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# **Terror targets Srinagar civilians**



Security personnel cordon off the area after a grenade attack by terrorists, in Srinagar, Sunday

**MOHIT KANDHARI** JAMMU

head of the first session of the newly elected legislative Assembly on November 4, one of the highly guarded and busiest streets of Srinagar city near the Tourist Reception Centre (TRC) was hit by a grenade attack in which at least 11 civilians were injured on Sunday.

The grenade attack took place less than 24 hours after one foreign terrorist identified as Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT)

Commander Usman Lashkari was eliminated by the joint team of security forces during an eight-hour gunfight in the Khanyar area of Srinagar city on Saturday.

alerted in Srinagar as the newly elected legislators will be attending the five-day-long maiden assembly session of the legislative Assembly.

A large number of shoppers were present for the weekly 'Sunday market' at the time of the grenade attack. All the injured were rushed to the nearby Sri Maharaja Hari Singh Hospital (SMHS) hospital for treatment.

According to initial reports, the attackers missed the target as they intended to hit the security personnel deployed in the area to maximum inflict injuries. According to hospital records civilians between the age group of 16 to 55 years were left injured in the attack. The explosion caused panic in the area and sent shoppers After these two back-to-back scrambling for cover. The security strikes, the security grid has been personnel also laid a tight cordon

and carried out random searches in the area to nab the attackers.

The Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha spoke to DGP, Nalin Prabhat and senior officials of the security agencies on the grenade attack in Srinagar. He directed the security officials for an effective and forceful response to punish the terrorists and their associates. The Lieutenant reaffirmed the Governor government's resolve not to allow terrorist elements to succeed in

"Terrorists targeting our citizens will have to pay a very heavy price for their actions. You have full freedom to crush terror outfits and leave no stone unturned to complete this mission," the Lieutenant Governor told the senior security officials.

their nefarious designs.

The Lieutenant Governor wished speedy recovery of those injured

directed that district and administration should extend all possible assistance.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah also reacted to the second incident of terrorist violence in Srinagar. He said the security apparatus must do everything possible to end this spurt of attacks.

The last few days have been dominated by headlines of attacks & encounters in parts of the valley. Today's news of a grenade attack on innocent shoppers at the 'Sunday market' in Srinagar is deeply disturbing. There can be no justification for targeting innocent civilians. The security apparatus must do everything possible to end this spurt of attacks at the earliest so that people can go about their lives without any fear" Omar posted on X (earlier Twitter).



### **IT** grad arrested for sending death threats to UP CM

PNS MUMBAI

The Mumbai police have arrested a 24-year-old woman for allegedly giving a death threat to Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, an official said on Sunday. The woman, identified as Fatima Khan, who has done BSc in Information Technology, resided in Ulhasnagar area of neighbouring Thane district of Maharashtra with her family members. Her father is into timber business, the official said. The woman is well qualified but is mentally unstable, the police

The Mumbai traffic police's WhatsApp number on Saturday received a message from an unknown number threatening that if Adityanath did not resign from the CM's post within 10 days, then he would be killed like NCP leader Baba Siddique, the official said. During the probe, the police found Khan had sent the message, he said.

The Mumbai Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) in a combined operation with the Ulhasnagar police traced the woman and apprehended her, the official said. Further investigation was on into the matter, the official added. The police are on alert as Adityanath is likely to come to Maharashtra for campaigning for the November 20 state assembly polls, as per officials. Former Maharashtra minister Baba Siddique was shot dead in Mumbai's Bandra area on October 12.



## Congratulations, Delhi AQI is 500

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

A thick layer of smog engulfed the National Capital on Sunday, and the Air Quality Index (AQI) continued to deteriorate, crossing the 500 mark, two days after Diwali. The government may soon consider banning BS-III petrol and BS-IV diesel four-wheelers, dust suppression measures, and forbid all nonessential construction activities. In areas like Shahdara and

Anand Vihar, the AQI remained above 500 after 11.30 am on Sunday. The air pollution level lies in the alarming 'hazardous' category (above AQI 400) in most parts of the capital, with PM2.5 levels over 59.6 times more threatening than the World Health Organisation's (WHO) prescribed limit.

An average AQI stood in the "very poor "category at 382 in Delhi. A day before, it had been slightly worse at 339 but did not slip into the 'severe' level as forecast because of favourable atmospheric conditions such as warmer temperatures and strong winds. According to weather analysts, it is likely that wind speed will drop further and, therefore, worsen the pollutants status. Local factors, including construction activities, heavy

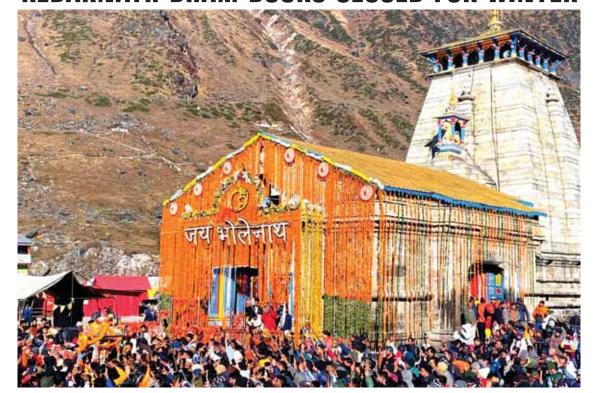
volumes of vehicles, and farm fires, aggravated the situation

At present, the major contributors to PM2.5 pollution are local and regional sources. The transport sector is the most significant contributor at 12.24 per cent, as per the Decision Support System data by the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM). While the residential sector contribution is 3.21 per cent, industries contributed (3.53 per cent), construction 1.67 per cent, energy sector 1.63 per cent, waste burning 1.49 per cent, and road

dust 1.19 per cent.
The IITM, in its six-day outlook
Sunday, said that the air quality is
likely to be in the 'very poor' or 'severe' category. It also stated, "Meteorological conditions are likely to be extremely unfavourable for dispersion of pollutants." The 24-hour average Particulate Matter (PM)2.5 and PATICULATE Matter (PM)2.5 and PM10 were 180.4 ug/m3 and 303.9 ug/m3, respectively, according to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) as of 1 pm on Sunday. The 24-hour averages of PM2.5 and PM10 pollutants are three times higher than the national prescribed standards of 60 ug/m3 and 100 ug/m3, respectively.

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### KEDARNATH DHAM DOORS CLOSED FOR WINTER



Devotees participate in the closure ceremony of the Kedarnath Dham door, in Rudraprayag district, Sunday. The shrine remains closed for nearly six months each year during the winter season

### **Historical humiliation for Team India**



PTI MUMBAI

The fortress had been breached already. On Sunday, it just crumbled to dressing room sitting stonefaced, trying to process a fall so spectacular that nobody

saw it coming.
For the first time in their Test history, which goes back to 1933, the 'Tigers' at home had been whitewashed in a series of three or more games.

humiliation was inflicted by New Zealand, a side that landed here after being thrashed 0-2 by a Sri Lankan team that is in transition. The Black Caps were also without their runs but it was on a track

biggest batting star -- Kane Williamson, thanks to injury. Yet, it was a full-strength India that looked confused and short of preparation the ground with the Indian throughout a rubber they were expected to win and win comfortably at that.

The 25-run loss in the third Test in front of a buzzing Wankhede crowd, that just a few months ago feted a T20 world champion Indian side. was a stunning reminder of how fortunes swing wildly in Having already sport. conceded the series 0-2, the Indians should have been able to pull one back. It wasn't an unfair expectation.

the chase was a mere 147

that looked like a minefield to the entire home line-up except Rishabh Pant (64). On Sunday, all Pant needed or wanted was for someone to hang in there. Nobody seemed capable. From Virat Kohli to skipper Rohit Sharma to Shubman Gill to Sarfaraz Khan, none looked to have learnt their lessons. Five key wickets were lost for

a mere 16 runs at the start of an embarrassing collapse with the logeshwari's very own Ajaz Patel making them dance to his tunes for a haul of 11 wickets in the match. The lett-arm sp.... has a staggering 25 Wankhede in just two matches, making him the most successful overseas bowler at the venue after the great Ian Botham (22).

Something like this will be a very low point of my career and I take full responsibility for it. With the bat, I was not good enough," a desolate Rohit admitted in the postmatch press conference struggling to explain clearly just what has gone so wrong with this team.

Continued on page 8



### **Retired DSP.** others attacked by neighbours

SAUMYA SHUKLA NEW DELHI

Two unruly sisters attacked former La former Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) of Uttar Pradesh, and his family members with a knife, injured a Delhi Police officer on duty, and dragged a two-wheeler for over half a kilometre with their car, while trying to flee arrest in East Delhi's Vasundhara Enclave

All hell broke loose in the wee hours of Saturday when the 74-year-old former DSP Ashok Sharma, who is also a cancer patient, asked the two women, namely 21-year-old Charvi Jain and 23-year-old Bhavya Jain to stop honking repeatedly in the society. both have been arrested.

Continued on page 8



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Get special discount of 20% till Chhath Puja





# **Queen Mary's Hospital**

PNS LUCKNOW

A fire broke out in the basement of Queen Mary's Hospital, King George's Medical University (KGMU), at around 4:47 am on Sunday. There was chaos at the scene. and many people got trapped in the basement of the hospital. The fire brigade team, which arrived after receiving the alert, controlled the fire within 15 minutes, thus averting a major disaster.

Upon receiving the information, Chowk fire station and the chief fire officer of Lucknow dispatched fire engines to the scene. After arriving, the officials observed that the fire had started in the medical equipment stored in the basement.

Taking immediate action, they began extinguishing the fire using the hospital's hydrant system.

The fire teams managed to bring the fire under control within 15 minutes. Due to the absence of a centralised air conditioning system in the hospital, the smoke did not spread to other rooms. Only the medicines stored in the

basement were damaged. The fire personnel promptly opened the windows, and the hospital staff had already opened the basement win-dows, preventing smoke from began to rise from the fire.

### Narrow escape for family as moving car goes up in flames

car caught fire in the Vikas Nagar area at around 11:15 am on Sunday.

Passersby informed the fire brigade, and two teams reached the scene to extinguish the flames. Onlookers said that after smoke began to emerge, it took only a few seconds for the car to become

fully engulfed in flames. The man at the driver's seat and his family managed to save their lives by jumping out of the vehicle.

According to reports, the car was travelling from Munshipulia to Tedhipulia. The driver had just reached the

reaching the second floor of the hospital. According to information received from KGMU, only medical kits and medicines are kept in the basement where the fire broke out. The fire likely ignited due to a short circuit. The guard immediately alert-

Lucknow (PNS): A moving ring road in Vikas Nagar when smoke started billowing from the car in front of a guest house. Upon seeing the smoke, commuters shouted and drew the attention of the driver, who immediately jumped out and ran awav.

Within moments, the car was engulfed in flames. The driver escaped unharmed.

The man in the driver's seat was identified as Anis Farooqi, who was heading towards Tedhipulia with his family. On the way, he suddenly applied the brakes, causing sparks to fly. Smoke started emerging from the car, leading to the fire.

The already trained KGMU staff also made every effort to prevent the fire from spreading. Fire brigade officials stated that initial investigations suggest the cause of the fire was an electrical short circuit. There were no casualties in this incident, but some medical items stored in the basement were damaged.

## Fire triggers chaos at Preparations for Chhath Puja begin

Preparations are underway for the Chhath Puja to be held on November 7 at the Laxman Mela ground. A cleanliness drive was organised at the Chhath Ghat, Laxman Mela ground, under the joint aegis of the All India Bhojpuri Samaj and the Lucknow Municipal Corporation on Sunday.

The national president of the Bhojpuri Samaj, Prabhunath Rai, stated that the 40th Chhath Mahaparv will be organised on November 7 and 8.

"Preparations for the Chhath Puja programme are in full swing. All those who will be fasting for the Chhath Puja have constructed decorations at the Laxman Mela ground," said

India Bhojpuri Samaj, along with the officers concerned and employees of the district administration, municipal corporation, Lucknow Development Authority, and other departments, are in constant communication, reviewing preparations for celebrating Chhath Puja in a grand and

He mentioned that the All

divine manner. "On November 7, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath will visit the Chhath Ghat Laxman Mela ground, to offer 'arghya'. He will be accompanied by Deputy CMs Brajesh Pathak

and Keshav Prasad Maurya,

Agriculture Minister Surya

Pratap Shahi, BJP state presi-

dent Bhupendra Chaudhary, Ial

Shakti Minister Swatantra Dev

Mayor Sushma Singh, Kharakwal, BJP leader Neeraj Singh, and BJP city president Anand Diwedi," he said. He further noted that over

150 artistes would participate in the programme, presenting a cultural programme continuously for 18 hours from 2 pm on November 7 to 7 am on November 8.

'The worship of the Sun God has been practised since ancient times. Chhath Puja

began in Bihar and has gradu-ally spread worldwide. Bhojpuri people have taken this culture wherever they have gone, and Chhath Puja is now celebrated in almost half of the world," he added.

He emphasised that Chhath Puja is the worship of Lord

"Worshipping the Sun God promotes good health. All women observe fast for the long life of their husbands and

sons. A great deal of social harmony is also evident during this puja. People from all sections of society come together to worship Sun God," he added. Chhath Puja has grown over the years, attracting huge crowds with a large Bhojpuri community congregating at

City residents have already started looking forward to the festival. A young Bhojpuri woman from the city said that

the venue.

she eagerly anticipates the Chhath Puja celebrations. "Previously, I would visit my hometown for the Chhath Puja

celebrations, but now, with such spectacular arrangements in the city, I celebrate it here," she said. Another man from the com-

munity remarked that the celebrations, which began on a small scale, have now taken on large-scale proportions and are enjoyed by everyone.

## Youth shoots at stepbrother over dispute

A family dispute turned violent in the Bazaarkhala area when a youth allegedly shot at his stepbrother using their father's licenced revolver around 2 am on Saturday, leabing the victim, Abhay, injured with a gunshot wound to his leg. Police seized the revolver and arrested the accused, identified as Anant. According to Inspector, Bazaarkhala police station, Santosh Kumar Arya, Abhay works in the building materials trade, while Anant, unemployed and reportedly struggling with drug addiction, often exhibits aggressive behaviour under the influence of alcohol. Their father Arun Kumar Singh, a retired nagar palika engineer, has two sons from his second marriage— Anant and Himanshu-and Abhay from the first.

The altercation rep

father late at night. Himanshu, witnessing the abuse, called Abhay for help.

When Abhay arrived, a heated argument ensued, escalating rapidly. In a fit of rage, Anant retrieved his father's licenced revolver and pulled the trigger,

leaving Abhay injured.
Neighbours, alerted by the sound of gunfire, informed the police. The police reached the place and rushed Abhay to hospital. They also arrested Anant at the scene, while further investigations are ongoing.

### WOMAN'S BODY RECOVERED

An unidentified woman's body was recovered from a heap of garbage under the staircase of a locked house in the Manak Nagar area on Sunday. Police said that the body appeared to be a week old.

According to reports, the inci-

intoxicated, started beating his and alerted the police, as well as the house owner, Aniruddha Sahitya of Hydle Colony. The police arrived at the scene and launched efforts to ascertain the identity of the deceased.
According to Manak Nagar
Inspector Ajit Kumar, the
police received information through emergency number 112. Local residents said that the woman used to roam around the area and begged to earn a livelihood. She would often sleep under the staircase of the house, which is unfenced.

Due to the festival celebrations, people were preoccupied and did not visit the house. The police suggested it is possible that she went down to the complex and did not return.

At around 11 am, Aniruddha Sahitya, from Kanpur Road under Alambagh police station, informed the police about the recovery of the woman's body. He explained that they current began when Anant, allegedly residents detected a foul smell ly live in Hydle Colony and that case.

their house had been locked for the past several months.

The body was found lying under the stairs of the complex. The police reached the scene and sent the body of the woman, aged around 50 years, for post-mortem examination. Neighbours reported that the woman worked as a rag-picker. It is worth noting that around 27 days earlier, another woman's body was found in a house in Manak Nagar.

The half-naked body of that woman was later identified by her family. It emerged that she had gone

out to buy provisions on a Sunday and did not return. Her family members had informed the police about her disappearance. After the body was discovered, the family suspected foul play and submitted a written complaint against a named suspect to the police. However, it remains unclear what action the police have taken in that

## Siblings strengthen their bond on Bhai Dooj

PNS LUCKNOW

Bhai Dooj was celebrated with traditional fervour and enthusiasm in the city, as sisters applied tilak on the foreheads of their brothers, and brothers gifted their sisters a variety of presents.

Archana Tewari, a housewife, said that her brother visited her home for the special occa-"I cooked his favourite food

for lunch, and he gifted me a beautiful saree. We have been celebrating Bhai Dooj for over 40 years now, and this has only strengthened our bond," she

Meera Tyagi, a private employ-ee, mentioned that she visited her brother's house for the

"My brother is a very generous sister on the occasion.

host, and on special occasions like this, he takes extra care to ensure we enjoy his hospitality. Events like these not only give us reasons to meet but also bring sweetness to our relationships," she said. Puja Saxena, echoing similar sentiments, expressed her excitement about the festival because her five-year-old daughter was going to celebrate it with her one-year-old

"This is a memorable occasion. My daughter was so excited to celebrate the festival with her baby brother, and my son looked beautiful with a red tilak on his forehead," she

Manas Srivastava, a young student, stated that he had brought a special gift for his

"I visited several markets to find something unique and special for her and decided to gift her an induction plate. She was extremely happy with the gift. For me, Bhai Dooj is all about the relationship between a brother and sister and its celebrations. The occasion allowed us to meet and spend quality time together," he added.

Simran Mathur, also a young student, said that she and her brother went for an outing together.

We recalled our childhood days and the pranks we played on each other. There are two festivals that celebrate brother-sister love: one is Raksha Bandhan, and the other is Bhai Dooj. We celebrate both occasions with a lot of fun and excitement."

### **Journalists facing** atrocities under **BJP regime: AKY**

Lucknow (PTI): Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav on Sunday alleged that journalists were facing atrocities under BIP's rule and were using every trick to "encounter the morale" of the media. Yadav posted a video on X in which some people were seen beating a man after stripping him. He said, "Murder of a journalist, pressuring journalists, giving monthly pay-ments to journalists, FIRs lodged against journalists, beating journalists after stripping them, forcing them to drink unwanted things... In BJP rule, every trick is being used to 'encounter the morale' of the media"

'Today's media says, we don't want BJP", he added. Replying to Yadav's post on X, Hamirpur police said that an FIR regarding the incident was registered on Monday. However, the video surfaced online on Friday. Among the named accused, R Soni has been arrested.

## November to be warmer this year, says Met dept



PNS LUCKNOW

It's November, and people are still using air conditioners post-Diwali. The Met department has predicted that November will be warmer this year compared to last year. Senior scientist at the Met department, Mohammed Danish, stated that this was primarily due to La Niña being neutral, and there would be very few western disturbances occurring this month.

He mentioned that temperatures will be one or two degrees above normal, which includes both maximum and minimum temperatures. In western Uttar Pradesh, the maximum temperature will be normal, while in eastern Uttar Pradesh, it will be above normal.

"The minimum temperature will be above normal across the state," he said.

In Lucknow, he indicated that the minimum temperature will range from normal to above normal.

'This November is warmer than last year. The chill has not set in as yet," he added. He also mentioned that light rainfall was expected on Monday in the north-eastern tures," he added.

parts of the state. Vibhuti Rai from the Geology

department of Lucknow University explained that this issue is related to the circulation of the winds.

"Normally, we experience snowfall in the hills, which brings cold to the Ganga plains. Although the mornings and evenings are a bit chilly, daytime temperatures remain very high. There is also no cloud cover, and it is the circulation system and cloud cover that are necessary to bring in some chill," he added.

He admitted that October was also very warm. "It was the warmest compared to the last two decades. We had an extended rainy season and an extended summer, which implies that everything is not following its usual pattern.
This is due to the influence of climatic chaos, but in my opinion, the snowfall in the hills is going to trigger the chill in the

plains," he added. He concluded by stating that December will return to normal temperatures, as a new circulation system will be established by that time. "December will have normal tempera-

## **Sub-inspector arrested in connection** with beheading of teen in Jaunpur

A sub-inspector of Uttar Pradesh Police has been arrested for his alleged involvement in a recent incident here in which a teenager was beheaded over a land dispute,

officials said on Sunday.

During interrogation, it was found that the SI spoke to the accused several times over phone a day before and after the incident, indicating his involvement in the criminal conspiracy, Additional SP Arvind Kumar Verma said. An FIR has been registered against six individuals in connection with the case at Gaurabadshahpur police station. Rajesh Yadav, posted as Sub-Inspector at the Mawana police station in Meerut, was arrested on Saturday for his alleged involvement in the October 30 incident in which Taekwondo player Anurag Yadav (17) was beheaded, SP

Verma said. Earlier, two per-

sons identified as Ramesh Kumar Yadav and his father Laalta Yadav were arrested in the case. A juvenile was also apprehended in connection with the matter, the senior officer said. Anurag was killed over a land dispute between his father Ramjeet Yadav and Laalta in Kabiruddinpur village of the Gaurabadshahpur area, he said.

According to police, the incident took place when Ramesh was clearing the grass on the disputed land, saying it was for Diwali cleaning. As members of the rival side objected, an altercation broke out.

As the matter escalated, Ramesh beheaded Ramjeet's son Anurag present at the spot with a sword and fled the

spot, they said. Samajwadi Party (SP) president Akhilesh Yadav has targeted the state government over the incident and said the more the government is

becoming weak and inactive,

the more powerful and active mal, the officer added. Kumar the criminals are becoming. The dispute over the land is 40 years old and the matter is currently in a civil court, according to district administration officials. While District Magistrate Dinesh Chandra suspended Lekhpal (local revenue officer) Jagdish Yadav, a report has been sent to the administration for action against Revenue Inspector Munni Lal, who oversees the area, the officials said.

Meanwhile, 11 people, including women and children, were injured on Sunday in an LPG cylinder explosion during a family function in a village in

Kannauj, police said. Circle Officer (City) Kamlesh Kumar said the incident occurred in Paniyarepurva village under the Kotwali police station area around 4.30 pm when food was being prepared. He said 11 people were injured in the explosion. Their condition is stated to be nor-

said the injured included two infants and two other children, aged two and nine years. In another case, a 35-year-old man and his five-year-old

nephew were killed when their motorcycle was hit by a speeding car in the Shamli district on Sunday, police said. The victims were identified as Rahul (35), his nephew Raunak Kumar (5) and his 3-year-old

son, Additional Superintendent of Police Santosh Kumar Singh said. The accident took place when the victims were on their way to attend a Bhaidooj function in Gageru village and were hit by a speeding car from behind, Singh said. Rahul and his nephew, Raunak were killed in the accident while his son was injured, Singh added. The bodies were sent for post-mortem. Efforts are being made to arrest the car's driver, who fled after the accident and left the vehicle behind, police said.

## Nagina MP claims stones thrown at Vande Bharat train

Lucknow (PTI): Azad Samaj Party (Kanshi Ram) MP Chandra Shekhar Aazad on Sunday claimed that stones were thrown at the Vande Bharat train in which he was travelling, and asked the railway minister and the administration to take strict steps to check such incidents.

He also urged parents and teachers to make children aware about the need to reduce such incidents and ensure the safe-

ty of railway passengers. In a post on X, Azad said, "This morning I was travelling from Delhi to Kanpur by Vande Bharat train. As soon as the train crossed Kamalpur station in Bulandshahr district at around 7:12 am, some antisocial element threw stones from outside, due to which the glass near the passenger sitting two seats ahead of me got shattered." "I was shocked and stunned by

this incident. This incident not only caused damage to government property, but also raised questions on the safety of passengers. Such incidents are reprehensible and cannot be accepted at any cost," Azad, who is MP from Nagina seat, said. He said according to a report, there were 1,503 such incidents in 2022, causing loss of crores of rupees to the Railways. This figure forces one to think why such incidents are happening again and again. Stone pelting on the train not only causes damage to property, but it can also prove fatal for the passengers," he said. There is a need to understand that railways are a valuable asset of the country and its protection is the responsibility of all of us citizens of the country, he said, adding such acts not only create a feeling of insecurity but also harm the image of our country.

