imputation made by you all are totally false, baseless, malicious and mala fide and as our client is in no way involved in any such illegal activity and as a responsible office bearer of the national political party he is aware of his duties," it added.

The notice demanded an "unconditional apology" to Tawde within 24 hours from the time the receipt of the notice, which was sent on November 21, and published in newspapers and social media. If they do not offer apology, then Tawde will initiate criminal proceedings under Section 356, which covers defamation, of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and also civil proceedings for the damages of Rs 100 crore against the three Congress leaders, the notice said.

Over 1.12 lakh trees will be felled to make way for Kanwar Yatra route: UP Govt informs NGT

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has been informed by the UP government's environment department that over 1.12 lakh trees will be felled in the protected forest area in the state to make way for the upcoming Kanwar Yatra route. The NGT had sought a reply from the secretary of the state's environment department in a case pertaining to the felling of more than one lakh trees and shrubs in the protected forest area.

The area in question spreads across three forest divisions of Ghaziabad, Meerut and Muzaffarnagar for the proposed route between Muradnagar in Ghaziabad and Purkaji in Muzaffarnagar. The reply, filed by UP principal secretary, Department of Environment, and dated November 19 said, "It is important to mention that the Public Works Department (PWD) received permission to cut 1,12,722 trees/plants for



the Kanwar Marg project, as approved by the (Union) Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change on February 28, 2023." It said at present, 25,410 trees had been marked and assigned for felling, of which 17,607 were cut by the PWD under the supervision of the Uttar Pradesh Forest Corporation. "Presently, the tree-cutting work has been suspended by PWD since August 9, 2024, and tree felling in certain stretches of the proposed alignment has not commenced," said the

reply uploaded on the tribunal's website on Friday. Noting that the tribunal asked the secretary to enumerate the number of trees under the UP Tree Protection Act provisions, the reply stated such an enumeration was not possible in the stretches where tree cutting was completed as plants and bushes were also cleared during the drive. "In the future, once PWD finalises a revised road alignment with width of 15-20 metre, joint inspections will identify and enumerate any remaining trees to be felled.

However, the total number of affected trees/plants should not exceed 1,12,722," it stated. The UP tree act provisions did not apply to the reserved and protected forest land, the reply added. "The land used for the construction of above-mentioned Kanwar Marg is a protected forest and the implementing agency has obtained in-principle approval from Government of India for Kanwar Marg Project. Thus, enumeration of trees as per the provisions of UP Tree Act 1976 was not carried out," it said.

Regarding the definition of trees, as asked by the tribunal in its previous order, the reply cited the Centre's Parivesh Portal, according to which trees were categorised based on girth size such as 0-30 cm, 31-60 cm, and more than 150 cm, and included provisions for also counting smaller plants and trees having a girth between zero and 30 cm. "This ensures that all relevant vegetation is comprehensively accounted," the reply said.

There is need to broaden definition of jobs and employment: Pradhan

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Union Minister for Education Dharmendra Pradhan on Friday here said there is a need to broaden the definition of jobs and employment adding technological disruptions will change the nature of jobs and economic activities. He stressed the need to continuously up-skill and re-skill the workforce for future-proofing them.

He made these assertions after launching along with Minister of Labour and Employment and Youth and Sports Mansukh Mandaviya a report titled Jobs at Your Doorstep: A Jobs Diagnostics for Young People in Six States. Secretary, Department of School Education & Literacy Sanjay Kumar; Secretary, Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Atul Kumar Tiwari; Country Director, World Bank, India

Auguste Tano Kouame; Lead Education Specialist, Shabnam Sinha, World Bank, India, officials of the Ministries and some school Principals were also present at the event.

Speaking at the event, Pradhan complimented the World Bank team for the detailed report on six states. He also suggested the World Bank team adopt a pan-India framework. Such in-depth diagnostics on skilling and jobs will enable stakeholders to create new architectures and make progressive policies for empowering our population, he said. He highlighted the need to broaden the definition of jobs and employment. Pradhan said the framework has to be broadened and viewed from the perspective of economic opportunities and empowerment. Expressing his gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra

Modi's vision to transform India into a global skills hub, the Minister said the population of the country will be the driver of the global economy. For this, skilling needs to begin right at schools and NEP 2020 has envisioned mainstreaming skilling in schools, he said.

Pradhan also said technological disruptions will change the nature of jobs and economic activities and it is needed to continuously up-skill and re-skill the workforce for future-proofing them. A 'whole-of-a-government' approach and working collaboratively to skill, up-skill and re-skill our large population is needed to emerge as the skill capital of the world, he mentioned. Mandaviya, in his address, mentioned that in the last budget, it was proposed to develop a curriculum to harness the potential of region-specific skills and employ-



ment, following a hub-and-spoke model. He also stressed on correcting the definition of job beyond employment. It is important to include informal education in academic education, he added. Sanjay Kumar reaffirmed Prime Minister Modi's vision of a 'whole-of-government'

approach, which has inspired collaboration between the two Ministries to develop systems in schools for inculcating the culture of skill education. Emphasizing the significance of practising a skill to achieve mastery, he noted that the NEP 2020 recommends instilling diligence and con-

sistent practice in students. The Government of India has an ambitious plan to transform the economy towards a high-income country status by 2047.

To achieve the goal of India becoming a productive economy, she needs to urgently address challenges facing its employment landscape and prepare its workforce. Multifaceted, dynamic, convergent approaches aligned to educational reform and market-linked skill development (SD) will help India reach its job growth potential. Key reforms by Government of India will help strengthen the vocational education sector to become a decentralized, local market-led, inclusive and fiscally sustainable sector, to train the workforce for the skills required for a high-income India. The Ministry of Education has made major strides on this front by launching the

National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2023. Both policies emphasize the importance of skilling in schools, with the NEP setting ambitious targets of 50 per cent of students accessing skill education by 2025 and all secondary schools offering skill education by 2030.

As India sets out to achieve these targets, the "Jobs at Your Doorstep" report serves as both a diagnostic and roadmap to providing strategic linkages and convergence between education and the jobs agenda of India. It goes deep into the job landscape of six states: Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, and Rajasthan (collectively the STARS states). STARS Scheme has a national component under which key reforms are shared and disseminated for implementation. This report underscores the significant benefits of embedding skill-based education from grades 9-12 to prepare students for diverse career paths relying on a bottom-up approach, going deep in districts of the six states. These present varying socio-economic profiles offer a nuanced view of how industry and government can both contribute towards the jobs agenda.

The World Bank assists the Ministry of Education with its program called Strengthening Teaching-Learning and Results for States (STARS) covering six states namely Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, and Rajasthan (collectively the STARS states). STARS Scheme has a national component under which key reforms are shared and disseminated for implementation. This report underscores the significant benefits of embedding skill-based education from grades 9-12 to prepare students for diverse career paths relying on a bottom-up approach, going deep in districts of the six states. These present varying socio-economic profiles offer a nuanced view of how industry and government can both contribute towards the jobs agenda.

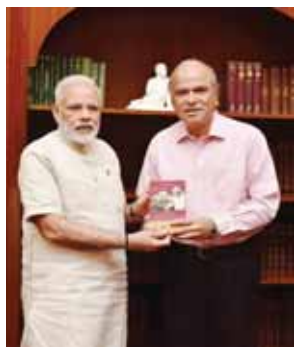
PM Modi expresses grief at death of former IIS officer SM Khan

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed his grief at the death of retired Indian Information Service (IIS) officer and Press Secretary to former President Dr APJ Abdul Kalam, S M Khan, calling it "irreparable loss to the society".

In his message to bereaved family Thursday from Guyana where he was on the last leg of five-day and three-nation visit, Modi said Khan was a hardworking and dedicated officer of Indian Information Service and worked in various departments.

"With his experience and expertise, he handled various challenging responsibilities with dedication. His humane approach and nature taking everyone along was worth mentioning," the Prime Minister said. He will be remembered for his efforts for needy people and



his demise is an "irreparable loss to the society," he said. "It is difficult to put in words the pain of loneliness in your life. He is not in this world in physical form but his memories and values will always be with the family," Modi said. A distinguished officer, who was spokesperson for the Central Bureau of Investigation for 15 years before joining as press secretary to former President Dr APJ Abdul Kalam, Khan died at a private hospital on Sunday after a brief illness.

Throughout his tenure, he became the face of the CBI, regularly addressing the media during high-profile cases, including the Bofors scandal, stock exchange scams and various white-collar crimes.

Following his extensive service with the CBI, Khan was appointed as the press secretary to the late President Dr APJ Abdul Kalam, a role in which he further solidified his reputation in public communication. After Kalam's term, Khan moved to a prestigious position as the director general of News at Doordarshan. In addition to his notable career in public service, Khan authored a book titled "People's President," which was released by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He also held the position of vice president and trustee at the India Islamic and Cultural Centre, contributing to cultural dialogue and community development.

PM Modi participates in 31 bilateral meets, informal interactions during tour

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi participated in 31 bilateral meetings and informal interactions with world leaders during his five days of three-country tour, officials said on Friday.

The whirlwind diplomatic engagements included a bilateral meeting with the Nigerian president in Nigeria, 10 bilateral meetings on the sidelines of the G20 Summit in Brazil and nine during Modi's visit to Guyana. In Brazil, Modi held bilateral meetings with the leaders of the country, besides those of Indonesia, Portugal, Italy, Norway, France, the UK, Chile, Argentina and Australia. These were marked by his maiden bilateral meetings with Indonesian leader Prabowo Subianto, Portugal's Luis Montenegro, the UK's Keir Starmer, Chile's Gabriel Boric, and Argentina's Javier



Milei, the officials noted. Modi also had informal interactions and pull-aside meetings in Brazil with the leaders of Singapore, South Korea, Egypt, the USA and Spain and with the heads and executives of various international organisations like Ursula von der Leyen of the European Union; Antonio Guterres of the United Nations; Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala of the World

Trade Organization; Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus of the World Health Organization; and Kristalina Georgieva and Gita Gopinath of the IMF. In Guyana, the officials said, Modi held bilateral meetings with the leaders of Guyana, Dominica, Bahamas, Trinidad & Tobago, Suriname, Barbados, Antigua & Barbuda, Grenada and St Lucia.

Two fishermen go missing as boat collides with Indian Navy's submarine

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Two fishermen were missing after their boat collided with an Indian Navy submarine late Thursday evening 70 nautical miles off Goa Coast. There were 13 fishermen onboard the boat and 11 of them were rescued, navy said here on Friday adding search operations were on for the remaining members.

"An Indian fishing vessel Marthoma with a crew of 13 reportedly collided with an Indian Naval unit on November 21 about 70 nm North West of Goa," an Indian Navy spokesperson said. "Search and rescue efforts were immediately launched by the Indian Navy with six ships and aircraft. Eleven crew have been rescued so far," he said. The search operation to find the two missing crew mem-

bers is ongoing and was being coordinated with the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC) in Mumbai. The Navy has ordered a high-level probe into the matter. A spokesperson from the Navy said additional assets, from the Coast Guard as well, were being mobilised and diverted to the area of the incident to help with the rescue efforts. The Navy deployed six ships and surveillance aircraft in the rescue mission.

The fishing vessel collided with a Scorpene class submarine - which is a crucial part of India's naval strength, capable of executing a wide range of functions, including anti-surface warfare, anti-submarine warfare, intelligence gathering, mine laying, and area surveillance. It has superior stealth techniques and low noise levels, making it a deadly and precise weapon.

Nitish lays foundation stones for rural road, bridge projects

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PATNA

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Friday inaugurated and laid foundation stones of multiple road and bridge projects of the state Rural Works Department (RWD) worth Rs 8,837.77 crore.

The Chief Minister asked officials to ensure that priority is also given to the maintenance of rural roads, bridges or causeways in the state. "With a view to improving rural connectivity, the CM on Friday virtually inaugurated and laid foundation stones of 6,199 projects of the RWD worth Rs 8,837.77 crore", a statement issued by the Chief Minister's Office said. "All roads and bridges of the RWD, for which foundation



stones were laid, the CM directed officials to complete the projects on time and ensure that there should not be any compromise on the quality of works and materials. He also asked officials that all

the roads and bridges which were inaugurated on Friday, should be inspected regularly and their continuous maintenance must be given the top priority", said the statement. The event was organised at CM's official residence, 1

Anne Marg. The programme was attended by RWD minister, Ashok Choudhary, Chief Secretary, Amrit Lal Meena, Additional Chief Secretary of RWD, Dipak Kumar Singh, and several other senior officials of the state government. Projects which were inaugurated on Friday included: 763 roads (total length 947 km) and 4 bridges (total length 435 metre) -- constructed at a cost of Rs 983 crore under the Chief Minister Gram Sampark Yojana. Under Chief Minister Rural Road Maintenance Programme, 972 roads (total length 1,904 km) have been repaired at a cost of Rs 1,113 crore and under the Chief Minister Rural Road Development Scheme, 33 roads (total length 104 km) have been upgraded (recon-

structed/strengthened/widened) at a cost of Rs 92 crore. Projects for which foundation stones were laid included: 1,472 roads (total length 1,571 km) and 5 bridges (total length 304 metre), which will be constructed at a cost of Rs 1,824 crore under the Chief Minister Gram Sampark Scheme. Under the Chief Minister Rural Road Maintenance Programme, 2,306 roads (total length 4,148 km) will be repaired at a cost of Rs 2,350 crore. Under the Mukhyamantri Gramin Sadak Unnayan Yojana, the work of upgradation (reconstruction/strengthening/widening) of 442 roads (total length 1,701 km) and one bridge (total length 27 metre) is to be done at a cost of Rs 1,739 crore.

Rise in sea levels likely to increase risk for millions of coastal residents, says study

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Climate-driven hazards such as rise in sea levels are likely to increase risk for millions of coastal residents, a study has warned. Published in the journal Nature Climate Change, the study estimates that a 1-metre sea level rise by 2100 would affect over 14 million people along the Southeast Atlantic coast, from Norfolk, Virginia, to Miami, Florida. The study holds relevance for India which has a large number of people living not only along the coastal areas but also dependent on sea for their livelihood. It showed that by 2100, 70 per cent of the coastal population will also be exposed to shallow or emerging groundwater -- a



beach loss, could displace millions and damage critical infrastructure unless robust adaptation strategies are implemented," said Shirzaei. The findings, in collaboration with the US Geological Survey, are based on assessments of the cumulative impact of multiple climate-driven coastal hazards, including sea level rise, flooding, beach erosion, sinking land, and rising groundwater. All these are expected to worsen significantly by the end of the 21st century. Further, the researchers noted that coastal storms and hurricanes will amplify the risk of flooding over land. With 1 metre of sea level rise, overland flooding will affect up to 50 per cent of residents in the region, impacting US\$770 billion in property value.

Mizoram government plans to relocate refugees to single location

PTI ■ AIZAWL

The Mizoram government is planning to relocate all refugees taking shelter in different parts of the state and to bring them in one place, according to Lalmuani Punte, political adviser to the chief minister. Punte on Thursday convened a meeting with officials of south Mizoram's Lawngtlai district to discuss issues concerning over 2,000 Bangladeshi refugees taking shelter in the district. He told the meeting that proper guidelines should be formulated to prevent the refugees from settling and shifting anywhere they want. Punte said that the government is taking steps to relocate and bring the refugees together in one place rather than be



scattered in different villages for administrative convenience. The plan will also help the government in providing humanitarian assistance in a more convenient way, he said.

Punte further said that plans are afoot to relocate 2,014 refugees from Bangladesh's Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) currently taking shelter in different villages in Lawngtlai district to four villages within the district.

Lawngtlai shares border with both Myanmar and Bangladesh and the southernmost district currently hosts 6,030 refugees from Myanmar and 84 internally displaced people from Manipur

besides 2,014 Bangladeshi refugees, according to deputy commissioner Cheemala Siva Gopal Reddy. Earlier, Young Mizo Association (YMA), the largest civil society organisation in the state, urged the state government to constitute a systematic mechanism, including proper shelter homes, for housing and handling over 42,000 refugees and internally displaced people. According to the state Home department, over 33,000 Myanmar nationals, including 12,572 children, are currently taking shelter across all the 11 districts of the state. Besides, 7,756 internally displaced people from Manipur also took shelter in different parts of the state, it said.

