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INSIDE

SPORTS 11 CRISTIANO RONALDO SCORES AS AL-NASSR BEATS DEFENDING CHAMPION AL-AIN 5-1



DONALD TRUMPS KAMALA HARRIS

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Donald Trump was Wednesday elected the United States' President for a second term in one of the greatest political comebacks in American history, four years after an election loss in 2020 that sparked a violent insurrection at the US Capitol. The 78-year-old Republican leader, convicted of felony charges and awaiting sentencing in a hush-money case in New York, defeated his Democratic rival Kamala Harris in a bitterly fought election.

According to races called by the Associated Press up to 7 pm (IST), 277 electoral votes had gone to Trump and 224 to Harris. Trump, the oldest person in US history to be elected president, crossed the halfway 270 votes-mark in electoral college votes with victory in the battleground state of Wisconsin.

Addressing his supporters at West Palm Beach in Florida, Trump declared his victory in the presidential election, calling the mandate "unprecedented and powerful". "Many people have told me that God spared my life for a reason," Trump said, referring to the two assassination attempts on his life during the election campaign this year.

Amid cheers of his jubilant supporters and his family by his side, Trump declared that this will be the "golden age" of America. "This is a magnificent victory for the American people. This was a movement like nobody's ever seen before, and frankly, this was, I believe, the greatest political movement of all time. There's never been anything



like this in this country, and maybe beyond," Trump said. "And now it's going to reach a new level of importance because we're going to help our country heal. We'll help our country... We have a country that needs help, and it needs help very badly," he said. Soon after projections indicated Trump's victory, congratulatory messages started pouring in from world leaders, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, British Prime Minister Keir Starmer and French President Emmanuel Macron, for his "historic return to the White House".

After President Grover Cleveland (1885-1889 and 1893-1897), Trump is the only person to return to the White House for another term after a gap of four years. Trump served as President from January 2017 to January 2021. "We made history for a reason tonight, and the reason is going to be just that we overcame obstacles that nobody thought possible, and it is now clear that we've achieved the most incredible political thing," Trump said in his speech.

"I want to thank the American people for the extraordinary honour of being elected your 47th president and your 45th

president," he said. "I will fight for you, for your family and your future." "Every single day, I will be fighting for you and with every breath in my body, I will not rest until we have delivered the strong, safe and prosperous America that our children deserve and that you deserve. This will truly be the golden age of America," said Trump, who wrapped up his speech with a playful dance to the song YMCA by the band Village People.

The victory by Trump is being seen as a remarkable comeback after he lost the 2020 presidential election to Joe Biden, which seemed then to

be the end of his political career. Trump challenged the election results and even indirectly urged his supporters to march on the US Capitol that reportedly triggered the violent attacks and clashes inside the seat of American democracy, sending shockwaves across the globe. In the following months, Trump unsuccessfully challenged the results in court. A grand jury found him guilty on 34 counts of falsifying business records. The Biden-Harris campaign said at the time that no one is above the law while Trump called the verdict the result of a "rigged" political system.

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Look forward to renewing our collaboration: PM Modi

RAHUL DATTA ■ NEW DELHI

India and the United States' ties across the spectrum including commerce, strategic affairs and defence are likely to see a healthy boost with Donald Trump winning the presidential polls, as he shares a warm relationship with Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Prime Minister Modi was one of the first world leaders to congratulate "friend" Donald Trump on his "historic" victory. In his message, Prime Minister Modi on Wednesday said he looks forward to renewing their collaboration to further strengthen the India-US Comprehensive Global and Strategic Partnership. "Heartiest congratulations my friend @realDonaldTrump on your historic election victory. As you build on the successes of your previous term, I look forward to renewing our collaboration to further strengthen the India-US Comprehensive Global and Strategic Partnership," Modi said in a social media post.

"Together, let's work for the betterment of our people and to promote global peace, stability and prosperity," he said. The prime minister also posted pictures of his previous meetings with Trump, who was the US president from 2016-2020. Both leaders share the same views regarding strategic co-operation and defence. They also shared a hard stance against terrorism, which strengthened ties,



FILE PHOTO

Sensex, Nifty surge over one per cent

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Stock markets rallied more than 1 per cent on Wednesday with benchmark Sensex soaring 901 points on heavy buying in IT and pharma shares as Donald Trump is all set to win the United States presidential elections. Extending its gains to the second day, the BSE Sensex jumped 901.50 points or 1.13 per cent to settle at 80,378.13. During the day, it soared 1,093.1 points or 1.37 per cent to 80,569.73. The NSE Nifty soared 270.75 points or 1.12 per



cent to close at 24,484.05. From the 30-share Sensex pack, Tata Consultancy Services and Infosys jumped over 4 per cent each. HCL Technologies, Tech Mahindra, Adani Ports, Larsen & Toubro, Maruti and Reliance Industries were also among big gainers.

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CBSE cracks whip on 'dummy' admissions

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a crackdown on 'dummy' admissions, the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) on Wednesday withdrew affiliation of 21 schools and downgraded six schools from senior secondary to secondary level, officials said. The move comes following a surprise inspection at the schools in Rajasthan and Delhi in September during which several lapses were found.

"The practice of dummy or non-attending admissions contradicts the core mission of school education, compromising students' foundational growth. To address this issue, we are taking decisive action to combat the proliferation of dummy schools and send a clear message to all affiliated institutions to resist the lure of accepting dummy or non-attending admissions," CBSE Secretary Himanshu Gupta said.



He said the vital observations of the surprise inspection committees regarding the irregularities observed during the inspections were communicated as a report to the respective schools. "The replies submitted by the schools were examined in detail by the Board. Based on the inspection findings and supported by videographic evidence, affiliation of 21 schools was withdrawn and six schools were downgraded from senior secondary to secondary level," Gupta added.

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LMV license holders can drive transport vehicles: SC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court (SC) on Wednesday ruled that individuals holding a Light Motor Vehicle (LMV) driving license are eligible to drive transport vehicles with a weight not exceeding 7,500kg. The judgment from a five-judge Constitution Bench, led by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud, offers clarity on licensing regulations and is expected to prevent insurance companies from rejecting claims based on the license type of drivers involved in accidents.

"A driver holding a license for light motor vehicle... for vehicles with gross vehicle weight under 7,500kg is permitted to operate a transport vehicle without needing additional authorisation... of the Motor Vehicle Act. LMVs and the transport vehicles are not entirely separate classes, and overlap exists



between the two," the Bench held, adding the statute should remain practical and workable. Pronouncing the unanimous verdict for the Bench, Justice Hrishikesh Roy, however, said the special eligibility requirement will continue to apply to vehicles carrying hazardous goods. Besides the CJ and Justice Roy, the Bench also comprised Justices PS Narasimha, Pankaj Mishra and Manoj Misra.

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Abandoned at birth, miracle baby Krishna defies death

PTI ■ PRAYAGRAJ/ KANPUR (UP)

In a tale of miraculous survival, an abandoned newborn found clinging to his life from the branches of a tree in Uttar Pradesh's Hamirpur in August has fought back from the jaws of death after surviving 50 wounds, including a deep animal bite, that dotted his tiny, fragile frame.

The boy, who was barely two days old when he was found abandoned in Hamirpur, has defied all odds to not only get a new lease of life, but also a new name - 'Krishna' - and most recently, a temporary abode, the government-run children's home in Prayagraj. Prayagraj district probation officer Sarvajit Singh told PTI that the "fully fit" child is now being properly looked after at the children's home, where he was shifted following the orders of the Bal Kalyan



Samiti (child welfare committee) in Hamirpur. Asked about the possibility of adoption, Singh said, "The profile of every such child is uploaded on the website of the Central Adoption Resource Authority. Whoever wants to adopt a child can apply on the website. However, the profile of this child is yet to be uploaded."

Before he arrived in Prayagraj, the paediatrics department of the GSVM Medical College in Kanpur had virtually become his home, helping him stage a

miraculous recovery in about two months, where his charming smile endeared him to the doctors and nurses alike. So it didn't come as a surprise when the medical staff of the hospital were moved to tears at the time of his discharge after a triumphant death-defying battle.

"Our hearts rejoiced in equal measure when this little kid, found clinging to a fragile thread of life after being abandoned and attacked, recovered fully," Dr Arun

Kumar Arya, head of the paediatrics department at the GSVM Medical College, said in a statement. "Against all odds, this small and innocent baby endured unimaginable hardship, suffering multiple dog bites and scratch marks on his entire body before being mercifully rescued," Dr Arya said. The child was found in an abandoned field in Hamirpur district and later rescued by the police after being notified by the local authorities, he added. The child was "severely malnourished" and "in desperate need of medical attention" at the time of his rescue. The unfed boy had multiple infected wounds on his body and his cries could be heard from afar, Dr Arya said. "The child was admitted to the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) on August 31.

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Patanjali's gift to the country on the occasion of Chhath - Dant Kanti Red

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Yogi launches scathing on MVA, says it is 'Maha Anaadi' alliance

PNS ■ WASHIM/AMRAVATI/AKOLA

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, while campaigning in Maharashtra on Wednesday, launched a scathing attack on the opposition alliance Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) terming it as "Maha Anaadi" alliance. He said that those who do not like Lord Bajrang Bali should go wherever they want to and asked, "Who in India does not believe in Lord Ram and Bajrang Bali?"

Yogi Adityanath, during the campaign for Maharashtra state assembly elections on Wednesday, said, "In the Treta Yuga when Lord Bajrang Bali existed, the concept of Islam did not even exist. Why are people being stopped from taking out Ram Navami processions or reciting Hanuman Chalisa?"

"Two major alliances are contesting in the election. On one side, there is the Mahayuti alliance which includes Bharatiya Janata Party, Shiv Sena and Nationalist Congress Party. On the other side, there is the Maha Aghadi or 'Maha Anaadi' alliance. An alliance that doesn't care about the country's values, religion, nationalism, or the moral boundaries of society is 'anaadi', Yogi said and added, "This is what the 'Maha Anaadi' alliance is doing. For the Maha Vikas Aghadi; power is a means for corruption, loot and promoting terrorism and Naxalism for political gain." He added that the Mahayuti alliance, under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, believed in "Tera vaibhav amar rahe maa, hum din char rahein



na rahein (May your glory be eternal, Mother whether we live or not)," while the Maha Aghadi alliance believes, "Mera vaibhav amar rahe Maa, chahe tum raho na raho (May my glory be eternal, mother, whether you stay or not)." Yogi said that power would come and go but India must remain and, under Modi's leadership, become the world's greatest power. He criticised the "Maha Anaadi" alliance for playing with the respect and self-respect of India and its culture.

He pointed out that Congress and NCP leaders once claimed that Lord Ram and Lord Krishna never existed, but now even those who opposed Ram were starting to remember him. He mentioned that after 500 years, Lord Ram had celebrated Diwali and Deepotsav at his birthplace. Yogi also spoke about the struggle of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, saying it was a fight for India's self-respect and

honour. He recalled that Shivaji Maharaj went to Agra to challenge the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb's rule. Yogi said that when he became the chief minister, he visited Agra, where he was informed about the construction of a Mughal museum that would house memorabilia related to Aurangzeb. "I questioned the relevance of such a museum, as Aurangzeb was a foreign invader and asked, what connection you have with him. I then directed that the museum's name be changed in memory of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj instead," he said. "After independence, Congress ruled for a long time but never thought about India and its culture. There was a time when Pakistan carried out terrorist attacks in India, Pakistani infiltrators would plant bombs, and China would violate India's borders. Whenever the issue was raised, Congress leaders would say, 'Don't speak, it will harm rela-

tions'. They were more concerned about relations than national security. However, under Modi's leadership, India is different," Yogi said.

"Now, if anyone tries to cross the border, they will face the journey of 'Ram Naam Satya', and if bombs are planted, there will be strong airstrikes and surgical strikes, making even Pakistan tremble," the UP chief minister remarked.

He highlighted that during Congress' time, national security was at risk, but under Prime Minister Modi's leadership, India does not quietly endure humiliation. He also mentioned a report that the Chinese army was retreating, while the Indian army was patrolling the border.

Yogi said that the name of Aurangabad, named after the cruel Afzal Khan who was defeated by Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, should be changed.

He suggested that it should be renamed Sambhaji Nagar in honour of Shivaji Maharaj's legacy. He emphasised that Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj united every Indian, and it is from his inspiration that he often says, 'Batiye mat, jab bhi bate toh kate the. ek hai toh nek-safe hai'. (Do not divide, for when we are divided, we are weakened. Unity brings safety and strength.) "With unity, there will be no stone pelting during processions, but people will clean the streets in front of you. The focus should not be on fighting and dividing but on uniting to ensure the victory of the Mahayuti alliance in Maharashtra and defeat the 'Maha Anaadi' alliance," he said.

11 killed in Hardoi road mishap



Relatives grief after a collision between a truck and an autorickshaw, leaving 10 people dead, in Hardoi, on Wednesday.

PTI

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a tragic incident, 11 people, including three children and six women, lost their lives in a collision between a tempo and a DCM truck in Hardoi on Wednesday. Five others sustained injuries and they were rushed to a nearby hospital for treatment. The accident took place near

Roshanpur village on Bilgram-Bilghur highway in Hardoi district when a passenger tempo overturned on Bilghur-Katra state highway while trying to avert collision with a DCM truck on Wednesday morning. Eleven people were killed in the accident - seven on the spot and four in hospital during treatment. The condition of five injured was said to be critical.

Police and relief teams were immediately rushed to the spot on getting news about the accident. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has expressed condolences to the families of the deceased. He also directed the officials to take immediate action and also ordered proper treatment of the injured. Police are searching for the DCM driver, who fled from the spot after the accident.

Police said only seven deceased had been identified so far. They include Madhuri Devi (40) of Majh village, Sunita of Patian Purva village, Neelam (60) wife of Raja Ram of Itoli Bilgram, Satyam Kushwaha son of Pappu Patel Nagar East Madhoganj, Radha wife Rakesh Itoli Bilgram, Sunita's daughter Ashi (8) of Alok Madhoganj, Radha Devi, and her aunt.