## Batteries, blades among 56 metal objects removed from teen's stomach

### **Patient dies** after surgery at Delhi hospital

**PTI** ■ HATHRAS

A<sup>15</sup>-year-old boy from Uttar Pradesh's Hathras died a day after a major surgery was performed on him at a Delhi hospital to remove an astonishing 56 objects such as watch batteries, blades, nails and other metal fragments from his stomach.

The discovery of multiple for-eign objects inside the body of Aditya Sharma, a Class 9 student, has left the medical community perplexed and his family shaken, the boy's father Sanchit Sharma, a Hathrasbased medical representative,

told PTI. The boy died a day after the surgery at Safdarjung Hospital as his heart rate spiked and his BP dropped alarmingly, his father said.

The foreign objects inside Aditya's stomach were detect-

ed during multiple medical check-ups in different hospitals in Uttar Pradesh, Jaipur, and Delhi, Sanchit said.

He said his family's ordeal started after his son complained of severe stomach pain and breathing difficulties. Sanchit said Aditya was initially taken to a local hospital in Hathras from where on medical advice he was subsequently moved to a Jaipur hospital, which discharged the patient after a brief treatment.

However, when the bov's symptoms resurfaced, his family took him to a hospital in Aligarh where a surgery was

performed on him to ease his breathing discomfort.

A post-surgery ultrasound at the Aligarh hospital on October 26 revealed presence of about 19 items inside Aditya's body, following which doctors referred him to a more advanced medical facility in Noida. Here, another scan revealed presence of about 56 metal fragments, which led to the family moving the boy to Delhi's Safdarjung Hospital where a major surgery was performed on him on October 27. "Doctors said that about 56 foreign objects were removed from my son's body after the

surgery at this Delhi hospital. Subsequently, three more for-eign objects were removed, which surprised even the doctors who conceded that they were clueless about how this was medically possible," he said. "I must say that the doctors did try their best but perhaps destiny willed otherwise. My son died a day after the surgery at the Delhi hospital as his heart rate spiked and his BP dropped alarmingly," Sanchit

Sanchit admitted that Aditya's case left even the doctors perplexed, as there were no injury signs in his mouth or throat to

suggest if the minor boy ingest ed the items deliberately or accidentally. He said: "I lost my only son and am now left with my daughter, who, like the rest of us, is shaken by this terrible, unexplained, and mysterious tragedy to have hit us out of nowhere.' He said Aditya's unexplained

death has raised many questions, leaving both his family and medical professionals puz-zled. The family resides at Ratangarbha colony in Hathras.

No comment was available from the Safdarjung Hospital on the matter.

## 'No provision for digital arrest; report cybercrimes at earliest'

**D**osing as CBI and RBI officials, suspected cybercriminals recently put a retired banker and his wife under "digital arrest" for five days in Uttar Pradesh's Meerut district and convinced the elderly couple to transfer more than Rs 1 crore to them.

A senior doctor from Lucknow's SGPGIMS lost Rs 2.81 crore under a similar ruse in August while reports of such crimes have also emerged from Noida and Varanasi, among other places in the

Cybercrimes, particularly digital arrests and financial frauds under the pretext of investment or employment, have surged since the COVID-19 pandemic. Prime Minister

Narendra Modi also warned citizens about these threats during a recent "Mann ki Baat"

Subject experts explain that digital arrest refers to a deceptive tactic used by cybercriminals, who falsely claim to have the authority to arrest an individual through digital means, often over the phone or via online communication. Scammers pose as law enforce-

ment or regulatory officials and use threats or intimidation to coerce victims into transferring money or providing personal information, claiming that they are involved in illegal activities. This method exploits fear and confusion, taking advantage of the victim's panic to facilitate financial

"I was told by the callers they

Postgraduate Institute (SGPGI) of Medical Sciences doctor

were from the CBI (Central Bureau of Investigation) and that my name had cropped up in a money-laundering and a human trafficking case, for which I would be arrested. They told me that to avoid arrest, I would be put under digital arrest while they examinate the state of ined my documents online," Sanjay Gandhi

said in her complaint. "I was asked not tell anyone about it since it was a matter of national importance," the Lucknow-based doctor said. According to data from the Uttar Pradesh Police, compiled by the non-profit Future Crime Research Foundation, more than 38.85 lakh calls were registered by the National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal

between January 2022 and August 2024, with over 6.05 lakh (15.7 per cent) originat-ing from Uttar Pradesh. Remarkably, 84.53 per cent of

these calls related to financial

fraud, amounting to Rs 3,153 crore, while nationwide figures reached Rs 19,860 crore. Triveni Singh, a former Indian Police Service (IPS) officer and cybercrimes expert, explained that the criminals behind these digital arrests operated from three fronts —

Pakistan, and a combined region of Cambodia, Myanmar and Laos in south Asia. "In Cambodia, Myanmar and Laos, there is a disturbing trend known as cyber slavery. Gangs recruit unsuspecting individuals under the guise of

offering jobs at call centres,

bogus call centres in India,

only to coerce them into committing cybercrimes," Singh, formerly a superintendent of police for UP Cyber Crime, noted. These criminals typically claim to be from the Enforcement Directorate (ED) or the CBI, allege that the victim's personal details are linked to illicit activities such as drug trafficking or money laundering. In some cases, the victims are falsely accused of viewing

pornography, causing them to panic and comply. Singh emphasised that there was no legal basis for digital arrest in India or anywhere

"If anyone threatens you with virtual arrest via Skype or any other means, consider them as fraud," the "Cyber Singham" cautioned.

Identifying the challenges

faced by law enforcement, Singh highlighted that most fraudulent calls were made

via VoIP through messaging apps such as WhatsApp.
This complicates the tracing of calls as obtaining data from these platforms, which often have servers outside India, is both challenging and time-

consuming.

The rising volume of cybercrimes makes it difficult for the police to respond quickly and, by the time information is gathered, the money is often funnelled into multiple accounts or converted into cryptocurrency. Superintendent of Police (UP

Cyber Crime) Rajesh Kumar Yadav echoed the need for public awareness, noting that while financial fraud cases had surged, reported incidents of digital arrests remained relatively low — around 10 cases

Uttar Pradesh has a robust call centre system for reporting cybercrimes, with the helpline 1930 integrated with UP 112, allowing victims to report cybercrimes quickly. The website cybercrime.gov.in enables immediate reporting of cyber fraud, ensuring prompt action, he said.

Yadav also pointed to the crucial role of the victims. "The sooner you recognise a fraud and report it, the better the chances of recovering lost funds."

He outlined two primary reasons individuals fall prey to such scams — greed and fear. Greed often stems from promises of easy money through investments or workfrom-home opportunities while fear is manipulated through leaked personal information. Both Singh and Yadav stressed that no legitimate law enforcement inquiry occurred online or through video calls. "However, cybercriminals continuously devise new methods. Raising awareness among citizens is vital for combating these crimes," Yadav said. He added that the Union

Home Ministry operated a social media channel -"Cyber Dost" — to disseminate information about emerging fraud tactics.

The senior officer said the ministry, along with its spe-cialised agency I4C, regularly conducted training sessions to enhance the capabilities of cyber personnel in Uttar Pradesh and other states.

## After Haryana, Yogi's outreach to boost BJP prospects in UP bypolls

PNS LUCKNOW

In the recently concluded Haryana assembly elections, the Bharatiya Janata Party, under the leadership and guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, secured a third consecutive victory, reinforcing its stronghold in the state.

Throughout the campaign, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's public engagement and strategic dialogue with voters played a key role in mobilising support and energising the electorate, leav-ing a noticeable impact on the BIP's success.

Making the above claims here on Sunday evening, an official spokesman of the government claimed that with the Haryana elections concluded, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has now turned his focus back to Uttar Pradesh, where he is expected to intensify his connection with local voters in preparation for upcoming byelections.

By-elections for nine assembly seats in Uttar Pradesh are set for November 13, and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath will be reaching out to voters to support BJP and its alliance partners' candidates in each constituency. Through his

strong National Democratic Alliance victory, building on his trust among the people, which stems from his track record of development and good governance, the spokesman added. From August to September, Chief Minister Yogi launched several new projects in these districts, laying a foundation for success in the by-elections through development, effective governance and personal out-

While BJP and alliance candidates are actively campaigning, BJP's ministers and office-bearers are also engaging with vot-ers across these nine constituencies. The responsibility for each seat has been entrusted to senior ministers in Yogi's government, with all working vigorously to support the cam-

The BJP organisation is conducting door-to-door visits, encouraging voters to support the NDA by highlighting the achievements of the Yogi government, including improvements in law and order and the delivery of good governance. Ahead of the by-elections for nine assembly seats in Uttar Pradesh, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has spurred a wave of development across the state, with a focus on empowering the youth. On August 17, he distributed appointment letters, sanctioned loans and provided smartphones and tablets to

smartphones and tablets to young beneficiaries in Ambedkar Nagar. Just days later, on August 22, he handed out appointment letters to nearly 5,000 young people, approved loans worth around Rs 50 crore, and distributed smartphones and tablets to over 2,500 youths in Muzaffarnagar.

The development drive continued as Yogi visited Mainpuri on August 27, where more than 3,700 young people received appointment letters, loans and digital devices.

In Aligarh, he provided appointment letters to 4,000 youth, distributed loans of Rs 35 crore, handed out smart-phones and tablets to over 1,500 students, and inaugurated 305 projects totaling Rs 705 crore on August 28. In Kanpur, Chief Minister Yogi

distributed appointment letters, granted loans worth Rs 191 crore, and provided smart-phones and tablets to over 8,000 youth on August 29. His development initiatives carried on into September,

reaching cities like Mirzapur on September 1, Moradabad on

on September 3, Phulpur on September 4, Ambedkar Nagar on September 8, Ghaziabad on

on September 8, Ghaziabad on September 18 and Mirzapur on September 23. In every by-election in Uttar Pradesh, Chief Minister Yogi has actively led the BJP cam-paign as a committed party worker, often resulting in significant wins for the BJP and its allies. When the Gola Gokarannath seat became vacant after the passing of MLA Arvind Giri, Yogi's energetic campaigning helped Aman Giri secure a victory for the BJP in 2022.

Similarly, in the May 2023 by-elections, Yogi's public out-reach played a key role in the victories of Apna Dal (Sonelal) candidate Rinki Kol in Chanbe and Shafiq Ansari of Apna Dal (S) in Swar Tanda. His efforts ensured both candidates' success in reaching the state assembly in Lucknow. Yogi's direct engagement with the public also paved the way for Akash Saxena's win in Rampur and Arvind Singh's victory in Dadraul. In the Lucknow East by-election following the passing of Ashutosh Tandon, Yogi campaigned for BJP candidate OP Srivastava, who ultimately won the seat.



Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath paid a courtesy call to BJP national president JP Nadda in New Delhi on Sunday

### Village head's representative 'forced to lick own spit' by police

Rae Bareli (PTI): A village head's representative in Nasirabad area here was allegedly forced to lick his own spit by the local police for "creating chaos" during a 'nautanki' programme organised without permission from the authorities, officials said on Sunday. Superintendent of Police (Rae Bareli) Yashveer Singh said the allegations are being investigated by the additional superintendent of police and action will be taken based on his report. Sushil Sharma, the representative of the head of Kapurpur village in Nasirabad, organised a 'Nautanki' programme with-out permission on October 30, Singh said in a statement.

During the programme, he and his associates misbehaved with the people and created chaos under the influence of alcohol. The accused also misbehaved with a police team from the local police station after which five people, including Sharma, were taken into custody, it said. Sharma, however, said the police team reached the village late at night and asked him to stop the nautanki programme. Sharma claimed that he and four others were detained and physically assaulted at the local police station while he was made to

## 27k schools with low enrollment to be merged with others | **Self-sufficiency in energy to**

The Basic Education department of Uttar Pradesh is working to close approximately 27,000 basic across the state having low enrollment of students. These schools will be merged with the neighbouring primary schools in the district.
The decision comes as part of an initiative to streamline educational resources, particularly targeting schools with an enrollment of fewer than 50 students by merging them with other schools.

Director General of Education Kanchan Verma recently held a review meeting in which she directed all basic shiksha adhikaris (BSAs) to assess and prepare for the merger of these underperforming institutions. The primary aim is to consolidate resources by integrating schools with low student populations into nearby

enrollment.

Currently, there are 27,764 basic schools in Uttar Pradesh with fewer than 50 students enrolled. As part of the consolidation plan, students from these schools will be accommodated in nearby facilities to ensure their continued education. The BSAs have been instructed to submit their reports regarding the merger of these schools by November 14. The review meeting emphasised the Indian government's commitment to making schools more practical and efficient. The education officials have been tasked with developing a framework to determine which schools can merge based on various factors, including transportation, student accessibility and geographical considerations such as canals and highways. Additionally, each school will

page comment detailing its status, and a comprehensive booklet listing all affected schools will be compiled for district review. A follow-up meeting with all BSAs is scheduled for November 14 to discuss the progress of this initiative.

### **MAYA FLAYS GOVT**

Bahujan Samaj Party chief Mayawati, on Sunday, reacted strongly to the proposed closure of some basic and primary schools and their subsequent merger.

The former chief minister of Uttar Pradesh said, "The decision of the UP government to close and merge the 27,764 council primary and upper primary schools with less than 50 students and merge them with other schools instead of taking necessary measures to improve them by making necright. In such a situation, where and how will the poor children study?' The decision to close schools is also unfair." The BSP supremo said, "In UP and most of the states of the country, especially primary and secondary education is in a very bad condition, due to which crores of children from poor families are constantly deprived of education, let alone good education. The decision of the Odisha government to close schools with less students is also unfair."

She said, "The result of such anti-poor and anti-people policies of the government is that people are being forced to educate their children in private schools, as is clear from the survey, but it is not right to close these schools instead of making necessary improvements by giving proper money and attention to education by

It may be mentioned that there are 27,764 primary and upper primary schools in Uttar Pradesh where there are less than 50 students. There is a plan to merge these schools with other schools. They will be merged with other schools of the panchayat or nearby schools. Instructions have been given to merge these schools for the next academic session i.e. the 2025-26 session. For this, instructions have been issued to the basic education officers of all the districts.

The instructions say that a report should be prepared to find out which nearby school it would be better to merge with. How much distance will the students have to cover to go to those schools? For this, a detailed report is being prepared keeping in mind many

# drive UP's economic growth

PNS LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh, with ambitious targets centered on solar and bio-energy, aims not only to achieve 100 per cent electricity availability across the state, but also to lay a solid foundation for a one-trilliondollar economy through renewable energy. Working in mission mode, the government is set to make UP self-sufficient in energy within the next two and a half to three

A major push is underway to expand solar energy access. Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's PM Suryaghar Yojana, the state has set a target to connect 2.5 million households to solar energy within the next three years. So far, over 48,000 homes have been equipped with solar panels, with another 30,000 expected to benefit by the end of the fiscal year. This initiative

not only aims to strengthen home energy supply but also to promote environmental conservation and reduce electricity costs.

Similarly, the PM Kusum

Yojana aims to generate 2,000 megawatts of solar energy by 2027. This programme enables farmers to install solar panels on unused land, providing an additional income source while enhancing sustainable energy production across the state. The Yogi Adityanath government is driving major initiatives to boost large-scale solar energy projects across Uttar Pradesh, including developing solar parks with a combined capacity of 4,800 MW, with the tendering process underway. Plans are also in place to establish floating solar projects across seven reservoirs, in partnership with National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC),

Tehri Hydro Development

Corporation (THDC) and

Satluj Jal Vidyut Nigam (SJVN). By 2027, the state aims to reach a solar power generation capacity of 14,000

Additionally, the Yogi administration is advancing toward bio-energy self-sufficiency. Over the next two years, it has set ambitious targets to expand bio-compressed gas capacity to 1,000 TPD, bio-coal to 4,000 TPD, and bio-diesel to 2,000 KLPD. Currently, bio-compressed gas plants with a 210 TPD capacity are operational, with further projects in progress. This bio-energy initiative not only seeks to curb pollution, but will also create new employment opportuni-

ties. In anticipation of future energy demands, particularly for new industries, the government has laid a detailed blueprint for enhancing power infrastructure over the next

## Gathering of akharas begins

PNS LUCKNOW

The grand procession of 13 akharas, a profound symbol of public faith, has commenced its entry into Kumbh City for the Maha Kumbh 2025, set to be held in Prayagraj in January. On Sunday, the Shri Panchdashnam Juna Akhara marked its magnificent entry, reflecting the Yogi Adityanath government's commitment to hosting a grand and meticulously organised Maha Kumbh. The gathering of akharas has started in the Kumbh city to participate in the great gathering of faith at the Prayagraj Maha Kumbh to be held on the banks of Triveni. The Shri Panchdashnam Akhara of the sanyasis entered the Kumbh city with royal splendour. Their impressive Nagar Pravesh Yatra started at the Hanuman Temple in Ramapuram village and cul-minated at the Mauj Giri Ashram of Juna Akhara. Along the procession route, Kumbh Mela officials greeted the mahatmas of the akhara with flower showers, while locals



adorned the mahamandaleshwars seated on silver thrones with petals.

The saints of the akhara will now remain in the city. On December 14, under the lead-Acharva of Mahamandaleshwar Swami Avdheshanand Giri, they will make their ceremonial entry into the Kumbh area.

To ensure the smooth and safe conclusion of the Nagar Prayesh Yatra, the Maha administration Kumbh deployed a significant police force. Led by Additional Kumbh Mela Officer Vivek Chaturvedi, teams of administrative officers accompanied the saints from the starting point in Ramapur. The deployment included four circle officers, six inspectors, nine subinspectors, and 40 police personnel to maintain seamless traffic flow. Additional policemen were stationed along various routes to manage traffic, ensuring the roads remained clear throughout the proces-

### Devotees to witness Amrit Kalash at Maha Kumbh

PNS PRAYAGRAJ

Under the leadership of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, the Uttar Pradesh government is working tire-lessly in Prayagraj to make the upcoming Maha Kumbh the most magnificent and divine event yet.

In line with this vision, the Allahabad Museum in Prayagraj plans to elevate the grandeur of Maha Kumbh with a unique display. The museum will showcase a replica of the Kalash dripping Amrit and has requested approximately 12,000 square feet from the Mumbh Meal administration to feature an exhibition celebrating Indian art and culture.

According to Deputy Curator of the museum, Dr Rajesh Mishra, the Amrit Kalash will be a major attraction for devotees from India and abroad, with plans to develop it as a selfie point.

Reflecting the mythological significance of Maha Kumbh,

the Amrit Kalash installation is set to be a memorable highlight of this grand event. The Allahabad Museum has established the world's first gallery dedicated to showcas-

ing the lives and contributions

of key revolutionaries from the 1857 uprising to India's

independence. This gallery brings to life the 90-year saga of the freedom struggle, featuring almost all the major freedom fighters from the extremist faction

fought for the nation. Visitors will have the unique opportunity to learn about heroes ranging from Mangal Pandey to Chandra Shekhar Azad. This gallery, a blend of digital and written displays, offers a space to honour and learn about these remarkable revolutionaries. Each exhibit vividly recounts the history of those who made the ultimate sacrifice for India's

freedom, leaving visitors

moved by their bravery and

### **'SP's real agenda** is Muslim appeasement'

Lucknow (PTI): Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya on Sunday said the "real agenda" of the Samajwadi Party is "Muslim appeasement and giving open support to jihadis for vote bank". In a post on X in Hindi, Maurya said, "SP's real agenda: Muslim appeasement and giving open support to jihadis for vote bank." 'Love Jihad, Land Jihad, Vote Jihad — politics of dividing society on every front, is this Shri Akhilesh Yadav's claim of harmony? Is this PDA? Both the character and face of SP have been exposed," Maurya said in his post.

Maurya's statement comes at a time when the BJP and the SP are all gearing up for bypolls in the state. On Saturday as well, Maurva had attacked the party, termed the Samajwadi Party chief's coinage "PDA" as 'Parivaar' Development

## BSP president doing vote politics, says UPCC chief Ajay Rai

A midst the 'Bantenge to Katenge' vs 'Judenge to Jeetenge' and other war slogans of the main political rivals in the state, Uttar Pradesh Congress president Ajay Rai, on Sunday, reacted to the statement of Bahujan Samaj Party chief Mayawati.

He said, "Mayawati was definitely made the chief minister, but she never fulfilled her responsibility as a chief minister or the responsibility that she should have as a former chief minister or leader after that." Mayawati had targeted all the parties and gave a new slogan

on Saturday. Rai also said, "So many rapes and atrocities have happened

with the Scheduled Castes, a child of Pasi community was killed in custody in Lakhimpur Kheri, but Mayawati never said anything. She does politics only to get votes. She is not concerned with the pain and suffering of the people." Mayawati had said, "The rule

of BSP has been the best among the people as compared to the BJP and SP governments. The public should not fall for the posters. BJP has made a plan to take advantage of the by-elections by misleading the public by giving the slogan 'If we divide, we will be cut' and SP has given the slogan 'If we join, we will win. To avoid their double standards, it is better that you join BSP and move ahead and stay safe."

## Mayor, others inspect Chhath preparations

 $M_{\text{Saurabh Srivastava, along}}^{\text{ayor Ashok Tiwari, MLA}}$  with the Additional Municipal Commissioner and others on Sunday inspected the Ganga ghats boarding a motorboat and reviewed the preparations for Chhath festival. The mayor instructed the Nagar Nigam officials for better cleanliness of the ghats before the start of the puja. He instructed the concerned

Nagar Nigam officers to complete the works of levelling/ barricading of the unpaved ghats and ensure proper clean-ing of the permanent changing rooms built on the ghat side. He also directed the departments concerned to construct additional temporary changing rooms for the devotees as per requirement and ensure time-



Mayor Ashok Tiwari along with MLA Saurabh Srivastava inspecting preparations for Chhath Puja at a Ganga ghat in Varanasi on Sunday.

ly completion of works. He said all street lights installed along the ghats should be checked and repaired immediately. Besides, signage boards should be installed outside mobile toilets so that the devotees do not face any kind of problem. The MLA also gave necessary

directions to the officials.

Meanwhile, senior district and

police officers also said that

Meanwhile, preparations are in full swing for the four-day Chhath Puja which will start on November 5 with the 'Nahay-Khay' (bathing-eating) event. Efforts are on in Banaras Locomotive Works (BLW) to make Surya Sarovar ready for the festival. However, it will be a challenging task for the local administration to make

be done properly at all the ghats and there should not be any

problem. They said arrangements for ambulances should

be done during this festival. They directed the police officers to ensure that the parking

arrangement was done proper-

ly and asked the Police depart-

ment, National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and

Water Police to remain alert and continue patrolling during

the festival.

the main Ganga ghats ready for the festival as the first 'arghya' of the Chhath Puja will be offered to Surya Bhagwan at the sunset on November 7 while second and last on the next day at the time of sunrise which will mark the end of the festival. Due to the rise in the water level of Ganga river earlier, huge amount of silt had collected at the ghat stairs. Though efforts are going on to remove the collected silt from the stairs at some of the ghats with the help of water pumps, it appears that the chances are little that the devotees will get proper place to offer their arghya' prayers there, one of the concerned residents said. In recent years, the 88-odd internationally famous Ganga ghats witnessed rush of thousands of people during the Chhath Puja.