Jama Masjid controversy, Mayawati urges government and SC to intervene

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ LUCKNOW



BSP chief Mayawati has strongly reacted to the controversy surrounding the Shahi Jama Masjid in Uttar Pradesh's Sambhal district. She has termed it an attempt to disrupt communal harmony in the state and country, urging the state government and the Supreme Court to take cognizance of the matter. Taking to social media platform X, Mayawati stated, "The sudden controversy, hearing, and subsequent hasty survey regarding the Shahi Jama Masjid in Sambhal district have become a topic of national debate and media headlines. Such actions threaten peace and harmony. The government and the honorable Supreme Court must take serious note of this." On Tuesday, a petition was filed in the Chandausi District Court, claiming that Sambhal's Shahi Jama Masjid was originally the Harihar Temple. The Civil Judge (Senior Division) Aditya

Kumar Singh appointed a court commissioner to investigate the matter. On the same day, a two-hour videography and photography survey was conducted inside the mosque. The findings are being compiled and will be reviewed in detail. The court has set November 29 as the date for the submission of the report. A member of the mosque committee expressed disappointment over the survey, stating, "This mosque has been here for 500 years, and namaaz has been offered continuously, unlike the Babri Masjid. Yet, a survey was carried out immediately after the court order. Nothing was

found-no idols, no evidence supporting the claims." The survey sparked protests from local residents, but the intervention of Sambhal MP Zia Ur Rehman Barq helped defuse tensions, allowing the survey to proceed. The petition claims that the Jama Masjid was originally a Hari Har temple located in Mohalla Kot Purvi and was converted into a mosque in 1529. It argues that the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has a duty to take control of the site. Given the sensitivity of the situation, the administration has heightened vigilance in the district. The District Magistrate has imposed Section 163 of the Indian Civil Security Code (BNS), which prohibits gatherings of more than five people and bans protests or demonstrations. The DM stated, "Strict enforcement of Section 163 will be ensured, and violations will result in legal action." The Jama Masjid controversy has sparked political debate across the spectrum.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh meets Japanese and Philippines counterparts at ASEAN meet in Laos



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Friday met his Japanese and Philippines counterparts on the sidelines of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM)-Plus meeting in Vientiane, Laos, defence ministry said here. Giving details, officials said Rajnath met his Japanese counterpart Gen Nakatani and Secretary of National Defence (Defence Minister) of the Philippines Gilberto Teodoro on the final day of

his three-day visit to Laos. India and Japan reiterated the importance of defence industry and technology cooperation between the two countries. Recalling the milestone event of signing of Memorandum of Implementation of UNICORN mast in Japan last week, both sides agreed to enhance cooperation in co-production and co-development in the defence manufacturing sector. To further improve interoperability between the Indian and Japanese forces, Reciprocal Provision of Supply and Services Agreement between the two countries and participation of militaries in various bilateral and multilateral exercises were discussed by both the Ministers. They also agreed to explore new areas of cooperation in the air domain. Rajnath Singh welcomed the

Philippines as country coordinator for India in ASEAN and ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM)-Plus forum for the next cycle. Both sides agreed to expand and deepen cooperation in exchange of subject matter experts, defence industry, counter-terrorism, space and maritime domain. Prior to his departure to New Delhi, Rajnath Singh also visited the Wat Sisaket Temple (a Buddhist Temple) in Vientiane, and sought blessings from Shri Mahaveth Chittakaro, Abbot of Sisaket Temple. During his three-day stay in Vientiane, Rajnath Singh attended the 11th ADMM-Plus, and held bilateral meetings with his counterparts from Malaysia, Lao PDR, China, US, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, Australia, Japan and the Philippines.

Suspects involved in looting properties of ministers and MLAs identified: CM Biren Singh

PTI ■ IMPHAL

Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh on Friday said that suspects involved in looting the properties of ministers and MLAs during protests on November 16 were identified and legal actions initiated. He condemned incidents like torching the photograph of a minister's late father in his house, looting the residence of an MLA and firing inside a car showroom, and wondered whether these could be part of any agitation. "In the name of democratic movement, some gangs have looted and burnt the residences of ministers and MLAs. Suspects have been identified through CCTV and appropriate legal actions have been initiated. I feel ashamed to publicly say that such things are



happening in Manipur," Singh told reporters. Urging people not to get involved in any activities that led to suspension of internet, the chief minister said, "Do not blame the government only. We need to correct ourselves as well." He said he has no objections against anyone who genuinely protested against the killing of children and

women in Jiribam district. "But those politically motivated gangs who took advantage of the situation, we will take legal action (against them)," Singh said. Had not CRPF gunned down 10 or 11 militants in Jiribam, some 100 civilians would have been killed on November 11 since the attackers wanted to over run a relief camp in Borobekra

and a police station, the CM claimed. So, the steps taken by the central forces should be appreciated, Singh said. "When the situation improves, we will make sure to lift suspension on (mobile) internet. Operations are on to apprehend the attackers. Though the NIA is also handling the case of the killing of innocents in Jiribam, the state government is not silent. We are also looking for them. The government will seek to protect lives and properties of civilians," Singh said. Manipur has seen a fresh wave of protests after six people - three Meitei women and three children - went missing from a camp for displaced persons in Jiribam last week, following a gunfight between armed men and security forces that

resulted in the deaths of 10 Kuki youths. More than 220 people have been killed and thousands rendered homeless in ethnic violence between Imphal Valley-based Meiteis and adjoining hills-based Kuki-Zo groups since May last year. The CM also slammed Congress leader P Chidambaram for advocating for regional autonomy in an X post, which he later deleted. To a question on Rahul Gandhi urging Prime Minister Narendra Modi to arrest of industrialist Gautam Adani in the backdrop of charges of bribery and fraud against the Adani group in the US, Singh alleged that America is trying to pull down India. "Will India do what the US says? The allegations are baseless," he said.

President Droupadi Murmu stresses 'Nation First' for a developed India

PTI ■ HYDERABAD

President Droupadi Murmu on Friday stressed the importance of instilling a sense of "Nation First" among citizens to make India a developed nation. She addressed a gathering at the inauguration of LokManthan-2024, a colloquium of "nationalist thinkers" in Hyderabad. The President said colonial rulers not only "exploited India economically" but also sought to "dismantle its social fabric". "The rulers who disregarded our rich intellectual traditions created a sense of



cultural inferiority among citizens. Such practices were imposed, undermining our unity. Centuries of subjugation left citizens with a mentality of slavery. Instilling the feeling of 'Nation First' is essential to

develop India," she said. Murmu cited the replacement of three old criminal laws, the renaming of Rajpath in Delhi as Kartavyapath, and the renaming of Durbar Hall in Rashtrapati Bhavan as 'Ganatantra Mandap', as

notable instances, reiterating these renaming aligns with the ancient tradition of democracy. Murmu also referred to the installation of the new 'Lady Justice' statue in the Supreme Court of India, describing it as another commendable step in eradicating colonial mentality. She stressed the importance of citizens understanding India's cultural and intellectual heritage and contributing to the strengthening of its invaluable traditions. Efforts to divide Indian society and create artificial differences were aimed at

weakening unity. However, she noted that the spirit of Bharatiyata (Indian-ness) kept the flame of national unity alive. "Whether we are 'vanvasis' (forest dwellers), villagers, or city dwellers, we are all Indians first. This sense of national unity has kept us united despite numerous challenges," she added. Highlighting India's ancient global influence, Murmu said the country's religious beliefs, art, music, medical systems, technology, language, and literature have been widely appreciated. "Indian philosophical

systems were the first to offer ideal life values to the global community. Strengthening this glorious tradition is our responsibility," she remarked. The president lauded all stakeholders for organising LokManthan-2024, calling it a praiseworthy effort to reinforce "the threads of unity in India's rich culture, traditions, and heritage." Telangana Governor Jishu Dev Varma, Union Coal and Mines Minister G Kishan Reddy, Telangana Women and Child Welfare Minister D Anasuya, and RSS Chief Mohan Bhagwat attended the event.

Karnataka: BJP president BY Vijayendra slams Siddaramaiah-led Government over Waqf land notices



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Karnataka BJP president BY Vijayendra on Friday launched a blistering attack on the Siddaramaiah-led Congress government, accusing it of issuing controversial Waqf land notices to farmers and discontinuing central schemes to fund its poll guarantees. In an interview to PTI, Vijayendra claimed growing dissent within Congress ranks, with MLAs reportedly frustrated over frozen constituency development funds and the chief minister's leadership style. "Siddaramaiah consistently blames the Centre to hide his administrative failures. The state's resources are poorly managed," the BJP state chief said, highlighting what he called a "desperate" situation in Karnataka's governance. He alleged that on one hand the ruling party is unable to fulfil the poll guarantees, while on the other hand the development activities have come to a standstill across all 224 assembly constituencies as legislators are unable to secure grants for local projects, he said. "Out of 224 assembly constituencies, no MLAs are getting grants for development activities," the son of former chief minister of Karnataka BS Yediyurappa claimed. The BJP chief particularly criticised recent policy decisions that he claimed hurt the poor, including hikes in milk prices, fuel costs, stamp duty, and a 20 percent increase in government hospital charges. "All these decisions of the Siddaramaiah government are affecting both the poor and farmers," he stated.

The comments by Vijayendra came even as BJP intensified its protests against notices issued to farmers under the Waqf law. "We are holding dharnas across the state. Our senior leaders will tour Karnataka in December first week against this move," he said, adding, "In the name of Waqf, poor farmers should not be cheated and their land should not be taken away." He alleged that Siddaramaiah has directed district commissioners to issue notices to farmers, triggering widespread protests. On controversy over cancellation of 12 lakh BPL cards in the state, Vijayendra said, "We don't oppose removing illegal beneficiaries, but cancelling cards just because someone has a PAN card is unscientific." Regarding internal party dynamics, he acknowledged some resistance to his leadership but expressed confidence in uniting all factions. "Few senior leaders might need some more time to accept. At the end of the day, I am confident that I will be successful in taking everybody together in the interest of the party," he said. The BJP leader also predicted BJP victories in Sandur and Shigoan, while expressing confidence in JD(S) candidate Nikhil Kumaraswamy's win in Channarayana. The party is currently focused on strengthening its presence in Hyderabad Karnataka and Old Karnataka regions, he added, as part of their strategy to return to power with an absolute majority.

Punjab Aam Aadmi Party names Aman Arora as party president

PTI ■ CHANDIGARH

The ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) in Punjab named New and Renewable Energy Minister Aman Arora as the new president of its state unit on Friday. The development comes a month after Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann said he would speak to the AAP leadership on the appointment of a full-time president of the party's state unit, expressing a desire to step down from the post. Arora, a prominent Hindu face of AAP in Punjab, will be the president of the party's state unit and MLA Amansher Singh Sherry Kalsi its working president. The move also comes a day before the results of the recent bypolls to four assembly seats - Gidderbaha, Dera Baba Nanak, Chhabawal (SC) and Barnala. The by-elections were necessitated after the incumbent legislators were elected to the Lok Sabha earlier this year. The bypolls are being seen as a litmus test for Mann, whose government has completed two-and-a-half-



years in office. "Today, I have handed over the responsibility of party president to two of my close colleagues, Cabinet Minister Aman Arora and MLA Amansher Singh Sherry Kalsi. The party has decided that Aman Arora will serve as the party president and Sherry Kalsi as the working president," the chief minister posted on X. "I have full confidence in both my colleagues that they will strengthen the party and the organization in Punjab in the coming time and take it to new heights," he added. Last month, after addressing a rally in Chhabawal, Bhagwant Mann said he had

been holding the post of the party president in Punjab for seven years. "Being chief minister, I have big responsibilities. I have 13-14 departments. I will speak to the party to appoint a full-time state unit chief so that the responsibilities can be divided," he had said then. Mann was appointed AAP's Punjab unit chief in 2017 when he was the MP from Sangrur. He led the party in Punjab during the 2019 Lok Sabha election and the 2022 assembly polls. AAP stormed to power in 2022, winning 92 seats in the 117-member Punjab assembly.

TTDC sets record with ₹213 per kilogram average price at Guwahati tea auction

PTI ■ AGARTALA

Finished tea of Tripura Tea Development Corporation Ltd (TTDC) sold at an average price of Rs 213 per kg at the Guwahati tea auction centre, the highest-ever price earned by the government-run public sector undertaking, an official said. Last year the average selling price of finished tea of TTDC was pegged at Rs 129 per kg at auction markets. The northeastern state, which has 54 tea gardens and 24 tea processing factories, produces 90 lakh kg to 1 lakh kg of finished tea annually. "The TTDC for the first time sold finished tea at an average price of Rs 213 per kg at auction markets which is the highest ever price earned by the corporation. This is a big achievement not only for TTDC but also for hundreds of small tea growers who supply tea leaves to us", TTDC chairman Samir Ranjan Ghosh told PTI on Friday. TTDC has produced around 6.84 lakh kg of finished tea in the current year (2024-25) till October, 2024 while it had produced 7.18 lakh kg of finished tea during 2023-24 financial year.



"After joining TTDC, I emphasized quality right from plucking to finished product to get a better price at auction markets. I told the small tea growers that if they supply quality leaves, we will get the best price. From collection to finished product we maintained quality and it paid off", Ghosh said. Asserting that the tea sector had largely been ignored in the northeastern state in the past, he said it was the BJP-led government that had given due importance to the tea industry since 2018. "A logo has been unveiled for the state's tea to promote the tea on the national stage. Besides, tea produced in the state has been named as Tripureswari tea.

An Rs 85 crore scheme for development of tea industry and tea workers was launched. All these factors have contributed to the present day's tea industry", Ghosh said. "Having knowledge about tea industry, I personally talked to registered brokers at the Guwahati auction market to bring the best price for the finished tea produced by TTDC", he said. At present, the TTDC runs two tea processing factories one at Durgabari and another at Brahamkunda in West Tripura. "With growing demand for finished tea of TTDC, construction work has already begun for setting up another tea processing unit at Machmara in Unakoti district", he added.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Cars the main culprit

Delhi's residents continue to bear the brunt of the city's toxic air, which is mostly driven by cars and not stubble burning

Come November and the capital city of Delhi turns into a gas chamber with AQI shooting to severe category. Most often the farmers are blamed for burning stubble and winds taking the fumes to Delhi. But that is not the true picture. Delhi vehicles are the main culprit, as has been indicated by many studies. So nothing is done and till it is swept away by the wind, smog hangs over the city. This year is no different. Delhi's air pollution has escalated to catastrophic levels, with the Air Quality Index (AQI) frequently crossing into hazardous territory hovering in the vicinity of 500. This public health emergency has fueled political blame games between the State and Central Governments, with stubble burning by farmers in neighbouring states often cited as the primary cause. However, research and scientific studies tell a different story: the real culprit behind Delhi's toxic air is not stubble burning but the city's overwhelming vehicular emissions. Vehicular traffic is consistently identified as the leading source of pollution in Delhi. A 2019 study by the Council on Energy, Environment and Water found that vehicles contributed between one-third and two-thirds of Delhi's harmful particulate matter. This alarming contribution is tied to the city's explosive growth in vehicle ownership. Between 1990 and 2018, the number of registered vehicles in the National Capital Region increased fivefold. Delhi alone accounts for over 11.8 million vehicles, 90 per cent of which are cars and two-wheelers. The volume of vehicular traffic has turned the capital into a pollution hotspot, with transport emissions driving air quality deterioration throughout the year.

In contrast, stubble burning, often portrayed as the main villain in Delhi's pollution narrative, plays a far smaller role. A 2017 study revealed that stubble burning contributed less than 3 per cent to Delhi's annual particulate matter. Even during its peak season from mid-October to early November, the share of pollution from crop residue burning is limited to 8 per cent, according to a 2023 report by the Centre for Science and Environment. Most of Delhi's pollution originates locally, with vehicular traffic contributing the largest share. This pattern becomes even more evident when air quality fails to improve after the stubble-burning season ends. Despite these findings, public discourse and policy responses disproportionately focus on stubble burning. This misplaced focus has real consequences. While interventions like subsidies for crop residue management have reduced farm fires, the overall air quality in Delhi remains dire because transport emissions and other local sources remain largely unaddressed. Addressing Delhi's air pollution crisis requires an urgent shift in priorities. Expanding and improving public transportation is crucial to reducing dependence on private vehicles. Cleaner fuels and technologies, such as electric vehicles, must be promoted alongside stringent enforcement of emission standards. Recognising this reality and acting accordingly is imperative. Until then, the capital's air will remain a health hazard.

PICTALK



A monk of Panch Dashnam Avahan Akhara during 'Nagar Pravesh' procession, in Prayagraj

Manipur in turmoil: Unraveling the roots of violence

The State is caught in the throes of a complex conflict fueled by ethnic tensions, socio-economic disparities and narco-terrorism

Manipur, one of the seven northeastern states of India, holds strategic importance due to its geographical location. It shares borders with Nagaland to the north, Mizoram to the south, Assam to the east, and Myanmar to the west. Often referred to as the gateway to Southeast Asia, this state is home to diverse ethnic communities, including the Meiteis (approximately 53 per cent), Nagas (around 24 per cent) and Kuki-Chin-Zomi tribes (about 16 per cent). However, Manipur has recently experienced its worst violence in over a decade. More than a year of unrest has left over 226 people dead, more than 1,500 injured, and displaced over 60,000 residents. Understanding the root causes of this conflict requires examining several interconnected issues. (a) **Demand for Scheduled Tribe (ST) Status** The spark for the current violence was a Manipur High Court directive urging the state government to consider granting the Meitei community Scheduled Tribe (ST) status. This decision was met with strong opposition from



the Kuki community, culminating in protests and clashes. **Understanding the ST Status Debate:** Manipur is geographically divided into two main regions: The valley (10 per cent of the total area): Predominantly occupied by the Meitei community, it is more developed and politically influential, with Meiteis holding 40 out of 60 legislative Assembly seats. The hills (90 per cent of the total area): Primarily home to tribal communities, these areas lag behind in education, employment, infrastructure, and representation. While residents from the hills can migrate to the valley for opportunities, valley residents are restricted from purchasing land in the hills due to tribal land ownership laws.