Prashant Kumar likely to made permanent DGP

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Yogi Adityanath cabinet's new guideline for the selection and appointment of the state's director general of police has dashed the hopes of many IPS officers. After the formation of the nomination committee, incumbent acting DGP Prashant Kumar may be made permanent.

This may give him a chance to hold the post of DGP for two years. If the government selects him as a permanent DGP, setting aside the seniority factor, this month, Kumar will retire two years after his selection i.e., November 30, 2026 instead of his scheduled retirement on May 31, 2025. He will get an additional 18 months after the completion of his retirement period. After the formation of the Bharatiya Janata Party government in Uttar Pradesh in 2017, eight DGPs have been appointed. Four of them were permanent. Among the permanent ones, OP Singh was the DGP for the maximum two years. Mukul Goyal was the last permanent DGP in UP.

Now, with the recent decision of the cabinet, Prashant Kumar, who is among the trusted officers of Chief Minister Yogi, can also get a chance to hold the post of DGP for two years. However, due to this many IPS officers will retire without becoming DGP. They include PV Ramasastri, Aditya Mishra, Sandeep Salunke, Daljit Singh Chaudhary, Bijay Kumar Maurya, MK Bashal, Tilottama Verma, Alok Sharma, Abhay Kumar Prasad, Deepesh Juneja and Neera Rawat. After Prashant Kumar's retirement, the names of the officers retiring only after May 2026 will be considered for selection to the DGP post.

Apart from UP, acting DGPs were also appointed in eight other states - Uttarakhand, Punjab, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Odisha, West Bengal, Rajasthan, and Jammu and Kashmir. Of these, Jammu and Kashmir DGP RR Swain was made permanent by the Central government in August last year, after which he retired on September 30. The Supreme Court had issued a contempt notice for appointing acting DGPs against the rules in the remaining eight states. Before filing its reply, the UP government has cleared the way to appoint a permanent DGP by making rules for the selection and appointment of DGP.

With this, the two-and-a-half year tussle between the UP government and the Union Public Service Commission regarding the appointment of a permanent DGP has also ended.

Yogi govt to ensure shining highways, roads, NHAI chairman reviews of ongoing projects

PNS ■ PRAYAGRAJ

The Yogi Adityanath government is focused on making the upcoming Maha Kumbh 2025 a historic event, with particular attention being given to the roads leading to Prayagraj city. Following the instructions of Chief Minister Yogi, both the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) and the Public Works Department (PWD) have commenced work to improve and beautify the roads connecting the highways to the city.

During Maha Kumbh 2025, crores of devotees from across the country and the world will travel to Prayagraj by road. They will be welcomed by wide roads, multilingual signboards, greenery, and artwork displayed along the way. In addition, all essential facilities will be available near the toll plazas to ensure a smooth and

comfortable experience for the visitors.

On Wednesday, NHAI Chairman Santosh Kumar Yadav conducted a review of ongoing projects with Principal Secretary (Urban Development) Amrit Abhijat, and Principal Secretary (PWD) Ajay Chauhan, at the Prayagraj Mela Authority auditorium. During the meeting, Yadav emphasised that Maha Kumbh 2025 is a historic event, and the roads should not only be constructed but also be aesthetically pleasing and well-maintained.

He instructed that as many signboards as possible be installed along all roads connecting to Prayagraj, along with safety inspectors to ensure smooth traffic flow. Additionally, beautification work, including paintings, lighting, and the installation of cameras, should be carried out.

He further emphasised that as crores of devotees will be visiting for the Maha Kumbh, the roads should be designed in a way that their appearance uplifts the spirit of the devotees. He noted that this is an excellent opportunity to showcase the government's work to the world. He instructed officials to ensure the installation of Cat's Eyes where necessary, add flowering at entry points, and apply paintings on dividers to help visibility during foggy weather.

Additionally, he asked for a review and improvement of the road lighting along National Highways. He also emphasised the need to highlight the NHAI control room number and promote awareness of the NHAI Highway Yatra App to assist travelers in having a smooth journey.

Regarding the toll plazas, the NHAI chairman emphasised that the toll plazas on the way

to the Kumbh should be closely monitored to ensure a positive experience for travelers. He instructed that the toll plazas should not only be well-maintained but also visually appealing. The facilities at these plazas should be streamlined, with clean toilets and properly trained staff who are prepared to handle all situations. He stressed the importance of ensuring that employees work in three shifts to maintain smooth operations. Additionally, he highlighted the need for an adequate number of ambulances to be stationed, along with incident vehicles, to handle any emergencies during the event. During this, Divisional Commissioner Vijay Vishwas Pant, ADG Bhanu Bhaskar, Mela Adhikari Vijay Kiran Anand, DM Ravindra Kumar Mandhad, SSP Kumbh Rajesh Kumar Dwivedi and other officers were present.

CM to inaugurate Akanksha Haat

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Under the leadership of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, the Uttar Pradesh government is actively promoting women's economic empowerment and self-reliance. In line with this mission, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath will inaugurate Akanksha Haat 2024 at Indira Gandhi Pratishthan here on November 9. This initiative aims to empower women entrepreneurs and self-help groups (SHGs) by providing them with a platform to showcase their products and talents.

Akanksha Samiti, an organisation driven by the IAS Officers' Wives Association (IASOWA) of Uttar Pradesh, is dedicated to the welfare and economic empowerment of women across the state's 75 districts. Through Akanksha Haat 2024, the committee seeks to create economic opportunities for women-led SHGs, allowing them to present their skills,

crafts, and products, ultimately strengthening their families and communities economically.

Akanksha Haat 2024 is being organised to promote local industries and empower women entrepreneurs. Each district will have its stall, allowing women entrepreneurs from across Uttar Pradesh to showcase unique regional products and crafts. Under Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's leadership, the state government is committed to expanding economic opportunities for women, enabling them to become financially independent and establish a strong societal identity. As part of the 'Twin State Initiative', women entrepreneurs and self-help groups from Jammu and Kashmir have also been invited to participate in Akanksha Haat 2024. This initiative aims to foster cultural and economic exchange, giving women entrepreneurs from both states the chance to gain new skills, share ideas, and broaden their business reach.

CM expresses gratitude for Centre's decisions

Lucknow (PNS): Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Wednesday expressed gratitude for key decisions made by the Union cabinet led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Chief Minister Yogi shared his appreciation on the social media platform X, commending the Centre's approval of an infusion of Rs 10,700 crore equity in the FCI and the PM Vidyalaxmi Scheme. In two posts on his X handle, he described these decisions as vital steps toward empowering farmers, supporting families nationwide, and making quality higher education accessible to all deserving youth. Chief Minister Yogi wrote on his social media platform X, "The Cabinet, under the leadership of Hon PM Shri Narendra Modi Ji, has approved Rs 10,700 crore equity infusion in the Food Corporation of India (FCI). This move will boost FCI's ability to procure food grains at MSP, maintain essential stock, and stabilise market prices, enhancing food security for the nation. Thank you Pradhan Mantri Ji, for this decision that empowers our farmers, ensuring welfare for households across India." In another post, Chief Minister Yogi wrote, "The Union Cabinet, led by Hon. PM Shri Narendra Modi Ji, has approved the PM Vidyalaxmi scheme, ensuring financial support for meritorious students across India. Through this initiative, over 22 lakh students will now have access to collateral-free, guarantor-free education loans for top institutions. Thank you Pradhan Mantri Ji, for making quality higher education accessible to all deserving youth."

Dedicated BIDA team to accelerate growth

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh government is set to take a significant step towards boosting the development process under the Bundelkhand Industrial Development Authority (BIDA). In a bid to accelerate growth, the government has initiated the formation of a dedicated team within BIDA. This strategic move aims to streamline various processes, attract new investments, and enhance the ease of doing business in the region.

It is important to note that Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath highlighted the need to increase the number of registry offices in BIDA during a high-level department review meeting on Tuesday, where he reviewed departmental progress. He also stressed the importance of speeding up BIDA's development work and continuously monitoring its progress.

To support these efforts, BIDA is forming a special team that will help carry out these tasks more efficiently. This team will ensure that all the expected projects are completed and a detailed plan is developed to guide the process. The newly formed special team within BIDA will play a crucial role in accelerating business

processes by focusing on project management and developing the master plan for the industrial township. The BIDA Industrial Township will attract investments across various sectors, including medical and pharma, logistics, agri-based industries, warehousing, information technology (IT), artificial intelligence (AI), research and development (R&D), semiconductor, solar parks, and more.

The team will assist in identifying suitable zones for sector-specific clusters, ensuring their development, and providing excellent connectivity. Additionally, it will streamline the processes of investment promotion, business re-engineering, and database management, contributing to a more efficient business environment in the region.

The special team will also set up a state-of-the-art Geographic Information System (GIS) in BIDA. This system will help track the various stages of construction and development within the industrial zones, creating a digital framework for better monitoring of ongoing projects. Additionally, BIDA's website will be enhanced with new features to meet future needs. In parallel, the team will work on implementing a smooth land bank management

process. A comprehensive database of available land under BIDA will be created and integrated with the Nivesh Mitra portal.

This will not only simplify processes for the department but also increase convenience for investors, ensuring greater transparency in all land-related determinations. Since BIDA plans to undertake large-scale construction and development projects, these works can only proceed quickly once clearance reports are obtained from various state and central agencies. To facilitate this, the special team will play a key role in creating and managing the reports required by BIDA to complete the development tasks.

The team will also ensure that all guidelines set by relevant tribunals and agencies are followed while preparing the reports, making the approval process smoother and faster. It is worth mentioning that 47 years after the establishment of Noida (New Okhla Industrial Development Authority), a new industrial city is being developed in the state through BIDA. Covering a total area of 35,300 acres, this new city will include the villages of Jhansi tehsil and surrounding areas, with the land acquisition process currently being expedited.

'Swachh Ghat Pratiyogita' promoting cleanliness during Chhath

Lucknow (PNS): Amid Chhath celebrations, the Uttar Pradesh government has launched the 'Swachh Ghat Pratiyogita' to promote cleanliness, beautification and a plastic-free environment. The competition, which runs till November 8, includes various activities aimed at encouraging active citizen participation in keeping the ghats of water bodies clean, according to an official statement issued on Wednesday. Chhath is a Hindu festival cel-

ebrated mainly in Bihar and eastern Uttar Pradesh. The four-day festival is dedicated to the worship of the Sun God and involves fasting, holy bathing and meditation while standing in water.

As part of the initiative, 'Arpan Kalash' have been placed at the ghats to collect offerings from devotees, encouraging them to maintain cleanliness, the statement said. The ghats have been designated as 'No-Plastic Zones' to limit the use of plastic and thermo-

col. These efforts are supported by the Swachh Sarathi club, along with schools, colleges, universities, NGOs and other voluntary organisations, the statement noted. Temporary toilets and bathing facilities have been set up at the ghats and dust bins have been strategically placed to ensure proper waste disposal, it said. Voluntary organisations are also conducting cleanliness drives and educating the public on the importance of maintaining a clean and safe environment.

Government speeds up construction of forensic laboratory in Lucknow

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a significant move to strengthen Uttar Pradesh's forensic capabilities, the Yogi Adityanath government has fast-tracked the construction of a state-of-the-art forensic science laboratory in Lucknow. This cutting-edge facility, designed as a 7-storey complex (B+S+5) with a basement, will cover a built-up area of 20,572.80 square metres at an estimated cost of Rs 87.50 crore. The EPC cell of the Planning department has been entrusted

with overseeing the project, and work has commenced on the detailed project report, architectural design and other critical assessments. Notably, this facility will be built on land provided by the UP State Forensic Institute and connect to the Lucknow-Kanpur highway via Ranipur road. Under Chief Minister Yogi's vision, this forensic lab is being designed with a forward-looking approach to meet future needs. Located 20 kilometres from Charbagh railway station, the complex will be solar-powered and will feature a range of

facilities, including an underground tank, incinerator, compost plant, acoustic wall paneling, gas-based fire fighting system, DG set, electric substation, and landscaped grounds. Advanced amenities like high-capacity lifts, HVAC systems, VRV and VRF systems, an IP-based EPABX system, IP-based CCTV, and an audio-visual system will ensure a modern infrastructure. This lab will significantly enhance criminal and other investigative processes. The EPC cell of the Planning

department has already initiated the construction process, with a detailed action plan in place. The entire project is set to be completed in 18 months. A master plan, to be finalised within 90 days, will include a comprehensive project report covering architectural design, topography, site survey, and sub-soil analysis. Renowned institutions like IIT-Delhi, IIT-Kanpur, IIT-Roorkee, IIT-BHU and NIT-Prayagraj will lend their expertise to ensure the facility meets the highest standards.

Kashi all set for Sandhya Arghya today



Namami Ganga activists on eve of Sandhya Arghya of Chhath Puja in Varanasi on Wednesday appealing to visitors to keep Ganga ghats clean

248 Chhath Puja spl trains being run to cater to rush

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

In view of heavy rush of passengers, 248 Chhath Puja special trains are being run in 1,668 rounds from through North Eastern Railway (NER), while last year 147 special trains were run in 556 rounds. On the occasion of Chhath Puja, the announcement of special trains and arrangements was broadcast in advance by NER making it very convenient for devotees to get their tickets and reach their destination. These trains include a special Vande Bharat train between Lucknow and Chhapra via Varanasi Junction (Cantt) and 05176/05175 daily Chhath Special unreserved train

between Varanasi City and Siwan which started from Varanasi City station on Wednesday morning and will continue to run till November 11. For the festival, Varanasi Division of NER has constructed a holding area for Chhath pilgrims at Chhapra station and took steps for crowd management to help passengers in making their journey smooth and convenient by saving them from troubles caused by the crowd. Some features of the holding area which have been made for Chhath pilgrims are a comfortable place with seats, beds and toilets, comprehensive arrangements for food and beverages, water dispensers and bottled water for providing pure drink-

ing water, extensive security arrangements in which CCTV cameras apart from deployment of Railway Protection Force (RPF) personnel for 24-hour monitoring from the control room; medical facilities in which doctors and nurses of the local health unit are available with necessary medicines, passenger facilities such as LEDs for accurate information about the movement of trains and extensive arrangements for cleanliness. These holding areas built at Chhapra and Siwan railway stations are providing convenience and comfort to Chhath pilgrims during their journey, informed Public Relations Officer (PRO) of Varanasi Division Ashok Kumar.