Devotees take bath in Yamuna river and perform rituals on Bhai Dooj at Balhuaghat in Prayagraj on Sunday.

# Shobha yatra to mark Chitragupta Jayanti Bhaiyya Dooj or Yam Dwitiya traditional gaiety and religion Bhaiyya Dooj or Yam Dwitiya traditional gaiety and religion for yatra of the property o

On the occasion of Bhagwan Shree Chitragupta Jayanti, various programmes were organised in the city on Sunday. The main attraction of the day was a 'shobha yatra' which was taken out under the banner of Akhil Bhartiya Kayastha Mahasabha. In the procession people were carrying portraits of great dignitaries from the Samaj. The procession was attended by a good number of people from the Kayasth Samaj and majority of them were wearing saffron scarves.

Meanwhile, under the aegis of Global Kayastha Committee, the birth anniversary of Lord Chitragupta was celebrated in the ancient Shri Ram Janaki Temple of Raghunath Nagar (Mahmoorganj). On the occasion, the temple was decorated in a grand manner and Annakut was performed by offering 56 bhogs to all the idols of the deities installed in



Chitragupta Jayanti being celebrated at Shri Ram Janaki Temple (Raghunath Nagar) in Varanasi on Sunday.

'Sundarkand Paath' was also organised. Acharya Praveen Tiwari distributed pens and Mata Annapurna's treasure to all the devotees as prasad. He also performed the worship of Lord Shree Chitragupta and 'yagna' for the welfare of the people.

The yajaman in the worship was Shashikant Srivastava, the temple. On the occasion founder of Global Kayastha

Committee, along with his family, Kamini, Jyoti, Rajesh Srivastava Guddu with his wife and Ajit Srivastava, secretary of Chitragupta Sabha Kashi. Shashikant Srivastava, while highlighting the importance of worship, said that Yam Dwitiya is also known as Bhai Dooj and there is a mythological belief that worshipping Yamraj and Chitragupta on

ends the fear and crisis of untimely death, he added. Functions were also organised on the occasion under the auspices of Chitragupta Yuvak Mandal in Banaras Locomotive Works (BLW) and Kayastha Samiti Sarnath Varanasi at Lohia Nagar Colony (Ashapur). Various programmes were also organised in Varunapuri Colony in Phulwaria, Ashok Puram Colony in Meerapur Basahi and other places.

The activists of Shree

Chitragupta Sena organised a programme on the occasion at Gayatri Nagar near Bhelupur. The president of the organisation Rajesh Srivastava Azad, secretary Narendra Prakash Srivastava 'Chanchal', Neeta Dhar, Rekha Srivastava, Om Prakash Srivastava, Ajay Sinha, Sushil Kumar Srivastava and many others were present.

**BHAIYYA DHOOJ** 

Bhaiyya Dhooj and Godhan puja were celebrated with all

traditional gaiety and religious fervour in different parts of the city here on Sunday. Majority of residents hailing from differ-ent parts of Bhojpuri-speaking eastern Uttar Pradesh and adjoining Bihar celebrated the day as typical Godhan Puja in which the sisters made some figures with cow dung and prayed for the long life of their brothers.

Singing traditional songs, they prayed to the Almighty to save their brothers from the effects of evil. The women also 'abused' their brothers and after that 'burnt' their tongues as per tradition. Groups of women had gathered to offer the prayers at several places in

As this holy city is of cosmopolitan character where people hailing from different states live in different localities, families of various states celebrate the day as Bhaiyya Dhooj, famous across the country as the festival falls on second day after the festival of Diwali.

### Suriname deeply rooted in Indian Sanatan culture: Dr Katyayan president Vijay Ram Lakhan, Ramrati Devi, Mahendra Hira

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Suriname is deeply rooted in Indian Sanatan culture as the people of the country have faith in Shri Ramcharitmanas and Maa Ganga, said Dr Rituraj Katyayan, a music teacher of Ranveer Sanskrit Vidyalaya of Banaras Hindu University (BHU), who returned to the city from Suriname, a country in northern South America considered as a part of the Caribbean islands. Throwing Caribbean Islands. Throwing light on his experiences on Sunday, he said Suriname seems like a part of India in a way. "People there are completely rooted in Indian culture as they worship Shri Ramcharitmanas and Maa Canga with great devotion Ganga with great devotion. Shri Ramcharitmanas is recited every day in Suriname. Along with this, Hindu gods and goddesses are also wor-shipped. Indian breed cows



are taken good care of in the cow shelters there", he said. A Sanskrit teacher of BHU, who returned to India after narrating the story of Shri Ramcharitmanas in Suriname for the last one month, said that Shri Ramcharitmanas Katha was organised for a month under the joint aegis of Jagadamba Tirtha Sthan and Sanatan Dharma Mahasabha. The event was organised in Suriname with the efforts of Sanatan Dharma Mahasabha and Sundar Hira. "The citizens of Suriname participated enthusiastically in this monthlong event. The biggest thing is that the residents there constantly try to inculcate the character of Lord Ram in their lives. And looking at Suriname, it seems that it is a state of India. The people there are very happy with the construction of Lord Ram's temple in Ayodhya and people say that soon they will come to India and worship Lord Ram", Dr Rituraj added. PROF KUMAR TAKES CHARGE: Prof Sanjay Kumar of Physics department, assumed the responsibility of Rector of the BHU at the Central Office on Saturday. Deputy Registrar Venugopal welcomed Prof Sanjay Kumar by presenting him a bouquet. The officers and employees of the Central

## AIU to hold North Zone V-Cs' conference on November 5-6

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

 $T^{
m he}$  Association of Indian Universities (AIU) will hold its North Zone Vice-Chancellors' Conference on November 5-6 at Graphic Era University, Dehradun, Uttarakhand. AIU President and Vice-Chancellor CSIM University (CSIMU) Kanpur, Prof Vinay Kumar Pathak said the conference will centre on the theme of "Technological Integration in Higher Education," underscoring the significance of digital advancements in acad-

The conference's inauguration will feature Lt Gen Gurmit Singh, PVSM, UYSM, AVSM, VSM (Retd), Governor of Uttarakhand, as the chief guest. Governor of Himachal Pradesh Shiv Pratap Shukla will preside as the chief guest for the valedictory session, along side Education Minister of Uttarakhand, Dhan Singh Rawat, who will join as guest of honour. Prof Pathak, who is dedicated to fostering conversations around technology-driven education reforms, said Dr Pankaj Mittal, Secretary General of AIU, will convene the conference and Prof Narpinder Singh, Vice-Chancellor of Graphic Era University, Dehradun, will act as host. As one of AIU's key annual activities, the North Zone Vice- Chancellors' Conference



AIU President Prof Vinay Kumar Pathak

brings together vice-chancellors from across north India, with around 100 vice-chancellors expected to attend in person and many more joining virtualy. The event will provide a platform for university leaders to discuss pressing issues in higher education, including the implementation of blended learning models, integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and immersive technologies like virtual and augmented reality in teaching and ensuring cybersecurity and data privacy in institutions. In his perspective, Prof Vinay Kumar Pathak highlighted the need for proactive technological integration in universities to create adaptable and future-

ready education systems. He remarked. 'This conference is an opportunity to shape a unified vision on leveraging technology to benefit higher education. We aim to set standards in the use of AI and blended learning, which enhance accessibility, flexibility, and engagement for students." The conference will unfold across three technical sessions, each designed to address a critical aspect of educational technology:- session I: Blended Learning Models; session II: Integrating AI, Virtual and Augmented Reality in Learning; session III: Cybersecurity and Data Privacy in Higher Education Institutions. Discussions and resolutions from the event will shape actionable policy recommendations, which will contribute to AIU's national advocacy efforts on behalf of higher education institutions. Outcomes from all five zonal conferences will feed into the National Conference of Vice-Chancellors and inform a "University Action Plan," to guide Indian universities in adopting a digitally empowered educational framework. As AIU celebrates its centenary year, this conference continues its mission of advancing higher education, positioning Indian universities at the forefront of global educational innovation.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE VARANASI

The government is paving the way for the progress of the youth. It is making the youth enterpeneurs by giving incentions of the strength of the progression of the strength of tives for setting up new indus-tries and service sector units. For this, one of the major schemes of the Uttar Pradesh government is the Mukhyamantri Yuva Swarojgar Yojana (MYSY). With this scheme, the youth are becoming self-reliant by starting self-employment and on the other hand, are also connecting people with employment. By the financial year 2024-25 (October), small and big enterprises of 60 youth of Varanasi division have benefited from the MYSY.

In this scheme, the government also gives subsidy along with providing loan at low interest rate. MYSY is a flagship scheme of UP launched to encourage the youth of the state for selfemployment. Ioint Commissioner (Industries) Umesh Singh said under the MYSY, the target is to provide ₹1,079.91 lakh margin money to 556 youth in the financial year

2024-25 in the four districts of

Varanasi division namely

Varanasi, Jaunpur, Ghazipur and

Chandauli. In comparison to this, till now 60 youth have been benefited with margin money of ₹192.79 lakh for selfemployment in this scheme. The main objective of this

scheme is to promote employment opportunities for educated youth. Through the scheme, the government helps in providing loan from the bank at low interest rate to provide financia assistance to unemployed youth to start their own new business. Under the scheme, a loan of up to ₹25 lakh for setting up industry and ₹10 lakh for service sector is made available through banks. There is also a provision for the state government to provide 25 per cent margin money (subsidy), which is a maximum of ₹6.25 lakh for the industry sector and a maximum of ₹2.50 lakh for the service sector.

The number of beneficiaries of Varanasi division under MYSY is 29 in Varanasi district, 15 in Ghazipur, nine in Chandauli and seven in Jaunpur and the margin money given by the government in the financial year 2024-25 is ₹94.08 lakh in Varanasi, ₹45.25 lakh in Ghazipur, ₹29.46 lakh in Chandauli and ₹24 lakh in Jaunpur.

PADDY PURCHASE: The Yogi government has made all the preparations to pay the maximum price to the paddy farmers as the paddy crop purchase has already started in the Varanasi division from November 1.

The Food and Logistics department has geared up for the purchase of paddy. The state government is getting the farmers a fair price for their hard work by removing the middlemen. Under the Kharif marketing year 2024-25, the target is to purchase 6.38 lakh metric tonnes of paddy in four districts of Varanasi divi-

The government has increased the support price of paddy by ₹117 per quintal this year as

compared to last year. Regional Food Marketing Officer Pradeep Kumar Kushwaha said in the last marketing year, the support price for the purchase of paddy was ₹2,183 per quintal for common and ₹2,203 per quintal for grade-A. In this marketing year, the state government has increased the support price to ₹2,300 per quintal for common and ₹2,320 per quintal for grade-A, which is ₹117 more.

He informed that the target is to

**Enterprises of 60 youth benefit from MYSY** purchase 6,38,000 metric tons (MT) of paddy from 397 centres in Varanasi division. There are 16,491 registered farmers in Varanasi division. The department has made complete preparations to purchase paddy from farmers. The farmer will first pay ₹20 to the labour for unloading and cleaning and the compensation will be refunded to him by adding ₹20 to the value

money paid. There are 34 paddy purchase centres in Varanasi district and there is a target to purchase 33,000 MT from 1,047 registered farmers. In Chandauli, there are 112 purchase centres and there is a target to purchase 2.35 lakh MT from 6,445 registered farmers. In Jaunpur, there are 115 purchase centres and there is target to purchase 1.50 lakh MT from 4,201 registered farmers and in Ghazipur, there are 136 purchase centres and there is target to purchase 2.20 lakh MT from 4,798 registered farmers. Among the four districts of Varanasi division, Chandauli, which is called the 'rice bowl', has the highest target of paddy purchase and the number of registered farmers, while Ghazipur is second, Jaunpur third and Varanasi fourth.

## Man found hanging

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE KANPUR

man was found hanging in A mail was round.

Athe verandah of a temple in the outskirts of Kantha village of Barjolkheda under Asoha police station area of Unnao on Sunday morning. Children playing nearby saw the hanging body and informed the villagers. On getting information his kin rushed to the spot and identified the body which was later sent for an autopsy. Police have started investigation. Reports said that Sumer (40), son of Kishan Lal of Kantha village, was found hanging in the verandah of Bajrangbali temple on Sunday morning. On the call of children, villagers rushed to the spot and informed the kin of the deceased. Father Kishan Lal reached the spot and informed the police. The the body was sent for an autopsy after panchnama. Father Kishan Lal said Sumer was married to Pinki about eight years ago. So far, seven of his children had died. After several prayers only a seven-month old son survived. Sumer used to support the family by doing agricultural work and was also addicted to alcohol.

worth around Rs 26 lakh were stolen from a transporter's house in Sen Pashchimpara police area. The theft took place when the transporter had gone to his ancestral place with wife to celebrate Diwali and his nephew was in the house. He came to know about the incident on return late in the evening. ADCP (South) along with forensic team carried out a probe on the spot. Hridyesh of Dwivedi Nagar, Sen Pashchimpara, said he had gone to Jahangirabad, Ghatampur, with wife to celebrate Diwali. On the night of Diwali, when nephew was sleeping in one room, miscreants committed the theft in another room. They stole Rs 6 lakh in cash and jewellery worth Rs 20 lakh from the almirahs. On coming to know about the incident the next day morning, nephew informed Hridyesh who returned home by late evening and informed the police on 112. Police also quizzed the neighbours and probed the issue with forensic team. Ghatampur CP Ranjit Singh said police and forensic team had collected evidence from the spot.

THEFT: Cash and jewellery

## Dr Banerjee awarded



Dr Tuhina Banerjee being conferred the Springer-Parija South East Asia Award of

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Tuhina Banerjee, Drofessor and Head, Department of Microbiology, Institute of Medical Sciences, Banaras Hindu University (IMS-BHU), has been conferred the Springer-Parija South East Asia Award of the IATP (Indian Academy of Tropical Parasitology) at the 18th National conference of IATP held in AIIMS, Guwahati, recently.

This is a prestigious international award by Springer in association with the Indian Academy of Tropical Parasitology (IATP) given

every year for excellence in research in parasitic diseases related to 'One Health'. It is awarded to the mid-level scientist/faculty from WHO South East Asian Member Countries (India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Indonesia, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Timor-Leste) based on his/her publications in indexed journals. The value of the award is in the form of a Springer book voucher of 2500 Euros along with a certificate and a gold medal. Prof Tuhina also delivered an oration during the annual con-

## Fire in medicine shop

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE KANPUR

medicine shop caught fire Ain Dava Bazar, Birhana Road on Saturday evening. Fire brigade rushed to spot and rescued all the residents safely and the fire was brought under control. Reports said that Vikas Gupta has a medicine shop in Dava Market, Birhana Road. On Saturday evening the shop suddenly caught fire which soon flared up to the first floor of the premises. Fire brigade rescued all the residents safely with the help of a ladder. The CFO said short circuit was the cause of the incident. Loss of goods and property could not be ascertained. On the other hand, shop owner said goods worth lakhs of rupees were gut-

ted in the fire. Meanwhile goods worth lakhs of rupees were gutted when two temporary shops caught fire in Chalis Dukan area of Kidwai Nagar police station early on Sunday morning. On seeing the fire, local residents rushed to the spot and informed the fire brigade. Two fire tenders extinguished the fire after some time. Police said both the shops had illegal electricity connec-

tion. Prima facie investiga-

tions revealed that the fire broke out due to a short circuit. There were several temporary shops set up in a row in Chalis Dukan to sell puja material during Diwali festivities, two of them belonging to Ashok and Anurag. Both these shops caught fire around 4 am on Sunday as a result of which goods worth lakhs of rupees were gutted. Fire brigade brought the fire under control within half an hour. Inspector, Kidwai Nagar, Bahadur Singh said he had visited the spot and found that most of the shopowners had illegal electricity connection. On receipt of complaint, investigation will be be carried out and action taken, he said.

On the other hand, the material piled up outside a rubberplastic factory also caught fire in a residential locality of Adarsh Vihar, Rampuram in Shyam Nagar under Chakeri police station area late on Saturday night.

As many as five fire tenders rushed to the spot and extinguished the flames. FSO Jajmau Rahul Nandan said there was no casualty in the incident. The amount of loss could not be

### NETRA embarks to set up green hydrogen production plant

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

NETRA, the R&D wing of NTPC Ltd, embarks to set up green hydrogen production plant using plasma oxy gasifi-cation of MSW/agri-waste technology. Upon set up it shall be a unique plant globally, wherein plasma assisted 'oxy gasification' of MSW-RDF/agri-waste shall be carried to produce 'very high quality syn-gas', from which high purity hydrogen (>99.9%) shall be separated using a novel configuration of 'gas membrane' and

pressure swing adsorption. This demonstration plant will produce about one tonne per day green hydrogen by gasifying about 25 tonnes per day MSW/agri-waste. Besides 'carbon-mono-oxide' separated from 'hydrogen recovery system' shall be used to produce electricity using a low calorie

gas engine. It may be mentioned that other than electrolysis, which is a highly energy intensive process (55-60 kWh/kg H2), gasification and reformation of MSW/agri-waste is the only



pathways to produce green hydrogen.

This cutting-edge technology is in line with NETRA's commitment to undertake research projects and demonstrate technologies for achieving energy transition goals and NTPC's commitment for adopting 'Circular Economy' models. This opens a new avenue for NTPC Green Energy Limited (NGEL), a wholly-owned subsidiary of NTPC in the domain

of green hydrogen.
MAN KILLED IN MISHAP: A man was killed while his son and two kids were seriously injured when a speeding car hit their bike in Purwa Kotwali police station area of Unnao on Sunday morning. Police sent both the injured to the district hospital and launched raids to nail the car rider.



# **ED** targets cyber fraud in 'digital arrest' scams

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI** 

Days after Prime Minister Narendra Modi urges people to guard against the menace of 'digital' arrests, probe agencies said they are taking action against this category of cyber crime with the ED filing a charge sheet in one such case and the I4C issuing a fresh advisory. The Enforcement Directorate (ED) issued a statement on Saturday, saying it filed a prosecution complaint before a special Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) court in Bengaluru last month against eight accused who allegedly "lured" common people through "fake" IPO allotments and stock market investments through fraudulent apps.

"Probe found that a huge network of cyber scams in India, involving fake stock market investments and arrest schemes executed primarily through social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp, and Telegram. "Known as 'pig-butchering' scams, stock market market scams, investment scams entice victims with promises of high returns, using fake websites and misleading WhatsApp groups that appear connected to reputable financial firms," the Enforcement Directorate

Scammers, it said, establish credibility through fake ads and fabricated success stories, ultimately leading victims to invest significant amounts. The ED said some victims of this scam were "manipulated" under the guise of a fake arrest (digital arrest) by the



Customs and the CBI, ultimately making them transfer huge funds to various shell or dummy companies under fake

regularisation process."

It said 'digital' arrest scams involve fraudsters posing as law enforcement officials, intimidating victims into transferring their savings by fabricating scenarios that suggest illegal involvement of the victim, the federal agency said. The Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C) issued a public advisory on Sunday asking people to "Beware of Digital Arrests" reminding that "those making video calls are not police, CBI, Customs officials or judges". They are cyber criminals, the organisation that functions under the Union home ministry said. The advisory asked people to not fall for these "tricks" and report such crimes "immediately" by national cybercrime helpline 1930 or logging at the portal

www.Cybercrime.Gov.In. Prime Minister Modi had during his monthly 'Mann ki Baat' radio address on October 27 flagged the issue of fraudsters targeting people with 'digital' arrests and urged people to adopt the mantra of stop, think and take action" when faced with such a scam, asserting that these steps will provide digital security to them. The ED said it booked a money laundering case into this crime after studying multiple police FIRs and it arrested eight persons, also named as accused in its charge sheet filed on October 10, named Charan Raj C, Kiran S K, Shahi Kumar M, Sachin M, Tamilarasan, Prakash R, Ajith R and Aravindan and 24 related companies. All the arrested persons are currently lodged in jail under judicial custody. This cyber crime case involves proceeds of crimes to the tune of Rs 159 crore and court has taken cognisance of the ED charge

the funds and the proceeds are ultimately converted into cryptocurrency transferred abroad, the ED probe found. One of the accused, Charan

Raj C, played a "key" role in this scheme by recruiting individuals for directorships and managing bank account openings. Shashi Kumar M assisted in "incorporating" several shell companies which became instrumental in became instrumental in collecting and integrating proceeds of crime into the banking system. Kiran S K, linked to several shell companies as per the ED, had connections with bank accounts of multiple shell entities created by overseas entities created by overseas scammers, who submitted documents

incorporate these companies. Sachin M, a Director in several firms, "admitted" to assisting overseas scammers in recruiting dummy directors and facilitating bank accounts, being "well aware" of their illegality, according to the agency. Tamilarasan played a "significant" role in facilitating these activities, collaborating with both Indian and overseas scammers and he "assisted" in opening bank accounts for shell companies. Like Cyberforest Technologies Pvt. Ltd., and "knowingly" continued these operations despite of knowledge of their connection to cybercrime, the agency said. The ED said it has "incriminating" evidence like chequebooks and communication records to say that these individuals participated in a syndicate that laundered proceeds from cyber frauds across India.

## Commission's tenure extended to examine SC status for converts

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

 $M_{
m and\ Empowerment\ has}^{
m inistry\ of\ Social\ Justice}$ extended by a year the tenure of a commission established to examine whether Scheduled Castes (SC) status can be granted to individuals who have converted to religions other than Sikhism and Buddhism. This decision, formalised through a notification dated November one, comes as the Commission, initially set to conclude its work on October 10 sought additional time to finalise its report.

The Commission of Inquiry



was constituted on October 2022, under the Commissions of Inquiry Act,

The inquiry also covers related concerns regarding social justice, rights, and the possible extension of reserved status to converts from religions not traditionally

included in SC classifications, such as Christianity and

Headed by former Chief Justice of India K G Balakrishnan, Commission been engaging with stakeholders, including sociologists, historians, representatives from affected

communities, to better understand the nuances of caste identity in the context of religious conversion, officials said.

According to the latest notification, the Commission is now required to submit its report by October 10, 2025.

### PM Modi congratulates Duma Boko as Botswana's President



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday congratulated Duma Boko on being elected as the president of Botswana and said he looks forward to working closely with him to further strengthen bilateral ties.

Duma Boko, the presidential candidate of the Úmbrella for



Democratic Change (UDC), was declared Botswana's sixth president last week.

În a social media post, Modi "Congratulations said. @duma\_boko on your election as the President of Botswana. Best wishes for a

successful tenure."
"Look forward to working closely with you to further strengthen our bilateral ties,"



### No forward movement on four names reiterated by Collegium

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

There has been no forward movement on the names reiterated by the Supreme Court Collegium headed by Justice D Y Chandrachud for appointment as high court judges as he demits office as the chief justice of India on November 10.

The collegium had in January 2023 reiterated the names of advocates Saurabh Kirpal for elevation as a judge of the Delhi High Court, R John Satyan as judge of the Madras HC, and Amitesh Banerjee and Sakva Sen as judges of

the Calcutta High Court. The top court collegium had also reiterated the Somasekhar Sundaresan, also an advocate, as judge of the Bombay High Court in January 2023.

In November that year, he was elevated as a judge of the Bombay HC.

People aware procedure to appoint high court and Supreme Court judges said the files relating to Kirpal, Satyan, Banerjee and Sen are still pending with the government.

In Januaary 2023, the Supreme Court collegium had for the second time reiterated the names of Banerjee and Sen for appointment as judges of the Calcutta High Court "expeditiously", saying it was not open for the government to repeatedly send back the same proposal.

Advocate Banerjee is the son of former approach.

of former apex court judge Justice U C Banerjee, who headed a commission which in 2006 ruled out conspiracy angle in the 2002 Sabaramati Express fire tragedy at Godhra that killed 58 'kar sevaks'.