The Meiteis fear that an increasing number of hill residents settling in the valley threatens their identity and culture. ST status for Meiteis would limit land purchases in the valley, potentially safeguarding their heritage. On the other hand, the Kukis argue that Meiteis already dominate key sectors such as governance, education, and the economy. Granting them ST status, they claim, would exacerbate the marginalisation of hill tribes. (b) **Narco-Terrorism** Manipur's proximity to the Golden Triangle and Golden Crescent has made it a hotspot for drug trafficking. Illegal poppy cultivation in the region is reportedly controlled by powerful drug lords, whose operations are threatened by government crackdowns. These drug lords, facing intensified enforcement efforts, have allegedly fueled violence by supplying arms and ammunition to militant groups, further destabilising the region. (c) **Eviction of Encroachers** Approximately 32 per cent of Manipur's forests are classified as protected under the Indian Forest Act and Wildlife

Protection Act. Encroachments by hill tribes and illegal immigrants for farming and settlements have led to significant deforestation. Recent government-led eviction drives have targeted these encroachments, prompting accusations of anti-tribal bias and deepening tensions between the valley and hill communities. **Voices from the Hill Tribes** Many people from the Kuki-Chin-Zomi communities claim to oppose violence, emphasising their peaceful protests against the High Court's order. They argue that militant groups responsible for the initial clashes do not represent their community. **A Way Forward for Peace** over half of the insurgencies in northeastern India are concentrated in Manipur, making its stability crucial. Fostering dialogue among all stakeholders, addressing grievances equitably, and ensuring inclusive development are essential steps toward lasting peace in the region. (The writer is Independent Research Scholar; views are personal)



YOGESH CHAUHAN

Global concerns over gender bias in politics

In the wake of Donald Trump's victory, a survey unveils deep concerns over the future of women's rights, reproductive autonomy and gender equality in the US



ARCHANA DATTA

In the aftermath of Donald Trump's electoral victory for the second term, a prominent US daily conducted a survey among more than five thousand women voters for their reactions. A majority of them expressed concerns about the erosion of 'rights', and 'their reproductive future', and aired an array of emotions such as 'sadness', 'scariness', 'disappointment', 'hurtfulness', 'betrayal' and 'heartbreaking'. Comments of some first-time voters also denoted despair, as many of them felt that their voices were 'more silenced than ever' and that they had been 'left empty-handed'. While a 36-year old woman rued that 'it is clear that men wanted to hold onto power... sexism won this election'.

While, another leading US daily attributed Harris's defeat to her greater emphasis on issues like 'abortion rights' and the 'protection of democracy', and for not paying adequate attention to the state of the economy or immigration, which many Americans viewed as the most pressing issues. Harris, on the other hand, in her concession speech urged her supporters to 'remain vigilant' and keep fighting for their values. Nevertheless, many non-profits working for reproductive freedom urged Democrats to 'developing a long-term plan to directly confront the sexism - both within their party and the nation - that hampered, both Harris and Hillary Clinton, the only women to win a major party's presidential nomination. In the US, women occupied 28 per cent of congressional seats in 2023, while Democrats had an edge over the Republicans, with 41 per cent of seats, and Republicans with only 15.4 per cent of members. Women are 32.7 per cent of all state legislators, 48 per cent of Democrats and 20 per cent of Republicans. Democratic women are at or above parity with Democratic men in 26 state legislatures. While Republican women fall short of parity with Republican men in all states, holding one-third or less of Republican seats in 47 state legislatures. Studies commented that prevailing beliefs and attitudes



about gender roles in the parties control political representation, and more traditional perceptions among conservatives persist that 'women's success is at the expense of men' (Centre for American Women and Politics at Rutgers University). However, it is not the USA alone that didn't ever elect a woman in the highest political office, but, several most socially and economically advanced countries like Sweden, despite having a good record of women's representation in most institutions, 47.5 per cent in Parliament and 54.5 per cent in the council of ministers, has never had a woman as a Prime Minister. Countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia have only closed 15 per cent of a hypothetical 100 per cent gender gap in political empowerment (WEF). While India, the largest democracy, has a scant presence of women (13.62 per cent) in the current Lok Sabha. Last year a law was passed, reserving one-third of seats in Lok Sabha and State Assemblies for women, but, its implementation stands postponed till the process of delimitation of constituencies is over. India did have a woman Prime Minister and two women Presidents. But, deep structural and systemic difficulties (Raje, 2019), created women's poor representation, resulting in 'a democratic deficit' in

LAST YEAR A LAW HAS BEEN PASSED, RESERVING ONE-THIRD OF SEATS IN LOK SABHA AND STATE ASSEMBLIES FOR WOMEN, BUT, ITS IMPLEMENTATION STANDS POSTPONED TILL THE PROCESS OF DELIMITATION OF CONSTITUENCIES IS OVER

governance and decision-making (Rahman and Rao, 2004). India ensured women's participation in the rural-urban local bodies since the early 90s, yet, several surveys found that a majority of women elected representatives reported 'gender-based discrimination', and in many places, their male relatives, especially husbands, played 'proxy' roles. While explaining reasons for this uneven power equation in politics, studies (Fox and Lawless, 2004) explicated that there is a 'gender gap in ambition', as many eligible women with the required professional and economic credentials as political candidates, often feel 'less encouraged to run for executive offices and tend to believe that they are less qualified for such offices than men'. Evidence also suggests that women's political careers are often influenced by 'family and relational considerations', and if they face higher costs for their career achievements, they shy away from pursuing such objectives. At the same time, other researchers pointed out voters' bias and discrimination which matter qualitatively in women's electoral prospects. Even political party leaders, act as gate-keepers, if they are aware of voters' bias against women, and are inclined to promote male candidates, as a votes-maximising strategy

(Esteve-Volart and Bagues (2012). Nevertheless, data from the latest wave of the World Value Survey (2017-2020), in Western Europe found that less than 20 per cent of survey respondents express agreement with the statement 'Men make better political leaders than women do'. Now, what is the way out? The introduction of gender quotas in candidate lists in different countries like Sweden (Besley et al., 2017) is more or less effective in empowering women, and improving the 'quality' of the elected politicians, particularly by regulating the composition of candidate lists (Campa and Hauser, 2020). Many also suggested that a combined politico-economic strategy that emphasises women's inclusion in the labour market, and the re-distribution of economic roles within couples, could change gender-role attitudes and help women to make entry into positions of political power (Folke and Rickne, 2020 and Campa and Serafinelli, 2019). As the world remains deeply entrenched in patriarchal mindset, sexism and gendered divisions of labour, women's share as chief political executive is still outnumbered by men by more than 9 to 1. (The author is former Director General Doordarshan, All India Radio; views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

US COURT INDICTS ADANI

Madam — A US court indicted billionaire Gautam Adani and seven others, including his nephew Sagar and three other executives, on charges of fraud and bribery. The case pertained to a deal between Adani Green Energy and a US seller for 12 gigawatts of solar power to be sold to various states. The charges came on a day when the firm planned a green bond launch in the US. The Adani subsidiary eventually cancelled the sale. The US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) has charged Adani, founder and chairman of the Adani Group, with allegedly defrauding American investors and bribing officials. The SEC alleged that the bribery scheme was orchestrated to enable renewable energy companies Adani Green and Azure Power to capitalise on a multi-billion-dollar solar energy project awarded by the Indian government. The complaint charges them with violating the antifraud provisions of the federal securities laws and seeks permanent injunctions, civil penalties, and officer and director bars. But the beneficiaries of these kickbacks were Chhattisgarh, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Odisha - all non-BJP governments at that time. But the blame goes to the BJP government. Basically, the current Biden government wants Adani to waive off Bangladesh's balance of payment of electricity and power bills. **Dorai Ramani Suresh | Ghaziabad**

MONEY DOMINATES ELECTIONS

Madam — The voter turnout in urban areas of Maharashtra shows the desperation of the literate voters over the way the election campaign is carried on. Money playing a dominant role, uncertainty over the elected candidates staying with the same party without falling prey to offers of purse or posts, and the campaign being far from the issues concerning the voters must have discouraged them from taking the pain of standing in line to cast their vote and bearing with the act of getting fooled by the politicians. Even the tall leaders spoke more on hate lines than touching upon the liveli-

Manipur needs solutions



propos to 'Douse the fire' published on November 21. Manipur has been burning since May 2023, murder, abduction, rape and arson, it has seen it all. The strife-torn northeastern state has also witnessed complete apathy of the double engine of central and state government. And

the government's actions have been restricted to empty rhetoric, imposing an internet ban and issuing vague promises of dialogues. The Centre's move to bring warring communities to the negotiating table has not inspired confidence. What is really baffling is that Prime Minister Modi has not bothered to visit the state. And surprisingly, the BJP has reposed the trust in Biren Singh, conveniently ignoring his lapses and the growing clamour for his removal. He must be shown the door without any further delay. Confidence-building measures with affected groups should be carried out as ethnic identities have played a great role in the socio-economic life of Manipur. **Bal Govind | Noida**

RAFAEL NADAL RETIRES FROM TENNIS

Madam — Rafael Nadal, a self-made glorious jewel of the tennis field, needs no introduction for his glittering career of winning 22 Grand Slams, 2 Olympic Gold medals, ATP Masters, and several French Open championships. He shares the 'Trinity of Tennis Gems' with Roger Federer and Novak Djokovic. Despite being in his 38th, Nadal always makes sure to be the tennis new learner, full of zeal with utmost calmness and maturity like an experienced player. In the milieu of tennis stars throwing tantrums and breaking racquets, Nadal never ever hurt the sport that pays him. Despite he had paid adieu to this sport, he will always shine in this sport's history for his incredible accolades and invincible spirit for continuing his sport for more than two decades. He is and will always remain a true inspiration for all the budding tennis aficionados across the world. **Kirti Wadhawan | Kanpur**

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



FIRST COLUMN

G20: COPING WITH NEW REALITIES

G20 Summit's toned-down declarations on Ukraine, climate finance and West Asia



KUMARDEEP BANARJEE

The recently concluded G20 summit in Brazil, could well serve as an early preview in what could be the realignment of global forces in the next year and beyond with the new incoming President of the USA. First, some major optics moments, such as the family picture for G20 leaders, which didn't have US President (of course some others were missing too). Second, winding down of several commitments from the Delhi declaration to just passing mention regarding the situation in Ukraine and climate finance. Third, the entire G20 summit is being riddled with speculation on whether the multilateral platform would survive a Trump presidency, and if so, with what effectiveness.

The view in Washington DC is similar, especially in the government circles. Every government official, some of whom may have served under Trump's first presidency, is well aware of his working ways. The incoming administration has an additional extra non government supervisor, the world's richest person Elon Musk, who has his own unique style of functioning. Many in DC, understand that their managers have one foot out of the door, and things would change, at least for the next four years post the inauguration on January 20. Trump's foreign policy outlook, if the past presidency is any reference, is likely to be transactional. Trump can parallel have public shouting matches and back door negotiations with friends and foes. He has already talked about ensuring long lasting peace in Ukraine, at a time, when under President Biden's patronage, US missiles are landing in Russian territory. Similarly, the proposal to impose higher tariffs on Chinese products, may sound sweet to



many, but knowing the sharp businessman Trump is, he may well cut a sweet deal with President Xi Jinping, which could potentially be of benefit to both nations. On India, Trump has called it out to be the tariff king and likely to make a case for imposing tariffs in reciprocal approach, for sectors where he thinks, US exports are getting impacted. India's chief economic advisor has already sounded out a cautionary note on incoming Trump presidency. He has been quoted as saying that with Trump administration's views on trade and tariffs, plus a slowing global economy, India may have to look beyond exports as the primary drivers of growth. India has taken several steps such as providing incentives for manufacturing in various sectors, but except for mobile phones, the growth has been slow. It would not be hard to assume that the sluggish uptake for India for manufacturing in sectors it has recently provided incentives, may well be on the slow lane for some years. What can however, change the game would be the transactional style Mr Trump has, which is well known not just to senior India ministers and bureaucrats but the PM Modi himself (who is known to share a warm relationship with Trump). Coming back to G20, while Delhi declarations had significant paragraphs on India promoted "not an era of war for Ukraine, the Rio De Janeiro declaration just mentioned, " Specifically concerning the war in Ukraine, while recalling our discussions in New Delhi, we highlight the human suffering and negative added impacts of the war with regard to global food and energy security, supply chains, macro-financial stability, inflation and growth." Clearly the world leaders didn't want to come out with any peace formulas, in face of President Trump assuming office next year. Similarly, the paragraph on West Asia focused on humanitarian aid, instead of taking either party's side. It read " While expressing our deep concern about the catastrophic humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip and the escalation in Lebanon, we emphasize the urgent need to expand the flow of humanitarian assistance and to reinforce the protection of civilians and demand the lifting of all barriers to the provision of humanitarian assistance at scale."

(The writer is a policy analyst; views are personal)

Hope floats for Sri Lanka in Dissanayake



NILANTHA LANGAMUWA

Dissanayake's unprecedented mandate in Sri Lanka's newly elected parliament presents a mix of hope and immense challenges in the quest to rebuild the nation

Anura Kumara Dissanayake, Sri Lanka's newly elected President, has emerged victorious in the November 14, 2024 parliamentary elections, securing an unprecedented landslide victory that will undoubtedly reshape the nation's political landscape. Known for his Marxist leanings, Dissanayake and his National People's Power (NPP) coalition have shocked the political establishment by gaining significant traction in minority-dominated regions—undermining the caste-driven politics that have long dominated the North, East and Central provinces. This triumph, achieved through a focused, strategic campaign, signals a bold rejection of the entrenched political elites and offers a forceful critique of Sri Lanka's frail democratic institutions. The magnitude of this victory speaks to a populace disillusioned by years of political stagnation and corruption.

After casting his vote, Dissanayake attended the 35th-anniversary commemoration of JVP founder Rohana Wijeweera, paying homage to the movement's resilience in the face of relentless oppression. Recounting its history of brutal suppression and bans, Dissanayake framed the JVP's struggle as an enduring fight for democracy, justice, and equality, despite decades of violence and persecution. "The history of our movement is one of unyielding resilience," he stated, honouring the sacrifices of fallen comrades. His rhetoric was one of defiance, and he emphasised that the JVP's ability to withstand adversity has kept its ideals intact.

Looking to the future, Dissanayake invoked the symbolism of "donning new garments," suggesting that the time has come to shed the old and embrace transformative change. The message was clear: Sri Lanka's political and economic systems are overdue for an overhaul, and his leadership intends to deliver just that. This moment represents more than a simple electoral win; it marks the dawn of a new political order, one rooted in the principles of progressive change and democratic service to the people.

The economic crisis that has ravaged the nation since its 2022 bankruptcy and subsequent default on foreign debt, looms large over this electoral victory. While Dissanayake's rise reflects a demand for systemic change, it also places him at the epicenter of an economic storm, where recovery will require deep structural reforms. Yet, his victory cannot be divorced from the grim reality: Can a country reeling from financial collapse truly embark on the path to transformative change? The pressure to reform and recover is intense, both from within Sri Lanka and from international actors, and failure to meet these expectations could spell disaster.

Sri Lanka's long and tumultuous democratic journey provides critical context to this election. Since gaining independence in 1948, the country's democracy has been a paradox: simultaneously resilient and fragile, moving between progress and decline. Nationalist policies have repeatedly sidelined minority communities, with discriminatory measures like the Sinhala-Only Act of 1956 deepening ethnic divides. Successive governments,



THIS ELECTION IS NOT JUST A TRIUMPH OF THE NPP; IT IS A BELLWETHER FOR SRI LANKA'S FUTURE, REVEALING WIDESPREAD DISILLUSIONMENT WITH TRADITIONAL POLITICAL PARTIES

often manipulated for political gain, have left a trail of unresolved grievances, and this fractured political landscape has stymied meaningful progress. Despite civil wars, uprisings, and systemic inequality, Sri Lanka's democracy has endured, offering fleeting moments of hope—only to be followed by setbacks and challenges that have hindered its progress. This backdrop of violence and division underscores the difficulty in achieving a truly inclusive democracy.

In this historical context, Sri Lanka managed to hold another parliamentary election, notable not for its violence but for the absence of it.

The Election Commission confirmed that the election was conducted freely and fairly—a rare glimmer of progress in a nation accustomed to electoral turmoil. The results, released on November 15, 2024, were nothing short of historic. Dissanayake's NPP secured 159 out of 225 seats, gaining a two-thirds majority, a feat unprecedented under Sri Lanka's proportional representation system. The NPP's 61.56 per cent share of the vote shattered records, surpassing the United People's Freedom Alliance's (UPFA) 2010 high. In a remarkable surge, the NPP secured 152 constituencies and 21

districts—again, setting new benchmarks. With 6.86 million votes, their victory represents a stunning political realignment, shifting from a meager 3 per cent in the previous election to an electoral force capable of rewriting the country's political script. In stark contrast, the main opposition party, the Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB), led by Sajith Premadasa, secured just 40 seats, a distant second.

While the SJB's defeat is a blow to the opposition, Premadasa's ability to hold the opposition leadership could provide an awkward but necessary check on the NPP's power, particularly given the inexperience of most of its members. Dissanayake's administration, already facing an inexperienced and fragmented legislative body, will have to navigate internal rifts while ensuring political stability. The introduction of anti-defection laws will likely be one of the first challenges on the horizon.

This election is not just a triumph of the NPP; it is a bellwether for Sri Lanka's future, revealing widespread disillusionment with traditional political parties, which are increasingly seen as inept and corrupt.

yet, the mandate for change is not without its contradictions. Voter turnout plummeted to just 68.93

per cent, with over 5 million people abstaining from the vote. This decline in electoral participation is a sobering reminder of the disconnect between the electorate and the political system—a symptom of the deep distrust that persists in Sri Lanka's democratic framework. For the NPP, this poses both an opportunity and a challenge: Can it unite a fractured nation while addressing the systemic inequities that continue to stifle its potential?

Dissanayake's sweeping victory provides him with the political leverage to pursue bold reforms, including the drafting of a new constitution, a task made possible by his overwhelming mandate. But his agenda is audacious: economic self-reliance, social equity, and fiscal discipline, all while addressing the deep-seated ethnic divides that have long plagued Sri Lanka. The NPP's ambition is to overhaul the nation's political and economic systems, but entrenched political factions will not surrender their power easily. Dissanayake's rise is a rejection of the old order—but whether he can truly dismantle it, or merely become another cog in its machinery, remains to be seen.

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

Trump's re-election sparks climate policy shift: US at a crossroads amid global action

As the world shifts toward renewables, the US faces mounting pressure to balance its growth with environmental responsibility

With the re-election of Donald Trump, the United States is poised to enter a critical period of climate policy retrenchment. Trump's policies promise increased fossil fuel production and the reversal of major clean energy investments, threatening global efforts to combat climate change.