Appeal to make CM's proposed rally a success

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

A special meeting of AChhanniganj Mandal under BJP's Sisamau assembly area was held at party's Gwaltoli office on Wednesday. It was chaired by the mandal president Karan. Senior party leaders, Prakash Pal, MLA Surendra Maithani, Kalawati Singh, Raju Sharma, Vinod Shukla (former district president), Srikrishna Badeji and other activists were present in the meeting. Area president Prakash Pal appealed to make the proposed rally of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on November 9 a grand success.

All the members discussed the strategy for the victory of party candidate Suresh Awasthi contesting from Sisamau Assembly constituency by a huge margin. They finalised the methodology to fetch around 60 per cent votes for their candidate which included door-to-door contact, contact by booth level groups, contacting elderly electorate, preparing list of 80+ people etc. It was resolved that all party workers would establish strong coordination with each other to strengthen booth level base and pledge for the victory of party candidate. Mandal president Karan Yadav proposed the vote of thanks.

24 illegally constructed basements sealed

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Under the directives of the Vice-Chairman, Kanpur Development Authority (KDA), Madan Singh Garbhal, the enforcement squad of zone 1 led by OSD Sat Shukla sealed as many as 24 illegally constructed and operating basements on Wednesday. These belonged to Mohd Asad (House No.101/187 Colongelanj); Mohd Parvez (House No.101/63 Farookh Road, Kayasthana Chauraha, Colongelanj); Mohd Adnan (House No.101/61, Colongelanj); Mohd Ismail (House No.101/61 Colongelanj); Mohd Wasim Rider (House No.101/61 Colongelanj); Hasib Ahmad Khan (House No.101/61 Colongelanj); Rais Ahmad Khan (House No.101/61 Colongelanj); Mohd Hasan (House No.96/15 Colongelanj); Mohd Hasan (House No.96/21 Siddiqui Miya Ka Hata, Colongelanj); Rasid (House No.96/41 Colongelanj); Jamil Ahmad (House

No.101/193 Colongelanj); Mohd Wasim Idris (House No.101/107 Colongelanj); Sheikh Abdul Nafis (House No.96/16 Colongelanj); Hazi Mohd Wasim Siddiqui (House No.96/52 B-2, Colongelanj); Babu Khan (House No.96/42 Barfkhana, Colongelanj); Zishan (House No.96/69 Colongelanj); Salim (House No.96/67 Colongelanj); Nawab Alam (House No.99/223 Nala Road); Shabbu (House No.100/215 Colongelanj); Idrish (House No.99/105 Munnapurwa); Jarin Ali Siddiqui (House No.99/99 Munnapurwa); Mehboob alam (House No.99/120 Munnapurwa); Saeed (House No.99/23, Beconganj) and Rais (House No.99/227 Nala Road). Junior engineers Janardan Singh, Kailash Singh and other officials were also present. ACP Tej Bahadur Singh, SHO Colongelanj Ravindra Shrivastava, force from Colongelanj and Bajaria police stations besides paramilitary force were present during the drive which would continue in future also.

Massive cleanliness drive launched

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

A massive cleanliness drive was launched on Wednesday before the auspicious occasion of Chhath festival by the personnel of 95 Battalion of Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) along with the members of Srijan Samajik Vikas Nyan and Varanasi Municipal Corporation. On the eve of Sandhya Arghya of Chhath cleanliness drive was conducted from Assi Ghat to Sant Ravidas Ghat in which the chief guest was CRPF Commandant Rajeshwar Balapur. In his address, he appealed to all residents of Kashi to ensure their participation in keeping Ganga clean. The pres-

ident of Srijan and brand ambassador of Ganga Haritima Abhiyan Uttar Pradesh and Nagar Nigam Anil Kumar Singh administered the oath of cleanliness, water conservation and environmental protection to everyone present there. A massive public awareness rally was also organised with the objective of ensuring that devotees do not face any difficulty during Chhath. "When Ganga river is clean, the prime minister's resolution could be fulfilled," Singh added. Corporator Rabindra Singh, Madhukar Pandey along with scores of CRPF personnel, including Praveen Singh, Priyanshu Singh of Srijan, Vijay Kejriwal, Balram Panda, Municipal Corporation's inspectors Anand and Archana and their teams etc were also present.

Mayor Ashok Kumar Tiwari, the cleaning of the ghats of Ganga and Varuna and ponds located in the city area has been completed 48 hours before the upcoming Mahaparva Dala Chhath (on November 7 and 8). The mayor who has been continuously inspecting the ghats and ponds for the last two days found some deficiencies and instructed the officers concerned to get them fixed immediately. The senior officers of Nagar Nigam have been monitoring the works. Tiwari claimed that Nagar Nigam has cleaned all the 84 ghats of the Ganga river and 63 ponds by employing 3,000 employees. Along with this, the ponds falling in the newly expanded areas have also been cleaned and silt has been removed from the ghats. "The

arrangement of street lights has been completed on all the ghats, due to which all the ghats have become bright", said Municipal Commissioner Akshat Verma. Additional Municipal Commissioner Dushyant Kumar Maurya also instructed the health inspectors for better cleanliness on all ghats and ponds. He has also directed the health inspectors to get all the ghats cleaned immediately at night after the Sandhya Arghya ends on the evening of November 7 so that it remains completely clean during the Sandhya Arghya on the morning of November 8. For this workers are being deployed at night especially for that day. Additional Municipal Commissioner Rajiv Kumar Rai and Chief Engineer Moimuddin are constantly vis-

iting the ghats and monitoring the arrangements. On the other hand, Additional Municipal Commissioner Vinod Kumar Gupta along with his subordinate officers is checking the arrangement of street lights installed on the ghats so that there is no shortage of lighting arrangements. Meanwhile, Chhath-related articles are being sold along the roadsides at various places in almost all the main markets, including Sigra, Lanka, Luxa, Godowlia, Chetganj, Maidagin, Jagatnagar, trans-Ganga Ramnagar, Parao etc and many places in trans-Varuna areas, including Shivpur, Bhojpur, Orderly Bazar, Pandeypur, Pahadia and Sarnath. In addition efforts are also going on in Banaras Locomotive Works (BLW) to ready Surya Sarovar for the festival.

SC slams UP Govt for demolishing without following legal procedures

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI/LUCKNOW

The Supreme Court on Wednesday slammed the Uttar Pradesh Government for demolishing an individual's house without following legal procedures and ordered to pay Rs.25 lakh as compensation. Welcoming the Supreme Court directive, Samajwadi Party and Congress attacked the State government for "misusing bulldozers". The Opposition parties said officials are taking such action to get themselves "in good books of the government". A Bench of Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud and Justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra observed that the demolition was "high handed" and without authority of law and directed the UP Government to initiate criminal proceedings against those responsible. The SC also gave guidelines to all States regarding road construction and removing encroachments. "How can you just enter someone's home and demolish it without following the course of law or serving notice," asked the Bench, directing to enforce the order within a month. "The demolition was carried out



without any notice or disclosure to the occupiers of the basis of the demarcation or the extent of demolition to be carried out. It is clear demolition was high handed and without the authority of law. The petitioner states the demolition was only because the petitioner had flagged irregularities in road construction in newspaper report. Such action by the State cannot be countenanced and when dealing with private property, law has to be followed,"

the SC said. As per the petitioner, his house was demolished without any prior notice or explanation for allegedly encroaching a highway. The petitioner said the demolition was a retaliatory measure after he informed the media about alleged irregularities in a road construction project. The SC dismissed the UP Government's request for an adjournment, insisting that the matter needs to be promptly addressed.

Ayushman card of elderly to be made today

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The Ayushman card of the elderly above 70 years of age of the district will be made at SSPG Divisional Hospital, Kabirchaura from 10 am on Thursday. Under this scheme, free treatment facility of up to Rs 5 lakh can be availed by getting admitted in any registered hospital. To get Ayushman card made, the elderly above 70 years of age will have to bring the same mobile number which is linked to the Aadhar card along with their Aadhar card so that their card can be verified through OTP. By doing e-KYC, they can be given an Ayushman card immediately. Giving this information Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Dr Sandeep Chaudhary said such elderly people can now get their Ayushman cards made through self-registration from Ayushman App or from Ayushman Mitras or Panchayat Sahayaks in Jan Seva Kendras, Panchayat Secretariats or through CHOs, kotedars and ASHA workers in Ayushman Arogya Mandir.

Emphasis on timely disease diagnosis to reduce economic loss in livestock rearing

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

A 10-day national short course training titled 'Hands-on diagnostic techniques for investigation of diseases in farm animals' commenced on Tuesday at the Faculty of Veterinary and Animal Sciences, Institute of Agricultural Sciences, Rajiv Gandhi South Campus (RGSC), Banaras Hindu University (BHU), Barkachha, Mirzapur. A total of 30 participants, including veterinarians and professionals related to laboratory diagnosis, have enrolled for this training from different fields and various regions. The inaugural session was held at New Lecture Theatre, RGSC, BHU in the presence of Prof Amit Raj Gupta (In Charge, Veterinary Clinical Complex & In charge, Department of Animal Nutrition) being the chief guest of the function. The guests of honours who graced the inaugural session were Prof Sidharth Shankar Das (Department of Veterinary Parasitology) and Dr Santosh Marandi (In Charge, Livestock Farm Complex & In charge, Department of Livestock Production Management). The training programme commenced with the lighting of the lamp and floral tribute at the statue of Mahamana Pt Madan Mohan Malviya by all distinguished guests on the dais. Students of BVSc and AH degree programme sang the melodious BHU kulgeet followed by welcome of dignitaries on the dais. The course Director Dr Jubeda Begum (Head, Dept of Veterinary Microbiology) briefed the course of the training programme. The co-chairman of the training programme Dr SK Ravi (Head, Department of Veterinary Gynaecology and Obstetrics) emphasised the importance of a timely disease diagnosis to minimise huge economic loss in livestock rearing. The guest of honour Prof SS Das urged the partici-



pants to participate whole heartedly and learn the techniques. Dr S Marandi emphasised upon the importance of disease diagnosis in making a livestock farm profitable. The chief guest of the function, Prof Amit Raj Gupta, emphasised the importance of accurate diagnosis for treatment of ailments. Further, interaction of human, animal and environment was highlighted by him as one world one health concept. A training manual published for this programme is released by the dignitaries on the dais and the course coordinators. All the dignitaries wished for the success of this training programme. Dr Utkarsh Kumar Tripathi (Co-Coordinator) coordinated the inaugural function along with Dr Archana Mahapatra, Dr Balamurugan and Dr Anupam Brahma (Course-Coordinators). Teachers of Veterinary faculty and students were present in the inaugural session. The participants gave their brief introduction and inaugural function ended with Dr Anupam Brahma proposing the vote of thanks. Dr Dhananjay Kumar, Dr Soutri Prasad, Dr Saroj Kumar, Dr Dayanidhi Jena, Dr Priya Ranjan Kumar, Dr Kaushik Satya Parkash, Dr Sajida Bano, Dr Dipanwita Bhattacharya were present in the inauguration function.

Free hearse van launched



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

A free hearse van was launched for the poor and unclaimed bodies by Kashi Mokshadayini Seva Samiti, Harishchandra Ghat and Telangana state's social organisation Manchala Shankar Ayya Charitable Trust. Addressing the press conference organised on the occasion at Paradkar Bhavan, Golghar, Maidagin, here on Wednesday, Manchala Shankar Ayya Charitable Trust's chairman Manchala Gyanendra, trustee Lakshmi, secretary Attapu Keshavalu and president of Kashi Mokshadayini Seva Samiti Pawan Chaudhary, Keshav Jan jointly said that it has been started taking inspira-

tion from the works of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Pawan Chaudhary said if anyone needed this hearse van, he/she can contact on toll free number 8960574743. Manchala Gyanendra said the organisation will soon also start a free food area and dharamshala. The guests were welcomed by Pawan Chaudhary by presenting them with *angavastram* and bouquets. On the occasion Keshav Jan, Nidhidev Jan, Annu Singh, Rajarshi Shukla, Dr Sunil Tiwari, Santosh, Munib Patel, Vedvati, Madhavi, Vikas Rawat, Tapan Rai, Deep Chandra, Shivkumar, Pawan Choubey, Dinesh Singh, Salim Ansari, Sanjay Singh, Pradeep Singh and other dignitaries were present.

Bike mechanic found hanging

Kanpur (PNS): A bike mechanic was found hanging under mysterious circumstances in his house on Poni Road under Gangaghat Kotwali police station area of Unnao on Wednesday morning. At the time of incident, his wife had gone to her parents' house. Police rushed to the spot and sent the body for autopsy after investigations. Sarvan Rawat (32), son of late Amol of Paramasukh Kheda, was a bike mechanic. Two days ago on Bhaiya Dooj, he had taken his wife and five-year old son to his in-laws' place and returned after dropping them there. On seeing his shop lying closed for the past several days, when customers reached his house on Wednesday morning and failed to get any response from inside, they peeped through the window and found him hanging. Police said the cause of his committing suicide could not be ascertained but a probe was on in the matter. Meanwhile an elderly man was battered to death with brick by a youth over a petty dispute in Jogikot village under Bangermau Kotwali police station area of Unnao. On the other hand, a motorcyclist was killed after he was hit by an unidentified vehicle while his two kids were seriously injured in Behta Mujawar police station area of Unnao. After the incident, passers-by called the ambulance and sent the injured to Bangermau CHC from where due to his critical condition, the youth was referred to higher centre, Lucknow, where he succumbed to his injury during treatment. His kids were still undergoing treatment at the CHC.