Advocate Sen is the son of Justice Shyamal Sen, who was elevated as a permanent judge of the Calcutta High Court in February 1986 and later became the chief justice from May 1999 to December

Justice Sanjiv Khanna will take over as the next CJI on November 11, a day after Justice Chandrachud demits office and will have a tenure of a little over six months. He will retire on May 13, 2025 on attaining the age of 65

### Doctors call for sleep screening to reduce truck accidents

**PTI** ■ INDORE

A group of doctors has advo-cated the need for "sleep screening" of truck drivers to bring down road accidents by at least 43 per cent.

The risk of road accidents is rising due to lack of sleep among truck drivers, Dr Rajesh Swarnkar, president of en Medicine told PTI Sunday.

"Keeping this in mind, the regional transport offices (RTOs) must ask truck drivers to fill up a form every two years with their body mass index (BMI) as well as details like whether they like to sleep during the day or whether they snore at night. The analysis of their replies and medical examinations can tell us if truck drivers have sleep apnea or any other related illness," Dr Swarnkar informed. If truck drivers sleep for seven to eight hours

in a day.
The risk of road accidents can be brought down by 43 per cent, he said.

Driver Dharmendra Sharma, who was about to commence a long journey from Transport Nagar here, said he manages to get just two to four hours of sleep per day, which turns him lethargic and also affects his concentration. Several other drivers said traffic jams, queues at toll plazas and the pressure of ontime delivery of goods are also causing sleeplessness.

"We can't sleep by the road since we fear someone may steal diesel, spare parts or goods," one of them added. Speaking on the issue, CL Mukati, chairman of National RTO and Traffic Committee of All-India Motor Transport Congress, an umbrella body of truckers, said the idea of sleep screening was a very good one.

The transport department should authorise hospitals to conduct regular health checkups and sleep screening of truck drivers.

If a driver is found to be suffering from any sleep-related disease as per the test, then he should be treated free of cost.

If the government wants, our organisation can provide funds for this," Mukati said. Moreover, the working hours of drivers should be fixed and the government should build rest houses for truck drivers every 200 kilometres on the highways, he added.

### Foreign Secretary to brief Parliament on India-Canada relations, China ties

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

 $F^{\text{oreign Secretary Vikram}}_{\text{Misri is likely to brief the}}$ Parliamentary panel on external affairs on Wednesday on the India-Canada ties, which have taken a hit after Canadian officials accused Indian government functionaries of ordering the murder pro-Khalistani terrorist Harjeet Singh Nijjar.

South East Asian Academy of parliamentary panel on the ecent unswing with China following the resume patrolling at friction points along the Line of Actual Control (LAC)in eastern

> India's relationship with Canada has taken a hit after Minister Justin Trudeau linked top Indian officials to the murder of Nijjar, a charge rubbished by New Delhi.

> Canada's Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister David Morrison had alleged on Tuesday that Home Minister Amit Shah ordered a



campaign of Misri is also likely to brief the intimidation and intelligencecharge dismissed as "absurd and baseless" by India.

India has been maintaining that the main issue between the two countries is that of Canada giving space to pro-Khalistan elements operating from Canadian soil with

India had withdrawn its High Commissioner to Canada Sanjay Verma after the security officials there named him as a "person of interest" in the investigation in Niijar's murder case. India had also expelled six Canadian diplomats, including acting

violence, High Commissioner Stewart Ross Wheeler on October 14. gathering targeting Sikh On October 25, Misri had separatists inside Canada, a briefed the Parliamentary panel on the Israel-Palestine conflict and asserted that India favoured a two-state solution to the issue.

sheet on October 29, it said.

The ED said fraudsters, in

order to perpetrate this fraud,

obtained hundreds of SIM

cards which were either

linked to the bank accounts of

shell companies or were

utilised to create WhatsApp

accounts. "The anonymity

afforded by these untraceable

SIMs allow scammers to

reduced risk of immediate

detection. The scammers

created 24 shell companies in

Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and

some other states to facilitate

acquisition

laundering of proceeds from cybercrimes," it said.

These shell companies,

registered mainly at the

addresses of coworking

spaces (where no actual

business presence exists),

have used fake bank

statements in filings before

Registrar of Companies as

proof of commencement of

business of these companies.

Scammers operated through

"mule" accounts to transfer

defraud victims with

India has supported a negotiated two-state solution, towards establishment of a sovereign, independent and viable state of Palestine within secure and recognised borders, living side by side in peace with Israel.

The Parliamentary panel on External Affairs, chaired by former union minister Shashi Tharoor, is examining the demand for grants of the External Affairs Ministry.

### Someone might see weakness, she'll see strength, that is my sister: RaGa champions sister Priyanka

PTI WAYANAD

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, who held a joint meeting with his sister Priyanka Gandhi Vadra here as part of the campaign for the upcoming Lok Sabha bypoll, on Sunday refrained from criticising Prime Minister Narendra Modi and others but spoke more about the family and his sister, who is the party candidate in Wayanad.

He said Priyanka, during her speech, had already spoken about PM Modi. "And, has alreadv mentioned Mr. Modi and we all bored of him. Then why mention him twice," Rahul Gandhi said during the

meeting. Priyanka, who spoke earlier, accused PM Modi of favoring big business interests over the well-being of the people.

"In this meeting, I have a choice in front of me to either give a political message or a speech I would give to my family members. I would rather speak to you like I speak to my family. I would like to give a speech more about the candidate herself,"



Rahul Gandhi said addressing the little girl taking the the rally.

campaigner. She never stood for election. That should tell about

something character, he said. Sharing their nostalgic memories of childhood when they competed with each

other using the cameras gifted by their father (late Rajiv Gandhi) for capturing the best photograph, he said, "I still don't remember who won the competition.. Ok.. She (Priyanka ) is now saying that I won."

He said Priyanka had travelled a long distance from photographs.

beauty is that everyone has millions and millions of labels, every single person is unique, everything is unique someone might see weakness, she'll see strength that is my sister," the Leader of Opposition said.

Rahul Gandhi also said that Priyanka can do more roles than him.

The by-election for Wayanad LS seat became necessary after Rahul Gandhi, who won the Lok Sabha polls from there and Rae Bareli constituency, decided to vacate Wayanad.

### Odisha CM addresses Mahanadi water dispute, highlights development projects in Bolangir

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **BHUBANESHWAR** 

Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi on Sunday said his Government is concerned about the Mahanadi water dispute with neighbouring Chhattisgarh. Majhi said he has already held discussions with his Chhattisgarh counterpart Vishnu Deo Sai twice on the Mahanadi water dispute. While replying to a media query in Bolangir, Majhi said the State Government is conscious about the issue and giving it all importance.

"Discussion on the Mahanadi issue is going on and I personally held discussions with the Chhattisgarh chief minister twice during courtesy meetings," said Majhi, who is in charge of the Water Resources Department. The CM further said that the state government is also giving emphasis on expediting the proposed barrages, dam projects on Mahanadi river in Odisha.

Majhi, who was on a two-day visit to Bolangir district for the first time after becoming the Chief Minister of Odisha,

alleged that the previous BJD

government had neglected

the district even though there



dearth of strong political leadership

During the press conference, he said that 83 development projects worth Rs 890 crore have been either inaugurated or foundation stone was laid in Bolangir district on Saturday. The foundation stone of the Upper Lanth irrigation project in Belpara block of the district was laid by the CM on Saturday. The upper Lanth irrigation project is proposed across river Lanth, a tributary of Tel river. The project after completion will provide irrigation to 15,000 acres of land in 25 villages and 38,000 farmers of Belpada will benefit from it, he said.

Among the projects inaugurated by Majhi included a Sub-Divisional Hospital (SDH) and a dialysis centre at Patnagarh and Titlagarh.

He also laid the foundation stone of a bypass road for Patnagarh town. Majhi said Bolangir district will be developed as one of the best districts in the state as the BJP government has been taking several initiatives for the development of the district. Deputy Chief Minister K V Singh Deo who hails from Bolangir district will review the projects every month for its timely completion, he said Odisha alleges that it does not receive sufficient water from the Mahanadi river during non-monsoon months as Chhattisgarh obstructs the flow of the water by constructing barrages upstream.

The previous Naveen Patnaik had moved the Supreme Court in this matter in 2016. The Mahanadi Water Disputes Tribunal was constituted in 2018, following orders of the Supreme Court.



# tourism at World Travel Mart in London

PTI PANAJI

Goa will participate in the upcoming World Travel Mart in London and highlight regenerative and spiritual tourism in the coastal state and the exposition of the relics of St Francis Xavier, an official said on Sunday.

The three-day event from November 5 to 7 will bring together industry leaders from around the globe, offering Goa a prime opportunity to present its distinctive tourism experiences and innovative sustainable travel initiatives

on an international platform,

a spokesperson from the

"The Goa tourism pavilion

tourism department said.

will offer a vivid showcase of the state's vibrant festivals, adventure pursuits, heritage traditions, and tranquil beaches that together shape its unique identity as a travel destination," he said.

State Tourism Director Suneel Anchipaka said the highlight of this year's participation is the concept of regenerative tourism, a step beyond sustainability that focuses on actively revitalising and enhancing Goa's natural and cultural treasures.

'The display will feature initiatives like hinterland tourism, preservation of heritage sites, wellness tourism centred around Ayurveda, and

emerging prominence as a destination for MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, Exhibitions) and wedding events," he said. These initiatives aim to

benefit local communities ensure that the and environment is preserved for future generations, he said Anchipaka said the pavilion will also present the Ekadasha Teertha Circuit, a spiritual exploration of the 11 historic temples in Goa. "The exposition of St Francis Xavier will also be one of the

highlights. The exposition will be held from November 21 to January 5, 2025, at Old Goa," of the Allahabad High Court. Justice Sen also served as the Governor of West Bengal Besides reiterating the names of Banerjee and Sen, the three-judge Collegium had also reiterated the names of senior advocate Kirpal as a judge of the Delhi High Court, advocate Sathyan as judge of Madras High Court and advocate Somasekhar Sundaresan as a judge of the Bombay High Court.

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-PAPER WITH PASSION-

## **Bangladesh protests**

Protests erupt in Bangladesh as international voices express concern over escalating human rights crisis

ens of thousands of minority Hindus in Bangladesh took to the streets on Friday, demanding immediate protection from ongoing violence and harassment following the recent political upheaval. The protests, primarily held in the southeastern city of Chattogram, saw around 30,000 Hindus gather, raising slogans for justice and security. The demonstrations were heavily guarded by police and military personnel, as Hindu community leaders urged the interim Government to intervene amid rising attacks on their community. The protests follow a series of reported attacks against the Hindu minority, which has been particularly vulnerable since the overthrow of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's secular government in August. After Hasina's departure, Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus was appointed to lead an Interim Government, which has faced criticism for its alleged inability to maintain order and protect minority groups. The influential Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Unity Council claims that over 2,000 attacks



on Hindus have occurred since August, a period marked by escalating violence from hard-line Islamist groups. Hindus represent approximately 8 per cent of Bangladesh's population of nearly 170 million, while the Muslim majority makes up around 91 per cent. Despite being a significant minority, Hindu communities say they are inadequately protected and often targeted amid political and social instability. The unrest has also affected other groups; reports indicate that supporters of Hasina's Awami League party and its ally, the Jatiya Party, have faced violence as well. The recent spike in violence has sparked international concern. United Nations human rights officials, along with

global advocacy groups, have voiced alarm over the human rights situation in Bangladesh under the Interim Government. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed concern over the attacks, while US President Joe Biden's administration announced that it is monitoring the situation closely. Adding his voice to the chorus, former US President and current presidential candidate Donald Trump condemned the "barbaric violence" targeting Hindus, Christians, and other minorities, describing Bangladesh as "in a total state of chaos." The Hindu activists who have been rallying since August are pressing the Government with a list of eight key demands which include the establishment of a minority protection law, the creation of a dedicated ministry for minority affairs, and a specialised tribunal to address and prosecute incidents of violence against minorities. Friday's protest in Chattogram was partly fuelled by recent sedition charges filed against 19 Hindu community leaders. As Bangladesh continues to grapple with political and religious tensions, minority communities remain on edge. With increasing international attention and escalating domestic demands for protection and justice, the Interim Government must restore peace and address the rights and safety of its minority groups, else there is a clear danger of it plunging into anarchy and eventually into a civil war.



America decides: Will Kamala make history



While polls show Harris narrowly leading, Trump's momentum and attacks on Harris, alongside economic concerns, keep the outcome unpredictable

he upcoming election for the White House is of immense significance, as it will determine the next tenant of the White House and shape the future of the United States. Whether America will get its first woman president or a second Donald Trump term is a debate going on among not only the politicians but also the public. A week before the November 5 presidential polls, election fever hit the country hard. However, there is a possibility that knowing the final result may take a few more dates. Narrow victories in a handful of swing states will likely determine who gets the top job. Polls and prediction markets are signalling a Republican sweep in the election.

As the Republican candidate, Donald Trump, and the Democrat nominee, Vice President Kamala Harris, wrap up their campaigns, the potential impact of this election on the future of the United States cannot be overstated.

It is no surprise that the campaign has been not only highly negative but also personal, with Trump attacking his rival, hitting her below the belt and calling her "dumb." While the reports claim that the fight is very tight, with Trump leading now and Kamala making up her lead, the suspense will continue for a few more days, even after the election date. The Electoral College is the system that decides presidential elec-tions: A candidate must secure at least 270 votes - allocated by state based on the outcome of their respective vote – to win the White House. Although certification sabotage has not yet resulted in such an extensive delay, many attempts have been made before. County election boards generally have no legal authority to investigate any allegations of fraud or irregularities.

Tight races in crucial battleground states in 2020 and an crease in mail-in voting amid the COVID pandemic saw prolonged vote counts.That helped fuel unfounded claims of election malfeasance pushed by Trump and his allies. State election law provides other checks and safeguards through which suspected



The state gave Biden 20 electoral college votes, taking over the 270 required to win. In 2016, Hillary Clinton conceded to Trump the morning after the election. With the presidential contest in the final countdown and Harris and Trump maligning the opponent, the vice president has called Trump dangerous. Harris insists she's doing both — establishing a contrast with Trump and laving out her agenda on the economy, immigration and more. She says It's either Donald Trump in there, stewing over his enemies list, or me working for you, checking off my to-do list."

Trump is relentless in attack-

TRUMP'S BANGLADESH CONCERN

before final votes are counted.

In 2020, President Joe Biden

won. The result was called for

four days after November 3,

when Pennsylvania's result was

confirmed.



SURPRISE THAT THE CAMPAIGN HAS BEEN NOT ONLY HIGHLY NEGATIVE BUT ALSO PERSONAL. WITH TRUMP ATTACKING HIS

**BELOW THE BELT** 

AND CALLING

HER "DUMB"

IT IS NO

Harris leads Trump by four points, 51 per cent-47 per cent, in an ABC/Ipsos of likely voters released Sunday. This is up slightly from her 50 per cent-48 per cent edge in early October. Meanwhile, a CBS /You govt survey out Sunday

ing Harris, sometimes in crude

terms. His core strategy has

been to tie Harris to voters'

frustrations with the Biden

According to the latest reports,

administration.

shows Harris up 50 per cent-49 per cent, a shift from the vice president's 51per cent-48 per cent lead in mid-October. According to Five Thirty Eight's election forecast, Trump is favoured to win 54 times out of 100, compared to 46 for As for the campaign spending, Harris routed Trump in

fundraising for their official campaigns in September by pulling in \$222 million compared to the Republican's \$63 down from the same period in 2020 when Biden raised \$281 million and Trump raised \$81

Harris was able to spend a lot on TV ads. According to the Wesleyan Media Project, the Harris campaign has also dramatically outspent Trump in

digital advertising and dominated cable and radio advertising advertising, which tracks campaign advertising spend-

The economy and inflation remain prominent concerns, with 90 per cent and 85 per cent of registered voters calling them highly important in their votes, respectively. Harris' campaign insists she's doing both — establishing a contrast with Trump and laying out her agenda on the economy, immigration and more. As she said in Georgia earlier this week: "It's either Donald Trump in there, stewing over his enemies list, or me working for you, checking off my to-do list."The economy and inflation remain prominent concerns, with 90 per cent and 85 per cent of registered voters calling these highly important in their vote. The problem for Kamala Harris is that she is a woman of Asian descent. Despite being million. Those numbers are a highly developed country, people are shying away from electing a woman. Hillary Clinton tried hard, but she

> (The writer is a popular columnist, currently in the US; views are personal)

could not win the presidency.

Let us see if Kamala is success-

## Art and literature: An imperative than a choice for students



### Embracing art and literature is an investment in their mental wellbeing tomorrow—an invaluable asset for their future life

any decades ago, when I opted to take literature in college, at a time when many of my peers chose science, people raised their brows. It was believed to be the choice of the mediocre, a subject that didn't need much of an intellect or dedication. It was where students who didn't secure a seat in prime areas finally settled. Art and literature weren't considered durable then. Neither is it given much weightage now by parents.

Creative pursuits are still categorised as hobbies, and they get sidelined as children reach higher grades or enter college. Why? Because art is not sustainable. It is not lucrative. It doesn't build careers as easily as a degree in science, technology or accounting does. There still may be some truth in that contention prompting parents to wean off their children from extracurricular activities as the race to the future heats up. But the role of creative activities in providing our children with a respite from the stress of careerbuilding cannot be undermined. At a time when they are grappling with the chal-



respite from their anxieties are artistic endeavours. It is often in the lines of a sketch or the verses of a poem that children find a voice beyond words a silent yet powerful release of their inner thoughts and emotions. In a world that measures success by exams and marks, these activities provide a refuge, where the mind is free to wander, explore, and create without boundaries. Studies have consistently shown that students who engage in painting, writing, music, dance or theatre experience lower stress levels than those who do not.

These activities act as a counterbalance to the rigid schedules and deadlines that studies impose, allowing children to unwind and channel their energies into something activities such as dance, entirely their own. One of the often overlooked merits of art and literature is the development of emotional intelligence. When children Problem-solving, adaptabili-immerse themselves in sto-ty, and innovation—all essenries, they begin to understand complex emotions, both their own and those of others. A novel might teach empathy, through practice, resilience while a piece of music might mirror feelings they struggle to articulate. These moments foster self-awareness, which is critical in today's fast-paced world where young people are grappling with social pressures and academic demands. These creative pursuits don't just make children more empathetic; they also teach them to become aware of their inner world—a skill that will serve them well beyond the walls of a class-

In those moments when they feel overwhelmed, they can turn to the comfort of a favourite book, the joy of drawing, or the calm of journaling. It becomes a personal ritual, a way to recharge and refresh, like finding shelter from the storm within the pages of a story or the hues of a canvas. Extracurricular

music, fine art and creative writing are not mere pastimes; they are crucibles where life skills are forged. tial skills in adulthood—find their roots in these pursuits. Children learn patience through failure, and confidence through expression, creating a sturdy foundation that will support them through life's inevitable challenges. Parents and educators must recognise the role these activities play in a child's mental and emotional development.

Fostering a balanced approach between academics and extracurricular interests can create resilient individuals who are not only high achievers but also happy, healthy humans. As life's pressures mount, these creative expressions transform into anchors, grounding us in times of stress and rekindling the joy we may have set aside in the haste of growing up.

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

Madam - Former President Donald Trump vowed to protect Hindu Americans from the radical left's anti-religion agenda, pledged to strengthen US-India relations, and condemned violence against minorities in Bangladesh. Donald Trump extended greetings and pledged to safeguard the interests of Hindu (may be forgotten that Sikh, Jain and Buddhists also followed Deepawali) Americans, vowing to shield them from what he described as the "anti-religion agenda of the radical left."

This is for the first time that Trump has addressed the crisis in Bangladesh, where reports indicate that hundreds of Hindus were killed during protests in July and August. He contrasted his approach to that of President Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris, whom he accused of ignoring the plight of Hindus both globally and in America.

Actually, this is not the love of Trump towards Hindus and minorities. This is just a political stunt with a view to lure the Indian population (a significant number in the United States now and very much capable of swinging the outcome of this tightly balanced election of 2024) in the US to vote for him in the Presidential election and nothing else. He is not that generous towards Indians as he is attempting to show. By nature, Trump is a bit of a dictator and is against the people migrating to the United States from various other countries. He terms migrated people as "Garbage".

Whatsoever, we should not want to forget that it was the US (read CIA) who purported the coup along with ISI to destabilise the region. US has always been and will be doing these things in future. Hence, don't take his love for Hindus seri-

Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee | Faridabad

### **ERIGAISI'S NATURAL GAME**

Madam— Ever had so many Indian chess players shine on international circuit simultaneously like the present bunch of

### **Adieu Bibek Debroy!**



ibek Debroy, a name that needs no Bintroduction for him; for the people of our country, to relate and recognise him as a public personality. From handling the India's PM Economic Advisory Council (EAC) to contributing in India's erstwhile Planning Commission i.e. Niti Aayog policy making, Debroy had left an indelible mark of contribution on India's intellectual and policy making landscape. His passing away at the age of

extremely talented youngsters. The exploits of R Praggnanandhaa are too well-known to need reiteration. Gukesh Dommaraju is on the brink of making history as he prepares himself to square off with Ding Liren in the World Chess Championship final in little less than a month. Meanwhile, Arjun Erigaisi has achieved the stupendous feat of reaching 2800 Elo points in the FIDE live rating, becoming only the second Indian after Viswanathan Anand and the sixteenth player in the world to do so. Only French Grand Master Alireza Firouzja—at 18—reached there earlier than the Indian GM.

Erigaisi has joined the elite club of Magnus Carlsen, Garry Kasparov, Vladimir Kramnik and Ding Liren among others. Known as a risky player, Erigaisi relishes the "accusation" as he feels top level chess needs some serious risk taking. Without his natural style of attacking game, the 21-year-old would not have broken into the top five of world chess at such a young age. The razor sharp player's new approach of not bothering

69 is a huge loss of our nation. He was truly a man of wide ranging interests, be that in Economics or Sanskrit, English or Puranas; his variety of interests into scholarly, put him at the epitome of the versatility in multi-discipline. His books, columns, and other translation works of Indian Vedas and Puranas into English had been an intellectual gift to all the Indian nationals from time to time. His sad demise is a huge loss of India's economic, cultural and scholar landscape. He put his knowledge and experience at the best use for his country holistic development. His visionary contribution to public policy, administration, literature and economics will keep on serving as a guide and bearing as torch

for the next generation Kirti Wadhawan | Kanpur

about records and ratings but concentrating on the game at hand appears to have paid him rich dividends. High energy and incredible motivation have driven him thus far, and the top rated Indian is all set to conquer new heights in chess.

Ganpathi Bhat | Akola

### **US SANCTIONS ON INDIAN COMPANIES**

Madam — The current US sanctions against Indian firms raise major worries about Indian vital posture. Should India reconsider its trading links with countries participating in the Russian defence supply lines? How can governments better educate firms on how to adhere to global sanctions in order to avoid future repercussions? On top of that, what steps would be executed to protect Indian enterprises caught up in geopolitical tensions? Addressing these issues is critical for protecting national interests amidst developing global conflicts.

Anshu Bharti | Begusarai

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## **FIRST COLUMN**

### **FINDING STILLNESS AMIDST** A FLOOD OF THOUGHTS

A journey toward tranquillity begins by learning to simply "be" in the present moment



RAVI VALLURI

ometime back I had written a piece on "Mind Management" and received certain queries about the generation of multi-ple thoughts and the acceptance by people that the mind was not at ease. It was frightening and troubling that several people of various age groups were plagued by all kinds of negative thoughts. People were troubled by thoughts arising during the whole day and particularly at night time. Thoughts arising at bedtime reside with us and seep deep into our consciousness and the following morning we are again troubled by those very thoughts and are not like fresh dew on petals. The Ashtravaka Gita says that "all action resides in the mind" and this is further corroborated by modern science. Modern science amplifies that there is no difference in the activity of the mind; whether you slap someone or merely think of slapping someone. It is the brain's limbic system, which is where motor control gets expressed. Just thinking of slapping someone activates all muscles that would be employed to undertake that specific action. On average, we are bombarded by 60 thousand thoughts a day. And we seem to have no control over them.