Trump's proposed energy policies suggest a substantial setback for climate action. His administration aims to roll back the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), which has allocated billions of dollars in tax credits for renewable energy projects and EV incentives, spurring substantial private sector investment. In 2024 alone, global clean energy spending hit \$2 trillion, dou-



SOURYABRATA MOHAPATRA

ble the amount invested in fossil fuels. Yet, Trump's proposed policies could throttle US participation in this growth, reinforcing dependency on fossil fuels rather than joining the global trend toward clean energy, where renewables now constitute the most economical choice in many regions. The implications of a second US withdrawal from the Paris Agreement—a prospect Trump

has not ruled out—are profound. When Trump first exited the Agreement in 2017, it allowed other nations to delay action under the guise of US non-participation. If Trump follows through again, it could stymie global climate funding negotiations, particularly for developing countries. Although the US has committed to contributing to a \$100 billion global fund for climate adaptation and mitigation, the administration's climate skepticism puts these financial obligations at risk. Without US leadership, experts fear slower progress on international agreements crucial to keeping global warming within the 1.5°C target.

Domestically, Trump's policies would deepen the US dependency on fossil fuels. His

administration's strategy emphasises maximising domestic oil and gas production, particularly from reserves Trump calls "liquid gold." However, the fossil fuel industry's employment numbers tell a different story: the US green economy supports over 10 million jobs compared to 300,000 in fossil fuel industries. The economic case for green energy is clear, yet Trump's vision includes reestablishing subsidies for oil, coal, and natural gas, effectively sidelining the renewable sector. In 2023, electric vehicles comprised 18 per cent of global car sales, a significant jump from just 2 per cent five years prior. Yet, Trump has criticised electric vehicles and promised to impose tariffs on imported Chinese EVs, potentially rais-



ing prices and diminishing EV adoption in the US market. These policies might inhibit US competitiveness in EV manufacturing and battery technology, where other nations—especially China—have taken the lead. Another concerning proposal from Trump's allies involves dismantling federal programs that support climate research and environmental regulation. Plans under "Project 2025" advocate for

defunding key agencies like the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and scaling back the Environmental Protection Agency's greenhouse gas monitoring. Without federal support for climate research and mitigation, the US could lose critical insight into atmospheric changes. In a geopolitical context, Trump's re-election could weaken the US influence in global climate governance.

Given the US role in controlling financial institutions that facilitate climate finance, its withdrawal or failure to meet commitments could reduce climate funding, a key agenda item at the COP29 summit in Baku. As the world's largest historical emitter, the US has a responsibility to lead by

example. Yet, with US emissions having only fallen 5 per cent since 1990—compared to the EU's 35 per cent reduction—the country's role as a climate leader is increasingly tenuous under Trump's leadership. Despite federal opposition, analysts believe that state governments, corporations, and financial markets will continue advancing climate action, albeit at a potentially slower pace.

Over the past decade, bipartisan support for renewable energy has increased, driven by job creation and energy independence rather than environmental motives alone. With or without federal backing, the economic engine for clean energy remains robust, with new manufacturing plants and energy storage facilities rapid-

ly coming online, particularly in states that benefit from IRA-funded projects. Given that federal policy directly influences emissions standards, environmental regulations, and international commitments, the pace of progress could indeed slow, with repercussions for both the US economy and global climate goals. If Trump's policies take effect, it is likely that the US will fall even further behind on international climate standards? What risks will US industries face if they resist the global shift to cleaner energy, only to find themselves competing in a marketplace that increasingly penalises high-emission practices?

(The author is a faculty member at NCAER in New Delhi; Views are personal)

Many in Gaza eating once a day, as hunger spreads amid aid issues

AP ■ DEIR AL-BALAH

Yasmin Eid coughs and covers her face, cooking a small pot of lentils over a fire fed with twigs and scrap paper in the tent she shares with her husband and four young daughters in the Gaza Strip. It was their only meal Wednesday — it was all they could afford. “My girls suck on their thumbs because of how hungry they are, and I pat their backs until they sleep,” she said. After being displaced five times, the Eids reside in central Gaza, where aid groups have relatively more access than in the north, which has been largely isolated and heavily destroyed since Israel began waging a renewed offensive against the militant group Hamas in early October. But nearly everyone in Gaza is going hungry these days. In the

north experts say a full-blown famine may be underway. On Thursday, the International Criminal Court issued arrest warrants against Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his former defence minister, accusing them of using “starvation as a method of warfare” — charges Israel adamantly denies. In Deir al-Balah, the Eids are among hundreds of thousands sheltering in squalid tent camps. The local bakeries shut down for five days this week. The price of a bag of bread climbed above \$13 by Wednesday, as bread and flour vanished from shelves before more supplies arrived. The United Nations humanitarian office warned of a “stark increase” in the number of households experiencing severe hunger in central and southern Gaza. It appeared to be linked to the robbery at gunpoint of

nearly 100 aid trucks last week-end in southern Gaza, close to Israeli military positions. Israel blamed Hamas but appears to have taken no action to stop the looting, while Hamas said it was the work of local bandits. Aid groups say the looting is one of many obstacles to getting food and other vital aid to the territory’s 2.3 million Palestinians. They also have to contend with Israeli movement restrictions, ongoing fighting, and heavy damage wreaked by the Israeli bombardment of roads and critical infrastructure.

FOR THE EIDS, HUNGER IS THE DAILY ROUTINE

For months, Yasmin and her family have gone to bed hungry. “Everything has increased in price, and we cannot buy anything,” she said. “We always go to sleep without having dinner.” She misses coffee, but

a single packet of Nescafe goes for around \$1.30. A kg (2 pounds) of onions goes for \$10, a medium bottle of cooking oil for \$15 — if available. Meat and chicken all but vanished from the markets months ago, but there are still some local vegetables. Such sums are astronomical in an impoverished territory where few people earn regular incomes. Crowds of hundreds wait hours to get food from charities, which are also struggling. Hani Almadhoun, co-founder of the Gaza Soup Kitchen, said his teams can offer only small bowls of rice or pasta once a day. He said they “can go to the market on one day and buy something for \$5, and then go back in the afternoon to find it doubled or tripled in price”. Its kitchen in the central town of Zuweida operated on a daily budget of around \$500 for much of the war. When the

amount of aid entering Gaza plummeted in October, its costs climbed to around \$1,300 a day. It can feed about half of the 1,000 families who line up each day.

THE SHARP DECLINE IN AID, AND US ULTIMATUM

Israel says it places no limits on the amount of aid entering Gaza and has announced a number of measures it says are aimed at increasing the flow in recent weeks, including the opening of a new crossing. It blames UN agencies for not retrieving it, pointing to hundreds of truckloads languishing on the Gaza side of the border. But the military’s own figures show that the amount of aid entering Gaza plunged to around 1,800 trucks in October, down from over 4,200 the previous month. At the current rate of entry, around 2,000 trucks would come into Gaza

in November. Around 500 trucks entered each day before the war.

The UN says less than half the truckloads are actually distributed because of ongoing fighting, Israeli denial of movement requests, and the breakdown of law and order. Hamas-run police have vanished from many areas after being targeted by Israeli airstrikes. The war started Oct 7, 2023, when Hamas-led fighters stormed into Israel, killing some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducting around 250. Around 100 hostages are still inside Gaza, at least a third of whom are dead, and Hamas militants have repeatedly regrouped after Israeli operations, carrying out hit-and-run attacks from tunnels and bombed-out buildings. Israel’s retaliatory offensive has killed over 44,000 Palestinians, more than half of them women

and children, according to local health authorities, who do not say how many of the dead were fighters.

The United States warned Israel in October that it might be forced to curtail some of its crucial military support if Israel did not rapidly ramp up the amount of aid entering Gaza. But after the 30-day ultimatum expired, the Biden administration declined to take any action, saying there had been some progress. Israel meanwhile passed legislation severing ties with UNRWA. Israel accuses the agency of allowing itself to be infiltrated by Hamas — allegations denied by the UN. Israeli news outlets have reported that officials are considering plans for the military to take over aid distribution or contract it out to private security companies. Asked about such plans Wednesday, government spokesman David Mercer said

“Israel is looking at many creative solutions to ensure a better future for Gaza.”

Yoav Gallant, the former defence minister who was seen as a voice of moderation in the far-right government before being fired this month, warned on X that handing over aid distribution to a private firm was a “euphemism for the beginning of military rule”. As that debate plays out in Jerusalem, less than 100 km (60 miles) away from central Gaza, most Palestinians in the territory are focused on staying alive in a war with no end in sight. “I find it difficult to talk about the suffering we are experiencing. I am ashamed to talk about it,” said Yasmin’s husband, Hani. “What can I tell you? I’m a person who has 21 family members and is unable to provide them with a bag of flour.”

UN reports heavy clashes in Lebanon

AP ■ JERUSALEM

Israeli troops fought fierce battles with Hezbollah fighters on Friday in different areas in south Lebanon, including a coastal town that is home to the headquarters of UN peacekeepers. A spokesman for the UN peacekeeping force known as UNIFIL told The Associated Press that they are monitoring “heavy clashes” in the coastal town of Naqoura and the village of Chamaa to the north-east. UNIFIL’s headquarters are located in Naqoura in Lebanon’s southern edge close to the border with Israel. “We are aware of heavy shelling in the vicinity of our bases,” UNIFIL spokesman Andrea Tenenti said. Asked if the peacekeepers and staff at the headquarters are safe, Tenenti said: “Yes for the moment.” Several UNIFIL posts have been hit since Israel began its

ground invasion of Lebanon on October 1, leaving a number of peacekeepers wounded. The fighting came a day after the International Criminal Court issued arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, his former defence minister and a Hamas military leader, accusing them of war crimes and crimes against humanity over their 13-month war in Gaza and the October 2023 attack on Israel respectively. The warrant marked the first time that a sitting leader of a major Western ally has been accused of war crimes and crimes against humanity by a global court of justice. Israel’s war has caused heavy destruction across Gaza, decimated parts of the territory and driven almost the entire population of 2.3 million people from their homes, leaving most dependent on aid to survive. Israel launched its war in Gaza

after Hamas-led militants stormed into southern Israel on October 7, 2023, killing some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducting another 250. Around 100 hostages are still inside Gaza, at least a third of whom are believed to be dead. Israel has also launched airstrikes against Lebanon after the Hezbollah militant group began firing rockets, drones and missiles into Israel the day after Hamas’ attack last October. A full-blown war erupted in September after nearly a year of lower-level conflict. A German official has suggested that his country would be reluctant to arrest Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on a warrant issued by the International Criminal Court. The ICC’s warrants for Netanyahu and former Defence Minister Yoav Gallant put Germany, a staunch ally of Israel, in an awkward position.

The government said in a statement on Friday that it is one of the ICC’s biggest supporters, but “at the same time, it is a consequence of German history that unique relations and a great responsibility connect us with Israel”. The government said it takes note of the arrest warrants and that “we will examine conscientiously the domestic steps”. It said that any further steps would only be an issue if a visit by Netanyahu or Gallant were “foreseeable”. Government spokesperson Steffen Hebestreit was pressed repeatedly at a regular news conference on whether it would be conceivable to arrest an Israeli prime minister. He replied: “It’s hard for me to imagine that we would carry out arrests in Germany on this basis.” Meanwhile, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov on Friday refused to comment on

the International Criminal Court’s arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and others, saying that the court’s rulings are “insignificant” for Russia, which doesn’t recognise the court’s jurisdiction. The ICC last year issued an arrest warrant for Russian President Vladimir Putin and a number of other top Russian officials, accusing them of war crimes in Ukraine. The Kremlin has brushed off the warrants, saying that in Moscow’s eyes they’re “null and void”. Asked if the ICC warrants for Netanyahu and others can help resolve the tensions in the Middle East, Peskov said: “Well, in general, the actions of the ICC are unlikely to help anything. That’s the first thing. And secondly, we don’t see any point in commenting on this in any way, because for us these rulings are insignificant.”



Smoke and flames erupt from a building hit in an Israeli airstrike in Chiyah, in the southern suburb of Beirut, Lebanon, on Friday. AP/PTI

Hungary PM vows to disregard int’l arrest warrant for Netanyahu

AP ■ BUDAPEST

Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban on Friday denounced the International Criminal Court’s issuing of an arrest warrant for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, saying he would defy it by inviting him to Hungary. In comments to state radio, Orban accused the International Criminal Court (ICC), the world’s top war crimes court based in The Hague, of “interfering in an ongoing conflict for political purposes,” saying the decision to issue the warrant for Netanyahu over his conduct of the war in Gaza undermined international law and escalated tensions. Member countries of the ICC, such as Hungary, are required to detain suspects facing a warrant if they set foot on their soil, but the court has no way to enforce that. The ICC issued the arrest warrant on Thursday for Netanyahu as well as for his former defence minister and Hamas’ military chief, accusing them of crimes against humanity in connection with the 13-month war in Gaza. The warrants said there was reason to believe Netanyahu and former Defence Minister Yoav Gallant used “starvation as a method of warfare” by restricting humanitarian aid



and intentionally targeted civilians in Israel’s campaign against Hamas in Gaza — charges Israeli officials deny. In his comments Friday, Orban, a close Netanyahu ally, called the arrest warrant “outrageously impudent” and “cynical.” He said he would invite Netanyahu to Hungary later Friday and vowed to disregard the warrant if the invitation is accepted. “We will defy this decision, and it will have no consequences for him,” Orban said. Hungarian Foreign Minister Peter Szijarto earlier criticised the ICC’s warrant as “absurd.” Israel and its top ally, the United States, are not members of the court. But other Israeli allies, including some of its close European friends, are put in an awkward position by the warrants. Several, including France, welcomed the court’s decision and signaled they might arrest Netanyahu if he visited.

White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said President Joe Biden’s administration was “deeply concerned by the prosecutor’s rush to seek arrest warrants and the troubling process errors that led to this decision.” Netanyahu on Friday praised Hungary for its stance on the warrant, saying in a statement: “Against the shameful weakness of those who stood by the outrageous decision against the right of the State of Israel to defend itself, Hungary — like our friends in the United States — is displaying moral clarity and standing by justice and truth.” The action by the ICC came as the death toll from Israel’s campaign in Gaza passed 44,000, according to local health authorities, who say more than half of those killed were women and children. Their count does not differentiate between civilians and combatants.

Trump nominates Bondi as his next Attorney Gen after Gaetz’s withdrawal

Washington (PTI): President-elect Donald Trump has selected Florida Attorney General Pam Bondi as his nominee for Attorney General, hours after his initial pick Matt Gaetz withdrew his name amid controversy over alleged sexual misconduct. Former Congressman Gaetz on Thursday announced his decision to withdraw from the nomination process for the post. “I am proud to announce former Attorney General of the Great State of Florida, Pam Bondi, as our next Attorney General of the United States,” Trump said in a statement on Thursday. He noted that Bondi served as a prosecutor for nearly 20 years, during which she was “very tough on violent criminals, and made the streets safe for Florida families.” “Then, as Florida’s first female Attorney General, she worked to stop the trafficking of deadly drugs and reduce the tragedy of Fentanyl overdose deaths, which have destroyed many families across our country,” he said. Trump praised Bondi for doing an “incredible” job. He alleged that the Department of Justice (DOJ) had been weaponised against him and other Republicans. “Not anymore,” said the President-elect. “Pam will refocus the DOJ on

its intended purpose of fighting crime and Making America Safe Again. I have known Pam for many years — She is smart and tough, and is an AMERICA FIRST Fighter, who will do a terrific job as Attorney General!” Trump said. Earlier in the day, Gaetz withdrew himself from the nomination after facing backlash from both the opposition and his own Republican Party Senators. He made the surprising announcement a day after he met with Senators on Capitol Hill. “I had excellent meetings with Senators yesterday. I appreciate their thoughtful feedback — and the incredible support of so many. While the momentum was strong, it is clear that my confirmation was unfairly becoming a distraction to the critical work of the Trump/Vance Transition,” he said. “There is no time to waste on a needlessly protracted Washington scuffle, thus I’ll be withdrawing my name from consideration to serve as Attorney General. Trump’s DOJ must be in place and ready on Day 1,” Gaetz wrote in a post on social media. Gaetz said he remains fully committed to seeing that Trump is the most successful President in history.

Second Australian teen dies in tainted alcohol case

AP ■ VANG VIENG (LAOS)

A second Australian teenager who fell critically ill after drinking tainted alcohol in Laos has died in a hospital in Bangkok, her family said Friday, bringing the death toll in the mass poisoning of foreign tourists to six. Holly Bowles, 19, had been in critical condition on life support following the poisoning in Laos more than a week ago. “We are so sad to say that our beautiful girl Holly is now at peace,” her family said in a statement sent to Australian Network 10 and other Australian media. “We find comfort and solace in knowing that Holly brought so much joy and happiness to so many people.” An officer at Vang Vieng’s Tourism Police office, who refused to give his name, told The Associated Press on Friday that a “number of people” had been detained in the case but that no charges have yet been filed. Staff at the Nana Backpacker Hostel, which was still operating but not accepting new guests, confirmed that the manager and owner were among those taken in for questioning. Tourist police offices are common in Southeast Asia and are set up specifically to help with incidents involving tourists and other foreigners.