OFFLINE COUNSELLING: Registrar of Chandrashekhara Azad University of Agriculture and Technology (CSAAU&T) Dr PK Upadhyay said special offline counselling for the Uttar Pradesh combined agriculture and technology entrance examination for the year 2024 will be held at Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel University of Agriculture and Technology (SVPUAT), Meerut. Dr Upadhyay said all students can register for special counselling till 5:00 pm on November 8. They will be able to download the counselling letter on November 9. He said students can report for special counselling for graduation from November 10 to 13 as per their rank.

Beautician training course inaugurated



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Under CSR initiative and under the aegis of Jagriti Mahila Mandal, NTPC Auraiya inaugurated a beautician training course aimed at empowering women from project-affected villages. The event was graced by CGM Auraiya, Jayadev Parida and President of Jagriti Mahila Mandal, Sanghamitra Parida, who jointly inaugurated the programme. The six-month beautician training course will provide valuable skill development to 42 women participants, equipping them with practical exper-

tise to explore employment and entrepreneurial opportunities within their communities. The beautician course is being implemented as per MoU signed with Om Sai Ram Brahm Baba Trust, Lucknow. Tanmoy Dutta, Head of HR, Janet Fernandez, FTE, CSR, Disha, FTE, Corporate Communication and Anita were also present on the occasion along with Ladies Club committee members.

across stations and trains lost items are quickly returned to their rightful owners. In a recent case, a passenger's lost mobile phone was safely returned to her at Motijheel Metro Station. The conscientiousness, honesty and friendly demeanour of Kanpur Metro employees have consistently left a positive impression on passengers. A recent incident at Motijheel Station is a testament to this. Deeksha Kumari, a resident of IIT society, accidentally left her mobile phone on the train while travelling from IIT to Motijheel around 11 am on Tuesday. At approximately 11:25 am, security personnel conducting a routine search found the phone and handed it over to Station Controller Divya. When Deeksha called her number in an attempt to locate the phone after leaving the station, Divya promptly informed her that it had been safely recovered. Deeksha arrived at Motijheel Station around 12:30 pm, where, after completing the necessary formalities, her mobile phone was returned to her in perfect condition. Commuter

Deeksha Kumari praised the alertness and honesty of the Kanpur Metro staff after receiving her mobile phone and expressed her heartfelt gratitude. It is a testament to the commitment of the Kanpur Metro team, which remains dedicated to assisting passengers in every situation. Since the launch of passenger services, Kanpur Metro's Lost and Found Cell has successfully returned around ₹70,000 in cash, four laptops and 65 smartphones to their rightful owners. Whether it's helping unwell passengers or reuniting lost individuals, Kanpur Metro continues to excel in all aspects of passenger service. On this occasion Managing Director of Uttar Pradesh Metro Rail Corporation Limited (UPMRC), Sushil Kumar, said, "The appreciation and trust we receive from passengers is the true reward for UPMRC. The safety of passengers' lives and property, along with excellence in every aspect of passenger service, remains our top priority. Moving forward, our team will continue to work with full dedication and commitment to uphold these values."

NIC warns officials of rising vishing scams

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI



A cyber security advisory has cautioned government officials against trusting the caller ID information that pops up while receiving a phone call, following a spurt in "vishing" attacks aimed at compromising confidential personal information and gaining unauthorised access to official systems. "Attackers may impersonate trusted entities, such as senior government officials, law enforcement agencies, or technical support personnel," the advisory issued recently by the National Informatics Centre (NIC) says. The severity of the communication has been categorised as "high".

It has specified that attackers "manipulate" caller ID information to make a call appear as if it is coming from a "legitimate government number". The communication sent to multiple government departments and ministries has been accessed by PTI. It says it was issued as "in recent months, there has been an increase in

vishing attacks targeting government officials to compromise confidential information and gain unauthorised access to official systems".

"Vishing" or voice-phishing is a social engineering attack where scammers use phone calls or voice messages to manipulate individuals to share sensitive information, such as log-in credentials, personal information and financial details.

The attackers also deploy the tactic of conveying a "sense of urgency", "coercing" targets into revealing information by implying severe consequences for non-compliance and using "complex technical language" to confuse or intimidate targets, making them more likely to comply, the advisory has said. It has asked government officials to be cautious against such techniques as it has underlined that caller ID information can be "easily spoofed".

"Do not trust the legitimacy of the caller based solely on the displayed number. Cross-check any caller claiming to represent an official agency with official records," the communication has advised.

It has also asked officials to mandatorily verify the caller's identity through government channels before sharing sensitive information. The advisory has asked them to call back the organisation or individual using publicly available contact information.

Officials, according to the advisory, should always "be suspicious of any unsolicited calls asking for personal or confidential information, especially when the caller is creating urgency or panic to pressure compliance". "Take time to verify the information provided by a suspect caller," the advisory has said. It has also asked government staffers to practise all established protocols for ensuring safe cyber interaction during work and otherwise.

Cabinet approves PM-Vidyalaxmi scheme for student loans

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved the PM-Vidyalaxmi scheme to provide monetary support to meritorious students so that financial constraints do not prevent them from pursuing quality higher education, Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said.

As per the scheme, anybody who gets admission in Quality Higher Education Institutions (QHEIs) will be eligible to get collateral free, guarantor-free loan from banks and financial institutions to cover the full amount of tuition fees and other expenses related to the course. "The Cabinet has approved PM-Vidyalaxmi scheme to provide financial support to meritorious students so that financial constraints do not prevent any youth of India from pursuing quality higher education," Vaishnaw said at a Press conference.

The scheme will be applicable to the top QHEIs as determined by the NIRF rankings - including all HEIs, government and private, that are ranked within the top 100 in NIRF in overall, category-specific and domain-specific rankings, state government HEIs ranked in 101-200 in the NIRF and all central government-run institutions. "This list will be updated every year using the latest NIRF ranking, and to begin with 860 qualifying QHEIs, covering more than 22 lakh students to be able to potentially avail benefits of PM-Vidyalaxmi, if they so desire," an official statement said.

Indian Coast Guard Lays Foundation for Tier-III Data Centre



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Deputy Director General (Policy & Plans), Indian Coast Guard (ICG), Inspector General (IG) Anand Prakash Badola laid the foundation stone for the Tier-III Data Centre of Project Digital Coast Guard (DCG) on Tuesday at Mahipalpur here, officials said on Wednesday.

Equipped with latest technology, the Project DCG's Tier-III Data Centre will serve as the brain centre to monitor and administer all the appli-

cations and vital IT resources, thereby providing critically important support to the administrative functioning of ICG.

Project DCG, being executed by Telecommunications Consultants India Limited, includes construction of state-of-the-art Data Centre in New Delhi, 'Disaster Recovery Data Centre' at New Mangalore, Karnataka and Pan-India connectivity among ICG locations including ships and also implementation of an 'Enterprise Resource Planning' application.

Centre approves ₹ 10,700 crore equity for FCI

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI



The Centre on Wednesday approved infusion of Rs 10,700 crore as equity in state-owned FCI for working capital requirement this fiscal. The Food Corporation of India (FCI) is the government's nodal agency for procurement and distribution of foodgrains. "The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved infusion of equity of Rs 10,700 crore for working capital in financial year 2024-25 in Food Corporation of India (FCI)," an official statement said.

The decision is aimed at bolstering the agricultural sector and ensuring the welfare of farmers nationwide. "This strategic move shows the government's steadfast commitment to supporting farmers and fortifying India's agrarian economy," it added. The FCI started its journey in 1964 with authorised capital of

Rs 100 crore and equity of Rs 4 crore. The operations of FCI increased manifold resulting in increase of authorised capital from Rs 11,000 crore to Rs 21,000 crore in February 2023. The equity of FCI was Rs 4,496 crore in 2019-20 fiscal, which was increased to Rs 10,157 crore in 2023-24.

"Now, the Government of India has approved a significant amount of equity of Rs 10,700 crore for FCI which will strengthen it financially and will give a big boost to the initiatives taken for its transformation," the statement said. FCI plays a pivotal role in ensuring food security by procurement of foodgrains at Minimum Support Price (MSP), maintenance of strategic foodgrain stocks, distribu-

tion of foodgrains for welfare measures and stabilisation of foodgrain prices in the market. "The infusion of Equity is a significant step towards enhancing the operational capabilities of FCI in fulfilling its mandate effectively. FCI resorts to short-term borrowings to match the gap of fund requirement. This infusion will help to lower the interest burden and will ultimately reduce the subsidy of the Government of India," the statement said.

The government's dual commitment to MSP-based procurement and investment in FCI's operational capabilities signifies a collaborative effort towards empowering farmers, fortifying the agricultural sector, and ensuring food security for the nation, it added.

Tight waistbands linked to petticoat's cancer risk

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI



Imagine wearing a traditional saree every day, only to discover years later that the tight waist cord of your petticoat might have silently caused a dangerous health issue. Dubbed "petticoat cancer," the condition is linked to the chronic pressure from tightly tied waistbands, a stark reminder that even long-standing cultural habits can carry hidden risks, according to a study published in British Medical Journal (BMJ) Case Reports.

The doctors in the reports have advised wearing a loose petticoat beneath the saree to ease pressure on the skin and loose clothing if skin problems develop to allow the area to heal. They also advise seeking medical attention if any skin irritation or ulcers develop, as non-healing wounds can eventually turn malignant. The study has revealed how

this seemingly harmless practice can lead to serious skin problems, including ulcers and even skin cancer. The condition, caused by prolonged pressure and friction, can lead to skin irritation, non-healing ulcers, and, in severe cases, skin cancer (squamous cell carcinoma). Doctors, including those from Jawaharlal Nehru Medical College in Uttar Pradesh, explained that continuous pressure and friction from a tight waist cord can cause long-term skin irritation. This irritation can lead to ulcers, which, in some cases, may develop into skin cancer, they said based on the two cases they came through.

right flank. She wore a lugda daily for 40 years. A lugda is tied very tightly around the waist without a petticoat," the authors wrote.

The authors further noted that the biopsies revealed that both women had a Marjolin ulcer, also known as squamous cell carcinoma (ulcerating skin cancer). In the second woman, the cancer had spread to one of the lymph nodes in her groin at the time of diagnosis, the authors said.

Authors warn chronic pressure from tight clothing can lead to non-healing ulcers and potential skin cancer. "Constant pressure at the waist often leads to cutaneous atrophy, which ultimately breaks down to form an erosion or an ulcer. The ulcer at this site does not heal entirely due to ongoing pressure from tight clothing.

A chronic non-healing wound results, which may develop malignant change," the authors wrote in the study.

BJP enrolls over ten Lakh members in Tripura



PTI ■ AGARTALA

The BJP has enrolled over 10 lakh people as its members during an ongoing membership drive, a senior party leader said on Wednesday.

A total of 8.51 lakh people have enrolled their names online as members of the ruling party, while another 2 lakh have registered in the offline mode, the party's Tripura in-charge Rajdeep Roy said.

"The Tripura BJP had set a target to have 10 lakh members in the state which has a population of 40 lakh and we have achieved it," he told reporters at Maharaja Bir Bikram Airport.

Roy said of the 2 lakh applications for membership through the offline mode, around 1.50 lakh names have already been uploaded on the membership drive web portal.

The drive commenced on September 3 and is scheduled to continue till November 15. The total enrolment includes both fresh members as well as renewal of membership.

"This is yet another big achievement for the party's state unit under the leadership of Chief Minister Manik Saha and BJP state president and MP Rajib Bhattacharjee. They did a remarkable job to achieve the target," he said.

Tripura's name is now clubbed with big states such as Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Assam with regard to fulfilment of organisational targets set by the party's central leadership, he said.

After completion of the membership drive, active members will be identified for participation in organisational elections, he added.

Manipur CM hails Thadou support for NRC, anti-drug drive

PTI ■ IMPHAL



Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh on Wednesday expressed his satisfaction over the recent resolution passed at the Thadou Convention, which voiced support for the National Register of Citizens (NRC) and the state's 'War on Drugs' campaign.

Singh, however, emphasised that the government would not compromise its policies in the name of bringing peace by accommodating outsiders. At a convention in Guwahati last week, the Thadou tribe pledged its support for NRC and also backed the state government's war on drugs.

Thadou is the largest tribe within the Kuki community. However, during the recent convention, the community asserted that "it is a distinct ethnic group of people, with own distinct language, culture, traditions and great history and

Thadou is not Kuki, or underneath Kuki, or part of Kuki, but a separate, independent entity known as Kuki."

Speaking at the launch of the Chief Minister's Coaching Scheme for Entrance Examinations to Professional Courses, Singh said, "Peace will definitely come. Thadou is one of the oldest tribes in the state. Following the Thadou Convention's support for the NRC and the War on Drugs campaign, several civil society organisations in the state have welcomed and appreciated this

stance." He added, "We cannot compromise on our policies in the name of peace. Under the guise of inclusiveness, we cannot accommodate every outsider. We must protect the distinctiveness of our indigenous communities and the rights of old settlers. We have faced numerous challenges because of this objective. We should also not forget that we are Indians." Regarding the coaching scheme, Singh said it aimed to empower students in Manipur

to compete at the national level for professional courses like JEE (Main/Advanced) and NEET.

He added, "People with knowledge and education are less likely to get involved in conflict and will maintain decorum in their speech and actions. Defending the unity and integrity of India is our collective duty, and we must understand the rights guaranteed under our Constitution." Singh said there would be an examination at the end of the coaching course, which would be held in March or April. He added that the government would bear the expenses of students who successfully pass the exam.