These thoughts arise on account of our memory bank (past impressions and Karma), the company we keep, past and current experiences and also the food that we partake in. According to the Ashtavakra Gita, enlightenment occurs only when we live in our hearts. The heart is synonymous with a point of inflexion where there is no past or future. There is only one present. Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar says that "the present moment is inevitable". And this state is true enlightenment. How does one reach that state of



"present moment"? Before dwelling on some techniques, let us witness a few stories. Two Buddhist monks were riding cycles and were on their way to meet a Zen Master. Monk one described the number of trees, clouds, wafts of cold breeze striking his cheek, mountains, beautitul blue sky, truits plucked on the way, and viilage folk he encountered among others before meeting the Zen

The second monk in all trepidation, meekly replied that he only cycled to meet the Zen Master. Immediately, the Master proclaimed the second monk to be the next Zen Master. Why? Because he was only cycling! He was in the present moment. Yet another Buddhist story. Two Buddhist monks were travelling through a dense forest. On their way, they came across a naked woman. The older one removed his apparel clothed the bare woman carried her across the river and left her on the other side of the bank.

The younger monk was greatly troubled by this act of his senior. He kept chiding the senior monk, literally accusing him of what he perceived as an act of sacrilege. The older one just smiled and remarked that he carried the lady across the river and left her there, while the other monk was still carrying the lady in his mind.

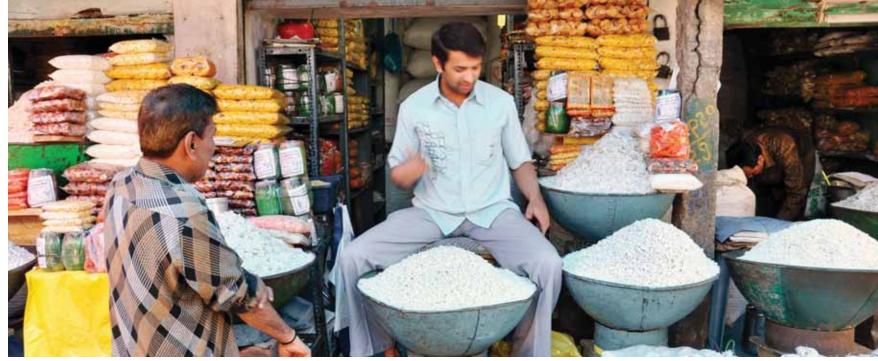
Practising pranayama, Sudarshan Kriya, yoga, undertaking vigorous exercise, pursuing hobbies, contemplating, praying, observing nature and just being a spectator or a witness will also help a seeker and those with troubled minds to live in the present moment. Confucious says, "Life is really simple, but we insist on making it

The writer is the CEO of Chhattisgarh East Railway Ltd. and Chhattisgarh East West Railway Ltd. He is a faculty of the Art of Living; views are personal)

# Food subsidy reforms: Can Govt tackle mounting costs-



Timely disbursement of funds to FCI would go a long way to streamline the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana, which provides free food grains to the people



he Ministry of Finance (MoF): has released Rs 97,000 crore towards food subsidy expenses in the first half of the current financial year (FY) to the Food Corporation of India (FCI). This is over two-thirds of the required fund support of Rs 147,000 crore to FCI during the current FY. The MoF is expected to release the balance amount by December 31, 2024. Under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY), the Centre asks the FCI and other state agencies to procure food from the farmers at MSP (minimum support price) and distribute it to around 820 million people for free. Under the Scheme, each beneficiary gets 5 kg of food per month. The entire cost i.e. MSP paid to farmers plus handling and distribution cost (HDC) is reimbursed to the FCI/other state agencies as a subsidy. The money comes from the Union Budget's allocation for 'food

The FCI conducts the bulk of the food procurement, handling and distribution operations on behalf of the Centre. At Rs 147,000 crore, it gets around 72 per cent of the total food subsidy Rs 205,250 crore being the budget estimate (BE) for 2024-25. The government is duty-bound to make timely payments to FCI to enable the latter to conduct its operations 'smoothly' and 'effectively'.

What is so special about the current FY? In the past, thanks to inadequate budgetary allocations (often prompted by the compulsion to keep the fiscal deficit excess of total expenditure over total receipts - under check), the government's payments to FCI had fallen short, forcing the latter to take recourse to working capital from banks to sustain operations. To bridge cash-flow mismatch, the extant arrangements provided for the FCI to avail a short-term loan with a tenure of 90 days up to Rs 75,000 crore at any given point in time.

This led to an increase in subsidy as interest cost on loans taken from designated banks (the interest rate ranges between 6.98 per cent to 7.36 per cent per annum) had to be reimbursed to the FCI. The gap between budget allocation and actual requirements used to be so huge that cash



IN THE PAST,

THANKS TO INADEQUATE **BUDGETARY** ALLOCATIONS, GOVERNMENT'S PAYMENTS TO FCI HAD FALLEN SHORT, FORCING THE LATTER TO TAKE RECOURSE TO WORKING CAPITAL FROM BANKS TO SUSTAIN **OPERATIONS** 

credit limits sanctioned by the banks proved to be inadequate.
This prompted the FCI to even borrow funds from the National Small Savings Fund (NSSF). The NSSF is a public account (estab-lished on April 1, 1999) where all deposits received under National Saving Schemes are credited. All withdrawals by depositors are made out of the accumulations in this Fund. Normally, the government is not expected to use the NSSF to meet its revenue expenditure and expenses on food subsidy fall in this category. Yet, it encouraged the FCI to encroach on the Fund to plug the shortfall in its receipts. When the FCI started taking loans from NSSF in FY 2016-17, the Centre had committed to release the subsidy arrears to enable FCI to pay back the loans in subsequent years. But, that was not to be as subsidy arrears kept mounting, and FCI continued borrowing increasingly from NSSF. At the end of 2018-19, FCI's cumulative borrowing from NSSF was Rs 200,000 crore. This continued into 2019-20 on a much larger scale. In that year's budget, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had kept the BE for food subsidy at Rs 184,000 crore and drastically reduced it to Rs 109,000 crore in the revised estimate (RE) just because she wanted to keep the FD close to the target. Against this, the requirement being Rs 219,000 crore, the shortfall of Rs 110,000 crore was made up by FCI borrowing from NSSF. In the budget for 2020-21, she

137,000 crore. TV Somanathan, the then expenditure secretary, saw nothing wrong in the above practice arguing that borrowings by FCI were against the assets it held in the form of food stocks. The argument was flawed since loans

kept BE at Rs 116,000 crore

against the requirement of Rs

were taken against subsidy receivable from the Centre. In the case of wheat, for instance, on every kilo sold under the National Food Security (NFSA), the subsidy was Rs 23 (MSP plus HDC of Rs 25 minus Rs 2 being the price paid by the beneficiary). The loan was given against this amount promised by the Centre. This liability couldn't be adjusted against the food stock, which, on giving to the NFSA beneficiary would fetch only Rs 2. The Secretary further argued that keeping these borrowings off the Centres balance sheet would pre-vent crowding out, and help the private sector borrow from the market at a lower interest cost. This needed to be weighed against erosion in the credibility of fiscal consolidation, which is inevitable when a strict liability of the Centre is kept off its balance sheet. A wrong can't be justified simply because the honest course of reflecting the liability in the Union budget would lead to problems for private firms.

The government recognised the flaw in the above approach even as Sitharaman made a course correction while presenting the budget for FY 2021-22. In the RE for FY 2020-21, she provided for a massive allocation of Rs 529,000 crore. That amount included Rs 462,000 crore towards payment of subsidy to the FCI against a claim of Rs 216,000 crore by the latter. The excess amount was used by the FCI to extinguish all its accumulated liabilities to the NSSF. During 2021-22, 2022-23 and 2023-24, the government stayed on course with allocation for food subsidy at Rs 372,000 crore, Rs 287,000 crore, and Rs 211,394 crore respectively adequate to fully cover the requirement. As for payments to the FCI, during 2021-22, the subsidy received was Rs 208,000 crore against the claim of Rs 207,000

crore. During 2022-23, the amount received was Rs 200,000 crore against the claim of Rs 204,000 crore. During 2023-24, the FCI received Rs 139,000 crore against the claim of Rs 133,000

During the current FY, having already received 2/3rd of its likely annual requirement, Rs 147,000 crore, during the first half, the FCI is expected to receive the balance 1/3rd by December 31, 2024. It receives the money almost round the clock, meaning it doesn't have to resort to short-term credit even from banks (forget NSSF), as its operational expenses are fully met from timely reimbursement of subsidy dues by the Center. From the Centre's perspective, all its liabilities regarding food subsidies are 'fully' reflected in the budget for any given FY. The government no longer indulges in window dressing, no carryover of subsidy dues, and the process is fully 'transparent'. Moreover, there is no interest cost boost to subsidy payments as the FCI need not borrow. But the unsustainable increase in food subsidies continues to haunt us.

This has to do with 'universal' coverage of PMGKAY (820 million beneficiaries and at least 100 million waiting to be included as per an order of the Supreme Court), promise to give them 'free' food eternally, purchase of 'unlimited' quantum of food from farmers at MSP resulting in high stocks with FCI (at 44 million ton, its stock of rice as on October 1, 2024 is over three times the requirement) and associated high carrying cost, reimbursement of cost to FCI on 'actual' basis and pilferage of subsidized food. Addressing these maladies calls for major reforms in the Scheme. Can Modi bite the bullet?

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

## AI enabled technologies: The game changer in spinal cord injury care Spinal cord injury care has yet to receive the focused attention it deserves from the government

n the realm of spinal cord injury (SCI) care, recent advancements in enabling technologies are revolutionising treatment, rehabilitation, and long-term care. These innovations are all set to redefine the quality of life for SCI patients. The International Spine and Spinal Injuries Conference (ISSICON) 2024, organised recently in New Delhi by Sri Balaji Action Medical Institute and the Spinal Cord Society, highlighted this potential by bringing together over 600 participants, including national and international experts, all focused on advancing SCI

Experts discussed the transformative role of technologies like mobility, and independence, the role of Exoscope, Robotic surgery, Neurorehabilitation



tools, and Artificial Intelligence (AI). It is evident that these enabling technologies are going to be the game changer in SCI care. Unlike in previous decades, where survival was the primary focus, today's innovations allow for the enhancement of function, shifting our approach from survival to empowerment and

precision are paramount in spinal microsurgeries. The ability to maintain a clear view of the surgical area with magnification is crucial, as it allows surgeons to operate with accuracy while providing adequate illumination.

Traditionally, microscopes have been the gold standard in such complex procedures, offering the depth of field and lighting necessary to navigate intricate anatomical structures. However, the limitations of traditional microscopes-primarily the fixed head position required for prolonged periods-often lead to neck and back strain for surgeons. Unlike traditional microscopes, exoscopes are equipped with high-definition cameras and 3D viewing

functionality. Visibility and screens, allowing surgeons to view a magnified 3D image on a large screen rather than through an eyepiece. This shift not only alleviates physical strain but also enhances ergonomic comfort, which can be transformative for procedures requiring extended

The exoscope's ability to provide improved illumination and 3D visualisation allows for sustained precision, minimising fatigue and supporting a higher level of surgical performance over prolonged periods. Moreover, it offers seamless integration with digital systems, assisting with documentation and enabling real-time collaboration with other specialists. Remote access to the exoscope's 3D feed allows for consultations with experts out-



side the operating room, which is particularly valuable in teaching hospitals and cases that require multidisciplinary input. By reducing the physical toll on surgeons and offering digital connectivity, the horoscope is paving the way for better, more collaborative care in spinal surgery.

The inclusion of AI in spinal surgery is another gamechanger, with the potential to reshape the field by allowing for data-driven insights and more precise treatment plan- technology can analyse past ning. Through AI, vast amounts of patient data can be analysed to identify optimal surgical approaches and pre-

dict complications.
Such AI insights combined with robotic precision could minimise human error and variability in outcomes, enhancing both surgical efficiency and patient safety. Currently, robotic systems are already being used in spinal procedures, aiding in the precise placement of screws, rods, and other implants. With AIdriven data analytics, robotic assistance could reach new levels of effectiveness. AI systems could improve preoperative planning based on large datasets, enabling more accurate hardware placements and efficient decision-making. This

surgeries to predict potential complications and suggest the most effective treatment paths, offering a personalised, databacked approach to surgical care. Furthermore, AI-driven analytics have the potential to predict patient outcomes based on prior cases, guiding surgeons on probable recovery trajectories and aiding patient consultations. ISSICON 2024's workshops reflected this commitment to enabling technologies by providing participants with hands-on experience in emerging techniques, such as robotic and navigationassisted spine surgery and robotic-assisted rehabilitation. The conference was aligned with the World Health Organisation's Rehabilitation 2030 initiative, reinforcing a

ing access to advanced rehabilitation services, particularly in underserved areas. To ensure the longevity of these innovations, ISSICON 2024 is developing eight position state-ments, created through preconference deliberations and expert discussions, to serve as guidelines for SCI care. The Spinal Cord Society has been advocating for a National Spinal Care Program that addresses the rising needs in spinal injury care and back

pain management. (Dr H S Chhabra is president of the Spinal Cord Society, director of Spine & Rehabilitation Services at the Sri Balaji Action Medical Institute, and Chairman of the ISSICON 2024 Organizing Committee; views

## BJP to implement UCC in Jharkhand, keeping tribals out of its ambit: Home Minister

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sum Ja announced that the BJP will implement the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) in Jharkhand if voted to power in the state, but would keep tribals out of its ambit. Shah, while releasing the saffron party's manifesto, 'Sankalp Patra', for the upcoming assembly elections in Jharkhand, announced that a Displacement Commission would be formed to ensure the rehabilitation of people displaced by industries and mines in the state. Elections to the 81-member assembly in the state will take place in two phases on November 13 and 20, and votes will be counted on

government

introduce UCC in Jharkhand but tribals will be kept out of its ambit. Hemant Soren and the government are spreading false propaganda that UCC will impact tribal rights, culture and relevant legislation, which is totally baseless as they will be kept out of its ambit, Shah said in Ranchi. He said though UCC would be implemented, it will ensure that tribal rights are not impacted.

"The BJP, if voted to power in Jharkhand, will deliberate on the Sarna religious code issue, and take appropriate decisions," he said. Shah said the saffron party, if voted to power, will create five lakh employment opportunities, including 2.87 lakh government jobs, in Jharkhand.

The Home Minister said that BJP will bring in a law to take

back land from infiltrators in Jharkhand and identify and deport the illegal immigrants. He claimed that 'Mati, Beti, Roti' (land, daughter and food) were under threat from the illegal immigrants and the BJP would provide security to the indigenous people. The local administrations encourage infiltration in West Bengal and Jharkhand, Shah alleged.

'Crimes against women rose by 29 per cent during the five year tenure of corrupt and insensitive Hemant Soren government, while rape cases saw an increase of 42 per cent during the period," Shah alleged. He accused the JMMled government of patronising infiltrators, while claiming that the tribal population was dwindling in the state and

Shah promised that the BJP will bring in a stringent law to take back land from infiltrators in Iharkhand as well as to drive them out.

He announced 'Operation Suraksha', promising to end human trafficking in Jharkhand by 2027, besides the elimination of Naxalism from the state in the next two years.

Shah said voters will have to choose between the "corrupt government patronises infiltrators" and the BJP which doesn't allow anyone to cross the border illegally. "Hindus are under attack and appeasement is at its peak. Jharkhand is the most corrupt state in the country," he alleged. There will be CBI and SIT probes into "paper leaks" in Jharkhand and culprits will be

put behind the bars, he said. The manifesto provides that Jharkhand Staff Selection Commission-Combined Graduate Level (JSSC-CGL) Competitive Exam will be cancelled and the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) will investigate the previous CGL exams and all major paper leak cases. Besides, it promises to make Jharkhand the hub of eco-tourism in the country. "We will set up 10 new medical colleges in the state. We will increase the coverage under Ayushman Bharat Jeevan Dhara Yojana from Rs 5 lakh to Rs 10 lakh for elderly persons aged over 70 years. We will increase the number of beds in primary health centres and

community health centres by

### Minister Athawale denies reports of any rift in MahaYuti over Mahim constituency

PTI MUMBAI

Union Minister Ramdas Athawale on Sunday denied reports of a rift in the ruling Mahayuti over the Mahim assembly constituency in Mumbai, which will see MNS leader Amit Thackarey taken on Shiv Sena's Sada Sarvankar.

The RPI (A) chief said threetime sitting MLA Sarvankar is a stronger candidate than Amit Thackeray, whose only qualification is that he is the of Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) chief Raj Thackeray.

The Republican Party of India (Athawale) is an ally of the Mahayuti, comprising the BJP, NCP and Shiv Sena. Amit Thackeray is making his

electoral debut, while Sarvankar is seeking re-election from Mahim. The Shiv Sena leader has

asserted that he will not with-



the BJP has expressed keenness to back the MNS candi-

Talking to PTI, Athwale said, "The Babasaheb Ambedkar Memorial and Indu Mill come under the Mahim constituency, and I don't think it is good to pressurise Sarvankar.

He is the sitting MLA and a stronger candidate than Amit Thackeray, and he will win." While refusing to comment on the BJP's show of support for the MNS candidate, he said Sarvankar was the Mahayuti official's candidate.

"Amit Thackeray has not done any work in the constituency, and his only qualification is that he is Raj Thackeray's son. He has just entered politics and has a lot to do in the future," Athawale

Elections to the 288-member Maharashtra assembly will be held on November 20, and the votes will be counted on November 23. Mumbai accounts for 36 assembly segments. November 4 is the last date for withdrawal of candidature.

Asked about the possibility of rebel candidates hurting the alliance in different constituencies, the Union minister said, "Whenever rebels contest elections, it hurts. It affected the Congress in

I think tomorrow 99 per cent of the rebels will withdraw. Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and other leaders are meeting

## **BJP elects Sunil Sharma as** leader of legislative party

**MOHIT KANDHARI** ■ JAMMU

Ahead of the beginning of the maiden Assembly session of the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly in Srinagar on Monday, the Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP) Sunday 'unanimously' elected Sunil Sharma as the leader of the legislative party. The House will meet after a

gap of more than six years on Monday, with the last session held in early 2018, a year before the reorganization of Jammu and Kashmir into two union territories.

Stringent security measures have been put in place for the assembly session.

47-year-old Sharma, who won from the Padder Nagseni Assembly constituency in Kishtwar, is set to assume the role of the leader of the opposition for the first time in the legislative assembly.



central observers by the BJP's parliamentary board to elect the leader of the legislature

Interacting with the media persons in Srinagar Sunil Sharma said, the BJP is set to play the role of a constructive opposition in the Assembly. Sharma said he is grateful to the party's central and state leadership for giving him this responsibility.
"With the help, experience,

and blessings of my MLA colleagues, I will discharge Union Minister Pralhad Joshi my duties. Keeping in mind and BJP General Secretary the party policies and aspirations of the people, we

will be the voice of the people in the assembly and outside as well," he said.

Asked about his priorities in the assembly, Sharma said, "I have just been appointed. The battle will start tomorrow. We have to see where the enemy is hiding and we will attack accordingly." Meanwhile, the party has announced its eader Narinder Singh will be the candidate for the post of deputy speaker in the Jammu Kashmir Legislative Assembly.

On the other hand, Veteran National Conference leader and seven-time MLA from Charar-e-Sharief Rahim Rather is likely to become the first speaker of the legislative assembly of the union territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

According to the provisional calendar for the session issued by the Assembly Secretariat, the House will elect the speaker in the first sitting on Monday.

## Geographical boundaries should not limit welfare of citizenry: MP CM

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE BHOPAL

Tn his address to the people of I the state on the occasion of the Foundation Day of Madhya Pradesh, Chief Minister Mohan Yadav said that geographical boundaries between states should not limit the welfare of

Attributing the initiative to a resolution by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Yadav outlined the manner in which his government approached the Ken-Betwa Nadi Jodo Paroyojana and the Parvati-Kalisindh-Chambal Link Project. The interstate Ken-Betwa river interlinking project is the first river interlinking project in

Yadav said that the cases pending for the approval of the Parvati-Chambal-Kalisindh project between Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan for 20 years have now been approved. He said that the approval by the Central Government will accelerate the pace of development in large regions of the state. Promising to leave no stone unturned in the quest for ful-filling the pledge of rapid devel-



opment made by Prime Minister Modi, Yadav said the Ken-Betwa project will provide irrigation and water facilities to citizens and farmers on a large scale in Bundelkhand.

The Chief Minister was addressing the 69th Foundation Day celebrations of Madhya Pradesh at Ravindra Sabhagam today. Many public representatives attended the event. Congratulating the people of the state, Yadav said that a long journey has been cov-

ered since the establishment of Madhya Pradesh in 1956. Invoking divinity, Yadav expressed happiness that the

state foundation day coincided with Diwali. The festive season in the state includes four-day Foundation Day celebrations and five-day Diwali festivities. Madhya Pradesh is fortunate that Maryada Purushottam Lord Rama spent most of his time in Chitrakoot. Lord Krishna also came to Ujjain in Madhya Pradesh to pursue education, said the Chief

Describing the state as the 'Motherland of Rivers,' Yadav underlined the abundance of minerals in the state. He said that the boundaries of 55 districts in the state will soon be redrawn. Along with the boundaries of the districts, the boundaries of the divisions also change. Reorganization-related work has not been done at this level

in the state in 68 years. Chief

Madhya Pradesh government will leave no stone unturned for development. Yadav said that until 2005,

there were only five medical colleges in the state, but now the number has increased to 20. Prime Minister Modi has recently inaugurated three new medical colleges in the state. The number of medical colleges will increase to 28 in the next two years. He said that work is also being done on a PPP model, through which there will be 40 medical colleges in the state. In the coming years, there will be a medical college in every district. Chief Minister Yadav congratulated the citizens present on the Foundation Day of Madhya Pradesh and Diwali, and called

upon them to enjoy the musical programme organized under the direction of renowned playback singer Ankit Tiwari from Mumbai. Singer Suhasini Joshi presented the Madhya Pradesh anthem. Yadav also released a film based on Madhya Pradesh

## **Historical humiliation for Team India**

From page 1

Coach Gautam Gambhir, who has remained bullish up until now, will certainly have a few questions to answer winning stalwart in Kapil Dev going forward if the tide does was in charge of the team as not turn dramatically in Australia, starting November 22. With this truly humbling result, the Indians were thrown off the top position in the World Test Championship points table. A spot in the final next summer, which once seemed quite certain, will now have to be fought for and that too quite vigorously. It is the first time that an

Indian team has been umpire call. whitewashed in a three-match 
It ended a heroic push-back

decades ago in 2000 when it lost 0-2 to South Africa. Interestingly, a World Cuphead coach even at that time. That result had ended the great Sachin Tendulkar's run as captain of the team and Kapil's tenure as coach.

What happens after the current loss will be eagerly watched. With 55 runs needed in the post lunch session and five wickets intact, India's hopes rested on Pant but he ended up falling to a contentious third-

suffered a humiliation of this pulled the side out of a rut in contact with the bat or the calculated approach was crash into his off-stump. for five. India's ineptness had exerted pressure on Pant, who could not have responded any better against the odds until the ghosts of inaccurate technology in the game arrived to haunt him and India.