The US State Department on Friday issued a health alert for citizens traveling in Laos, warning of “suspected methanol poisoning in Vang Vieng, possibly through the consumption of methanol-laced alcoholic drinks,” following similar alerts from other countries whose citizens were involved. Australia’s prime minister had announced on Thursday that a 19-year-old citizen, Bianca Jones, had died in a Thai hospital where she had been evacuated for emergency treatment, and that her friend — Bowles — remained in a hospital “fighting for her life.” A 28-year-old British woman, Simone White, also died from suspected methanol poisoning in Laos, the British Foreign Office said. An American and two Danish tourists also died, though specifics about the causes of death have not been released. New Zealand’s Foreign Ministry said one of its citizens was sickened in Laos and was a possible victim of methanol poisoning. Laos is a one-party communist state with no organised opposition and the government keeps a tight lid on information. In this case, officials have released almost no details. The Foreign Ministry has refused to comment, and in Vang Vieng, the small hospital where some of the victims are

believed to have been treated, initially referred all questions to the town’s health office on the hospital grounds. The town health officials refused to comment, saying they lacked proper permission. Methanol is sometimes added to mixed drinks at disreputable bars as a cheaper alternative to ethanol, but can cause severe poisoning or death. It is also a byproduct of poorly distilled homebrew liquor, and could have found its way into bar drinks inadvertently. Landlocked Laos is one of Southeast Asia’s poorest nations and a popular tourist destination. Vang Vieng is particularly popular among backpackers seeking partying and adventure sports. Neil Farnilore, a New Zealander who owns the Kiwi Kitchen restaurant in town, said a lot of his customers were very worried about the incident. “I think it’s never happened before, so it is hopefully just a one-off incident,” said Farnilore, who has lived in Vang Vieng for 20 years. “It’s very sad all around. I’m sure nobody intended to cause injury, but it’s happened.” The two 19-year-old Australian women who have both now died fell ill on November 13 following a night out drinking with a group.

Decks cleared for Scholz to seek second term as chancellor

AP ■ BERLIN

Germany’s popular defence minister has taken himself out of contention to become the country’s next leader, clearing the way for Chancellor Olaf Scholz to seek a second term in an early election after a week of arguments that exposed deep divisions in his struggling party. Defence Minister Boris Pistorius said in a video Thursday night that he has informed the centre-left Social Democrats’ leadership that he is “not available for a candidacy for the office of chancellor.” He said that “Olaf Scholz is a strong chancellor and he is the right candidate for chancellor.” Pistorius’ announcement

resolves the question of who will run in the election expected on Feb 23, but a week of very public arguments is widely viewed as having damaged a party that was already far behind the main opposition centre-right Union bloc in polls. Rather than building momentum from Scholz’s firing of his finance minister two weeks ago, which put an end to his unpopular three-party coalition, party members have aired public doubts about the chancellor. The Social Democrats’ rivals have already determined who will lead their campaigns. The Union nominated Friedrich Merz as its challenger in September. Scholz’s remaining coalition partners,

the Greens, named Vice Chancellor Robert Habeck to head their challenge on Sunday. While Scholz has made clear for months that he intends to run for a second term and his party’s leadership had made clear that it backed him, the lack of a formal nomination so far created space for persistent speculation that the party might instead choose Pistorius, who enjoys much higher popularity. On Monday, two influential lawmakers said Scholz’s “current standing is strongly linked” with the failed coalition, which collapsed in a dispute about how to revive Germany’s stagnant economy, and that they were hearing a lot of compliments for Pistorius.

Merkel says she felt sorrow at Trump’s comeback, recalls ‘non-handshake’

AP ■ BERLIN

Former German Chancellor Angela Merkel says she felt “sorrow” at Donald Trump’s return to power and recalls that every meeting with him was “a competition: you or me.” In an interview with German weekly Der Spiegel published Friday, Merkel said that Trump “is a challenge for the world, particularly for multilateralism.” “What awaits us now is really not easy,” she said, because “the strongest economy in the world stands behind this president” with the dollar as a dominant currency. Merkel worked with four American presidents while she was German chancellor.

She was in power throughout Trump’s first term — easily the most tense period for German-US relations of her 16 years in office, which ended in late 2021. She recalled as “a typical scene” a famously awkward moment in the Oval Office when she first visited Trump at the White House in March 2017. Photographers shouted “handshake!” and Merkel quietly asked Trump: “Do you want to have a handshake?” There was no response from Trump, who looked ahead with his hands clasped. “I tried to coax him into a handshake for the photographers because I thought in my constructive way that maybe he hadn’t noticed they wanted such

a picture,” Merkel was quoted as saying. “But of course his refusal was calculation.” The pair did shake hands at other points during the visit. Asked what a German chancellor should know about dealing with Trump, Merkel said he was very curious and wanted details — “but only to read them for his own advantage, to find arguments that strengthen him and weaken others.” The more people there were in the room, the greater was his urge to be the winner, she added. “You can’t chat with him. Every meeting is a competition: you or me.” Merkel said she felt “sorrow” at Trump’s victory over Kamala Harris in the November 5 presidential election.

Australia rejects Musk’s claim that it plans to control access to internet

Melbourne (AP): An Australian Cabinet minister on Friday rejected X Corp owner Elon Musk’s allegation that the government intended to control all Australians’ access to the internet through legislation that would ban young children from social media. Treasurer Jim Chalmers said Musk’s criticism was “unsurprising” after the government introduced to Parliament on Thursday legislation that would fine platforms including X up to 150 million Australian dollars (\$133 million) if they allow children under age 16 to hold social media accounts. “The idea that Elon Musk is not delighted with our steps to try and protect kids online is not an especially big surprise to us, nor does it trouble us greatly,” Chalmers told reporters.

The spat continues months of open hostility between the Australian government and the tech billionaire over regulators’ efforts to reduce public harm from social media. Parliament could pass legislation as soon as next week that would oblige X, TikTok, Facebook, Snapchat, Reddit and Instagram to ban young children from their platforms. The legislation introduced on Thursday will be debated by lawmakers in Parliament on Monday. Musk responded to the legislation’s introduction by posting on his platform, “Seems like a backdoor way to control access to the Internet by all Australians.” Asked if that was the government’s intention, Chalmers replied, “Of course not.”

Ukraine's Parl cancels session after Russia fires new missile

Ukraine's parliament canceled a session on Friday as security was tightened after Russia deployed a new ballistic missile that threatens to escalate the nearly three-year war.

overnight, killing two people and injuring 12 more, the regional administration said Friday morning. The attack targeted a residential district of the city.

a photo from Kyiv's railway station on his X account Friday morning. "I am interested in how the Ukrainians are coping with the bombings, how Czech projects are working on the ground and how to better target international aid in the coming months. I will discuss all of this here," Lipavsky wrote.

the city centre. Not only is the parliament closed, "there was also recommendation to limit the work of all commercial offices and NGOs that remain in that perimeter, and local residents were warned of the increased threat," said lawmaker Mykyta Poturaev, who added this is not the first time such a threat has been received.

in response to Kyiv's use of US and British longer-range missiles capable of striking deeper into Russian territory, Russian President Vladimir Putin said in an address on Thursday. It struck a missile factory in Dnipro in central Ukraine. Putin warned that US air defence systems would be powerless to stop the new missile, which he said flies at 10 times the speed of sound and which he called Oreshnik - Russian for hazelnut tree.

Missile Test Range "Kapustin Yar" in Russia's Astrakhan region, and flew 15 minutes before striking Dnipro. The missile had six warheads each carrying six submunitions. The peak speed the missile reached was 11 Machs. Test launches of a similar missile were conducted at the range in October 2023 and June 2024, the directorate said. The Pentagon confirmed that Russia's missile was a new, experimental type of intermediate-range missile based on its RS-26 Rubezh intercontinental ballistic missile.

Govt employees warned against supporting Imran's protest

Government employees in Pakistan's northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province have been officially warned of dire consequences against their participation and use of government machinery for the proposed protest march by jailed former prime minister Imran Khan's party on Sunday.

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

SSA-19016/4/2024-Media-SSA/1/823907/2024 Mission Director, Samagra Shiksha Axom, Kahilipara, Guwahati-19, Assam invites bids through e-tendering process for supply of band instrument under Samagra Shiksha Axom.

Interested bidder may download the document schedules containing the tender details, terms and conditions, from the website and submit their tender on-line at https://assamtenders.gov.in

Janasanyog/CF/2300/24/23-Nov-24 Sd/-Mission Director, Samagra Shiksha Axom Kahilipara, Guwahati-19

PUBLIC NOTICE

ASSOTECH MOONSHINE URBAN DEVELOPERS PRIVATE LIMITED (CIN: U70109DL2006PT152223) Registered Office: 105, Pankaj Tower, 1st Floor Opp. Supreme Enclave Society, Mayur Vihar Phase-1, Delhi - 110091

Whereas M/s Assotech Moonshine Urban Developers Private Limited is in the process of developing a Group Housing Society namely "Assotech Blith" situated in Sector-99, Dwarka Expressway- Gurugram, Haryana over an area measuring 12.062 Acres under License No. 95 of-2011 dated 28-10-2011 granted by Director, Town and Country Planning, Haryana and having RERA Registration No. 83 of 2017 dated 23-08-2018.

And Whereas M/s Assotech Moonshine Urban Developers Private Limited (hereinafter referred "Company") has applied for change in Bank Account and accordingly Company has obtained In-principal approval for change of bank accounts from Haryana Real Estate Regulatory Authority, Gurugram.

Table with 3 columns: Particulars, Previous Bank Accounts, New Bank Accounts. Lists bank details for Karur Vysya Bank and M/s Assotech Moonshine Urban Developers Private Limited.

M/s Assotech Moonshine Urban Developers Private Limited Date: 06/11/2024 Place: Gurugram

'Russia supplied air defence missiles to North Korea in return for its troops'

Seoul (AP): Russia has supplied air defence missiles to North Korea in exchange for sending its troops to support Russia's war efforts against Ukraine, a top South Korean official said Friday.

sent more than 10,000 troops to Russia in October, some of whom have recently begun engaging in combat. It has been unclear what Russia would give North Korea in return.

China expanding visa-free entry to more countries Beijing (AP): China announced Friday that it would expand visa-free entry to citizens of nine more countries as it seeks to boost tourism and business travel to help revive a sluggish economy.

China expanding visa-free entry to more countries

Beijing (AP): China announced Friday that it would expand visa-free entry to citizens of nine more countries as it seeks to boost tourism and business travel to help revive a sluggish economy. Starting Nov 30, travellers from Bulgaria, Romania, Malta, Croatia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Estonia, Latvia and Japan will be able to enter China for up to 30 days without a visa.

GOVERNMENT OF HARYANA TENDER NOTICE. Table with columns: SR. No., NAME OF BOARD/CORP./AUTH, NAME OF WORK NOTICE TENDER, OPENING DATE, AMOUNT/END (APPROX.) IN RUPEES, WEBSITE OF THE BOARD CORP./AUTH, NODAL OFFICER/CONTACT DETAILS/EMAIL.

Public Notice. Notice is hereby given that the certificates for 150 Equity Shares under certificate No's 1063333, 1063334, 1063335 bearing distinctive numbers 304515301 to 30451545 of State Bank of India in the joint names of Sanjay Kapoor & Mrs. Tulika Kapoor have been lost or mislaid & the undersigned have applied to the company to issue duplicate certificate(s) for the said shares.

E-TENDER (Retender-I) NOTICE. IIM Ranchi invites e-tender from eligible bidders for 'Providing Integrated Education Software Solution for Academic Programme Offices'. Last date for submission of the e-bids is 03:00 pm on 06.12.2024.

PUBLIC NOTICE. It is to inform to the public at large that Mr. Surender Kumar had acquired Property bearing municipal no. 141, area measuring 86 Sq. yds out of total area measuring 172 sq. yds., situated at New Shodh colony, Faridabad, Haryana vide Transfer Deed registered on dated 03.12.2019 executed by Mr. Sheem Singh and Now Mr. Surender Kumar is the undisputed owner of the said property.

PUBLIC NOTICE. It is publicly notified that the RESIDENTIAL PLOT No. 57, BLOCK-E, SECTOR-55, NOIDA, U.P., addressee of DR. REKHA AGRAWAL W/O SHRI PL. AGRAWAL R/o 1550, SHORE DRIVE APT., 25D CHICAGO, USA, had sold on the basis of Special Power of Attorney which was Stamping by ADD, COLLECTOR GHAZIABAD, on dated 16/05/1990, in the name of SHRI RAKESH GUPTA S/O SHRI R.C. GUPTA R/o E-57, SECTOR-55, NOIDA, U.P., and agreement is not executed. Because agreement to sell is not registered/executed so it is public notice notified that the transfer of the property bearing RESIDENTIAL PLOT No. 57, BLOCK-E, SECTOR-55, NOIDA, U.P. is going to be transfer through S.P.A. in the name of his wife SMT. SHASHI K. GUPTA W/O SHRI RAKESH GUPTA R/o E-57, SECTOR-55, NOIDA, U.P. If someone has any objection he/she file his/her objection along with the sufficient proof in the Group Housing Department of the Noida Authority within 30 days from the date of publication of this notice.

PUBLIC NOTICE. Notice is hereby given on behalf of AJAY KUMAR JHAMBI who is purchasing ENTIRE GROUND FLOOR, WITHOUT ROOF RIGHTS PART OF PROPERTY BEARING NO.25, AREA MEASURING 343 SQ. YDS., IN BLOCK-C, GREEN PARK EXTENSION, YUSUF SARAI, NEW DELHI; from M/s Capital Infrastructure & Project LLP and Mr. Gurleen Singh Makkar who had purchased the subject property vide Certificate of Sale dated 09.03.2022 executed by Kotak Mahindra Bank Limited in favour of M/s Capital Infrastructure & Project LLP and Mr. Gurleen Singh Makkar, Document No.1737, in Book No.1, Volume No. 4458, on Pages 7 & 18, on dated 09.03.2022, SR-VA Hauz Khas, and intend to mortgage against the financial assistance from IDBI Bank Limited, that Original Certificate of Sale dated 09.03.2022 executed by Mr. Sansar Chand Sharma in favour of Mr. Vishal Sharma (Rectifying the Line No. 5, Para No. 4, Page No. 6 in the Gift Deed dated 28.05.2014), Document No.4956, in Book No. 1, Volume No. 775, on Pages 164 to 175, on dated 28.05.2014, is/are Lost/Mislaid/Not available. To comply the requirements of BANK/NBFC, we give this public notice that if any Person having any type of claim (right/title/interest/creating mortgage over the said property, may inform in writing, at the address mentioned below, about his objections, within 7 days from today, failing which it shall be presumed that the said property is free from all type of Encumbrances, lien etc. Lucern Legal LLP Plot No.136, (Basement) Upp Park, New Delhi-110049, Contact # 011-40646316

कार्यालय नगर निगम, हरिद्वार. नगर निगम हरिद्वार द्वारा जिलाधिकारी/प्रशासक महोदय, नगर निगम हरिद्वार द्वारा दी गयी स्वीकृति के क्रम में नगर निगम हरिद्वार के सराय स्थित A.B.C. Center के संचालन हेतु फर्म का चयन किये जाने हेतु दू-निड (तकनीकी एवं वित्तीय) प्रक्रिया के माध्यम से www.uktenders.gov.in पर ई-निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है। निविदा से सम्बंधित सभी सूचना www.uktenders.gov.in से प्राप्त की जा सकती है। जिसका विवरण निम्नानुसार है:-

सार्वजनिक सूचना. मेरे मुखकालि नन्द कुमार सिंह व निविदा कुमार सिंह उर्फ विन्नु सिंह (पति-पत्नी) निवासी डी-3/437 गली न. 8- पुला-3 सोनिया विहार सभापुर, दिल्ली-110094 ने अपने पुत्र अनुराग सिंह को अर्ध स्वयंस्वत अर्थात् अर्ध स्वयंस्वत होने के कारण इससे सभी सम्बन्ध विच्छेद कर इसे अपनी सम्पत्त चला-अचल सम्पत्ति से ब्येथल कर दिया है। इसके कार्यों/स्वयंस्वत/लेनदेन का मेरा मुखकालि सपरिवार जिम्मेवार नहीं होगा।

SRF LIMITED. Regd. Office: The Galleria, DLF Mayur Vihar, Unit No. 236 & 237, 2nd Floor, Mayur Vihar Phase, Noida Link Road, Mayur Vihar Phase I Extn, Delhi-110091 Corporate Office: Block-C, Sector 45, Gurugram, Haryana-122 003 Tel. No (Regd office) : (+91-11) 49482870; Fax : (+91-11) 49482900 E-mail: cs@srf.com, Website: www.srf.com; CIN: L18101DL1970PLC005197

Notice is hereby given that Share Certificates pertaining to shares of the Company detailed below have been reported lost and request(s) for issue of duplicate Certificates in lieu thereof have been received by the Company :-

Table with 6 columns: Sl. No., Folio No., Name of the Share Holder / Legal Heir (Claimant), Cert.No., Dist-No., Lost Shares. Lists details for various shareholders like GITA RANI PAUL, AMIT KUMAR PAUL, BATTIPROLU NAGESHWARA, etc.

Public is hereby cautioned against dealing with the aforesaid share certificates. for SRF LIMITED Sd/- RAJAT LAKHANPAL Sr. VP (Corporate Compliance) & Company Secretary Place: Gurugram Date: 22-11-2024

Public Notice. I, Harvinder Singh son of Shri Chatar Singh, resident of House No. 463, FG, HB Colony, Sector-21D, Faridabad, Haryana, declare on oath that my wife Smt. Amrit Kaur is unable to see with her eyes. My son's name is Saksham Singh who is our adopted son and apart from him we have no other child. My adopted son Saksham Singh's behaviour towards me and other members of my family is not good and his conduct is also not good. He abuses and beats me and other members of my family almost everyday and there is a danger to our life/property. Due to this reason, I end all my relations with my adopted son Saksham Singh and evict him from all my movable and immovable properties. If in future any person will have any kind of transaction or relationship with my adopted son Saksham Singh, he himself will be responsible for it.