Additionally, Singh urged the selected students to plant a tree under the Prime Minister's initiative "Maa Ke Naam Ek Per" (One Tree in the Name of Mother), encouraging environmental responsibility alongside their academic pursuits.

FIR lodged against actor-turned-BJP leader Mithun Chakraborty for 'provocative' speech

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KOLKATA



West Bengal Police on Wednesday lodged an FIR against actor-turned-BJP leader Mithun Chakraborty for allegedly delivering a provocative speech during a party programme in North 24 Parganas district last month. According to police sources, the complaint against Chakraborty pertains to a speech he made during a BJP programme at the EZCC in Salt Lake area on October 27, based on which police registered an FIR at Bidhannagar South police station.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah was also present at the programme, which was organised to kick off the West Bengal leg of the BJP's membership drive. "We have started an investigation into

the case," said a senior officer of Bidhannagar police station. Although Chakraborty was unavailable for comment, BJP state president and Union Minister Sukanta Majumdar described the FIR a result of "vendetta politics." "There is nothing provocative in his speech. These are nothing but attempts to intimidate him by using police as a political tool," he said.

Chakraborty, who received India's highest film honour, the Dadasaheb Phalke Award,

earlier this year, had asserted on October 27 that the "masnad" (throne) of West Bengal would belong to the BJP after the 2026 Assembly elections, promising to do whatever it takes to achieve the goal. While speaking at the programme at the Eastern Zonal Cultural Centre (EZCC), Chakraborty said, "In 2026, the masnad will be ours, and we will do everything to achieve the goal."

In an apparent reference to TMC MLA Humayun Kabir's communal remarks aimed at BJP workers during the Lok Sabha elections, Chakraborty cautioned that no one should attempt to intimidate saffron party voters into abstaining from voting in the next Assembly elections. He called upon the booth-level workers of his party to resist any such attempts.

Ajit Pawar promises to increase benefits under Shinde Govt scheme

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In its manifesto for the 2024 Maharashtra Assembly polls, the Ajit Pawar-led NCP has promised to increase the quantum of assistance under the "Majhi Ladki Bahin Yojana" from Rs 1,500 to 2,100 per month, to enhance the benefit under the Shetkari Sanman Nidhi from Rs 12,000 to Rs 15,000 per year and to grant Rs 25000 per hectare bonus for paddy farmers.

While releasing his party's 11-point manifesto in his home constituency of Baramati on Wednesday, NCP President and Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar said that in addition to the state-wide manifesto, his party would also release constituency-specific manifestos in the coming days. Simultaneously, NCP (AP)'s Working President Praful Patel released the NCP (AP) party's at Gondia in Vidarbha region, while State unit chief Sunil Tatkare released the in Mumbai.

At a mega high-tech event, the NCP (Ajit Pawar) released the manifesto in all the constituencies from which it is contesting through video-conferencing. All the senior party leaders, including Pawar, Patel and Tatkare, were present at the event.

Pawar said that the NCP (AP) -- if re-elected to power -- has promised to increase the amount under Majhi Ladki Bahin Yojana from existing Rs 1,500 per month to Rs 2,100



per month. "This initiative will be the largest monthly Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) in Maharashtra's history providing benefits of Rs 25,000 per year to over 2.3 crore women," the NCP (AP) chief said. "This initiative will be the largest monthly DBT transfer in Maharashtra's history providing

benefits of Rs 25,000 per year to over 2.3 crore women," he added.

Among other things, the NCP (AP) talks about increasing the old age pension from Rs 1,500 to Rs 2,100 per month. For farmers, the party has promised to raise the Shetkari Sanman Nidhi from Rs 12,000 to Rs 15,000 per year, combining support from both the central and state governments. The manifesto also talks about waiving the farmers loan and giving 20 per cent additional subsidy for all crops sold under MSP. Besides this, NCP has also given an assurance of Rs 25000 per hectare bonus for paddy farmers. "We have resolved to build more than 45000 'panand'

roads in rural parts of Maharashtra. This is the biggest plan to develop the rural agricultural infrastructure," the manifesto stated.

Other promises include a commitment to create 2.5 million jobs and provide monthly stipends of Rs 10,000 to 10 lakh students through training. A monthly salary of Rs 15,000 for Anganwadi and ASHA workers and commitment to reduce electricity bills by 30% while prioritizing solar and renewable energy are some other promises made by the NCP (AP). "We vow to implement measures that will curb the prices of essential commodities, making them more affordable for everyone," the manifesto stated.

Parliamentary panel postpones briefing on India's ties with Canada, China

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



A briefing by Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri to a parliamentary panel headed by Congress MP Shashi Tharoor on India's volatile ties with Canada and China did not take place on Wednesday and is likely to be taken up later, sources said.

They said the briefing by the External Affairs Ministry delegation on its demands for grants for the year 2024-25 went on for a long time and it was decided that the briefing on these issues will be done at a later meeting. The ministry officials also had some other engagement, a MP

said, noting that the panel's meeting coincided with the US presidential election result in which Donald Trump stormed back to power.

India's ties with Canada have nosedived over the North American country's allegation of the Indian government's involvement in the killing of a Khalistani activist, a charge rejected by New Delhi. India has accused Canada of pro-

viding safe haven to the separatists.

India's relations with China have also been frosty following the Ladakh standoff but have recently seen some thaw after the two countries reached an agreement on the issue. Some MPs said the next meeting should take place after the state elections and the by-elections to allow maximum participation as some of them may be busy in campaign. The results to the polls are scheduled for November 23.

Misri had in the earlier meeting of the parliamentary committee on external affairs briefed its members on the "Israel-Palestine Conflict".



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Trump wins hands down

Donald Trump makes a sensational comeback in the closely fought US presidential elections

The US presidential election is one of the most influential political events worldwide, with major implications not only for domestic policy but also for international relations, economic stability, and global security. In 2024, the election has been particularly charged, with significant issues driving the race. Though the counting is still on and the winner is yet to be officially announced but going by the trends, Trump has won and he has already claimed victory. Kamala Harris failed to perform in the swing states leading to her defeat. Trump's victory brings a mix of continuity and radical shifts in several key areas. The 2024 US election has revolved around several pressing issues which were important not only for the Americans but for the people across the world. High inflation rates and concerns over economic recovery post-pandemic have been at the forefront. Voters were focused on job security, rising costs of living, and access to affordable healthcare. Trump's stance included pushing for lower taxes, reducing government spending, and deregulation to stimulate growth, which he claims would address inflation and boost job creation. Another major issue that was widely debated was immigration. The debate over immigration intensified, with Trump advocating for stricter border controls and policies aimed at reducing illegal immigration. His focus includes building stronger physical barriers at the US-Mexico border and increasing enforcement, framing immigration as a matter of national security and economic stability. Besides, Healthcare accessibility and costs remain contentious topics. Trump in his campaign emphasised reducing healthcare costs and revisiting the Affordable Care Act. His approach included providing tax credits and fostering competition among providers, but it also drew criticism for potentially reducing access to affordable care for some citizens. Interestingly Trump has taken a critical stance on climate regulations, advocating for energy independence through expanded oil and natural gas production. His stance contrasts with those calling for robust climate action, as he argues that deregulation is essential for economic stability and growth. However the issue that is of utmost importance for the world at large is the US foreign policy. Foreign policy has emerged as a defining factor, particularly in relation to China and Russia. Trump's "America First" strategy focuses on reducing overseas military commitments and renegotiating trade agreements to protect American interests. This stance resonates with some voters concerned about national sovereignty but worries international allies and those advocating for a more collaborative global approach. However, Trump's victory may be well taken in New Delhi as he has had good chemistry with Prime Minister Modi and has supported India's stand. It would be interesting to see how Trump would steer international choppy waters this time as Ukraine war and Palestine issue would be two major issues he would need to handle immediately after assuming the office.



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PICTALK



A photographer takes a photo of a macaque monkey at the Shrine Galtaji temple, in Jaipur

Hazardous Delhi air is putting lives at risk



RAJDEEP PATHAK

As Delhiites face a significant decline in their health and life expectancy due to pollution, there is an urgent need for finding solutions to tackle this menace

Delhi's air quality has reached dangerous levels, with the Air Quality Index (AQI) crossing into the "hazardous" zone shortly after Diwali celebrations. This post-Diwali spike is not new, as the city frequently ranks among the most polluted in the world. In early November 2024, AQI levels in Delhi surged to nearly 500 in some regions, a threshold considered extremely harmful. According to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), key areas in Delhi like Anand Vihar, Alipur, and RK Puram reported AQI readings above 300. This rise indicates severe pollution levels far above the World Health Organisation's (WHO) recommended safety limits, posing substantial health risks for millions of residents. The AQI measures air quality on a scale that categorises air quality into six levels: "good," "satisfactory," "moderate," "poor," "very poor," and "hazardous." Readings above 300 signal critical pollution, while values over 400 reach the "severe" range. At such levels, exposure to fine particulate matter (PM2.5) becomes dangerous, as these minuscule particles can infiltrate deep into the lungs, affecting respiratory and cardiovascular health. The factors behind this annual pollution crisis are complex, involving both local and regional contributors. Delhi's high vehicular emissions, industrial output, construction dust, and waste burning are persistent contributors. However, during the harvest season, stubble burning in nearby states like Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh intensifies the problem. In October and November, farmers often burn leftover crop residue, producing vast smoke clouds that drift toward Delhi and blend with local pollutants. Vehicular pollution is another significant factor, with over 15 million registered vehicles in Delhi alone. Despite policies mandating regular Pollution Under Control (PUC) checks, enforcement remains a challenge. Emissions from diesel vehicles and two-wheelers, which lack proper pollution controls, further degrade the air quality. Attempts by the



Delhi Government to curb pollution have included measures like the odd-even traffic scheme, a firecracker ban during festivals, and incentives to use public transport. However, these initiatives have only provided limited relief. Residents continue to experience issues like breathlessness, sore throats, headaches and dry cough, compounded by long-term respiratory conditions. This year, the Supreme Court criticised Delhi's inadequate enforcement of pollution control measures during Diwali, particularly the lack of compliance with firecracker bans. The court expressed frustration over the non-implementation of its orders, highlighting the collective failure to safeguard public health. The Delhi government has also activated the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP), designed to address pollution levels as they rise. GRAP consists of multiple stages, with Stage III activated only when AQI reaches "severe" levels. At this stage, vehicle movement and construction activities are restricted, and educational institutions may close to protect students' health. While GRAP has achieved some improvements, its impact is often temporary, as citizens and businesses frequently ignore these directives. The severe air pollution in Delhi has profound effects on public health and quality of life.



THIS YEAR, THE SUPREME COURT CRITICISED DELHI'S INADEQUATE ENFORCEMENT OF POLLUTION CONTROL MEASURES DURING DIWALI, PARTICULARLY THE LACK OF COMPLIANCE WITH FIRECRACKER BANS. THE COURT EXPRESSED FRUSTRATION OVER THE NON-IMPLEMENTATION OF ITS ORDERS

During high-AQI periods, particularly vulnerable groups, like children and the elderly, are advised to stay indoors to avoid severe respiratory and cardiovascular issues. Outdoor activities are restricted, with schools occasionally closed to protect students from toxic air exposure. Additionally, dense smog disrupts transportation, leading to frequent flight and train delays due to poor visibility. As residents increasingly rely on air purifiers to maintain indoor air quality, the economic and psychological impacts of Delhi's air pollution crisis only deepen. In response to the deteriorating situation, the Delhi Government announced a series of measures to tackle pollution. These include developing green pathways, walkways, and open spaces along roads to reduce dust and improve urban greenery. Efforts are underway to enhance municipal waste management, including recycling 100 per cent of construction and demolition waste by 2025. To further manage waste, the Municipal Corporation of Delhi is establishing a fifth recycling unit in Tehkhand, capable of processing 1,000 tons daily. Biomining is also planned at major landfill sites, such as Okhla, Ghazipur, and Bhalswa, to excavate and treat years' worth of accumulated waste. Expanding public transportation is another goal, with

plans to grow Delhi's bus fleet to 10,500 by next year, 80 per cent of which will be electric. This is accompanied by a focus on impounding older, polluting vehicles. Such measures aim to address long-standing pollution sources sustainably. Experts emphasise, however, that reducing air pollution in Delhi will require more than Government policies; public engagement and behavioral change are also essential. A multi-pronged approach is crucial to effectively reduce air pollution. Introducing alternative methods to stubble burning, such as subsidising crop-residue management equipment, is one solution. Increasing urban greenery and limiting industrial emissions are further steps toward a healthier environment. On an individual level, Delhi residents can contribute by using public transportation, minimising car usage, and adopting energy-efficient practices at home. Additionally, improved air quality monitoring and early-warning systems could help raise public awareness and enable quicker responses. India's dedication to conservation aligns with the broader goal of creating a healthier environment for future generations. (The writer is Programme Executive, Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti; views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

PAPER BALLOTS OVER MACHINES

Madam — In spite of being at the top of technologically advanced countries, the United States of America falls back on ballot paper voting to root out any suspicion of foul play stemming from voting through EVM. Over the last two decades, the United States has gradually moved back from electronic voting machines to paper ballots. Given ballot paper voting, unlike EVM, builds confidence among voters and opposition party members, it undoubtedly strengthens democracy. Another highly commendable step the USA election authorities have taken. They have printed the ballot papers in all major languages of a state, depending on its demography. While a voter in New York can choose a ballot paper in Bengali instead of English, Chinese, Spanish, and Korean, voters in Illinois can opt for a ballot paper printed in Hindi. It also shows how a democratic country should honour the mother tongue of even those voters who have origins in different countries. These actions reflect the attitude of catering and prioritising the interests of the demos (people) above everything. India needs to get back to ballot paper voting without any delay. It must also be remembered that to impose a language ignoring the major languages spoken in a particular area flouts democratic principles. There is no room for the 'one nation, one language' policy in a multilingual democratic country like India. **Sujit De | Sujit De**

DIVISION OVER CASTE

Madam — Since the last Lok Sabha elections, immediately followed by the state Assembly election and ensuing Assembly in Maharashtra and Jharkhand and by-elections in several states, demand for caste census is in top gear in the Opposition camp, while the BJP has been silent on it and is meekly supportive. Though not constitutionally valid and having no authentic official database of individuals' caste identity, the caste politics in the facade of the caste census is

Prioritise student wellbeing



Student suicides are rising worldwide. Every day, we read news about young students taking their own lives due to overwhelming pressure. Many of these students are studying far from their families, aiming to crack high-stakes exams like JEE, NEET, UPSC, and CA. Parents often send them away at a young age, where they're not fully prepared to handle the intense stress. At a time in life meant for playing, making friends, and

exploring their interests, they are pushed to lock themselves in rooms and study for hours. This isolation and pressure can lead to anxiety, and, tragically, some may feel that ending their lives is the only escape.