Pant had belittled every challenge that New Zealand threw at him, blasting nine fours and a six to make 64 from only 57 balls. Having not taken a review earlier in the morning session for a leg-before, New Zealand burned one when they took against Pant for a caughtbehind but the replays showed Patel's delivery in the series. The last time India from the fearless man, who 22nd over had neither been

But on the next, Pant was

contentiously adjudged out caught-behind by third umpire. DRS replays showed a tiny spike, which Pant felt was the sound of his bat brushing the pads, but former Australia player and third umpire Paul Reiffel ruled it against the Indian. Until he fell to Patel for his fifth wicket in the innings and 10th in the match, Pant had thoroughly dominated the New Zealand spinner, clobbering five fours and a six to collect 34 runs off his 27 deliveries. For yet another instance, captain Rohit's ultra-aggressive approach to had him walking back and perhaps for the last time at his home turf.

Rohit's (11) erroneous attempt to play his signature pull shot off Matt Henry on a delivery which was barely waist-high led to his fall. As soon as Rohit's top edge went up, Henry broke into celebration knowing it was headed towards Glenn Phillips - one of the best fielders - who ran behind from midwicket to take a fine Coming off a fine 146-ball

90, Gill shouldered arms on a delivery from Patel (4/43) away but it straightened to a pair for the batter.

ground once again with his bat trained on his shoulder, perhaps to exude confidence, but he could not reach the pitch of a floated delivery which took the edge of his bat to the first slip.

From the other end, Yashasvi Jaiswal (5) watched this surrender and he too became a part of it when he was beaten by Phillips (3/42) for a leg-before. Sarfaraz (0) went for a pre-meditated sweep shot on the first ball for the second time in the Test and paid a heavy price too, top edging it for Rachin Ravindra to move in from expecting the ball to turn deep square leg and complete

### Man killed in Khajuri Khas by relative after heated argument

**STAFF REPORTER** ■ NEW DELHI

35 year old man was killed A<sup>35</sup> year old man was about they his relative after they had a heated argument while celebrating the festival of 'Bhaidooj' in northeast Delhi's Khajuri Khas area

According to the police on Sunday, the deceased has been identified as Hemant who succumbed to his bullet injuries. Deputy Commissioner of Police (Northeast) Rakesh Paweriya said, "At 6.20 pm, a call regarding firing incident was received at Khajuri Khas police station. On reaching the spot, at Sonia Vihar, it was

found that Bantu is residing in a rented accommodation and on the occasion of Bhaidooj his two sisters Rekha and Chandni along with their husband's namely Ajay and Hemant visited him."

He added that both Ajay and

Hemant are in same business of making garland (mala). "During festival celebration, Ajay and Hemant had a heated argument about their business and Ajay fired at Hemant and fled from the spot," the officer added. Hemant was taken to Jag

Pravesh Chandra (JPC) hospital for treatment.

## Congratulations, Delhi AQI...

From page 1

The AQI at Nehru Nagar also remained in the "severe" category, with levels recorded at 431. The AQI remained in Punjabi Bagh and Ashok Vihar at 427 and 415, respectively. Alipur, Aaya Nagar, Bawana, Burari, Mathura Road, IGI Airport, Jahangirpuri, Mundka, Narela, Patparganj, Rohini, Shadipur, Sonia Vihar, Wazirpur, Mandir Marg, Nehru Nagar, Najafgarh, and other weather-monitoring stations witnessed from "very poor" air quality to hazardous category, according to the Sameer app that provides hourly updates of the National AQI published by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB). These levels fall under the "very poor" category, with prolonged exposure likely to impact residents' respiratory health, especially those with preexisting conditions.

In Noida, Sector 62 registered an AQI of 314 and Sector 116 at 303. Sector 125 recorded a slightly lower AQI of 287. Meanwhile, air quality in Gurugram varies significantly across different areas. NISE were deployed to control dust created for smooth flow of

Gwal Pahari recorded an AQI of 351, while Sector 51 witnessed a much lower AOI of 188, suggesting relatively better air quality.
As per details shared by the

Ministry of Environment, a total of around 54,000 vehicles have been challaned for nonpossession of PUCs and around 3900 overaged vehicles have impounded across NCR since the imposition of Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) between October 15 and October 31, 2024. The Ministry said in a statement that more than 7000 construction and demolition sites were inspected across the NCR and environment compensation has been imposed on 597 non complying sites and orders for closure have been issued for 56 sites. To control the dust pollution

at source, the deployment of Mechanical Road Sweeping Machines (MRSMs), water sprinklers and anti smog guns (ASGs) have been increased across NCR. In Delhi alone, on average 81 MRSMs were deployed daily while in Haryana and UP, 36 MRSMs

pollution on roads. Similarly on average around 600 water sprinklers and ASGs each were also deployed on a daily basis across NCR. Intensive inspections were

carried out for illegal dumping sites across NCR and necessary action taken against illegal sites. More than 5300 such inspections were carried out. Accordingly, action against defaulters for solid waste burning during the GRAP period was also taken. Enforcement drives have been taken by NCR State agencies to inspect industries and DG sets and take action against non-complying units by imposing EC and/or issuing Around 1400 closure. industries and 1300 DG sets were inspected and action against non-complying units were taken.

Setting up Monitoring Control Room in the Commission To follow up and monitor the targeted actions by NCR States, a GRAP Monitoring Control Room has been set up in the Commission since 15.10.2024 which is headed by Member (CAQM). A dedicated WhatsApp group has been information between Control Room and concerned Nodal Officers of States. The Control Room remains operational throughout the week.

Meanwhile, an analysis by the

take on the bowlers, when a

Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air ranked Delhi as the third most polluted post-Diwali city. As per the Consortium for Research on Agroecosystem Monitoring and Modelling from Space, which comes under the Indian Council of Agricultural (ICAR), an autonomous organisation under the Department of Agricultural Research and Education (DARE), satellites detected 861 residue burning events in the six study States on 02-November 02. The state wise events detected were 379 in Punjab, 19 in Haryana, 87 in Uttar Pradesh, 00 in Delhi, 80 in Rajasthan and 296 in Madhya Pradesh. The data shows a total 9376 burning events were detected in the six states between September 15 and November 2, which are distributed as 3916, 838, 1272, 12, 1036 and 2302 in Punjab,

Haryana, Uttar Pradesh,

Delhi, Rajasthan and Madhya

Pradesh, respectively.

### **Retired DSP, others attacked...** From page 1

A senior officer said, "On Saturday at about 12.26 am, a PCR call was made by Ashok Sharma that two girls had beaten him. They were blowing the horn of their swift car again and again in the society. He asked them to not do so upon which they assaulted him." Both the accused and Kumar were residents of Aniket Apartment. The retired man was injured and taken for medical treatment at Lal Bahadur Shastri (LBS) hospital.

Following the incident, on the same day at about 6.37 pm, the police received a PCR call stating that two ladies had a knife and were quarrelling with the caller. The police team rushed to the Aniket Apartment where complainant Reena, daughter of Ashok Sharma, alleged that she as well as her sister Pratibha was standing outside her parental home when the sisters attacked

'Two ladies came and started to beat them. Bhavya had a big knife in her hand which was later taken off successfully. However, the sisters beat them, and their mother Shanti," the

officer said, adding that while conducting enquiry from the local residents, and the victim, the alleged ladies were in their apartment and refused to come out despite repeated warnings. To force them out, police instructed that the electricity and water supply to the apartment be cut off. Meanwhile, some residents deflated two tires of the sisters' Swift Dzire car.

"Suddenly both women came out from their flat and swiftly sat in their car, and accelerated the vehicle to kill the public as well as the police team. Anyhow, the police team and residents tried to save themselves. However Head Constable Sunil got a fracture in his leg and other public persons Ashok Sharma, Pravin and Panaday got injuries and are under observation," another officer added.

While fleeing, the women hit 36-year-old Joginder Singh, who was standing with his Scooty outside the society on the roadside, and fell down. "His Scooty was dragged till about 700 metres. Police staff chased them and both were overpowered in Noida with the help of Uttar Pradesh Police," he said, adding that two cases were registered against them. A total of four FIRs have been registered at New Ashok Nagar police station against the two accused on the basis of complaints filed by former DSP Sharma, his daughter Reena, head constable Sunil and scooter rider Joginder. The two sisters have been

booked under various sections of BNS including 109 (2) (attempt to murder), 115 (voluntarily causing hurt), 126(2) (wrongful restraint), 221 (obstructing public servant in discharge of public functions), and 132 (assaulting or using criminal force against a public servant).

Sources said that both the sisters have a history of confrontational behaviour, including an alleged incident in which they took a security guard hostage in September whose skin they burnt with hot iron. The two sisters were booked previously September in a case in which Non-Bailable Warrant (NBW) proceedings are underway against them. They had also poured dirty water on a police team previously. Investigation in all the cases are in progress under ACP Kalyanpuri, police

### Woman strangled to death by live-in partner in Nand Nagri

**STAFF REPORTER** NEW DELHI

A<sup>25</sup>-year-old woman was death by her live-in partner in Nand Nagri area of northeast Delhi.

According to the police on Sunday, a PCR call was received of murder in Nand Nagri police station on Saturday at 11 pm. "Postmortem report will clear the cause of death," the police said. A senior police officer said the woman was found hanging by her brother Golu, who also stays with her. "Upon inspection of the premises, in a bathroom of the said premises a cloth was found hanging in a bathroom where the deceased was last seen by her younger brother Golu as hanging, who took her out of the bathroom," he said.

Crime team was called at the spot and photographs were taken by the Crime and FSL Team. According to the police, the body was inspected in a mortuary where no external injury was found visible but small ligature marks were visible on her throat.

## Khamenei threatens Israel, US with 'a crushing response'

Iran's supreme leader on Saturday threatened Israel and the US with "a crushing response" over attacks on Iran and its allies.

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei spoke as Iranian officials are increasingly threatening to launch yet another strike against Israel after its October 26 attack on the Islamic Republic that targeted military bases and other locations and killed at least five people. Any further attacks from either side could engulf the wider Middle East, already teetering over the Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip and Israel's ground invasion of Lebanon, into a wider regional conflict just ahead of the US presidential election this

Tuesday.
"The enemies, whether the Zionist regime or the United States of America, will definitely receive a crushing response to what they are doing to Iran and the Iranian nation and to the resistance front," Khamenei said in video released by Iranian state media.

The supreme leader did not elaborate on the timing of the threatened attack, nor the scope. The US military operates on bases throughout the Middle East, with some troops now manning a Terminal High

Altitude Area Defense, or THAAD, battery in Israel.

The USS Abraham Lincoln aircraft carrier likely is in the Arabian Sea, while Pentagon press secretary Maj Gen Pat Ryder said Friday that more destroyers, fighter squadrons, tankers and B-52 long-range bombers would be coming to the region to deter Iran and its militant allies.

Early Sunday, the US military's Central Command said B-52s from Minot Air Force Base's 5th Bomb Wing arrived in the Middle East, without elaborating. The 85-year-old Khamenei had struck a more cautious approach in earlier remarks, saying officials would weigh Iran's response and that Israel's attack "should not be exaggerated nor downplayed." Iran has launched two major direct attacks on Israel, in April and October.

But efforts by Iran to downplay the Israeli attack faltered as satellite photos analyzed by The Associated Press showed damage to military bases near Tehran linked to the country's ballistic missile program, as well as at a Revolutionary Guard base used in satellite launches.

Iran's allies, called the "Axis of Resistance" by Tehran, also have been severely hurt by ongoing Israeli attacks, partic-



ularly Lebanon's Hezbollah and Hamas in the Gaza Strip. Iran long has used those groups as both an asymmetrical way to attack Israel and as a shield against a direct assault. Some analysts believe those groups want Iran to do more to back them militarily.

Iran, however, has been dealing with its own problems at home. as its economy struggles under the weight of international sanctions and it has faced years of widespread, multiple protests. After Khamenei's speech, the Iranian rial fell to

an all-time low. It had been 32,000 rials to the dollar when Tehran reached its 2015 nuclear deal with world powers. Gen Mohammad Ali Naini, a

spokesman for Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard which controls the ballistic missiles needed to target Israel, gave an interview published by the semiofficial Fars news agency just before Khamenei's remarks were released. In it, he warned Iran's response "will be wise, powerful and beyond the

enemy's comprehension."
"The leaders of the Zionist regime should look out from the windows of their bedrooms and protect their criminal pilots within their small territory," he warned. Israeli air force pilots appear to have used air-launched ballistic missiles in the Oct. 26 attack. Khamenei on Saturday met

with university students to mark Students Day, which commemorates a Nov. 4, 1978, incident in which Iranian soldiers opened fire on students protesting the rule of the shah at Tehran University. The shooting killed and wounded several students and further escalated the tensions consuming Iran at the time that eventually led to the shah fleeing the country and the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

## Israel 'struck' Gaza clinic during polio campaign; army denies

said.

Palestinian officials say an Israeli drone strike on a clinic in northern Gaza where children were being vaccinated for polio wounded six people, including four children. The Israeli military denied respon-

The alleged strike occurred Saturday in northern Gaza, which has been encircled by Israeli forces and largely isolated for the past year. Israel has been carrying out another offensive there in recent weeks that has killed hundreds of people and displaced tens of thousands.

It was not possible to resolve the conflicting accounts. Israeli forces have repeatedly raided hospitals in Gaza over the course of the war, saying Hamas uses them for militant purposes, allegations denied by Palestinian health officials. Dr Munir al-Boursh, director

general of the Gaza Health Ministry, told The Associated Press that a quadcopter struck

the Sheikh Radwan clinic in Gaza City early Saturday afternoon, just a few minutes after a United Nations delegation left the facility.

The World Health Organisation and the UN children's agency, known as UNICEF, which are jointly carrying out the polio vaccination campaign, expressed concern over the reported strike.

'The reports of this attack are even more disturbing as the Sheikh Radwan Clinic is one of the health points where parents can get their children vaccinated," said Rosalia Bollen, a spokesperson for UNICEF.

Today's attack occurred while the humanitarian pause was still in effect, despite assurances given that the pause would be respected from 6 am to 4 pm." Lt Col Nadav Shoshani, an Israeli military spokesman, said that "contrary to the claims, an initial review determined that the (Israeli military) did not strike in the area at the specified time." A scaled-down campaign to administer a second

dose of the polio vaccine began Saturday in parts of northern Gaza. It had been postponed from October 23 due to lack of access, Israeli bombings and mass evacuation orders, and the lack of assurances for humanitarian pauses, a UN statement

The administration of the first dose was carried out in September across the Gaza Strip, including areas of northern Gaza that are now completely sealed off. Health officials said the campaign's first round, and the administration of the second dose across central and southern Gaza, were successful.

At least 100,000 people have been forced to evacuate from areas of north Gaza toward Gaza City in the past few weeks, but around 15,000 children under the age of 10 remain in northern towns, including Iabaliva, Beit Lahiva and Beit Hanoun, which are inaccessible. according to the UN. The final phase of the polio vaccination campaign had aimed to reach

an estimated 119,000 children in the north with a second dose of oral polio vaccine, the agencies said, but "achieving this target is now unlikely due to access constraints."

They say 90 per cent of children in every community must be vaccinated to prevent the spread of the disease.

The campaign was launched after the first polio case was reported in Gaza in 25 years a 10-month-old boy, now paralysed in the leg. The
World Health Organisation said

the presence of a paralysis case indicates there could be hundreds more who have been infected but aren't showing symptoms. The war began on October 7, 2023, when Hamasled militants stormed into southern Israel, killing some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducting another 250. Israel's offensive has killed over 43,000 Palestinians, according to Gaza health authorities, who do not say how many were combatants but say more than half were women and children.

## Iranian-American held in Iran: US

**AP** DUBAI

An Iranian-American jour-nalist who once worked for a US government-funded broadcaster is believed to have been detained by Iran for months now, authorities said Sunday, further raising the stakes as Tehran threatens to retaliate over an Israeli attack on the country.

The imprisonment of Reza Valizadeh, acknowledged to The Associated Press by the US State Department, came as Iran marked the 45th anniversary of the American Embassy takeover and hostage crisis on Sunday. It also followed Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei threatening both Israel and the US the day before with "a crushing response" as long-range B-52 bombers reached the Middle East in an attempt to deter Tehran.

Valizadeh had worked for Radio Farda, an outlet under Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty that's overseen by the Revolutionary Court, which US Agency for Global Media. routinely holds closed-door ornary, he wrote on the social platform X that his family members had been detained in an effort to see him return to Iran. In August, Valizadeh apparently posted two mes-

sages suggesting he had that this dual US-Iranian citi-returned to Iran despite Radio zen has been arrested in Iran" Farda being viewed by Iran's theocracy as a hostile outlet. 'I arrived in Tehran on March 6, 2024. Before that, I had unfinished negotiations with the (Revolutionary Guard's) intelligence department," the message read in part.
"Eventually I came back to my

country after 13 years without any security guarantee, even a verbal one. Valizadeh added the name of a man who he claimed

belonged to Iran's Intelligence Ministry. The AP could not verify if the person worked for the ministry. Rumors have been circulating for weeks that Valizadeh had been detained. The Human Rights Activists News Agency,

which monitors cases in Iran, said that he had been detained on arrival to the country earlier this year, but later released. He was then rearrested and sent to Evin prison, where he now faces a case in Iran's hearings in which defendants face secret evidence, the agency reported. Valizadeh had faced arrest in 2007 as well, it said. The State Department told the AP that it was "aware of reports and for USD 6 billion in frozen

when asked about Valizadeh. We are working with our Swiss partners who serve as the protecting power for the United States in Iran to gather more information about this case," the State Department said. "Iran routinely imprisons US citizens and other countries' citizens unjustly for political purposes. This practice is cruel and con-

trary to international law." Iran has not acknowledged detaining Valizadeh. Iran's mission to the United Nations did not immediately respond to a request for comment. The Voice of America, anoth-

er US government-funded media outlet overseen by the Agency for Global Media, first reported the State Department was acknowledging Valizadeh's detention in Iran. Since the 1979 U.S. Embassy

crisis, which saw dozens of hostages released after 444 days in captivity, Iran has used prisoners with Western ties as bargaining chips in negotiations with the world. In September 2023, five Americans detained for years in Iran were freed in exchange for five Iranians in US custody

Iranian assets to be released by South Korea. Valizadeh is the first American

known to be detained by Iran

in the time since. Meanwhile, Iranian state television aired footage Sunday of different cities across the coun-

try marking the anniversary of the embassy takeover. Gen Hossein Salami, the head of the Guard, also spoke in Tehran, where he repeated a pledge made the day before by Khamenei. "The resistance front and Iran will equip itself

with whatever necessary to confront and defeat the enemy," he said, referring to the militant groups like Hamas and Lebanon's Hezbollah backed by Tehran. In Tehran, thousands at the

gate of the former US Embassy chanted "Death to America" and "Death to Israel." Some burned flags of the countries and effigies of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. They also carried images of killed top figures of Iran's allied militant groups including Lebanese Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah and Palestinian Hamas leader Yahva Sinwar. The crowd in the state-organized rallies chanted they were ready to defend the Palestinians.

### Millions of **Americans** seal their choices in early voting

New York (PTI): The 42 Broadway in New York is an important address in this election season in the US. This is the office of the Board of Elections. Michael Ryan, executive director, and his deputy Vincent Ignizio are upbeat about the figures that the early voting has drawn for the city. On the first day, about 140,000 votes were cast in the early

voting. "We don't want to pat ourselves on the back but we are upbeat about this. New York has already created a record in early voting and it is still on," says Ryan. Across the United States, tens

of millions of voters have already cast their ballots. According to the data from the Iniversity of Florida's Election Lab tracker, more than 68 million Americans have already voted. Across the nation, voters are taking advantage of the flexibility offered by early voting options, whether through mail-in ballots or in-person polling sites.
This trend allows voters to

avoid potential issues such as inclement weather, long queues, or unforeseen scheduling conflicts on election day. Ryan feels that several factors played a role in ensuring the positive trend in early voting, at least for New York City (NYC). "In 2020 less than 100 polling stations were set up for early voting. This year the number is almost 50 per cent more than that," says Ryan. An early voting station has been set up at the John Jay College in the Manhattan area of NYC. The station is packed with voters coming in and casting their ballots days ahead

## Harris appears on 'Saturday Night Live' as mirror image of Rudolph

Vice President Kamala Harris made a surprise appearance on "Saturday Night Live" in the final days before the election, playing herself as the mirror-image double of Maya Rudolph's version of her in the show's cold open.

The first lines the candidate spoke as she sat across from Rudolph, their outfits identical, was drowned out by cheers from the audience.

"It is nice to see you Kamala," Harris told Rudolph with a broad grin she kept throughout the sketch. "And I'm just here to remind you, you got this." In sync, the two said supporters need to "Keep Kamala and carry-on-ala," declared that they share each other's "belief in the promise of America," and delivered the signature "Live from New York it's Saturday

Harris made the surprise trip to New York City with the ele tion looming, briefly stepping away from the battleground states where she's been furiously campaigning in favor of NBC's iconic sketch comedy show, where she was hoping to generate buzz and appeal to a nationwide audience.

Harris came to New York on Air Force Two after an early evening campaign stop Saturday on in Charlotte, North Carolina. She was scheduled to head to Detroit, but once in the air, aides said she'd be making an unscheduled stop and the plane landed at LaGuardia Airport.

Harris arrived at 30 Rockefeller Plaza in Manhattan, where "SNL" tapes, shortly after 8 p.m., enough time for a quick rehearsal before the show airs live at 11:30 pm. It is the final "SNL" episode before Election Day on Tuesday. The visit wasn't previously announced and an official familiar with Harris' planning only officially confirmed it for reporters traveling with the vice president moments before the live airing began. The official insisted on anonymity to discuss plans before they were made public. Harris departed immediately after the opening segment. She told reporters, "It was fun!" as

she boarded the plane to leave New York. Host John Mulaney and musical guest Chappell Roan shifted the show away from politics. Neither addressed the election. Mulaney, the standup comic and former "SNL" writer, hosted for the sixth time and talked about his kids with wife Olivia Munn, Catholicism, and his stint in

Some expected Roan, the 26year-old singer who has become a major star in recent months, to make a political statement in her first appearance on the show. She has previously been harshly critical of the Democratic party and declined to endorse Harris, though Roan has said several times she plans to vote for her. But she played it straight, or as straight as the wildly theatrical performer gets. She sang her hit "Pink Pony Club," on an all-pink set bathed in pink light. Senator Tim Kaine also made a surprise appearance, in a game-show s where the gag was that no one remembered him despite his being Hillary Clinton's running

### Germany allocates 20 mn euros to Pakistan for forest protection project

Islamabad (PTI): Germany will provide 20 million euros to Pakistan for the second phase of a project aimed at the protection and sustainable management of forests in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, according to a media report on Sunday. An agreement for financial support for the 'Billion Tree Afforestation Support Project' (BTASP) was signed in Islamabad on Saturday between Pakistan Economic Affairs Secretary Dr Kazim Niaz and Director of German Development Bank KfW, Esther Gravenkotter. The first phase of BTASP is already under implementation in partnership with the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Climate Change, Forestry, Environment and Wildlife Department, the Dawn newspaper reported. It will support the protection and

sustainable management of forests in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. The project will focus on new plantations on 10,000 hectares, capacity building of forest departments, and developing a management information system. The project will support nature-based livelihood generation geared to alleviate poverty. It will promote women's economic empowerment and participation in decision-making processes, according to the report. Pakistan is among the nations considered most vulnerable to climatic changes despite being among the countries contributing least to environmental pollution. The country faced massive rains and floods in 2022, which, officials said, were caused by climatic changes.