ASSOCIATE SIGNALLING WORKS IN LUMDING DIVISION. E-Tender No.: SNT-28-LMG-2024-25-RT; Dated: 19-11-2024; E-Tender are invited by the undersigned for the following work: Name of work : Associate signalling works in connection with TTR(FS+TVS+VCMSC)-17 sets (1:12) & TTR (TVS+VCMSC)-18 sets (1:12) Guwahati-Tezpur section and TTR(TVS+VCMSC)-14 sets (1:12) & TTR(FS+TVS+VCMSC)-31 sets (1:12) Chaparmukh-Lumding section. Tender Value: ₹1,76,96,745.52/-; Bid Security: ₹2,38,500/-; Date & time of closing of tender at 15:00 hours and opening at 15:30 hours on 13-12-2024. For details please visit in website www.ireps.gov.in

Public Notice. Notice is hereby given that my client Dhananjay Kumar Singh is in process to purchase the Freehold Residential Plot Bearing No. 6 G, area measuring 100 sq. yds. Out of total area measuring 615.29 Sq. Yds., out of Kharsa No. 285, Situated Within extended abadi (Lal Dora), the revenue of Village Devdi, Tehsil Huar Khas (M.B Road) New Delhi-110080 (availing loan from PCHFL) from Smt. Murti Devi, having acquired the said property vide Gift Deed dated 2/11/2023 (Document No. 10973) executed by her husband Ganga Ram. All persons having any claim against or in respect of the said Property, or any part thereof, by way of sale, exchange, mortgage (equitable/registered or otherwise), gift, trust, inheritance, family arrangement, maintenance, bequest, partnership, possession, lease, sublease, tenancy, license, lien, charge, pledge, easement or otherwise whatsoever, are hereby requested to notify the same in writing to us with supporting documentary evidence at the address mentioned below within 7 days from the date hereof, failing which the claim or claims, if any, of such person or persons will be considered to have been waived and/or abandoned.

U GRO Capital Limited. SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMovable PROPERTIES UNDER THE SECURITIZATION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF FINANCIAL ASSETS AND ENFORCEMENT OF SECURITY INTEREST ACT, 2002 READ WITH PROVISION TO RULE 8 AND 9 OF THE SECURITY INTEREST (ENFORCEMENT) RULES, 2002. Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described Secured Asset(s) mortgaged / charged to U GRO Capital Limited ("Secured Creditor"), the possession of which has been taken by the authorised officer of Secured Creditor, will be sold on "As is what is" and "As is where is" and "Whatever there is" on the date and time mentioned herein below, for recovery of the dues mentioned herein below and further interest and other expenses thereon till the date of realization of amount, due to Secured Creditor from the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) mentioned herein below. The Reserve Price, Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) and last date of EMD deposit is also mentioned herein below.

सूचना. प्रारंभिक नव शिक्षा संस्थान के समस्त सम्मानित आजीवन/ साधारण सदस्यों को सूचित किया जाता है कि प्रारंभिक नव शिक्षा संस्थान पूर्वी पुराना सोलमपुर दिल्ली-31 को कार्य कारिणी का चुनाव कार्यक्रम इस प्रकार है: 1. नामांकन की तिथि एवं समय: 07/12/2024 अपराह्न 1:00 बजे से सायं 5:00 बजे तक 2. जांच की तिथि एवं समय: 08/12/2024 अपराह्न 1:00 बजे से सायं 5:00 बजे तक 3. नाम वापिस लेने की तिथि एवं समय: 11/12/2024 अपराह्न 2:00 बजे से सायं 4:00 बजे तक 4. मतदान की तिथि एवं समय: 17/12/2023 प्रातः 8:00 बजे से अपराह्न 1:30 बजे तक 5. मतगणना की तिथि एवं समय: 17/12/2024 अपराह्न 1:30 बजे से प्रारम्भ 6. परिणाम की घोषणा की तिथि एवं समय: 17/12/2024 मतगणना के पश्चात श्री बी.पी. त्यागी, श्री अमित तंवर (चुनाव अधिकारी) प्रारंभिक नव शिक्षा संस्थान, सोलमपुर दिल्ली -31

CLIX HOUSING FINANCE LIMITED. NOTICE UNDER SECTION 13(2) OF THE SECURITIZATION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF FINANCIAL ASSETS AND ENFORCEMENT OF SECURITY INTEREST ACT, 2002. The undersigned being the Authorised Officer of Clix Housing Finance Limited, a Housing Finance Bank Company under the National Housing Bank Act under the provision of the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (S4 of 2002) (hereinafter referred to as "SARFAESI Act, 2002") having its Registered Office: Agarwal Corporate Tower, Plot No. 23, 5th Floor, Goidind Lal Sikka Marg, Rajendra Place, New Delhi- 110008 (hereinafter referred to as "CLIX"), and is engaged in the business of providing financial assistance to meet the needs of over millions of its customers all over India, hereby issues to you the following notice :-

Name & Address of Borrower/Co-Borrower : 1. DEEPAK PAWAR S/O JAI PAL SINGH, H. NO. 353, SECTOR 10, GURUGRAM-122001. 2. SUNITA W/O DEEPAK PAWAR, A-14/1 2ND FLOOR NEAR MOONGA HOSPITAL H. NO. 353, SECTOR 10, GURUGRAM-122001. ALSO AT: HOUSE NO. 95, FRIENDS COLONY, HISAR, HARYANA-125001. 3. HUKUM SINGH S/O JAG RAM H. NO. 353, SECTOR 10, GURUGRAM-122001. ALSO AT: HOUSE NO-142/1, GALI NO-1 DEVILAL NAGAR, GURUGRAM, HARYANA-122001. 4. LAKHMI CHAND S/O JAI PAL SINGH, H. NO. 353, SECTOR 10, GURUGRAM- 122001. ALSO AT: D BAHU RATAN DAS MADHINI, KADIPUR, GURGAON, HARYANA-122001. Loan A/C Numbers/Date: HGJHJM0000000822 / 24.12.2021, Loan Amount Availed: ₹. 25,75,000/- Date of 13(2) Notice: 17-jun-2021, NPA Date - 02.10.2024 Demand Date and Amount as Per Sec. 13(2) Act. Notice: ₹. 25,59,382/- as on 18.10.2024 Mortgage Properties : "ALL PIECE AND PARCEL OF PLOT NO.348, ARAZI JARAI KHEWAT/RHATA NO. 120/105, KHATINI NO. 156, MU NO. 29, KILA NO. 3 (8-0), 7(8-0), 8(1) (5-16), 8(2)(2-7), 13(8-0), 14(8-0), KITA 7, 5/960 PART OF AREA 48 KANAK O MARLA, BAKOIA AREA A KANAK O MARLA (150 SQ. YARDS), WAKA SHIVANU MOJHA MOJHA TEHSIL AND DISTRICT GURUGRAM, BARUIE BAYANAMA WASKHA NO. 10492/ EAST: OTHERS PROPERTY, NORTH: OTHERS PROPERTY, WEST: WIDE 20FT ROAD, SOUTH: OTHERS PROPERTY Further with reasons, we believe that you are evading the service of demand notice, hence this publication of demand notice. You are hereby called upon to pay CLIX HOUSING FINANCE LIMITED with in a period of 60 days of date of publication of this demand notice the aforesaid amount alongwith further interest, cost, incidental expenses, charges etc., failing which CLIX HOUSING FINANCE LIMITED will take necessary action under all or any of the provision of Section 13(4) of the said Act against all or any one or more of the secured assets including taking possession of this secured assets of the borrower/s. Further you are prohibited U/S 13(13) of the said Act from transferring either by way of sale/lease or in any other way the aforesaid secured assets. Please note that no further demand notice will be issued. Date - 23.11.2024, Place - GURUGRAM Authorized officer, CLIX HOUSING FINANCE LIMITED

U GRO Capital Limited. 4th Floor, Tower 3, Equinox Business Park, LBS Road, Kurla, Mumbai 400070. SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMovable PROPERTIES UNDER THE SECURITIZATION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF FINANCIAL ASSETS AND ENFORCEMENT OF SECURITY INTEREST ACT, 2002. Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described Secured Asset(s) mortgaged / charged to U GRO Capital Limited ("Secured Creditor"), the possession of which has been taken by the authorised officer of Secured Creditor, will be sold on "As is what is" and "As is where is" and "Whatever there is" on the date and time mentioned herein below, for recovery of the dues mentioned herein below and further interest and other expenses thereon till the date of realization of amount, due to Secured Creditor from the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) mentioned herein below. The Reserve Price, Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) and last date of EMD deposit is also mentioned herein below.

THE PIONEER CLASSIFIEDS. CHANGE OF NAME

I, Vijay Kansal S/o Perhald Rai Kansal R/o G-11 First Floor Naveen Shahdra Delhi -110032 inform that I have changed my name from Vijay Kumar Kansal to Vijay Kansal for all future Purposes. PD(956)A

I, Nandini Oraon D/o Sanjay Oraon R/o House No. 184, Masjid Moth, Andrewsganj, South Delhi, Delhi- 110049 declare that My name is wrongly mention Nandini Orav in 10th marksheet. My correct name is Nandini Oraon. PD(957)C

I, Sanjay Oraon S/o Binoy Oraon R/o Kandaran Uhpurbapada Chorolmoni, Malda, West Bengal-732139, declare that My daughter marksheet bears the incorrect surname as Sanjay Orav instead of Sanjay Oraon. PD(958)C

I, Mrs. Pooja Oraon W/o Sanjay Oraon R/o House No. 184 Masjid moth Andrewsganj South Delhi, Delhi-110049 declare that My daughter marksheet bears the incorrect surname as Pooja Orav instead of Pooja Oraon PD(959)C

My former name was Kunwarwati, and my name is now Kumar Devi. In the future, I wish to be known and recognized by the name Kumar Devi. Mrs. Kumar Devi, wife of the late Shri Rampal Diwasi, resident of 32/40, Praan Garhi, Thana Sihani Gate, District Ghaziabad. PD(860)C

Markets stage recovery; Sensex reclaims 79k level, Nifty surges

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark equity indices rebounded sharply on Friday, with the Sensex climbing 2.54 per cent to reclaim the 79,000 level, driven by across-the-board rally and value buying at lower levels. Strong buying by domestic institutional investors and a firm trend in the US markets also helped the indices, traders said.

The BSE benchmark Sensex jumped 1,961.32 points or 2.54 per cent to settle at 79,117.11. During the day, it surged 2,062.4 points or 2.67 per cent to 79,218.19.

The NSE Nifty soared 557.35 points or 2.39 per cent to 23,907.25.

All the 30 Sensex firms ended in the green.

Hectic buying in blue chip counters like Reliance



Industries, IT and tech shares boosted market sentiment. State Bank of India, Tata Consultancy Services, Titan, ITC, Infosys, Larsen and Toubro, Reliance Industries and Bajaj Finance gained the most. The majority of the listed Adani group firms ended

higher, bouncing back from the previous day's sharp fall after billionaire industrialist Gautam Adani was charged in the US for alleged bribery and fraud. Ambuja Cements surged 3.50 per cent, ACC jumped 3.17 per cent, Adani Enterprises climbed 2.16 per cent, Adani Ports (2.05 per cent), Adani Total Gas (1.18 per cent) and NDTV (0.65 per cent) on the BSE.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 5,320.68 crore on Thursday, while Domestic Institutional Investors (DIIs) bought shares worth Rs 4,200.16 crore, according to exchange data.

In Asian markets, Seoul and Tokyo settled in the positive territory while Shanghai and Hong Kong ended lower. European markets were trading lower. The US markets ended higher on Thursday.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 0.19 per cent to USD 74.37 a barrel.

On Thursday, the BSE benchmark tanked 422.59 points or 0.54 per cent to settle at 77,155.79 points. The Nifty slumped 168.60 points or 0.72 per cent to 23,349.90.

Cooperative renaissance opens new doors to development and prosperity



DR. MEENESH SHAH

India which is producing 231 million tonnes of milk annually is the largest milk producer in the world, contributing approximately one-fourth of global production. Through cooperatives, millions of small and marginal farmers have been united, creating a network of over 1.7 lakh dairy cooperative societies in the country and establishing massive plants with a processing capacity of 100 million liters of milk per day. This historic success is the result of seven decades of relentless hard work and efforts by cooperative institutions across the country. In India, dairy is not limited to milk production; it serves as a livelihood source for over 80 million families, empowers women, provides nutrition and financial security, and acts as a key driver of inclusive rural development.

The dairy sector is comprised of women. These cooperatives provide women with unique opportunities for social and economic empowerment. They inspire women to build self-confidence, morale, and develop leadership skills. Today, women account for about 35% of the total membership of dairy cooperatives, with over 61 million women being active members. Additionally, around 48,000 women-specific dairy cooperatives are operational across the country. Similarly, Milk Producer Organizations (MPOs) also offer women opportunities for active participation. The cooperative dairy sector in India is evolving from "women's participation" to a dairy industry led by "women's leadership."

The establishment of a separate and dedicated Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry, and Dairying in 2019, followed by the formation of the Ministry of Cooperation in 2021, reflects the Government of India's faith in the cooperative model and its potential to bring prosperity to the nation. This has advanced the vision of "Sahkar Se Samridhi" strengthening the cooperative movement in the country. Within a short span of three years, the ministry has initiated several significant measures for the holistic and inclusive development of the entire cooperative sector.

The primary goal is to strengthen the cooperative movement and take it to the grassroots level in order to realize Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's vision of "Sahkar Se Samridhi". Under the leadership of Union Home and Cooperation Minister Shri Amit Shah, the Ministry of Cooperation has set the objective of establishing new PACS (Primary Agricultural Credit Societies), dairy, and fisheries cooperatives in panchayats and villages where they currently do not exist. Additionally, the existing PACS, dairy, and fisheries cooperatives will be further empowered with the support of NABARD (National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development), NDDB (National Dairy Development Board), and NFDB (National Fisheries Development Board).

Dairy Cooperatives in India India has over 8 lakh cooperative societies operating across 29 different sectors, serving nearly 29 crore members. Among these, agriculture-related cooperatives, such as Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS), dairy, and fisheries cooperatives, play a crucial role in providing rural communities with access to markets, credit, and technical services. These cooperatives facilitate the procurement of inputs and the marketing of products, ensuring that farmers get fair prices in the marketplace.

Today, India's dairy cooperative network comprises 23 state-level marketing federations and apex organizations, 268 district milk unions, and over 1.44 lakh active village-level societies with approximately 1.72 crore members. This network collects around 660 lakh kilograms of milk daily and sells 440 lakh liters of milk per day. In dairy cooperatives, nearly 70% of the workforce in the

lakh gram panchayats (GPs) in the country. Around 1.6 lakh gram panchayats do not have a PACS (Primary Agricultural Credit Society), and nearly 2 lakh gram panchayats lack a dairy cooperative society. In this regard, in February 2023, the Union Cabinet approved the establishment of 2 lakh PACS, dairy, and fisheries cooperatives over the next five years. To ensure timely implementation and monitoring of the plan, the Home and Cooperation Minister launched a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) guide. According to the plan, NABARD will establish approximately 70,000 new multi-purpose PACS (M-PACS), NDDB will form and strengthen around 1,03,000 dairy cooperative societies (DCS), and the National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB) will establish approximately 11,500 fisheries cooperative societies (FCS). Additionally, state governments will set up around 25,000 new M-PACS, dairy, and fisheries cooperatives.

farmers and rural communities across the country. The National Cooperative Organics Limited (NCOL) aims to realize the potential of organic products and create a healthy agricultural ecosystem. Bhartiya Beej Sahakari Samiti Limited (BBSL) promotes the production, processing, and distribution of high-quality seeds. Meanwhile, National Cooperative Export Limited (NCEL) works to enhance cooperative trade and promote Indian products globally. NDDB is the main promoter of NCOL. The establishment of NCOL aligns with the government's "Whole of the Government Approach," which involves collaboration with relevant ministries, departments, and agencies. NCOL operates as a comprehensive organization for the collection, procurement, certification, testing, branding, processing, storage, and marketing of organic products. Similarly, to improve crop yields and develop a system for the conservation and promotion of indigenous natural seeds, BBSL has been established to produce, procure, and distribute quality seeds under a single brand through the network of cooperatives. BBSL will help increase the production of quality seeds in India through cooperatives.

In the last six decades, through the collaborative efforts of NDDB and the state and central governments, approximately 1.44 lakh active dairy cooperatives have been established across the country. Now, under the "White Revolution 2.0" initiative, there is a plan to form 1.03 lakh new multi-purpose dairy cooperative societies (M-DCS) and empower existing ones over the next five years. This will be a significant achievement and will take milk production and distribution in the country to new heights. Multi-purpose PACS (M-PACS) are emerging as commercial hubs. By adopting new model bylaws, these societies are now conducting over 25 different business activities, including dairy. Three national-level multi-state cooperatives have been established to link grassroots-level cooperatives to national and international value chains: 1. National Cooperative Organics Limited (NCOL) 2. Bhartiya Beej Sahakari Samiti Limited (BBSL) 3. National Cooperative Export Limited (NCEL). These initiatives represent a revolutionary step in the history of India's cooperative movement. They aim to connect local cooperatives with broader markets, enhance their capabilities, and open new avenues for growth. By focusing on organic products, quality seeds, and exports, these cooperatives are positioned to bring cooperative enterprises into the global spotlight, benefiting

To create a global identity for domestic cooperative products, NCEL has been established as an umbrella organization to facilitate exports for the entire cooperative sector of the country. This committee will promote cooperative efforts in agriculture, horticulture, dairy, poultry, livestock, fisheries, sugar, spices, organic products, fertilizers, and more. Cooperative institutions have built a strong infrastructure in the country. By better coordination and utilization of these resources, the collective impact can be further enhanced. To increase the income of member farmers, cooperatives will need to adopt new strategies. These include the use of advanced and modern technologies, improving operational efficiencies, diversifying income sources, and promoting partnerships. By implementing these initiatives, cooperatives can explore new possibilities and strengthen their role in the economy.