Parents should avoid imposing career paths on their children and instead allow them to explore and decide what they want for themselves. Governments can also take steps to address this crisis, such as offering personal counselling sessions for students where they can discuss their struggles and implementing mental health awareness programmes in schools and communities. Ultimately, pressuring children to study hard for the sake of a "better future" can end up damaging their wellbeing and happiness. It's far better to let children decide what they want to work towards rather than forcing them into paths that might not be right for them. **Priya Thakur | Ujjain**

TEMPLE ATTACK CONDEMNED

Madam — The Canadian soil is becoming a battleground for the anti-India sentiments these days, as the Khalistani groups and supporters managed to score win after win in their anti-India agendas. The recent terror attack in the Hindu temple based in Canada is getting a global backlash and condemnation. India is particularly annoyed with the Canadian authorities for not paving the way for the miscreants who are spoiling India's image and hurting Indian sentiments as a whole. We Indians in particular wish strong Canadian intervention and demand speedy justice from the side of Canadian government and authorities as soon as possible. **Kirti Wadhawan | Kanpur**

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

Why are women overlooked for leadership? It's time for a change!



RACHNA LAKHPATRI

Deep-rooted biases and outdated stereotypes frequently overshadow women's capabilities, despite evidence that women leaders enhance company performance and culture

In India, women are frequently overlooked for management and senior leadership roles despite their proven capabilities in both personal and professional settings. It's a complex issue often attributed to stereotypes, unconscious biases, and a society that still grapples with entrenched gender roles. Yet, if we pause and consider the day-to-day roles women play, particularly in an Indian household, it becomes evident that they possess an array of skills crucial to any organisation's success. Imagine a typical day for a woman managing her household. She coordinates with household help, ensures that her family's needs are met, oversees children's schedules, and often also supports extended family members. Each of these tasks requires quick thinking, negotiation skills, empathy, and time management. Such daily acts of coordination and problem-solving are, at their core, management skills. The inquiry at hand is, why do we fail to acknowledge these abilities when they are



showcased in a professional setting? Do these skills lose their validity simply because they originate from home-based experience? Many argue that women's ability to blend emotional intelligence with logical decision-making makes them especially adept at leadership roles. Their approach is often holistic—they not only focus on completing tasks but also on nurturing relationships, fostering team morale, and ensuring that the process is as smooth as the outcome. Research indicates that companies with gender-diverse leadership teams tend to achieve better financial performance and foster a more satisfied workforce, contributing to a healthier com-

pany culture. Women bring different perspectives and problem-solving approaches, which complement male colleagues' styles. When women are given a seat at the table, companies gain a more nuanced understanding of their markets and customers. And yet, despite clear advantages, women remain vastly underrepresented in senior roles. The reasons are rooted in a long history of gender bias. Women are often pigeonholed as too "emotional" or too "soft" for the challenges of executive positions, while men are assumed to be inherently more decisive and resilient. Yet, resilience is something that women exemplify every day—balancing multiple roles in a society that demands more of them both at home and at work. Change is on the horizon, with many organisations now actively working to bridge the gender gap in leadership. However, it requires a deeper cultural shift to truly unlock the leadership potential of women. Organisations need to embrace mentorship pro-

grams, implement unbiased hiring practices, and encourage flexible work policies that allow women to balance personal and professional responsibilities. Moreover, celebrating women's leadership styles rather than forcing them to fit into traditionally masculine roles can create more authentic, powerful leaders. The argument is simple: women already demonstrate essential leadership skills every day, whether in boardrooms or in households. It's time to recognise their contributions and give them the opportunities they deserve. For any organisation that values growth, empathy, and resilience, overlooking women isn't just unfair—it's a missed opportunity. Let's champion a future where leadership is based on talent and vision, not on outdated biases. Women are ready for the challenge, and it's time we give them the space to lead. (The writer is a motivator and a freelance journalist; views expressed are personal)



FIRST COLUMN

THE ART OF HEALING

True healing must be comprehensive, nurturing both the physical and spiritual self



RAVI VALLURI

Humans are creatures of their habits. I was addicted to smoking, drinking and consuming 'Gutakha'. It had become almost a quotidian habit and had taken a severe toll on my health. Ailments could be self-inflicted or they could be a professional hazard. In all such cases, the victim suffers physically and emotionally. The healing must be both physical and spiritual. I vividly recall how the Sri Lankan cricket team was a victim of terror and violence in Lahore. They underwent therapeutic care by psychiatrists and underwent several mind management and mental strengthening therapies. Similarly, the Tsunami victims of 2004, those affected by the 26/11 Mumbai terror strikes and the earthquake victims of Gujarat (2001) and Uttarakhand (2013) were revived up by the bouquet of self-healing courses by several spiritual organisations and professional help offered by numerous self-help groups. Such tragedies are traumatic experiences. Cities, towns, villages and settlements are razed to rubble.

I come back to my story, where like an ignoramus I started consuming liquor, ignoring all warnings. Thus, my moral compass fell prey to the predilections of a weak mind. It was at this time that my mother, a trained social worker, and a practitioner of Siddha and Pranik healing, refused to entertain my supercilious and specious arguments and extolled certain dormant virtues in me so that I could upend the pyramid. My mother was afflicted by repeated attacks of Paroxysmal Atrial Tachycardia (PAT). This is a type of arrhythmia (irregular heartbeat) that is accompanied by severe sweating, dizziness, palpitations, angina and acute breath-



lessness. I had seen my mother suffering from this condition on several occasions and being admitted to the ICU. However, after undergoing the ten-day Vipassana spiritual sojourn, she recovered from the debilitation. She simultaneously learnt Siddha and Pranik healing, which augured well for her recovery.

These healing techniques along with proper medication and diet helped her in healing. This is the unbounded power and scientific attribute of the breath. Breathing techniques, meditation proper medication and diet are all healthy habits. These can change the traction of our lives and rejuvenate the body and mind. During 'Operation Parakram' our defence forces, after a protracted stay of more than a year at our borders, returned to their cantonments. The fractious behaviour of our unfriendly neighbour did not make them lose their sanity. It is not only the deaths, but defence personnel get maimed during such operations.

Further, their mental state becomes foggy and they become highly irritable. Mere administration of drugs does not act as a panacea. It is medication plus something more to revive their physical and mental bodies. As our defence and para-military forces work in hostile environments it is heartening to know that yoga, Vipassana and Art of Living Courses are conducted for them so that they can maintain physical and mental equilibrium. A soldier asked Gurudev whether he would become passive if he continued with his sadhana, to which Gururji responded, "Most certainly not." Further, he added that Gita Upadesh itself was revealed by Lord Krishna during the Mahabharata war. Arjuna regained the power of discrimination after witnessing the "Divine Spectacle." Be it an individual or a cricket team, those affected by environmental disturbances or our defence forces, all require continuous physical and mental healing to continue their journey. The mystic Rumi has succinctly said, "The wound is the place where the light enters you."

(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)

CoP 29: A pivotal moment to act on climate crisis



B K SINGH

With the upcoming CoP 29 summit in Azerbaijan, world leaders face mounting pressure to deliver on pledges for climate finance and reduced fossil fuel reliance



Back-to-back hurricanes Helene and Milton originating from the Gulf of Mexico, that have battered the western coast of Florida in the United States have led to political debates and blame games ahead of the US Presidential election. The Republican team targeted the Biden-Harris duo for not doing enough to save lives and restore electricity. More than 200 people have perished in each of the hurricanes and also people have lived without electricity for more than 24 hours. Tropical typhoon Trami over the South China Sea claimed more than 150 lives in the Philippines, and 10 in Vietnam, injured thousands and damaged properties and infrastructures in both countries. Further, the deadliest flood in 50 years in Spain has also claimed more than 250 human lives. As against this, India's disaster management response during cyclones has been praiseworthy.

Whether it was cyclone Nisarga on our West coast in 2020 cyclone Fani in West Bengal in 2019, or the recent Dana in Odisha and West Bengal we have evacuated million of people on each occasion in a record time of 24 to 48 hours and as a result, there has hardly been any loss of life. Recent images from Valencia and other regions of Spain, last month's image from Italy where vehicles were swept away as roads became rivers, and before that similar flooding in France, Poland, Austria, and Czech are reminders of frequent flooding and associated misery to people. The global physics of fossil fuels has destabilised the world. The warmer the atmosphere gets; the more moisture it can hold. This would mean more intense downpours and longer drought.

In Spain, a year's worth of rain was dumped in half a day. While India's track record in dealing with disasters is good, what it should relook is its decisions to sacrifice natural forests for infrastructures, development projects and mining. Consumption of coal, oil and natural gas is swelling worldwide, despite leaders knowing that the surge in emission of greenhouse gases leads to increased warming of the planet and we face more destructive and frequent climatic catastrophes. Forests are the best sink for carbon and sacrificing them for GDP is only

to invite more frequent disasters. Earth is already warmed by 1.2 degrees Celsius. The year 2023 has been the warmest in the recorded history of post-industrialisation.

The trend from 2024 till July suggests that we are on course to break the 2023 temperature record. Developed countries are responsible for the warming so far. Scientists are consistently forecasting that beyond 1.5 degrees Celsius warming, part of many countries especially island nations will be submerged in the Sea. United Nations Framework Convention for Climate Change (UNFCCC) has provided a forum for World leaders to meet annually and decide on actions to be taken to keep the warming within 1.5 degrees.

In the annual conference (CoP 25) in Paris in 2015 countries pledged their nationally determined contributions (NDC) to cut the consumption of fossil fuel and to develop renewable energy at speed and scale by 2030. Among G20 countries India is the only one, which is on course to fulfil the pledge. Donald Trump as US President in 2017 refused to toe the line with the Paris Agreement and said that climate is a hoax.

No CoP meeting took place till he was in office. Corona pandemic delayed it further even after Biden took over and CoP 26 at Glasgow was held in November 2021.

Here again, leaders reiterated their pledge at Paris and also revived climate finance of \$100 billion that developed countries would contribute towards the cost of climate adaptation in the developing world annually. Another rhetoric was started during CoP 27 at Sharm el Sheikh that developed and some developing countries like China would pay for loss and damage in global south countries. This has again not been complied with. The climate finance of \$100 billion

annually has been agreed upon in Copenhagen CoP in 2009 but has not been complied with so far. African countries and island nations are suffering from extreme climate events like droughts and floods as well as supply chain disruptions owing to geopolitical tensions in West Asia and Ukraine.

Countries like Namibia and Zimbabwe have ordered to cull of thousands of wild elephants (a threatened species) for food. If climate finance and loss and damage funds were made available, there was no need to cull threatened species and endangering the ecological security of the region further. The pledge regarding cutting fossil fuel consumption and transition to renewable energy especially by Western nations and China has been overlooked. There has been unprecedented growth in oil and gas drilling in the US and coal production in China.

Biden and other European leaders are not on course to fulfil their commitment to bring down fossil fuel consumption by 2030 and achieve net zero by 2050. China has pledged net zero by 2060 and India by 2070. Scientists are telling us to keep the warming within 1.5 degrees lest we face the consequences. 2050 and 2060 are far ahead and the question is whether we will be able to stand the disasters till then.

During the nomination as Republican presidential candidate in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Trump in his address said to abandon climate - drill baby drill. He cut jokes in his election rallies saying that if the Sea level rises due to warming, the people will have more buildings facing the Sea. The transfer of technology from developed countries to developing and third-world countries for transition to renewable energy at speed and scale is another key to climate mitigation. India, China and Western nations have gone

ahead substantially, yet they need to step up their efforts.

Renewable energy transition should take place at such a pace that we automatically cut fossil fuel consumption. Countries' demand at Glasgow CoP 26 to 'phase out' fossil fuel did not have total acceptance and was modified to 'phase down' on the insistence of China and the support of India. Further at Dubai CoP 28 another phrase 'transition away from fossil fuel' was agreed upon. Irrespective of the phrases used in the CoP resolutions, leaders are only concerned about the growth and GDP and are not inclined to bring down fossil fuel consumption. CoP 29 is scheduled to commence in Baku, Azerbaijan on November 13th, when world leaders will again take stock of the situation and roll out further actions.

Unfortunately, the host country along with its neighbours Armenia and Georgia is experiencing relatively more warming as compared to the global average. While every nation should put in their efforts to cut emissions, India should have relook at the projects requiring the sacrifice of natural forests, whether for linear infrastructures in the Himalayas, in Western Ghats or deforestation of 130.75 sq km forests for great Nicobar Development projects.

India's track record for growing compensatory afforestation for the trees lost is very poor. Supreme Court recently threatened contempt against agencies for not taking up planting ten times the trees lost in the project. 3700 trees were sacrificed in 2015 for the widening of NH 123 Bharatpur Dholpur road and Apex court's condition to plant up 37000 trees has not been fulfilled so far.