### Trump to rally backers every day until election in North Carolina Gastonia (AP): Donald Trump will rally supporters in North

Carolina every day until Tuesday's election, a flurry of late activity in the only swing state that he won in both his 2016 and 2020 campaigns. Even as Trump looks to expand the electoral map and project strength with trips to New Mexico and Virginia, two Democratic states not widely viewed as competitive, he is

The former president's path to the 270 electoral votes needed to capture the presidency gets significantly more complicat-

putting considerable time into North Carolina, which last

backed a Democrat for presi-

ed if he loses North Carolina. The fast-growing Southern state gave Trump his smallest margin of victory — 1.3 percentage points — over Democrat Joe Biden four years ago. Trump campaigned in Gastonia, west of Charlotte, and Greensboro on Saturday, with a stop in Salem, Virginia, in between. He will be in the eastern city of Kinston on Sunday and in Raleigh on Monday. Those four rallies will bring his total events in North Carolina since Oct. 1 to nine. His running mate, Ohio Sen. JD Vance, has been in the state six times during the same period, most recently on Friday.

Vice President Kamala Harris, Trump's Democratic rival, also was in North Carolina on Saturday for a concert and rally in Charlotte. Her campaign has not announced any other travel to the state before Election Day, though she's sending her husband, second gentleman Doug Emhoff, to Greenville on Monday. The extensive damage from Hurricane Helene across western North Carolina has created a dose of uncertainty about the state of play here. Flooding destroyed homes and displaced residents in several counties, including the liberal city of Asheville and the conservative rural areas surround-

# key states in last 50 hours Democratic presidential candidate Kamala Harris and

"We will win," Vice President of the main election day on November 5. Suzan, the coordinator of the station, feels the early voting process is witnessing a very positive America.

her Republican rival former president Donald Trump are leaving nothing to chance in the last 50 hours before closing of the polls, making a passionate appeal to their countrymen to support and send them to the White House.

Harris told thousands of her cheering supporters in Wisconsin urging them it's time to turn a page and bring in a new generation of leadership in

She was campaigning in Wisconsin and North Carolina

closing arguments in Michigan, Georgia and Pennsylvania on Sunday and Monday.

Trump and Harris crisscross

Trump, 78, choose Virginia for campaigning on Saturday. Addressing thousands of his supporters in Salem, the former president promised to bring in a new era of peace and prosperity in the country. He continued to charge Harris of being a liberal Left radical.

Over the next two days, Trump has a hectic schedule in the battleground states of Michigan, Pennsylvania, Georgia and North Carolina. To win, a candidate needs 272 electoral college votes.

According to respectable

on Saturday. She plans to make 272towin.com, Harris is assured of 226 electoral votes and Trump of 219. While Harris needs 44 additional electoral college votes to reach the magic figure of 272, Trump requires 51. Both the candidates have multiple pathways to victory running through the seven battleground states of Arizona, Nevada, Wisconsin, Michigan, Pennsylvania, North Carolina

and Georgia. Political pundits believe that Pennsylvania (with 19 electoral college votes) and Michigan (15 electoral college votes) are now the ground zero. Latest polls indicate that it's too close to call in both Michigan and Pennsylvania.

## 'India-US partnership most important globally for future'

PTI PHILADELPHIA

dent in 2008.

 $T^{\text{he India-US partnership is}}_{\text{the most important engage-}}$ ment globally and the cooperation will flourish further if Kamala Harris becomes the US president as she recognises the significance of the relationship, prominent Indian-origin Democratic leader Neil Makhija has said.

In an exclusive interview with PTI, the young leader, considered to be close to Harris, also came down very hard on former president Donald Trump for his immigration policy that has triggered some concerns among immigrant communities in the US, including

Indian-Americans. On the India-US partnership, Makhija said it is the most important relationship for the

"When you think about the competition the US has been having with China, when you think about the actions that Russia is taking which are at odds with the interests of the US and its allies, India is really the most important country for the US to continue to build the relationship in terms of its sheer size, economic activities," he said.

Makhija said it is very important that the next US president understands that India is a very crucial partner for the US in many ways.

When it comes to global priorities like our defence, tackling global issues like climate change. The US and India can lead the way if they work together. So we need a president who recognises that and Kamala Harris is that person,"

to democracy. "He is engaging in the same kind of behaviour we have seen in some of the darkest moments in world history where leaders have scapegoated those individuals and communities that do not even have the right to vote," he said. Makhija is presently serving as Montgomery County Commissioner and Chair of the Board of Elections. He is the first Indian American

Makhija called Trump a threat

Commissioner elected in the history of Pennsylvania and many Democrats believe that the young leader could be in Harris' cabinet if she wins the election. You can see that he (Trump) is blaming all of the country's problems on immigrants and it

is not real, it is not realistic, it

is simply aimed at inflaming

tensions and driving divisions

among people who live here in the US," he said. "Unfortunately history does repeat itself. Hopefully, the

people of our country recog-nise what happened in the past and we avoid a similar fate in the future," he added. In his campaign speeches, Trump promised a radical shift to tighten Washington's immi-

gration policy and vowed to stage the "largest deportation operation in American history" if he is reelected. The Republican leader has even resolved to end birthright citizenship for the children of immigrants living in the US

illegally, triggering concerns Indian-origin Democratic leader among various diaspora com-Neil Makhija munities including from Bangladesh, India and Pakistan. Makhija also appeared to hold the Republican Party responsi-



ble for not increasing the cap on H1B visas for Indians. "Kamala Harris was the sponsor of a bill to fix that issue of

H1B backlog when she was the senator. The problem was that the Republicans did not support it and they used to say that they were in favour of legal immigration," he said.

"But now it is clear that they do not want any immigration and they do not support immigra-tion reform. They do not support any of the bills that would give people who live here, work here and pay taxes a real pathway to citizenship," Makhija added.

Describing the November 5 presidential election as very significant for the US, he said the country is at the crossroads. "On the one hand, we have a candidate who is protecting democracy and fundamental freedoms. Then we have a candidate who represents the past and wants to turn back the

clock to a time before anyone

from our community was here in the US. Who wants to turn back the clock on fundamental rights," he said.

"Their (Trump camp's) belief is that the country is supposed to be a specific demographic region. We think America is an idea, we think America is an idea that anyone can succeed no matter who you are," Makhija said.

"This is the decision that we are making which is — do we have a country which is pluralistic. that is welcoming, that is inclusive or do we think it should be exclusive and really meant to serve a particular demography?" he said.

'I think Kamala Harris represents the future that is more inclusive, that will be welcoming and lives up to the ideals that our country truly was founded on," Makhija added.

# Mcap of most valued firms jumps, **State Bank, ICICI Bank top gainers**

The combined market valuation of 6 of the top-10 most-valued firms surged Rs 1,07,366.05 crore last week, with State Bank of India and ICICI Bank becoming the biggest gainers.

Leading stock exchanges BSE and NSE conducted a onehour special 'Muhurat Trading' session on the occasion of Diwali on November 1, marking the start of the new Samvat 2081.

Last week, the BSE benchmark climbed 321.83 points, or 0.40 per cent.

While Reliance Industries, ICICI Bank, State Bank of India, ITC, Hindustan Unilever, and Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) were the gainers, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), HDFC Bank, Bharti Airtel, and Infosys faced erosion from their market valuation.



The valuation of State Bank of India jumped Rs 36,100.09 crore to Rs 7,32,755.93 crore. ICICI Bank added Rs 25,775.58 crore to

9,10,686.85 crore in its market valuation.

LIC's valuation surged Rs 16,887.74 crore to 5,88,509.41 crore and that of Reliance Industries soared Rs 15,393.45 crore to Rs 18,12,120.05 crore. ITC added Rs 10.671.63 crore.

taking its market capitalisation (mcap) to Rs 6,13,662.96 The valuation of Hindustan Unilever climbed Rs 2,537.56

crore to Rs 5,96,408.50 crore. However, the mcap of Infosys tanked Rs 38,054.43 crore to Rs 7,31,442.18 crore and that of Bharti Airtel slumped Rs 27,299.54 crore to Rs 9,20,299.35 crore.

The valuation of TCS eroded Rs 26,231.13 crore to Rs 14,41,952.60 crore. The mcap of HDFC Bank declined Rs 3,662.78 crore to

Rs 13,26,076.65 crore. Reliance Industries remained the most valuable firm of the country followed by TCS, HDFC Bank, Bharti Airtel, ICICI Bank, State Bank of

India, Infosys, ITC, Hindustan

Unilever and LIC.

# SEBI proposes to allow InvITs, REITs, SM REITs

PTI NEW DELHI

Markets regulator Sebi has proposed allowing Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs), Small and Medium REITs (SM REITs) and Infrastructure Investment Trusts (InvITs) to use interest rate derivatives for hedging

Also, the regulator has suggested approving lockedin units for REITs and InvITs to be transferred among sponsors and their groups, similar to rules for promoters in listed companies, to help sponsors manage their holdings without holdings compromising "skin in the game".

Additionally, Sebi has suggested permitting fixed deposits to be considered as cash equivalents when calculating leverage for REITs and InvITs, clarifying credit rating requirements for REIT and InvIT borrowings, and setting a timeline for filling vacancies their boards and expanding the asset base for REITs and SM REITs.

The regulator has also proposed to permit REITs to invest in liquid mutual funds. It has suggested measures to facilitate ease of doing business for REITs and InvITs, along with investors' protection.

According to its consultation paper, Sebi is considering allowing REITs and InvITs to hedge against interest rate fluctuations by using derivatives like interest rate

This could help stabilise cash flows, reduce risks, and protect unitholder interests, especially for long-term infrastructure projects. It is also proposed to define "Common Infrastructure"

for REIT regulations.
To enhance business flexibility for REITs, it has been proposed to clarify that facilities like power plants, heating/cooling systems, water treatment, and waste treatment plants -- serving one or more REIT assets -will qualify as "common infrastructure" under REIT

This applies even if these



facilities are not located within a single project due to their technical requirements. These facilities should supply and be used exclusively by REIT assets. For power plants, however, any excess power can be sold to the state utility/grid as regulations, with any credits or payments going towards the benefit of REIT assets.

To improve transparency, it has been proposed to amend the governance norms for quarterly reporting of InvITs. Currently, quarterly results for the investment manager and its business segments are presented to the investment manager's board, but there is no direct requirement for InvITs to report their The proposed amendment would clarify that quarterly results should specifically reflect the performance of the InvITs themselves, not investment iust the managers. This change aligns InvIT regulations with REIT regulations, where the focus is on the quarterly results of the REIT itself. Also, it has been suggested to

align the composition of NRCs in REIT and InvIT managers with listed companies under the LODR regulations.

Currently, all NRC members for REITs and InvITs must be independent directors. The proposal allows a mix of independent and nonexecutive directors, similar to listed companies.

To enhance investors' protection, Sebi reviewing suggested conditions for InvITs to borrow beyond the 49 per cent limit, assessing REIT investments in unlisted equity shares and outlining the roles and responsibilities of trustees for REITs, InvITs,

## FMCG firms worry over high inflation, hint price hike

PTI NEW DELHI

T eading FMCG companies Lreported a decline in margins in the September quarter on account of higher input costs and food inflation, which ultimately slowed down the pace of urban consumption.

Rising prices of commodity inputs such as palm oil, coffee and cocoa were also accentuated and some FMCG firms have hinted at a price

Godrej Consumer Products Ltd (GCPL), Marico, ITC, and Tata Consumer Products Ltd (TCPL) have expressed concerns over squeezing urban consumption, which according to industry experts forms 65-68 per cent of

FMCG total sales. "We think this is a short-term hit and we will recover the margins through judicious price increase and stabilising of costs," said GCPL Managing Director and CEO Sudhir Sitapati in a Q2 earning statement.

Godrej No 1, HIT had a marked by "high food quarter given the



headwinds of oil costs and tough consumer demand in India and its standalone EBITDA margin was lower, caused entirely by high inflation in palm oil.

The rural markets, which were earlier lagging behind, continued their growth journey ahead of urban. FMCG Besides. players growth reported from premium products and from sales through commerce channels

Another FMCG maker Dabur India also said the demand environment was challenging GCPL, makers of Cinthol, in the September quarter inflation and a resultant

squeeze in urban demand." The maker of Dabur Chyawanprash, PudinHara and Real juice reported a decline of 17.65 per cent in its consolidated net profit to Rs 417.52 crore and revenue from operations slipped 5.46 per cent to Rs 3,028.59 crore. Recently, Nestle India Chairman & Managing Director Suresh Narayanan also raised concerns over decline and said "middle segment" is under pressure as high food inflation continues to cripple household budgets. "It is extremely clear that the market is facing muted

demand. The growth in F&B

sector which

used to be in

double digits a couple of quarters ago, is now down to 1.5-2 per cent," he said.

Over the rise of food inflation, Narayanan said there is a "sharp uptick" in prices of fruits and vegetables and oil prices. 'This could lead to an

increase in prices if raw material costs become unmanageable for companies. We are ourselves facing a difficult situation as far as coffee and cocoa prices are concerned," he said.

Nestle India, which owns brands such as Maggi, Kit Kat, and Nescafe also reported a marginal decline of 0.94 per cent and its domestic sales growth was at 1.2 per cent. Narayanan also pointed out that tier-1 and below towns

and rural also seem to be reasonably stable. However, "pressure points" are coming from mega cities and metros.
TCPL MD & CEO Sunil D'Souza also said urban has softened and has an impact on consumer spending in urban areas.

"My hypothesis is probably food inflation is higher than what we think it is and the impact is far higher"

D'Souza in the earnings call for the September quarter. HUL CEO & MD Rohit Jawa said the market volume growth trajectory remained muted in this quarter. At an MAT (moving annual total) level, total FMCG volume growth has slowed down slightly in recent months.

'The pattern is quite clear that urban growth has trended down in the recent quarters or quarter and rural has continued to grow gradually and has now for the past few quarters been ahead of urban, and also continues to be ahead of urban this time," Iawa said in an earnings call. HUL, which owns power brands such as Surf, Rin, Lux, Pond's, Lifebuoy, Lakmé, Brooke Bond, Lipton and Horlicks, reported a 2.33 per cent decline in consolidated net profit.

Similarly, Marico also reported "rural growing at 2x the pace of urban" on a year-on-year basis. It also reported "higher input costs in the core portfolios". Though it already had price hikes in the coconut oil portfolio and a favourable reversal in the pricing cycle in Saffola oils

## Magicpin slashes platform fee to Rs 5 per delivery



**PTI** ■ NEW DELHI

Happ magicpin has slashed platform charges to Rs 5 per delivery, half of the fee set by its competitors, a top company official said on Sunday.

Around two weeks back, Zomato and Swiggy raised platform fees in the range of 42-67 per cent per delivery. Magicpin founder and CEO Anshoo Sharma, on social

platform announced the reduction in platform fees applicable for deliveries during the present calendar vear.

'We can find a balance towards the welfare of our delivery heroes and our customers during festive seasons.

Hence, here is a magicpin promise to let more people eniov the festive season. Magicpin's platform fees

50 per cent of

slashed by

competition to Rs 5 only for the rest of the year," Sharma

He said there will be no fee hike on food delivery for the rest of the year 2024.

Zomato increased the platform fee from Rs 7 to Rs 10, which will be charged to customers besides delivery fee per order.

Swiggy followed suit and raised the platform fee to Rs 10 from Rs 6 it charged earlier.

Before Diwali, Magicpin was levying a platform fee of Rs 7, which it has slashed by about 29 per cent, following which it has recorded a two-fold jump in order on a year-overyear basis.

This Diwali, we went against the current trend and took some hard platform pricing decisions.

Result: More than Half a Million orders, Love and Support received during the long festive weekend!

This is 2X of what we did last vear," Sharma said in a post

## Microsoft sees strong momentum in AI spending in India, aims to empower two million with AI skills

 $\underset{slowdown\ in\ technology}{M^{icrosoft\ does\ not\ see\ any}}$ company's India and South Asia President, Puneet Chandok said, asserting that "a lot of momentum" is building up on AI with buzz around 'Copilot' and rise in number of use cases across industries in this market that the software maker counts as among its fastest-growing regions.

In an interview to PTI, Chandok said the general perception around AI has shifted from skepticism to optimism, and now to real impact on the ground, with interesting use cases".
Microsoft's AI assistant 'Copilot' has become a "verb" for artificial intelligence, he observed.

The Redmond, Washingtonbased company is constantly looking at areas it needs to invest in, he said, describing India as among the fastestgrowing regions globally for Microsoft and a "real opportunity to make a dent" with technology and innovation.

Noting that technologies that change the world have to be built responsibly, Chandok emphasised that Microsoft is fully committed to ensuring compliance with all the regulatory requirements, and new evolving frameworks.

"Copilot has become the verb 'Copilot' to India's transformation, which I'm really excited about," Chandok said.

Microsoft is working towards its mission of making AI a reality for everyone in India.



a technology business in India", Chandok said, adding, 'we truly want to be a force that moves India and South Asia forward".

It is pertinent to mention that Microsoft Chairman and CEO Satya Nadella during his visit to the country in February this year had affirmed the company's commitment to supporting India's transformation into an AI-first nation -- in terms of skilled AI workforce and AI infusion across sectors and industries. The Microsoft global honcho had global honcho had announced that the company will provide 2 million people in India with AI skilling

INDIA program that we launched, where we're going to train 2 million people in India over the next two years on AI... That is on its way... The other one, (is where) 75,000 women developers in for AI. We are truly becoming India will be trained and certified as part of Microsoft's 'Code Without Barriers' program, which is really exciting. We just launched the Microsoft Micro Degree in AI with the Ministry of Skill Development, as part of our

digital skills across India," Chandok said.

Chandok believes that India is among the most-exciting markets globally for all technology companies, and for Microsoft.

'It is also one of the fastestgrowing markets for Microsoft, one of the fastestgrowing regions across the world, and that is the reason you are seeing a lot of commitment, a lot of investments, and a lot of impact," he said.

The company is bringing the concept of 'One Microsoft' together in India.

"We have got massive capabilities in India. IDC, which is a development centre, cloud plus AI, Microsoft Research has a massive presence in India, and marks one of the largest presence outside the US. We're bringing all of those capabilities together for our customers and working truly as 'one Microsoft' to make sure that the AI-for-everyone mission in India, is a reality," he said.

The company's India outlook is backed by strong traction it sees on demand and supply sides, as also the on-ground impact.

opportunities. "From a demand perspective, "...The ADVANTA(I)GE more than 7,000 listed companies are in India... A massive runway... Third largest startup ecosystem in the world. So we're excited about that 60 million-plus small and medium businesses. So that is a real opportunity from a demand

perspective.
"On the supply side, if I look at GitHub, India is just behind the US, and close to 15 million developers in India are now on GitHub. We will overtake the US in the next Microsoft is "much more than commitment to enhancing two or three years," he said,

referring to the Microsoft-owned software development platform. Citing estimates to back the

company's optimism about the region, he said one is six AI researchers or AI developers in the world come from India. "There's a recent study which

said every fourth employee that will get added to the workforce in the next 10 years will come from India. So I think just the impact that we have on the world is incredibly important," he said. The Microsoft India leader said AI conversations need to shift from challenges to real opportunities, given that the India market transformative opportunities

across sectors. Citing an example of just how AI is making a difference in India, he said, given that a sizable population here does not speak English, AI is helping drive local language

push. "...So it is reducing the digital divide, which is a fascinating

opportunity," he said. Chandok, however, pointed out that technologies that change the world must be built responsibly, and emphasised that Microsoft is fully committed to ensuring compliance with all the regulatory frameworks.

The regulatory conversations, across the globe, are pushing all tech companies, including Microsoft, to re-emphasise reinforce and commitments safeguarding data, privacy,

transparency, removing biases. He said 'security' has to be built by design, and can "never be an afterthought". "It is job number one, security is above everything else.

## **India sees significant gains in export** competitiveness across key sectors

India's competitiveness export has witnessed healthy gains in multiple sectors particularly petroleum, petroleum, gemstones, agrochemicals and sugar during the last five years, as these segments have increased their share in global trade, according to the commerce ministry data.

The other sectors where the share of India's exports has increased during 2018 and 2023 are electrical goods, pneumatic tyres, taps and valves, and semiconductor devices.

The ministry data analysis showed that petroleum exports rose to USD 84.96 billion in 2023, with India's market share surging to 12.59 per cent last year from 6.45 per cent in 2018, positioning it as the second-largest global exporter. It was ranked fifth in

In the precious and semiprecious stones segment, the country's share in global shipments has soared to 36.53 per cent last year from 16.27 per cent in 2018. It has propelled the country to the top position in the category, with exports reaching USD 1.52 billion in 2023 from USD 0.26 billion in 2018.

It was at the second spot in

Similarly, in cane or beet sugar, the country's outbound shipments have more than quadrupled to USD 3.72 billion from USD 0.93 billion in 2018. has India achieved

tremendous growth in the export of cane or beet sugar, with its global market share increasing from 4.17 per cent in 2018 to 12.21 per cent in Further, the country's position



"As the world's second-largest exporter of sugar, India's success can be attributed to both favourable agricultural policies and its strong

production base.
The country has capitalised on the growing global demand for sugar, especially in regions like Southeast Asia and Africa," an official said. India's share of the global market for insecticides and fungicides has also shown healthy improvement.

The country increased its global share from 8.52 per cent in 2018 to 10.85 per cent in 2023, with exports reaching USD 4.32 billion.

India's ability to meet international agricultural and environmental standards and its emphasis on innovation in agrochemicals have led to this improvement, the official said. India is now the third-largest exporter globally against the 5th position in 2018, the data

in the global market for rubber pneumatic tyres has also strengthened, with exports growing to USD 2.66 billion in 2023 from USD 1.82 billion in 2018.

India now holds a 3.31 per cent share of the global market, up from 2.34 per cent in 2018, and the country has moved up to the eighth position globally from 13th in 2018, indicating the rising demand for Indian-Indianmanufactured tvres. particularly in emerging markets.

The data also showed that exports of semiconductors and photosensitive devices have increased from a mere USD 0.16 billion in 2018 to USD 1.91 billion in 2023, with the country's share in the world market rising to 1.4 per cent, and the country now ranks ninth globally compared to 25th in 2018.

This underscores India's potential to become a key player in the global semiconductor supply chain.

### Lower sales realisation hit margins of cement makers

**PTI** ■ NEW DELHI

Major cement manufacturers reported a decline in margins in the September quarter, mainly on account of lower prices, leading to lower sales realisation.

Barring three leading cement producers UltraTech Cement, Ambuja Cement, and Dalmia Bharat other smaller players, including Nuvoco Vistas Corp, JK Cement, Birla Corporation, and Heidelberg Cement, reported a decline in topline and sales volume in the second quarter of the current fiscal year.

Industry observers said the increase in sales volume of UltraTech and Ambuja Cements is mainly due to the several acquisitions by both companies that consolidated their position further in the industry.

The industry also faced challenges such as extended monsoon, floods, and a slow pickup in government demand, cumulatively leading towards a weak demand. Power, fuel, and other costs,

however, largely remained stable for the industry. The all-India average cement price was around Rs 348 per 50 kg bag in June 2024. It decreased 11 per cent year-on-year to Rs 330 per bag in September, though it increased 2 per cent on a month-on-month basis. In the first half of FY25, cement prices declined 10 per cent year-on-year to Rs 330 per bag. A year earlier, the average prices stood at Rs 365 per bag and Rs 375 per bag in

FY23, according to an Icra

## CELEBRATING ORD DHANWANTRI, THE GOD OF MEDICINE

IMA-AYUS celebrates Dhanwantari Day, honours pioneers in traditional Indian medicine promoting Ayurveda, writes ABHI SINGHAL

Ayurveda is an alternative medicine system which has always been pushed to heights for desi and better recovery. The theory and practice of Ayurveda is heavily practised throughout India majorly with the help of Ayurvedic medicines. The IMA-AYUS is an organisation working for the betterment of the integrated system of medicine from the past 12 years.