(The author is the Chairman, NDDB, NCOL and NCDFI; Views are personal)

Govt notifies telecom cyber security rules, to access traffic data



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The government has notified the telecom cyber security rules, that aim to safeguard India's communication networks and services, through a host of measures including specified timelines for telcos to report security incidents and make disclosures. The rules also empower the central government and its authorised agency to seek traffic data and any other data (other than the content of messages) from a telecom entity for the purpose of ensuring cyber security. Telecom entities would also be required to adopt telecom cyber security policy, that would include security safeguards, risk management approaches, actions, training, network testing, and risk assessment. "The central government, or any agency authorised by the central government, may, for the purposes of protecting and ensuring telecom cyber security, seek from a telecommunication entity, traffic data and any other data, other than the content of messages, in the form and manner as may be specified by the central government on the portal; and direct a telecommunication entity to

establish necessary infrastructure and equipment for collection and provision of such data from designated points to enable its processing and storage," according to the rules framed under the new Telecom Act. The government and any agency authorised by it to collect data under these rules, as well as persons with whom such data is shared, will place adequate safeguards to ensure that such data is stored and maintained in strict confidentiality and prevent any unauthorised access, it said. The rules clearly outline telecom cyber security obligations. "...No person shall endanger telecom cyber security by misuse of telecommunication equipment or telecommunication identifier or telecommunication network or telecommunication services or by fraud, cheating or personation; transmitting any message which is fraudulent; committing or intending to commit any security incident; engaging in any other use which is contrary to the provision, of any other law for the time being in force; or any other means which may have security risk on telecom cyber security," according to the

rules," it said. Under the rules, every telecom entity will be required to implement specified measures to ensure cyber security, including adopting a telecom cyber security policy (security safeguards, risk management approaches, actions, training, best practices and technologies, to enhance telecom cyber security). The policy, it said, should also encompass telecom network testing including hardening, vulnerability assessment and risk assessment, identification and prevention of security incidents among other aspects. The policy should entail a rapid action system to deal with security incidents including mitigation measures to limit the impact of such incidents; and forensic analysis of security incidents to ensure learnings from such incidents and further strengthening telecom cyber security. Telecom entities would be required to appoint a Chief Telecommunication Security Officer, and report security incidents within six hours to the Centre along with "relevant details of the description of such incident."

NTPC Green Energy IPO fully subscribed on third day



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The initial public offering (IPO) of NTPC Green Energy Ltd, the renewable energy arm of NTPC, got fully subscribed on the third day of the share sale on Friday. The Rs 10,000-crore share sale received bids for 60,68,16,774 shares, as against 59,31,67,575 shares on offer, translating into 1.02 times subscription, as per NSE data. The portion for retail investors got subscribed 2.70 times. The quota for qualified institutional buyers fetched 75 per cent subscription, while the non-institutional investors part got subscribed 42 per cent. NTPC Green Energy has mobilised Rs 3,960 crore from anchor investors. The initial share sale is entirely a fresh issuance of equity shares with no offer-for-sale (OFS) component. The issue has a price band of Rs 102-108 per share. Proceeds from the IPO to the tune of Rs 7,500 crore will be used to repay or prepay part or all of its subsidiary NTPC Renewable Energy Ltd's (NREL) outstanding loans and a portion will be utilised for general corporate purposes. NTPC Green Energy is a Maharatna, central public sector enterprise with a renewable energy portfolio, including solar and wind power assets. IDBI Capital Markets & Securities, HDFC Bank, IIFL Capital Services Ltd (formerly known as IIFL Securities Ltd) and Nuvama Wealth Management are the book-running lead managers to the issue.

Zepto raises USD 350 mn in domestic funding

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Zepto on Friday announced a USD 350 million fundraise in its latest round that the quick commerce company said marks the largest 100 per cent domestic fundraise within India's startup ecosystem. The round included investments from Indian High Net worth Individuals (HNIs), family offices, and leading financial institutions.

It was led by Motilal Oswal Private Wealth division. The fundraise saw participation from several family offices and investors including Motilal Oswal AMC and Raamdeo Agarwal, the Taparia Family Office, the Mankind Pharma Family Office, the Cello Family Office, the Haldiram Snacks Family Office, the Sekhsaria Family Office, the Kalyan Family Office, the Happy Forgings Family Office, the

Mothers Recipe Family Office (Desai Brothers) and notable individuals such as Abhishek Amitabh Bachchan and Sachin Ramesh Tendulkar, among others. "This round reflected the growing commitment of Indian investors to back transformative startups," Zepto said. The funding comes at a time when India's economy is accelerating its shift toward domestically driven growth, Zepto said.

"When we started this venture, the risk appetite among domestic investors was limited, especially to trust 18-year-olds with their money. We are humbled to have reached a place in India's economic growth, where we have not only fostered trust but also spearheaded a fundraise of this magnitude, which will hopefully set a precedent for the startups that follow," Aadit Palicha, CEO and co-founder of Zepto said.

US allegations renew questions on governance at Adani firms: S&P

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The indictment of Adani Group's founder Gautam Adani by US prosecutors could renew questions over the ports-to-energy conglomerate's governance practices and damage its reputation, S&P Global Ratings said Friday. US prosecutors have charged Adani and seven others including his nephew Sagar, with agreeing to pay about USD 265 million in bribes to Indian government officials to obtain favourable terms for a solar power supply contract. Adani Group has denied all charges, calling them "baseless", and said it would seek "all possible legal recourse". "The allegations could renew questions over the group's governance practices and damage its reputation. We will watch for any signs of weaker funding access or concerns from existing

lenders -- which could be demonstrated by the lowering of funding limits, non-renewal of facilities, or significantly higher credit spreads," S&P Ratings said in a note. After the news of the indictment broke, equity and bond prices across Adani group companies have fallen sharply. The group has cancelled a USD 600 million concluded bond sale. This indictment is independent of, but follows, a short-seller report last year, which hit equity and bond prices across the group although these had subsequently recovered. The group has denied the allegations and asserted that they are baseless. The group needs regular access to both equity and debt markets given its large growth plans, in addition to its regular refinancing. "We believe domestic, as well as some international banks and bond market investors,



look at Adani entities as a group, and could set group limits on their exposure. This may affect the funding of rated entities. We note that the rated entities have no immediate and lumpy debt

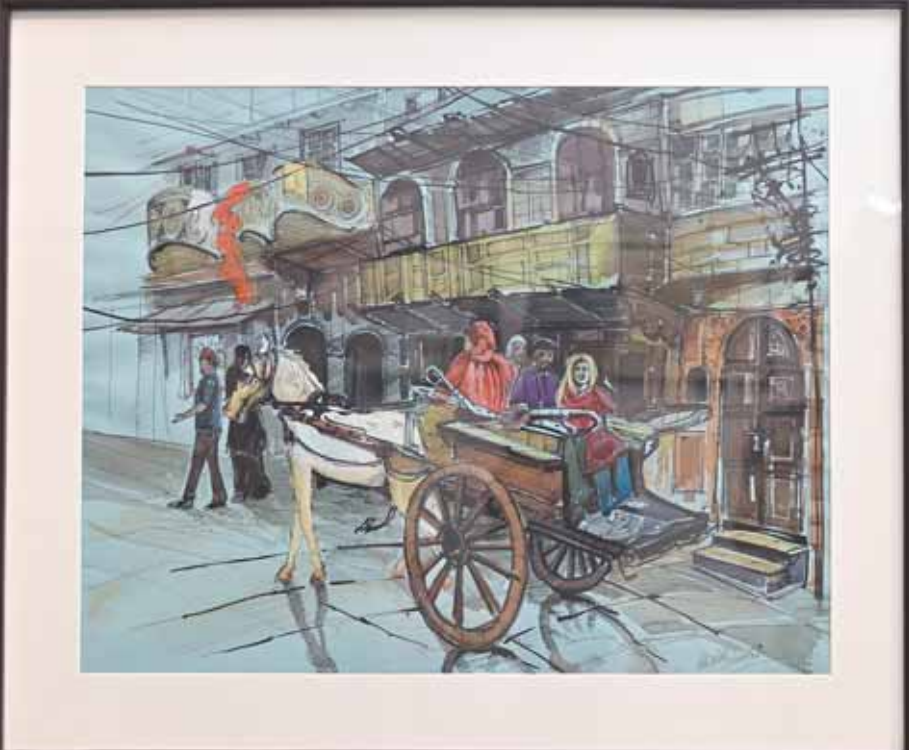
maturities," the rating agency said. "If allegations of illegal activities or misleading statements prove true, we could assess the group's governance more negatively." Separately, research firm

CreditSights said refinancing for Adani Group's green energy business is the biggest concern in the near term. "Funding channels will inevitably squeeze across the Adani Group, with creditors

likely to reduce or limit their group-wide exposure." Concerns are most for Adani Green Energy Ltd given it has the weakest liquidity and credit fundamentals," it said, pointing to short-term debt of about USD 2 billion, largely in the form of project loans, at the conglomerate's green energy unit. S&P Global Ratings revised to negative the credit outlook for multiple Adani Group entities on Friday, citing funding access and financing-cost concerns. "A US indictment of three board representatives of an unrated Adani group entity could affect investor confidence in other Adani group entities (because the founder is on the board of multiple entities within the group), thereby potentially impairing their funding access and increasing their funding costs," S&P said. US prosecutors allege that Adani and others were involved in a USD 265 million bribery scheme that breached

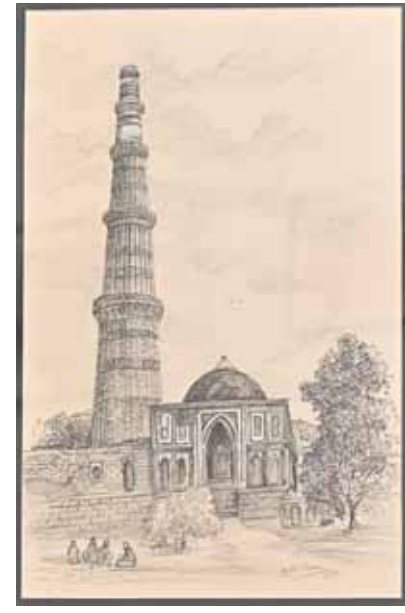
the anti-bribery compliance policy through misrepresentation to investors in an offshore bond. "In our view, this could further raise questions regarding the management and governance of various Adani group entities. The indictment is independent of, but follows, a short seller report that led to investigation by the Indian Supreme Court and India's capital market regulator," S&P said. Stating that because of the potential impact across the wider Adani Group, S&P said it has revised to negative the outlook on Adani Electricity Mumbai Ltd (Adani Electricity) and Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Ltd (Adani Ports). "We also affirmed our 'BBB-' ratings on these entities." Project finance entity Adani Green Energy Ltd Restricted Group 2 (AGEL RG2) is a subsidiary of Adani Green Energy Limited (AGEL), the entity linked to the

allegations. "Although it is ring-fenced from the parent, we revised to negative the outlook on AGEL RG2 and affirmed our 'BB+' issue rating," the rating agency said. "The negative outlook on these entities indicates that, in our view, their cash flows could be materially affected if funding access weakens, their funding costs rise significantly, or the allegations are proven, in addition to our assessment of their governance and business profiles." S&P said it believes that if the allegations are proven, it could have some bearing on the company's operations over time. "This could occur if there is a review of relationships with the government agencies that award concessions and licenses, or with off-takers and counterparties such as Solar Energy Corp of India (SECI), state distribution companies, and joint venture partners," it said.



THE HEART OF THE CITY ON CANVAS

In "Contours of Delhi," Soumen Dutta brings the city's iconic architecture to life through his intricate sketches. From Mughal monuments to colonial-era buildings, his work offers a fresh perspective on Delhi's rich heritage, writes **SAKSHI PRIYA**



PHOTOS: PANKAJ KUMAR

structures, offering a fresh, heartfelt perspective. His dedication to visiting each location and drawing from his personal experiences gives the collection a unique depth. For anyone with a connection to Delhi, this exhibition is a powerful reminder of the city's timeless charm. The exhibition *Contours of Delhi* offers a profound reminder of how art can capture the soul of a city, evoking nostalgia and a deep connection to its landmarks. As *Dutta's* sketches invite us to experience Delhi through his eyes, they also remind us of the timeless beauty that lies within every corner of this city.

As I walked through the exhibition, I couldn't help but feel a deep sense of connection to the city. *Dutta's* art invites us to revisit these places, each sketch a gentle reminder of the stories these structures have witnessed over the years. From the bustling streets of *Chandni Chowk* to the tranquil spaces of *Lodhi Gardens*, his work allows us to experience Delhi in a way that words alone cannot.

Contours of Delhi is a celebration of Delhi's identity, its rich history and the emotional ties we all share with its landmarks. *Dutta's* work beautifully captures the essence of these iconic

"दिल्ली की गलियों में कुछ तो बात होगी, वरना इस शहर को हर कोई अपना क्यों कहता है?" (There must be something special about the lanes of Delhi, otherwise, why would everyone call this city their own?) Indeed, *Soumen Dutta's* exhibition brings this very sentiment to life, offering a heartfelt tribute to the city's enduring spirit.

Delhi, the heart of India, is a city that never fails to captivate. It holds within it a unique blend of history, culture and modernity. For those of us who call it home, the structures that define this city are more than just buildings; they are symbols of our shared heritage and memories. *Soumen Dutta's* latest exhibition, *Contours of Delhi*, at *Travancore Palace*, offers an intimate portrayal of these very landmarks that breathe life into the capital.

The exhibition, inaugurated by *Dr. Sanjeev Kishor Goutam*, Director-General of the National Gallery of Modern Art, saw the participation of several distinguished guests, including *Shri Sunil Tandon*, Director of India Habitat Centre and *Bharatnatyam*

dancer *Pratibha Prahlad*. The presence of such prominent figures underscored the significance of the show.

What made this collection so remarkable was *Dutta's* ability to capture not only the grandeur of Delhi's architecture but also the very essence of the city itself. Over forty-five paintings were displayed, each portraying the intricate details of Delhi's iconic landmarks. Using pen and colours, *Dutta* brought to life the city's monuments, temples, gardens, bridges, mosques and dargas, offering a fresh perspective on these architectural marvels. His personal connection to each structure was evident, with his ability to highlight unique features and evoke memories of the past.

Among the most striking works in the exhibition were those of *Gole Market*,

Kota House, the *Red Fort*, *Jama Masjid* and *Lodhi Garden*. Each of these sketches felt like a living, breathing piece of Delhi's history. *Dutta* didn't just draw the buildings; he visited each one and captured its true spirit, visualising them from his own unique angle. His portrayal of *Aakashvani Bhawan*, for instance, showed pigeons fluttering around the building. These birds, much like the structure itself, have long served as messengers, connecting people across generations. *Dutta's* ability to combine the past with the present, through subtle details like this, demonstrated his exceptional skill. What stands out in *Dutta's* work is his attention to even the smallest details that make each structure so distinctive. It wasn't just about capturing the architecture, but about making the

viewer feel as though they were standing in front of these buildings themselves. His sketches evoke a sense of nostalgia and familiarity for anyone who has walked these streets or visited these monuments. The artist's dedication was clear: he had visited every single location, allowing himself to fully connect with each place before translating it onto canvas.

For *Dutta*, Delhi is more than just a city; it is where he has spent most of his life. "Delhi is the heart of the country, and I have lived the majority of my life here. Every structure I encountered had its own unique aura, and it was this connection that I sought to depict in each of my sketches," he shares. His deep emotional bond with Delhi is clearly reflected in his work, making each piece feel personal and intimate.



SHOWCASING NORTHEASTERN CRAFT

The *North East Festival* is an annual celebration of the rich cultural heritage, art and traditions of Northeast India, bringing together diverse communities and showcasing the region's unique crafts, music, and cuisine, writes **SAKSHI PRIYA**

"Culture is the widening of the mind and the spirit," said *Jawaharlal Nehru*, a quote that captures the very essence of the *North East Festival*. This annual event, now entering its 12th edition, is a vibrant example of how culture can bridge divides, creating a space where diverse traditions, local crafts, and contemporary art come together in a celebration of unity. The festival is not only a cultural display but also a powerful reminder of the diverse heritage of *Northeastern India* and its place in the broader cultural landscape of the nation. The *North East Festival* expertly blends the traditional with the modern. The event showcases the diverse ethnic groups of the region through performances of folk dances, regional music, and exhibitions of local crafts. These cultural offerings offer a glimpse into the deep-rooted heritage of the *Northeastern* states. Alongside these traditional elements, the festival also embraces modern artistic expressions with vibrant street performances, contemporary music, dance battles, and digital art installations. This combination of old and new reflects the dynamic nature of the region, where heritage is celebrated while the future is eagerly welcomed.