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



THE TRANSFER OF TECHNOLOGY FROM DEVELOPED COUNTRIES TO DEVELOPING AND THIRD-WORLD COUNTRIES FOR TRANSITION TO RENEWABLE ENERGY AT SPEED AND SCALE IS ANOTHER KEY TO CLIMATE MITIGATION

How AI, big data and personalisation are transforming B-school curricula

From integrating AI into decision-making processes to adding global perspectives, B-schools are merging traditional education with innovative technology

In 2024, technology is influencing every aspect of life, transforming the way we communicate, learn, and run businesses. With advancements in Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, IoT, Big Data, Blockchain, and other digital technologies, we are currently navigating the fourth wave of the industry revolution.

Businesses primarily prioritise automation and machinery to enhance workforce operations, with 88 per cent of small business owners using automation to increase their workforce efficiency, according to an Unmud study. This shift is driving up the demand for digitally literate and tech-savvy professionals in the industry, inspiring business schools to redesign their academic curricula.



PRABHU AGGARWAL

Following are the revolutionary ways technology is reshaping the business industry.

Reshaping Business Education through AI: According to the Future of Jobs Survey, 75 per cent of companies plan to adopt AI technologies in the coming years. This signals a significant shift brought about by technology in business education; the integration of AI and ML.

Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning are revolutionising how future business leaders think and make decisions, disrupting the traditional learning models. Emerging technologies such as generative AI provide real-time feedback and high-level interactivity, inspiring B-schools to employ learning approaches to develop AI skills in students, thus, preparing them to meet the demands of a rapidly evolving business landscape. **Integration of Data Analytics into Business Intelligence:** Data has become the primary currency in business intelligence, helping businesses make informed decisions to enhance their growth. Technological trends such as statistical techniques, predictive analysis, machine learning,

and artificial intelligence allow businesses to identify leading patterns and tailor their offerings. As recent studies by Edge Delta point out, more companies will adopt big data and technology, increasing the employment rate by 58 per cent. To help students stay competitive, B-schools actively embed data analysis into their offered curriculum, improving students' data proficiency. Incorporating data analytics into higher education curricula, particularly in PGDM and MBA programmes, will promote innovation and solution-oriented thinking among students. **Experiential Learning and Real-World Applications:** With the rapid inclusion of technology in business, the leading employers are ex-



sively prioritising professionals with industry-ready technical and soft skills. The technologically integrated method of business education complements the traditional teaching pedagogy, preparing students to tackle real-world challenges and provide futuristic solutions. Through industry internships, consultation projects, case studies, and business simulations, B-school students gain hands-on experience and practical skills necessary to

excel in today's competitive job market. While a business degree holds significant importance, practical experience allows students to turn their learnings into actionable solutions.

Personalised Learning Approach: The amalgamation of technology and education has made education personal. The traditional learning model employs a one-size-fits-all approach, ignoring individual learning needs. On the other hand, the modern learning model is tailored to meet individualistic demands, making learning seamless for every student. Through tech-integrated personalised education, students can adapt the learning materials and understand at their own pace. This shift is especially impactful in

business education, where personalised learning helps students stay current with industry trends, bridge the skill gap, and learn based on their proficiency.

Balance Between Human Creativity and Automation: While many view the current era as Industry 4.0, others argue we are swiftly moving towards Industry 5.0. Unlike its predecessor, Industry 5.0 emphasises the well-being of professionals, fostering prosperity beyond jobs and promoting ecologically balanced economic growth. The upcoming industrialisation era envisions close collaboration between humans and AI tools, enhancing operational efficiency and cost-effectiveness. This has led top B-schools to thoughtfully curate the core

management courses, integrating human-centricity, sustainability, and automation.

Bringing Global Perspective to Classrooms: Business challenges today are inherently global in nature, such as sustainability issues, supply chain management, foreign regulations, and cultural diversity. By embedding a global outlook in business education, B-schools equip students with essential tools to effectively address these problems. Facilitating worldly industry collaborations and connecting peers from diverse cultures through virtual modes fosters a deeper business understanding in the students, enabling them to drive positive changes.

(The writer is Dean BMS Hyderabad; views are personal)

Rahul Gandhi announces guarantees at MVA joint rally

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

A Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) of Rs 3,000 per month for women under the Mahalakshmi Yojana, loan waiver of up to Rs 3 lakh and a Rs 25 lakh health insurance along with free medicines are among the five guarantees that the Opposition Congress held out to the people of Maharashtra ahead of the Assembly polls scheduled for November 20.

and NCP (Sharad Pawar), in Mumbai, leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi pledged to conduct a caste census and strive for removal of 50 per cent cap on reservations. The five guarantees that Rahul announced at the rally were a DBT of Rs 3,000 per month to women and free bus travel for women and girls under Mahalakshmi Yojana, loan waiver of up to Rs 3 lakh to farmers and incentive of Rs 50,000 for regular loan repayment, health insurance up to Rs 25 lakh and free medicines, a caste-wise census in the state and strive to remove 50

percent reservation limit and Rs 4000 per month to unemployed youth. Rahul unveiled the five guarantees in the presence of Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray, and NCP (SP) supremo Sharad Pawar in Mumbai. "This is a battle of ideology. On one hand, we have BJP and RSS, while there is the INDIA alliance on the other hand. On one hand, there is BR Ambedkar's Constitution, equality and mohabbat (love) and respect, while on the other hand, BJP and RSS are



trying to abolish the Constitution," Rahul said. Earlier in Nagpur, Rahul Gandhi charged that the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) were covertly "dismantling" the foundational principles of the Constitution and said that both the RSS and BJP were well aware that they would be ripped apart, if they attacked the Constitution directly. Speaking at a "Samvidhan Samman Sammelan" in Nagpur, Rahul went hammers and tongs at both the RSS and BJP for using narratives like "development, progress, and

economy" to camouflage their real intent of eroding the fundamental principles of the Constitution. "The RSS and the BJP cannot attack the Constitution from the front because they will have to pay for it. That's why they hide behind words like 'vikas', 'pragati', 'unity' to carry on their agenda of inequality that ensures benefits only to a few individuals at the cost of the vast majority of people... Their agenda undermines the rights of marginalized communities enshrined in the Constitution," Rahul said. Singling out the RSS for a vicious attack, Rahul demand-

ed to know "from where does the RSS get money to maintain its huge facility here and to run Shishu Mandirs and Eklavya Vidyalayas?". "The money comes from BJP-run governments in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat and from favoured industrialists Adani and Ambani," he said. Before attending the "Samvidhan Samman Sammelan", Rahul visited Deeksha Bhoomi - a place where late B R Ambedkar embraced Buddhism way back in 1956 - and paid tributes to Lord Buddha and late Dr Ambedkar, the chief architect of Constitution of India.

NSG officer dies by suicide

SAUMYA SHUKLA ■ NEW DELHI

In a shocking case of alleged death by suicide, a 31-year-old National Security Guard (NSG) officer died in his barrack at the Sudarshan Camp near the Indira Gandhi International (IGI) airport with his service weapon. According to the police on Wednesday, the deceased has been identified as Narender Singh Bhandari, serving with the NSG on deputation from the Indian Army. The officials said that he was found dead with a self-inflicted gunshot wound. A Police Control Room (PCR) call regarding the incident was reported on Tuesday. Reacting to the incident, Deputy Commissioner of Police (IGI Airport) Usha Rangnani said, "On Tuesday, a PCR call was received regarding a suicide incident at the NSG Sudarshan Camp near Shiv Murti. Upon receiving the information, police personnel promptly arrived at the location, where the body of Narender Singh



Bhandari, an NSG staff member on deputation from the Army, was found inside his barrack. "Preliminary inquiry suggested that he suffered a self-inflicted gunshot wound," Rangnani said. No suicide note was recovered the place of the incident according to a senior police official. While prima facie it looks like a case of suicide, the police are investigating the matter from all angles and ascertaining the cause of the suicide. The DCP further said that forensic and mobile crime teams have examined the scene and collected evidence in the matter. "He was declared brought dead at Safdarjung Hospital. Further investigation in the incident is underway," she added.

Maharashtra: BJP expels 40 rebel candidates from the party

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Faced with an unprecedented rebellion in constituencies across poll-bound Maharashtra, the ruling BJP has cracked the whip and expelled as many as 40 party rebel candidates in 36 Assembly constituencies across the state. In a formal statement issued a day after the deadline for withdrawal of nominations ended, the BJP named the 40 rebel candidates whom it expelled from the primary membership of the party for violating the party and indulging in anti-party activities. Known all along for discipline in its party ranks, the BJP is dealing with massive rebellion across the state. The expelled rebel candidates are taking on the party's official candidates. "There are more rebel candidates in the fray than the ones named in the list. There



are 78 more rebel candidates in the fray. All these rebels are contesting against the official candidates put up by our allies - the Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena and Ajit Pawar-headed NCP," a BJP leader who did not want to be identified said. The 40 expelled BJP rebels are spread across the state. They include two rebels from Dhule -Rural (Shrikant Karle and Sophan Patil), two from Jalgaon city (Mayur Kapse and Ashwin Sonawane), two from Nanded-North (Vaishali Milind Deshmukh and Milind Uttarmrao Deshmukh), Nanded south (Dilip Venkatrao Kadkrute, Sunil Sahebrao More and Sanjay Dhongare), Baglan-ST (Aakash Salunke and Jayashree

Garund). In what came as a jolt to the BJP, its national spokesperson and former Nandurbar MP Dr Heena Gavit resigned from the party's primary membership after defying the party's directive not to contest against the Shinde Shiv Sena's official candidate Amashya Padvi from Akkalkuwa constituency. The State BJP had threatened that it would initiate disciplinary candidate if she did not withdraw her nomination against Padvi. Earlier this year, Dr Heena was trounced in the Lok Sabha polls by Gopal Padvi, son of incumbent Akkalkuwa MLA KC Padvi. Congress has renominated KC Padvi as its candidate from Akkalkuwa. Dr Heena's father, Vijaykumar Gavit - who is the state tribal development minister in the Eknath Shinde candidate - remains the BJP candidate from the neighbouring Nandurbar constituency.

Sharda Sinha to be cremated in Patna with full State honours

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PATNA/NEW DELHI

Renowned singer Sharda Sinha, who breathed her last at AIIMS Delhi on Tuesday, will be cremated in Patna with full state honours on Thursday. Patna District Magistrate (DM) Chandrashekhar Singh said her mortal remains reached in the State's Capital on Wednesday. "As per wishes of her family members, Sinha's cremation will take place around 9 am on Thursday," said Singh. One of the things that Sinha would be remembered for is her rendition of devotional songs meant for 'Chhath', the most popular festival of the state which, incidentally, falls on Thursday when the 'Bihar Kokila' will be consigned to flames. Sinha's mortal remains have been kept at her Rajendra Nagar house (near Kankarbagh) in Patna where her fans and well wishers will pay their last respects to the popular folk singer. Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar announced cremation with full state honours for Sinha, a recipient of Padma Shri and Padma Bhushan. Kumar visited Sinha's house on Wednesday afternoon to pay last respects to the departed soul. Besides, several VVIPs are also expected to visit the singer's house to pay homage. Union Minister and BJP national president J P Nadda is also expected to visit Sinha's house on Thursday evening. Sinha passed away on Tuesday night while undergoing treatment at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences



(AIIMS) in Delhi. She was 72. West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee condoled Sinha death and said, "Saddened at the demise of noted folk singer Sharda Sinha. Also known as 'Bihar Kokila' due to her melodious voice, her songs in Bhojpuri, Maithili, and Magadhi languages will always be remembered. I express my sincere condolences to her bereaved family, friends and fans". Renowned singer Sharda Sinha's son, Anshuman, on Thursday expressed his wish for his late mother to be considered posthumously for the Padma Vibhushan, the second-highest civilian honour in the country. Prominent cinema personalities Anurag Kashyap, Manoj Bajpayee, Richa Chadha, Huma Qureshi, and Sonu Nigam were amongst others who condoled the death of Sharda Sinha, fondly called 'Bihar Kokila' by her fans. The Padma Bhushan recipient lent her voice to songs prominently in Maithili, Bhojpuri and Magadhi languages such as "Chhathi

Maiya Aayi Na Duariya", "Ho Deenanth", "Dwar Cheka", and "Patna Se", but had also sung Hindi film songs like "Taar Bijli" ("Gangs of Wasseypur"), "Kahe Toh Se Sajna" ("Maine Pyar Kiya"), and "Babul" ("Hum Aapke Hain Koun..!"). Production house Rajshri, which backed "Maine Pyar Kiya" and "Hum Aapke Hain Koun..!", shared a condolence message on its social media page. Born in Sapatul in Bihar, Sinha became famous not only in her home state but also in parts of eastern Uttar Pradesh. Popular playback singer Sonu Nigam said it was extremely saddening to lose "respected Sharda Sinha ji during the great festival of Chhath Puja". Bhojpuri actor and politician Ravi Kishan said without Sinha's voice, every festival seemed empty, especially the festival of Chhath, which is why "chhati maiya" called her back during this time. Former Bhojpuri actor and BJP MP Manoj Tiwari, who on Tuesday visited the bereaved family after Sinha's death at AIIMS-Delhi, shared a heartfelt post on the microblogging site.

Abandoned at birth, miracle...

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He was put on oxygen support and fed with an infant-feeding tube. The loving care provided by the doctors and nurses brought the child back from the jaws of death as he became the apple of their eyes. Not a day went by when the hospital staff didn't play with baby Krishna," he said. "Dr Arya named the child 'Krishna' because he was found on the auspicious day of Janmashtami (August 26) and emerged victorious after enduring so much suffering at such a tender age," the principal of G SVM Medical College, Sanjay Kala, said.

However, while shifting him to the children's home in Prayagraj, the child welfare committee recorded the infant's name as 'Lov', noting that it was an imaginary ('kalpanik') name. "This baby is a reminder of human resilience and the power of kindness. Though abandoned, they are not alone. They are surrounded by those who believe in second chances. It is a testament to life's determination to persevere," Dr Arya said. The boy was handed over to the child welfare committee on October 25 which moved him to his new abode in Prayagraj over the next couple of days.