IMA-AYUS has been organising Lord Dhanwantri Jayanti every year to celebrate Lord Dhanwantri, god of medicine, the founder of Ayurveda, and an incarnation of Lord Vishnu. The organisation celebrates the day as a tribute to Lord Dhanwantri and honouring pioneers in traditional Indian medicine.

The event was graced by K. K. Sharma, Founder and Managing Director of AIMIL Pharmaceuticals, as the Guest of Honour, bringing invaluable support traditional medicine. AIMIL is a sciencedriven Ayurveda company producing herbal and Ayurvedic healthcare promoting Ayurveda for 40 years. In his keynote speech, Dr. R.S. Chouhan Patron (Ayus), reaffirmed the association's commitment to the advancement of Indian medicine and supporting the

fraternity's betterment. Dr. Chouhan spoke about the association's role in promoting the rich heritage of Ayurveda, Unani, and other medical systems, traditional underscoring their significance in contemporary healthcare. The event was inaugurated Ram Niwas Goyal, Hon'ble Speaker of the Delhi Vidhan Sabha, who addressed the

emphasised on how the

medicine is vital for

future health and

wellness in the country.

The event had sessions

system of

and

audience

Indian

Indian deeply to the audience. The subcontinent, organisation unveiled its monthly magazine Souvenir 2024, with all the yearly events that take place within the organisation.

Gaur Brahmin Ayurvedic College Rohtak Haryana, Shri Krishna Ayush Ayurveda and Unani.

ith historical roots explaining Ayurveda and its impact Students from Ayurvedic & Unani University Kurukshetra, Divya Jyoti Tibbia College Delhi, School of Ayurvedic Medical College & Unani Medical Education and Hospital, Modi Nagar, Ghaziabad Research, Jamia Hamdard Delhi, (U.P.) and more were facilitated as promising students in the field of

### In conversation with Dr Raman Khanna

Dr Raman Khanna, B.A.M.S and medical practitioner from the past 41 years is the the National General Secretary IMA-AYUS. He joined IMA-AYUS in 1988, it's year of formation. He is dedicated to his career as a doctor and to support and promote Ayurveda while being in the association. He talked about Ayurveda, it's incorporation in daily life and the history of Lord Dhanwantari Jayanti. Excerpts

What is the history of the Lord Dhanwantri Jayanti celebrated by **IMA-AYUS?** Integrated Medical association

IMA(Ayus) has been celebrating Dhanwantari Diwas for the last 38 years to honor Lord Dhanwantari, who is regarded as the God of Ayurveda and health. Celebrated on Dhanteras, this recognizes contributions of traditional medicine and promotes awareness about Ayurvedic practices. It serves as a platform to emphasize holistic health, wellness, and the importance of integrating ancient healing traditions into modern healthcare.

All the practitioners of Ayurveda worship Bhagwan Dhanwantari because he is considered the god of Ayurveda and the divine physician. In Hindu tradition, Dhanwantari is believed to have emerged from the ocean during the churning of the ocean (Samudra Manthan) carrying the nectar of immortality (amrita) and the knowledge of healing. His association with health and wellness makes him a central figure in Ayurvedic practices, symbolizing the holistic approach to healing and the importance of balance in life. Worshiping Dhanwantari is a way for

practitioners to seek blessings for health, knowledge, and the successful practice of Ayurveda.



How do you think this event ways it can support daily wellness: inspires medical practitioners and students to pursue Ayurveda?

Lord Dhanwantari, regarded as the type. deity of Ayurveda, highlighting the Daily Why do you organise this event every year in the field of Ayurveda? This celebration can natural rhythms, like waking up early, oil pulling, and self-massage to deepen their commitment to Ayurveda, emphasizing its potential for enhancing human wellness. It management. also fosters a sense of community and encourages the exploration of traditional knowledge contemporary health practices.

> Do you think incorporating Ayurveda in daily wellness can help

Incorporating Ayurveda into daily wellness routines can be beneficial for many people, as it promotes balance through diet, lifestyle, and natural remedies. Ayurveda, a holistic system of medicine from India, emphasises a personalised approach based on your digestion, and enhances overall wellunique constitution (or "dosha")—

and spirit. Here are some needs.

Balance: Dietary suggests foods suited to your dosha Yes, the Celebration of Dhanwantari to promote digestion and energy. Diwas serves as a significant source For example, grounding, warming inspiration for AYUS foods are advised for the Vata dosha, practitioners and students. It honors while cooling foods benefit the Pitta

**Routines:** importance of this ancient healing encourages routines that support (Abhyanga). These can promote better sleep, circulation, and stress Stress and Mental Health: Ayurveda

includes mindfulness practices like yoga, meditation, and breathing exercises (pranayama) to reduce stress and increase mental clarity. Natural Remedies: Using herbal

remedies tailored to your dosha and needs (like turmeric for inflammation or ashwagandha for stress) can provide gentle, plantbased support.

Many find that following Ayurvedic principles helps them feel more in tune with their body, improves being. However, it's important to Vata, Pitta, or Kapha. It's built around consult an Ayurvedic practitioner, the idea of maintaining health especially if you're new to it, to ensure by harmonising mind, body, the practices align with your health

# DEBUNKING POPULAR **NUTRITION MYTHS**

ness 11



### BY DR WAJIHA MEHTAB

n today's world, nutrition information is everywhere—from social media is everywhere—non sound influencers to fitness gurus, all are offering dietary advice. But with so much information, how do we separate fact from fiction? Unfortunately, many popular nutrition myths continue to spread, often leading to confusion and unhealthy choices. As a registered dietitian, it's important to set the record straight with science-backed facts. There are some most persistent nutrition myths circulating today that should be debunked.

Carbs Are the Enemy

Fact: Carbohydrates have been vilified by many diets, but they're not inherently bad. In fact, carbohydrates are your body's primary energy source. Whole grains, fruits, vegetables, and legumes are all excellent sources of healthy carbs that provide essential nutrients like fiber, vitamins, and minerals. The key is to focus on complex carbs rather than refined sugars. It's not about eliminating carbs but choosing the right ones.

**Eating Fat Makes You Fat** 

Fact: The idea that fat automatically leads to weight gain is outdated. Healthy fats, such as those found in avocados, nuts, seeds, and olive oil, play a vital role in your body. They help absorb fat-soluble vitamins, support brain function, and even aid in satiety, making you feel fuller for because of their cholesterol content. and longer. The type of fat you consume matters more than the amount—trans fats and excessive saturated fats can be harmful, while unsaturated fats are essential for good health.

### A Detox Diet Will Cleanse Your Body

Fact: Detox diets are one of the most popular trends, but the science doesn't back them up. Your body has its own natural detoxification systems—primarily the liver, kidneys, and digestive tract. No special juice, cleanse, or supplement is needed to "flush out toxins." Instead of relying on expensive detoxes, focus on a well-balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetables, fiber, and water to support your body's natural detox processes.

### Gluten-Free Is Always Healthier

Fact: Going gluten-free is medically necessary for people with celiac disease or gluten intolerance, but for the general population, there's no evidence that a gluten-free diet is inherently healthier. In fact, many gluten-free processed foods are lower in fiber and higher in sugar and fat to compensate for the texture and taste of missing gluten. Unless you have a medical reason, there's no need to avoid gluten. Whole grains like wheat, barley, and rye are nutritious and offer many health benefits.

Late-Night Eating Causes Weight Gain Fact: Weight gain is more about what and how much you eat overall than the specific time of day. While late-night snacking can sometimes lead to overeating, particularly of less healthy, high-calorie foods, it's the excess calories that contribute to weight gain—not the timing. If you're hungry in the evening, opt for a light, balanced snack

like yogurt or a handful of nuts, rather than worrying about the clock.

### MYTH 6

You Need to Eat Small, Frequent Meals to Boost Metabolism

Fact: The idea that eating every few hours boosts your metabolism is a  $c \quad o \quad m \quad m \quad o \quad n$ The misconception. reality is that the



number of meals you eat has little to do with your metabolic rate. What matters most is the total number of calories consumed and the quality of those calories. Whether you prefer three meals a day or six smaller ones, the key is to eat a balanced, nutrient-dense diet that meets your body's needs.

You Should Only Eat Egg Whites

many people opted for egg whites to avoid fat and calories. However, research now shows that dietary cholesterol has a minimal impact on blood cholesterol for most people. The yolk is actually packed with essential nutrients, including vitamins D and B12, choline, and healthy fats. Eating the whole egg provides a nutritious and filling meal, so there's no need to skip the yolk.

You Need Supplements to Be Healthy

Fact: While some people may benefit from specific supplements (e.g., vitamin D, B12 for vegans, or folic acid during pregnancy), most people can meet their nutritional needs through a well-balanced diet. Whole foods provide a complex mix of nutrients that work together in ways supplements can't replicate. Over-reliance on supplements can lead to nutrient imbalances or toxicity. Always consult with a healthcare professional before starting any new supplements.

You Can Spot-Reduce Fat

Fact: Unfortunately, spot-reducing fat, such as targeting belly fat through crunches or specific exercises, is not possible. When you lose fat, it happens across your entire body, not just one specific area. The best approach for fat loss is a combination of regular exercise (both cardio and strength training) and a balanced, calorie-controlled diet.

### **CONCLUSION** Trust the Science

It's easy to be swayed by the latest diet trends or celebrity-endorsed health tips, but it's essential to approach nutrition with a critical eye. Rather than falling for myths and misinformation, trust the science and rely on credible sources, like registered dietitians, for guidance. Your

health is too important to base on fads-balanced, evidence-based nutrition will always stand the test of time.

> The author is MSc, PhD, Consultant Nutritionist, Founder & Director, Artisan Academy of Advanced Clinical Nutrition.

## **SheShield Conclave Concludes**



## Non-performance of batters is worrying, we will strive to do something special in Australia: Rohit

disastrous performance of star batters is certainly a cause of concern for India, admitted Rohit Sharma after a stunning reversal against New Zealand but the skipper promised that the team will fight to deliver something 'very very special' in Australia.

New Zealand went strength to strength in the series while hosts India could not bring their floundering campaign back on track and ended up suffering a rare and humiliating 0-3 whitewash. Rohit (91) and Virat Kohli (93) managed less than 200 runs across three Tests, a major reason for India's debacle.

"It's a cause of concern without a doubt. If the batters are not performing, that is a cause of concern," Rohit said.

"What is done, is done now. As a player, as a captain, as a team, we all have to look forward and see how we can correct what we didn't embarrassing result at home manage to achieve here. table following the embarrassing result at home and it could hasten the



special in Australia. We will focus on that." India have already been

displaced from the top of the World Test Championship There is a good opportunity impending transition for the for us to go and do Test side but Rohit preferred happens after.

something really, really to look only at the immediate challenge of Australia tour.

"I don't think we can look that far ahead. I'm not going to look beyond Australia series. Australia series, for us is now very, very important. We will try and focus on that rather than thinking what

for the first time ever. "Australia is not an easy place to play cricket. But we

play five Tests Down Under

can take a lot of confidence how we played in the last two series in Australia. In the back of our mind, we have to think like that," said Rohit.
Rohit, of late, has adopted an
ultra aggressive and risky
approach while batting, and
it has resulted in him losing his wicket rather quickly.

He maintained that he has not lost faith in his defensive skills and his style of batting was more of an evolution process he chose for himself but promised to have a relook into it.

"I haven't defended a lot in this series because I haven't been there to defend. Clearly I have to look at my own game and try and see what best I can do. When I go to bat, I always think how I can put the team in the best situation of the game."

"When the openers go in, they set the tone and sometimes you can fall on the other side of it as well. This series, I have fallen on the other side of it. But I don't see that I have lost faith in my defence.

### Parthavi, Vanshika, Hemant win gold, Indian boxers return with 17 medals from U-19 World C'ships

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Parthavi Grewal, Vanshika Goswami and Hemant Sangwan punched their way to gold as Indian boxers made a strong impression, clinching a haul of 17 medals at the inaugural U-19 World Championships organised by World Boxing in Colorado, USA.

It was the female boxers who stole the show with as many as 10 of them standing on the podium at the age group tournament.

While Parthavi notched a dominant 5-0 win over Netherlands' Aaliyah Hoppema in the women's 65kg final Vanshika emerged victorious in the woman's +80kg category against Germany's Victoria Gatt by Referee Stops Contest (RSC) one minute and 37 minutes on Saturday.

In the next bout, Hemant clinched India's sole gold medal in the men's category by securing a 4-1 split decision victory over the USA's Rishon Sims in the

90kg category. Nisha (51kg), Supriya Devi Thokchom (54kg) and Kritika Wasan (80kg) lost their respective finals to sign off with silver medals. This significant medal count was highlighted by the contributions of 11 Khelo India Athletes (KIAs), of which eight are SAI National of Excellence Centre (NCOE) trainees.

The medallists also included three NCOE trainees who are non-KIAs, all training out of NCOE Rohtak. Medal-winning Khelo India

Athletes: Boys - Sumit, Lakshay Rathi, Krrish Pal (all NCOE Rohtak), Aryan, Rishi Singh. Girls - Krisha Verma (NCOE Aurangabad), Chanchal Chaudhary, Nisha, Vini, Akansha Phalaswal (all Chanchal NCOE Rohtak), Supriya

Devi. Medal-winning Athletes:

NCOE Rohtak - Parthavi, Vanshika (Gold), Chanchal, Nisha, Vini, Akansha, Kritika (Silver), Krrish Pal, Sumit, Lakshay Rathi (Bronze). NCOE Aurangabad - Krisha Verma (Gold)

Overall medal winners: Gold: Krisha Verma (F75kg), Parthavi Grewal (F65kg), Vanshika Goswami (F+80KG), Hemant Sangwan

(M90kg). Nisha (F51kg), Silver: Supriya Devi Thokchom (F54kg), Kritika Wasan Chanchal

(F80kg), Chaudhary (F48kg), Anjali Singh (F57kg), Vini (F60kg), Akansha Phalaswal (F70kg), Rahul Kundu (M75kg). Bronze: Rishi S

(M50kg), Krrish (M55kg), Sumit (M70kg), Aryan (M85kg), Lakshay Rathi (M90+kg).

Pool H features Manipur

Hockey, Hockey Bengal, Hockey Bihar, and Assam

The tournament will open

with a series of matches, including Uttar Pradesh

Hockey vs Kerala Hockey

and Hockey Karnataka vs Hockey Uttarakhand,

among other exciting

fixtures, setting the stage for

a thrilling championship.

Hockey.

### Rashid ends tied 25th, Canadian Lee wins title in Jakarta

**PTI** ■ JAKARTA

Indian golfer Rashid Khan, who was tied third at the halfway stage, faltered in the last two rounds with 72-71 and finished tied 25th at the BNI Indonesian Masters here on Sunday.

Rashid (67-67-72-71) totalled 11-under as fellow Indian SSP Chawrasia (68) was T-41st at 7-under and the 2023 champion Gaganjeet Bhullar (72) was T-44th.

Canadian Richard T. Lee finally ended his long and frustrating seven-year wait for a third victory on the Asian Tour when he recorded a fine four-shot wire-to-wire

After dozens of opportunities to win again following his Lee was six in front at the relieved to prevail at Royale



closing two-under-par 70 for a four-round total of 23under.

Chinese Taipei's Chang Weiand Phachara Khongwatmai from Thailand secured second place, after both carded 64s. Zimbabwean Kieran Vincent

finished fourth following a

ahead at the turn. A one-and-Jakarta Golf Club after firing a-half-hour weather delay, rankings

which began when he was on hole 10 failed to unsettle him. However, an unexpected double-bogey on the 16th, where he took two to get out of a greenside bunker and missed a six-foot bogey putt, led to some uncertainty.

It meant his lead was cut to four over Chang, who was in the clubhouse, but he steadied the ship with a brave five-foot putt for par on the next hole followed by a par on the last.

The victory continued a brilliant run of form as he was tied for second in last week's International Series Thailand, finished joint ninth in the Black Mountain Championship, and came home in 10th at the Yeangder

success at the 2017 Shinhan start of day and in cruise American John Catlin, who Donghae Open he was control after lying seven closed with a 69 here and was tied for sixth, leads the

### Top teams compete for honours in 14th senior men's National Hockey Championship

there before and a lot of the

guys haven't been there

before, which is why we are

trying to go there a little

early just to get used to the conditions."

Rohit said India will have to

draw a lot of confidence

from their last two series

wins with the team set to

Atotal of 31 teams will fight for the top honours at the 14th edition of the Hockey India Senior Men National Championship set to begin here on Monday. The 31 teams were divided into eight pools, and the tournament will conclude on

November 16. During the league stage, each team will play against every other side in their pool.

The top team from each pool will advance to the quarterfinals to be played on November 13, followed by semifinals on November 15, and the final and 3rd/4th place play-off match on November 16.

Pool A features defending champions Hockey Punjab along with Dadra & Nagar Haveli And Daman & Diu Hockey and Chhattisgarh Hockey.

Pool B includes Hockey Harvana Telangana Hockey Himachal, and Karnataka,



Hockey Mizoram, while Pool C comprises Hockey Unit of Tamil Nadu, Hockey Madhya Pradesh, Hockey Andhra Pradesh, and Hockey Andaman & Nicobar. Pool D consists of F

Chandigarh, Hockey Uttarakhand, and Tripura Hockey.

Ε, Рооl Hockey Association of Odisha will compete with Le Puducherry Hockey, Hockey Rajasthan Hockey and Hockey Arunachal, and Hockey Gujarat, while Tirkey said.

Hockey India President
Dilip Tirkey expressed his
enthusiasm for the
upcoming tournament. "We are delighted to host the 14th Hockey India Senior

Hockey

Hockey.

while Pool F includes Uttar

Pradesh Hockey, Delhi Hockey, Kerala Hockey, and

Hockey Jammu and Kashmir.

Pool G consists of Hockey

Iharkhand,

Maharashtra

National Championship in Chennai, a city with a rich hockey legacy. This championship provides a platform for showcasing the best talent from across the country and is a key event in developing the future stars of Indian hockey. I wish all the teams the very best as they compete for top honours,"

their quest for a third consecutive WTC final

appearance.
However, to qualify for the final without depending on

external results, they now must win four of their remaining five games -- a

challenging task in Australia. Australia, on the other hand, are in a better position as they need to win four of their

remaining seven Tests.

### Rio Takeda wins Toto Japan Classic after six sudden-death playoff holes for her first LPGA Tour win

**AP** ■ SHIGA

 $R^{\mathrm{io}}$  Takeda of Japan won the LPGA's Toto Japan Classic on Sunday in a playoff that lasted six sudden-death holes, defeating Marina Alex of the United States. It was Takeda's first victory on the LPGA

Tour. Takeda had a birdie on the par-5 18th

hole, edging Alex with par.
The two were tied after 54 holes at 15under 201. The tournament was restricted to 54 regulation holes after

Saturday's third round was washed out They were also even after the first five playoff holes in the sudden-death

format, each with a birdie on the first

playoff hole and pars on the next four

holes. All of the playoff holes were par-5s - the 18th hole and the 13th. Alex shot a 6-under 66 in the final round and Takeda shot 67.



Haeran Ryu of South Korea was one shot behind after regulation with a 66. She finished at 14-under 202.

Hana Wakimoto of Japan, the leader after the first two rounds, slipped to a 1-over 73 and finished three strokes

behind the leaders. She was also seeking her first LPGA Tour win.

The Japan tournament concludes a fourevent Asian swing for the LPGA Tour that included events in China, South Korea and Malaysia.

India lost their top position in the World Test Championship standings, slipping to second place after suffering an embarrassing home series defeat to New

Zealand on Sunday.
India lost to New Zealand by 25 runs in the third and final Test in Mumbai resutling in a 0-3 whitewash, their first in a home Test series since South Africa's 2-0 win in 1999-2000. This was also for the first time India have been swept 0-3 in in a home series.

It was India's fifth loss in the ongoing WTC cycle, causing a significant drop in their points percentage (PCT), which fell from 62.82 to 58.33. India thus dropped to the second spot behind reigning champions Australia, who have regained the top spot with a PCT of 62.50.



India are now schedule to fly Down Under to play the five-match Border-Gavaskar Trophy, which has gained more significance now as

New Zealand's historic series sweep in India has also bolstered their WTC final

aspirations. They have climbed to the fourth spot with a PCT of 54.55, while Sri Lanka occupy third place with a PCT of

55.56. South Africa, currently fifth with a PCT of 54.17, also remain in contention for a top-two finish and a place in the next year's one-off Test at

### Silva scores in stoppage time, Atlanta rallies to beat Messi's Miami 2-1 to even playoff series

AP ATLANTA

Xande Silva scored with about a minute to go in stoppage time shortly after a goal by Lionel Messi was waved off by a clear offside, giving ninth-seeded Atlanta
United a 2-1 victory over Inter

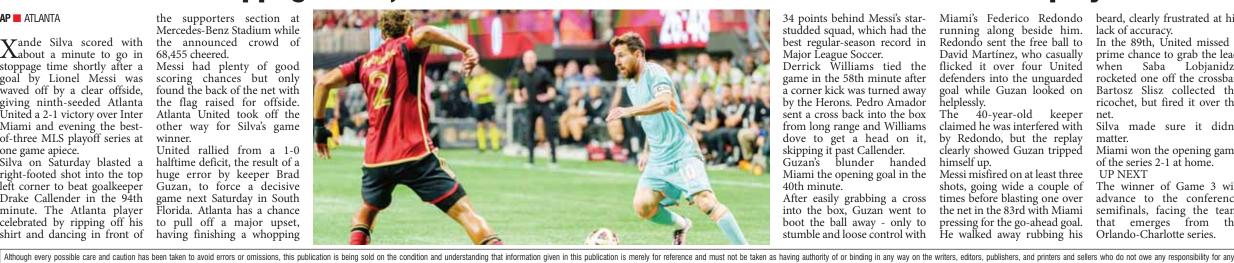
Atlanta United took off the Miami and evening the best-of-three MLS playoff series at

one game apiece. Silva on Saturday blasted a right-footed shot into the top left corner to beat goalkeeper Drake Callender in the 94th minute. The Atlanta player celebrated by ripping off his shirt and dancing in front of having finishing a whopping

the supporters section at Mercedes-Benz Stadium while the announced crowd of 68,455 cheered.

Messi had plenty of good scoring chances but only found the back of the net with the flag raised for offside. other way for Silva's game winner.

United rallied from a 1-0 halftime deficit, the result of a huge error by keeper Brad Guzan, to force a decisive game next Saturday in South Florida. Atlanta has a chance to pull off a major upset,



34 points behind Messi's star- Miami's Federico Redondo beard, clearly frustrated at his studded squad, which had the best regular-season record in Major League Soccer.

Derrick Williams tied the game in the 58th minute after a corner kick was turned away by the Herons. Pedro Amador sent a cross back into the box from long range and Williams dove to get a head on it, skipping it past Callender. Guzan's blunder handed

Miami the opening goal in the 40th minute. After easily grabbing a cross into the box, Guzan went to boot the ball away - only to

running along beside him. Redondo sent the free ball to David Martínez, who casually flicked it over four United defenders into the unguarded goal while Guzan looked on helplessly. The 40-year-old keeper

both teams will be vying for

India were considered

favourites to win a majority of

their remaining matches in

the top two spots.

claimed he was interfered with by Redondo, but the replay clearly showed Guzan tripped himself up.
Messi misfired on at least three

shots, going wide a couple of times before blasting one over the net in the 83rd with Miami pressing for the go-ahead goal. He walked away rubbing his

lack of accuracy. In the 89th, United missed a

prime chance to grab the lead

when Saba Lobjanidze

rocketed one off the crossbar.

Bartosz Slisz collected the ricochet, but fired it over the net. Silva made sure it didn't

matter. Miami won the opening game

of the series 2-1 at home. UP NEXT The winner of Game 3 will advance to the conference

semifinals, facing the team that emerges from the Orlando-Charlotte series.

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