At its heart, the *North East Festival* is a platform for local artisans, craftsmen, and entrepreneurs. It provides them with an opportunity to showcase their work to a wider audience, bringing recognition to their skills and offering economic

opportunities. Hand-woven textiles, intricate bamboo crafts, and beautifully carved wooden items are just a few examples of the region's craft traditions. These artisans not only preserve ancient techniques but also innovate, ensuring their crafts remain relevant in the global marketplace. The festival thus supports the preservation of cultural heritage while simultaneously encouraging economic growth and sustainability in the region. One of the unique aspects of the festival is its celebration of *Northeastern* cuisine. With a rich culinary tradition that varies from state to state, the food stalls at the event offer a wide variety of flavours. From *Assam's* spicy curries to *Nagaland's* smoked meats, from the *sweet treats* of *Sikkim* to the *rice-based dishes* of *Manipur*, the food at the festival is a reflection of the region's diversity. It is not just about taste but also about the stories each dish tells, stories of family traditions, local ingredients and ancestral knowledge passed down through generations. Sharing a meal at the festival becomes an act of cultural exchange, connecting people to the heart of the *Northeast*.

The *North East Festival* also plays an important role in shifting perceptions about the region. Historically, the *Northeast* has often been viewed as distant and separate from the mainstream. This festival challenges such misconceptions, creating an environment where the contributions of the *Northeast* to



PHOTOS: PANKAJ KUMAR

India's national identity can be celebrated. It brings people from all over the country together, providing a space where they can engage with the region's culture openly. By doing so, it reminds everyone that the *Northeast* is not a remote part of India, but an integral piece of the nation's cultural, social, and economic fabric.

In addition to celebrating culture, the *North East Festival* contributes to the region's development. It provides a platform for business-to-business (B2B) interactions, opening opportunities for collaboration and investment in areas such as tourism, technology, and regional products. The festival creates opportunities for growth by connecting entrepreneurs, local businesses, and potential investors, helping build a stronger economy

in the *Northeast* and ensuring that its people have access to the resources they need to thrive. The festival also takes time to recognise the achievements of individuals from the *Northeast*, honouring those who have excelled in sports, education, arts, and entertainment. By highlighting their success, the festival inspires younger generations to dream big and strive for greatness. These role models show that the *Northeast* is a hub of talent and innovation, contributing to India's progress across various fields. Lastly, sustainability is a key focus of the *North East Festival*. In a world increasingly concerned with environmental issues, the festival sets an example by promoting eco-friendly practices. From using sustainable materials for decorations to highlighting local, organic produce, the festival ensures that its celebrations are not only about fun and enjoyment but also responsible and conscious of the environment.

The *North East Festival* is more than just an event. It is a celebration of the region's culture, people and potential. It provides a platform for artistic expression, supports local artisans and promotes sustainable practices. By bringing together people from all walks of life, it creates a sense of pride and shared identity. The festival is a powerful reminder that, despite our differences, we are all part of a greater whole, and that celebrating our diversity strengthens the bonds that unite us as a nation.

Celebrating the Richness of Indian Culture Through Art

There is something magical about the way art can capture the essence of a place, turning intangible traditions and experiences into vivid, enduring images. At the *Bulgarian Embassy in New Delhi*, the group exhibition *Threads of Heritage* unfolds this magic, presenting a rich display of works that reflect the depth and diversity of Indian culture. Organised by *Lokayata Art Gallery*, this exhibition invites viewers to experience India's heritage through the eyes of 27 talented artists, each contributing their unique perspective to the cultural dialogue.

From the moment you step into the space, the paintings draw you in, each one a vivid brushstroke of India's soul. The works on display, numbering more than 100, offer a journey through the country's traditions, landscapes, and customs, with both Indian and international artists showcasing their interpretations. Curated by *Qazi M. Raghieb*, the exhibition is a blend of modernity and tradition, offering a fresh lens through which to appreciate India's cultural wealth.

A standout in this showcase is *Golden Temple, Amritsar* by Korean artist *Katrina Jughwa Kim*. Her oil on canvas captures the serene beauty of the *Golden Temple*, rendering it in such a way that the spiritual and historical significance of this sacred site is felt deeply. *Kim's* personal connection to India imbues her work with a tenderness that resonates with anyone who has ever been moved by the temple's quiet grandeur.

Alongside *Kim's* work, *Amit Srivastava's* *Windkissed* commands attention with its expressive use of acrylic and oil on canvas. The painting conjures the raw energy of nature, where wind and breath are almost tangible, swirling in vibrant motion across the canvas. Similarly, *Ranjit Sarkar's* *The Echoes of Joy* captures the

BY TEAM VIVA



PHOTOS: PANKAJ KUMAR

celebratory spirit of Indian festivals, the energy and vibrancy of the colours echoing the joyful rhythms of the country's many celebrations.

The exhibition also honours the rich traditions of Indian art. *Bhavna Pandey's* *A Cultural Heritage*, a series of seven pieces painted on antique paper, delves into the symbolism of Indian culture. The delicate watercolours on aged paper offer a timeless connection to the past, while *Archanaa Panda's* *Heritage Rhythms* blends acrylic and oil to explore the fluidity and movement within Indian traditions.

Not all of the pieces are rooted in the past, some artists bring a modern twist to Indian themes. *Indian Classical Dance*, Digital Sketch, by *Ananda Gupta*, for example, uses mixed media to capture the very essence of life and its connection to nature. The layers of texture and colour speak of continuity, blending past and present in a harmonious dialogue.

Through works like these, *Threads of Heritage* becomes a celebration of India's dynamic identity, constantly evolving while remaining firmly anchored in its past. Artists such as *Kamal Kishore*, with *Indian Culture*, and *Chandana Bhattacharjee*, with *Love in Nature*, offer their own reflections on the intricate relationship between humans and the world around them. Whether through the bold oils of *Indian Culture* or the subtle mixed media of *Love in Nature*, both pieces illustrate the continuing relevance of traditional themes in today's world.

Ultimately, *Threads of Heritage* is not just an exhibition of beautiful paintings. It's an invitation to immerse oneself in India's ever-evolving cultural landscape, to see its history and traditions through new eyes. The show weaves together past and present, offering a rich and thoughtful exploration of how art can honour tradition while embracing the modern world.

IPL 2025 Schedule: BCCI shares schedule for next three seasons

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Next year's Indian Premier League will be held from March 14 to May 25, the BCCI has told the IPL franchises while also setting aside similar widows for the event's 2026 and 2027 editions in an uncharacteristically elaborate plan.

The BCCI has also decided to include injury-prone England pacer Jofra Archer, Indian-born American pacer Saurabh Netravalkar and uncapped Mumbai-wicketkeeper-batter Hardik Tamore in the two-day mega players' auction to be held in Jeddah from Sunday.

In its communication to the franchises, the Board has stated that the dates for the next three seasons are being shared at once to "assist the franchises in planning for the players' auction."

The 2026 edition of the tournament will start on March 15 and the grand finale



has been scheduled for May 31. The 2027 edition will once again start on March 14 with the final on May 30. All three finals will be held on Sundays. The BCCI had plans to increase the number of

matches in the IPL to ensure that it runs for 10 and half weeks and looking at the windows set aside, it looks imminent that the league's game count will increase.

Archer did not feature in the IPL this year and his run in the 2023 edition was cut short by an elbow injury.

Netravalkar was one of the breakout stars of the T20 World Cup in the USA earlier this year with impressive performances that were crucial to his side advancing to the Super 8s.

The former India Under-19 player, who also turned up for Mumbai in Ranji Trophy, migrated to the USA to pursue computer engineering and is currently employed with Oracle.

His omission from the pruned auction list at the expense of another India-turned-US player Unmukt Chand had raised eyebrows as the latter was not a part of the American team in the T20 World Cup.



Jannik Sinner leads Italy back to the Davis Cup semifinals

AP ■ MALAGA

No. 1-ranked Jannik Sinner won matches in singles and doubles to lead defending champion Italy to a 2-1 comeback victory over Argentina, earning a return trip to the Davis Cup semifinals.

"I'm here trying to do the best I can in the singles," Sinner said on Thursday.

"If they put me on the court in doubles, I'll also try my best." On Saturday, Italy will face Australia in a rematch of last year's final, but this time it will only be for a chance to play for the championship.

Australia eliminated the U.S. 2-1 earlier Thursday to reach the final four at the team competition for the third consecutive year.

The other semifinal, to be contested Friday, is the Netherlands against Germany. The Dutch got past Rafael Nadal and Spain in the quarterfinals earlier in the week, sending the 22-time Grand Slam champion into retirement. Italy fell behind 1-0 in the quarterfinals when Argentina's Francisco Cerúndolo defeated Lorenzo Musetti 6-4, 6-1 on an indoor hard court at the Palacio de Deportes Jose Maria Martín Carpena in southern Spain.

But then in stepped Sinner, whose season already includes two Grand Slam trophies — at the Australian Open and U.S. Open — plus the title at the ATP Finals last weekend in Turin, Italy. First he overwhelmed Sebastián Báez 6-2, 6-1. Then Sinner teamed with 2021 Wimbledon runner-up Matteo Berrettini in the deciding doubles match to win 6-4, 7-5 against Andres Molteni and Maximo Gonzalez.

"He carried me today," Sinner said about Berrettini. After arriving late to Malaga from Turin, Sinner did not get a chance to practice on the Davis Cup competition court before taking on Báez and stretching his streak to 22 sets won in a row.

"In three minutes, he was perfectly comfortable on court," Italy captain Filippo Volandri said. "He's a special one."

Volandri swapped out his original doubles team, Simone Bolelli and Andrea Pavoncelli, for Sinner and Berrettini, and the change paid dividends. Australia, the Davis Cup runner-up the last two years, advanced when Matt Ebden and Jordan Thompson beat the surprise, last-minute American pairing of Ben Shelton and Tommy Paul 6-4, 6-4 in that quarterfinal's deciding doubles match.

The Shelton-Paul substitution for Paris Olympics silver medalists Austin Krajicek and Rajeev Ram was announced about 15 minutes before the doubles match began. Ebden and John Peers beat Krajicek and Ram in the Summer Games final in August.

The Australians broke once in each set of the doubles. In the second, they stole one of Shelton's service games on the fourth break opportunity when Ebden's overhead smash made it 5-4.

Thompson then served out the victory, closing it with a service winner before chest-bumping Ebden.

The 21st-ranked Shelton made his Davis Cup debut earlier Thursday in singles against 77th-ranked Thanasi Kokkinakis, who emerged from a tight-as-can-be tiebreaker by saving four match points and eventually converting his seventh to win 6-1, 4-6, 7-6 (14). No. 4 Taylor Fritz, the U.S. Open runner-up, then pulled the Americans even with a far more straightforward victory over No. 9 Alex de Minaur, 6-3, 6-4.



Cricket Australia to pay tribute to late Phillip Hughes on 10th death anniversary

PTI ■ PERTH

Cricket Australia has planned a series of initiatives to mark the 10th anniversary of the tragic death of Phillip Hughes including a tribute before the start of the second Test between India and Australia at the Adelaide Oval scheduled from December 6-10.

CA will also honour the late Australian cricketer during the upcoming three Sheffield Shield games, as players will wear black armbands and flags will fly at half-mast.

A promising left-hander who played 26 Tests, Hughes lost his life just days before his 26th birthday in 2014 after being struck by a bouncer during a domestic match.

Representing South Australia, Hughes was hit on an unprotected area below his left ear while attempting a hook shot against Sean Abbott at the SCG. Despite wearing a helmet, the impact proved fatal.

"We understand this will be a time of reflection for the many people who knew and admired Phillip Hughes," Cricket Australia (CA) CEO Nick Hockley said on Friday.

"We wanted to ensure that the Hughes family, particularly,

Arsenal, Manchester City and Bayern advance to Women's Champions League quarterfinals

AP ■ LONDON

Arsenal, Manchester City and Bayern Munich all advanced to the Women's Champions League quarterfinals with two games to spare.

Late substitute Lina Hurtig scored the winner in Arsenal's 1-0 victory over Juventus in London on Thursday.

Khadija Shaw scored twice for City in a 2-1 win at Swedish club Hammarby. City stayed perfect in Group D with four victories and reached the last eight for the first time since 2021.

Bayern Munich held 1-1 at Vålerenga in Norway and still earned a quarterfinal berth after Juventus' loss.

Arsenal, Bayern and City join Chelsea, Lyon and Real Madrid in the quarterfinals.

Two-time defending champion Barcelona routed Austrian champion St. Pölten 4-1. The Catalan club trails City by three points in their group and is in a strong position to advance.

Bayern tops Group C with 10 points, Arsenal has nine followed by Juventus (3) and Vålerenga (1).

Back to winning Man City responded to its first loss of the season, 2-0 at Chelsea in the Women's Super League on Saturday.

Still without injured star Vivianne Miedema, Shaw took charge, proving her scoring instincts after half an hour.

The forward scored from inside the penalty area with a deflected shot that flew over goalkeeper Anna Tammelin to frustrate more than 20,000 noisy fans at the Stockholm Arena in the Swedish capital.

Ellen Wangerheim equalized soon after the interval from close range to rejuvenate the crowd but Shaw struck again to restore the lead just minutes later.

This time, she delivered a powerful right-footed finish from the edge of the area.

Bayern and Harder contained Bayern dominated possession but could not translate it into goals until the 75th minute. It had to rely on substitute Jovana Damjanovic, who gave the visitors a late lead after connecting on a pass from Giulia Gwinn.

The Norwegians, who have retained their domestic title, equalized in the 88th on Elise Thorsnes' header following a corner. Pernille Harder, who found the back of the net five times for Bayern in the previous three games, could not do it again on Thursday and was substituted.

Hurtig's night



Sreejesh-coached Indian colts depart for Oman to defend Junior Asia Cup title

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Fresh from winning the bronze medal in the Sultan of Johor Cup, PR Sreejesh-coached Indian colts on Friday departed for Muscat to defend the Junior Asia Cup title.

India, who defeated arch-rivals Pakistan 2-1 to lift the title last year for a record fourth time, will open their campaign against Thailand on November 27 in their Pool A fixture.

They will next face Japan on November 28 and Chinese Taipei on November 30.

Their last group stage match is against Korea on December 1. India need a top-two finish to secure a semifinal berth.

Pakistan, Malaysia, Bangladesh, Oman, and China constitute Pool B.

Confident of a positive start, captain Amir Ali said they have prepared well and are determined to reach the final.

"We have been preparing rigorously and are ready to face the challenges ahead," Ali stated in a Hockey India release.

"We all understand the importance of this tournament and the opportunity to showcase our skills on the big stage. Our focus is on giving our best from the very first match and securing a strong position to make it to the final."

Vice-captain Rohit said the whole team is motivated ahead of the campaign.

"The energy in the camp is fantastic, and there is a strong sense of unity among the players. Our recent performance at the Sultan of Johor Cup has given us confidence, and we're focused on building on that momentum.

"We are determined to work hard, stay disciplined, and perform to our full potential in every match," Rohit said.

"We are all feeling very motivated and eager to start our campaign at the Men's Junior Asia Cup. The energy in the camp is fantastic, and there is a strong sense of unity among the players."

India have so far won the title in 2004, 2008 and 2015, making them the most successful side in the tournament. For legendary Indian goalkeeper Sreejesh, this will be his second assignment as the coach.

He began his stint with a bronze medal victory at the Sultan of Johor Cup, beating New Zealand 2-2 (3-2) in a thrilling shootout.



I thought it was just a regulation wicket: Starc on KL Rahul dismissal

PTI ■ PERTH

Australia's senior pacer Mitchell Starc on Friday played down the chatter around India batter KL Rahul's contentious caught behind dismissal on the first day of the opening Test here, saying it was a "regulation wicket".

Rahul's dismissal kicked up a controversy with former players from both the countries questioning the third umpire's decision to overturn the on-field official's not out call.

After on-field umpire Richard Kettleborough ruled in Rahul's favour following Australia's appeal, the home team used DRS to challenge the decision.

Third umpire Richard Illingworth, however, overturned the call despite not having the benefit of a split-screen view which would have given him a clearer picture of whether the Starc delivery actually grazed the bat or the snicko responded to a hit on the pads.

"It got overturned obviously, but I thought it was regulation, the sound it made, the timing of it, I thought it was just a regulation wicket," Starc said at a press conference.

Starc (2/14), who bagged the opening wicket of the series when he removed Yashvi Jaiswal, will resume on six not out alongside wicketkeeper Alex Carey, who is unbeaten on 19, on Saturday, with Australia at 67/7 after India made 150 in their first innings.

A staggering 17 wickets fell on the opening day, a record on Australian soil, but the leading pacer believed batting is going to get easier in the second innings and they just need to survive the new Kookaburra ball.

"I think there was a fair bit of good bowling today. Obviously there was enough in the wicket and it probably felt like it was a hardball wicket,"



Starc said, "When the ball started to get a little bit softer towards the back end of that Indian

innings, it probably didn't do as much. (There was) still enough there, but it didn't do as much as the brand new hardball.

"So I guess that's something for teams to take in the second innings.

"If you can get through the testing period, it does get slightly easier. That being said, the outfield is quite slow, so that probably made runs a bit hard to come by. That's probably the slowest outfield we've seen over in the west for a long time."

While Starc gave the first breakthrough, his pace-bowling colleague Josh Hazlewood proved to be more successful on the day, returning with excellent figures of 4/29 in 13 overs before the peerless Jasprit Bumrah (4/17 in 10 overs) yet again displayed his extraordinary skills.

Starc is also not of the view that batting conditions were becoming harder across Australia.

"How many ways can you skin a cat? Bowlers are allowed to bowl good balls," he said.

"When there's a lot of runs, it's like, 'Oh, the bowlers bowled badly. When there's wickets, the wickets are tough.' (But you are allowed to bowl good balls and maybe credit should go to both teams and bowlers.

"Sure, there's plenty in the wicket when you put it in the right area and it was hard work for batting, but as I said, you're allowed to bowl good balls and there were plenty of those today."

At stumps, Australia trailed by 83 runs thanks to the incredible comeback by the Bumrah-led Indian team, something that seemed improbable after they were all out for an under-par score and weeks after their unprecedented 0-3 drubbing to New Zealand at home.