President Murmu to embark on INS Vikrant, witness naval operations at sea

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

President Droupadi Murmu will embark the indigenous aircraft carrier INS Vikrant and witness naval operations at sea on Thursday, navy said here on Wednesday. It will be her maiden visit to the aircraft carrier. Giving details, officials said Navy chief Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi will receive the

President at INS Hansa (Naval Air Station at Goa) and present a 150-men Ceremonial Guard of Honour. Soon thereafter, she will embark the indigenous aircraft carrier INS Vikrant at sea off Goa. This is maiden sailing of the Supreme Commander onboard the indigenous aircraft carrier INS Vikrant to witness the full spectrum of multi-domain naval operations.

Donald Trumps Kamala Harris

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In effect, he became the first former president to get the nomination for the top office on the planet after being convicted of a felony. Trump won the battleground states of Pennsylvania, Georgia, North Carolina and Wisconsin. Counting of votes was still underway in the swing states of Arizona, Michigan and Nevada. Earlier, Harris cancelled an election watch party in her alma mater Howard University after a clear trend in the counting of votes emerged. The results are a big disappointment for Harris. She joined the race after President Biden dropped out from his reelection campaign in July, weeks after

he came under severe scrutiny following his incoherent performance at a televised debate with Trump. The nomination itself was historic as she became the first woman of colour in the US to be fielded by a major party in the presidential race. In her address after formally accepting the nomination, Harris vowed to "chart a new way forward" far devoid of bitterness, cynicism and divisive politics. The US has 50 states and most of them vote for the same party in every election, except the swing states. Generally, there is not much surprise over the candidates picking up victories in states other than the pivotal battleground ones. Overall, a total of 538 electoral college votes are up for

grabs. The swing states of Pennsylvania, Michigan and Wisconsin, known as part of the Rust Belt, have been traditionally the strongholds of the Democratic Party. An exit poll by CNN said roughly three-quarters of the electorate holds a negative view of the way things are going in the US today. Only about one-quarter called themselves enthusiastic or satisfied with the state of the nation, with more than four in 10 dissatisfied and roughly three in 10 saying they are angry, according to the poll. Voters remained generally optimistic, with more than six in 10 saying America's best days are in the future, and only about one-third that they're already in the past, the CNN poll found.

LMV license holders can drive...

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"Road safety is a serious public issue globally. It is crucial to mention that in India, over 1.7 lakh persons were killed in road accidents... and the assumption that they stem from drivers operating light transport vehicles driven by LMV license holders are unsubstantiated," the Bench said. The verdict said that the factors contributing to road accidents include rash driving, speeding, road design and the failure to adhere to traffic laws. Other significant contributors are the use of mobile phones while driving and non-compliance with regulations like seat belts and wearing helmets, it added. "We are able to reach such a conclusion as none of the parties in this case has produced any empirical data to demonstrate that LMV driving

license holders driving a transport vehicle is a significant cause for road accidents in India," the SC verdict read. "An authoritative pronouncement by this court would prevent insurance company from taking a technical plea to defeat a legitimate claim for compensation involving an insured vehicle going below 7,500kg, driven by a person holding a driving license for LMVs in an era where autonomous or driverless vehicles are no longer tales of science fiction and app-based passenger platforms are a modern reality, the licensing regime cannot remain static," it further stated. The amendments that have been carried out by the Indian legislature may not have dealt with all the possible concerns...As we are informed by the Attorney

General that the legislative exercise is underway, we hope that a comprehensive amendment to address the statutory lacunas will be made with necessary corrective measures," the order read. "Our present interpretation on how the licensing regime is to operate for drivers under the statutory scheme is unlikely to compromise the road safety concerns," the court ruled. The Bench said this will also effectively address the livelihood issues for drivers operating transport vehicles who clock maximum hours behind the wheels in legally operating transport vehicles below 7,500 kg with their LMV driving license. The Bench upheld the 2017 judgment of the SC in the Mukund Dewangan case which had held that the LMV license holders can drive transport vehicles weighing upto 7,500kg.

CBSE cracks whip on...

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Of the 21 schools whose affiliation has been withdrawn, 16 are in Delhi while five of them are in Rajasthan's coaching hubs, Kota and Sikar. Majority of the inspected schools were found to have violated the board's affiliation by-laws by enrolling students beyond their actual attendance records, effectively creating 'dummy' enrollments. Additionally, schools were found to be flouting infrastructural norms of the board," Gupta said. The CBSE has taken cognisance of these serious violations and showcause notices are being issued to the defaulting schools. Legal action is also being contemplated against those found guilty of non-compliance," he added.

Scores of students preparing for engineering and medical entrance examinations prefer to take admission in dummy schools so that they can focus solely on their preparations for the competitive exams. They do not attend classes and straightaway appear in the board exams. Aspirants also choose dummy schools, keeping in mind the quota in medical and engineering institutes available for students from certain states. For example, candidates who have completed classes 11 and 12 in Delhi are considered for admission in medical colleges of the national capital under the Delhi state quota. Earlier this year, the CBSE cancelled the affiliation of 20 schools for enrolling dummy students and ineligible candidates.

Look forward to renewing our collaboration: PM Modi

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There were some hiccups in trade with Trump favouring America First. Policy leading to tariff disputes. Both sides imposed tariffs on each other's goods. These irritants are likely to go away during Trump's second innings, sources said. Last month, Trump had praised Prime Minister Modi as "the nicest human being", saying the Indian leader is "a friend of mine." Trump had made the comments in response to a question, "Modi, India. He's a friend of mine. He's great... Before him, they were replacing them every year. It's very unstable. He came over. He's a friend of mine. But on the outside, he looks like he's your father. He's the nicest, but he's a total killer," he had said.

Trump had also recalled Modi's visit to Houston in 2019 to attend the 'Howdy Modi' event during his tenure, saying, "It was beautiful. It's like 80,000 people going crazy. We were walking around...". The Republican candidate had said he shares a "very good relationship" with Modi. The 'Howdy Modi' event was followed by Trump's 2020 visit to India, where he was welcomed with the 'Namaste Trump' rally, organised by PM Modi in Ahmedabad, with about 100,000 people attending the event at a cricket stadium. Modi and Trump had also met in 2017 in Washington DC. Last week, Trump had extended Diwali greetings and pledged to safeguard the interests of Hindu Americans, vowing to shield them from what he

described as the "anti-religion agenda of the radical left." He highlighted his commitment to protecting their freedoms and enhancing relations with India, a nation he said was a vital ally. Sharing a social media post, Trump wrote, "We will also protect Hindu Americans against the anti-religion agenda of the radical left. We will fight for your freedom. Under my administration, we will also strengthen our great partnership with India and my good friend, Prime Minister Modi." Trump also condemned the attacks on minorities in Bangladesh, including Hindus and Christians, amidst the political turmoil following the resignation of former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. "I strongly condemn the barbaric

violence against Hindus, Christians, and other minorities who are getting attacked and looted by mobs in Bangladesh, which remains in a total state of chaos," Trump said. The Congress also congratulated Trump with party chief Mallikarjun Kharge saying "we look forward to working closely with the United States for global peace and prosperity". Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi also congratulated Trump and wished success to him in his second term. "Congratulations on your victory, @realDonaldTrump! Wishing you success in your second term as US President. All the best to @KamalaHarris in her future endeavours," Gandhi said in a social media post. In a social media post, Kharge

said, "On the behalf of the Indian National Congress, we extend our congratulations and best wishes to President @realDonaldTrump for his election victory." India and the United States share a robust comprehensive global strategic partnership, underpinned by long-standing shared democratic values, aligned interests, and extensive people-to-people connections, the Congress president said. "We look forward to working closely with the United States for global peace and prosperity," Kharge said. Several world leaders including Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and President of the European Union Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, had also sent their congratulatory messages to Trump. "I warmly

congratulate Donald J. Trump. The EU and the US are more than just allies. We are bound by a true partnership between our people, uniting 800 million citizens. So let's work together on a strong transatlantic agenda that keeps delivering for them," der Leyen said. Netanyahu was among the first leaders to acknowledge Trump's victory on social media and send his greetings, calling it history's greatest comeback. "Dear Donald and Melania Trump, Congratulations on history's greatest comeback! Your historic return to the White House offers a new beginning for America and a powerful recommitment to the great alliance between Israel and America," he said, signing it off with "yours, Benjamin and Sara Netanyahu".

Sensex, Nifty surge over one per cent

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Titan, IndusInd Bank, Hindustan Unilever, Axis Bank and HDFC Bank were the laggards. "Global markets experienced a relief rally following the US election results, reducing political uncertainty with Trump securing a strong mandate. This has led to strong risk-on sentiments, driven by expectations of tax cuts and increased government spending," Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services said. The domestic buying was broad-based, with IT leading the charge in anticipation of a rebound in IT spending in the US. "BFSI spending in the US has improved as per the IT Q2 result which is positive for Indian players," Nair added.

In Asian markets, Tokyo settled higher while Seoul, Shanghai and Hong Kong ended lower. European markets were quoting in the green. Wall Street ended sharply higher on Tuesday. Global oil benchmark Brent crude declined 2 per cent to USD 74.02 a barrel. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 2,569.41 crore on Tuesday, while Domestic Institutional Investors (DIIs) bought Rs 3,030.96 crore worth of shares, according to exchange data. Bouncing back from Monday's sharp fall, the BSE benchmark jumped 694.39 points or 0.88 per cent to settle at 79,476.63 on Tuesday. The Nifty climbed 217.95 points or 0.91 per cent to 24,213.30.

KAMALA HARRIS

First woman V-P who fails to score a big first in US politics

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Kamala Harris, the daughter of Indian and Jamaican immigrants, failed to notch a big first in American politics when she lost to her Republican rival Donald Trump in the race to the White House.



The Democratic leader's defeat to Trump in a bitterly contested election shattered her dream to become the first woman President of the United States.

Harris, 60, has known other firsts, though. She has been the district attorney for San Francisco — the first woman, first African-American and first Indian-origin person to be elected to the position.

As vice president, she is the first woman to hold the post. Also, she happens to be the first African-American or Indian-American person to make it there.

In an Op-ed published three days before the November 5 election, Harris recollected her frequent visit to India as a child and remembered her late mother, Shyamala Gopalan, a cancer researcher and civil rights activist.

"Growing up, my mother raised my sister and me to appreciate and honour our heritage. Nearly every other year, we would go to India for Diwali. We would spend time with our grandparents, our uncles, and our 'chithhis' (aunts)," Harris said in the article for The Juggernaut, an online South Asian publication. She said she believes Americans want a president who works for all American people. "And that has been the story of my entire career," she said.

Harris got her big chance when President Joe Biden abandoned his own bid for reelection in July following his poor performance in a nationally televised debate with Trump. Biden endorsed Harris as the party nominee in the election.

Her nomination fulfilled her presidential dreams, which she abandoned before the primaries in 2019 due to a lack of funds to continue her campaign.

Biden picked her as his running mate in 2016. She was just the third woman to be picked as the vice president nominee on a major party ticket.

And she was one of only three Asian Americans in the Senate and the first Indian-American ever to serve in the chamber. She has been likened to Barack Obama, the country's first Black President.

More than a decade ago, journalist Gwen Ifill called Harris "the female Barack Obama" on the "Late Show With David Letterman". Later, a small businessman from Willoughby, Tony Pinto, called her "a young, female version of the president".

She is considered close to Obama, who endorsed her in various elections, including that for the US Senate in 2016, Vice President in 2020 and the presidential election in 2024.

Harris was born to two immigrant parents: a Black father and an Indian mother. Her father, Donald Harris, is from Jamaica, and her mother, Shyamala Gopalan, migrated to the US from Chennai in 1958. She, however, defines herself simply as "American".

"My mother understood very well that she was raising two black daughters," she wrote in her autobiography "The Truths We Hold". "She knew that her adopted homeland would see Maya and me as black girls and she was determined to make sure we would grow into confident, proud black women."

Harris was born in Oakland and grew up in Berkeley. She spent her high school years living in French-speaking Canada — her mother was teaching at McGill University in Montreal.

"Harris was raised in a middle-class family by a working mother who taught her to believe in the promise of America. Her mother also taught her the value of hard work, bringing Kamala to her breast cancer research lab and showing her how to clean test tubes as a child," according to the Harris campaign website.

She attended college in the US, spending four years at Howard University, which she has described as among the most formative experiences of her life. After Howard, she went on to earn her law degree at the University of California, Hastings and began her career at the Alameda County District Attorney's Office.

She became the top prosecutor for San Francisco in 2003 before being elected the first woman and the first Black person to serve as California's attorney general in 2010, the top lawyer in America's most populous state.

In her nearly two terms in office as attorney general, Harris gained a reputation as one of the rising stars of the Democratic Party. In 2017, she was sworn into the US Senate, where she championed legislation to fight hunger, provide rent relief, improve maternal health care, expand access to capital for small businesses, revitalise America's infrastructure, and combat the climate crisis.

Harris is married to Douglas Emhoff, a lawyer, for the past 10 years. She is the stepmother of two children, Ella and Cole, who are her "endless source of love and pure joy".

Her role as vice president was more than just symbolic. Unlike her predecessors, she wielded considerable power during Biden's presidency. As president of the Senate, she set a new record for the most tie-breaking votes cast by a Vice President in history — surpassing one that had stood for nearly 200 years. And her votes have been consequential.

World leaders hail Trump's 'historic' comeback

PTI ■ LONDON/JERUSALEM

Congratulatory messages poured in Wednesday from world leaders, including Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his UK counterpart Keir Starmer, for Donald Trump after his "historic" comeback in the US presidential election.

Starmer was among the first world leaders to issue a congratulatory message soon after Trump addressed a rally in Florida to claim victory in the US presidential race.

He said the "special relationship" between the UK and the US would continue to prosper under the new American administration after Trump clinched crucial battleground states in the US overnight.

The 78-year-old Republican leader cleared the 270 electoral votes needed to clinch the presidency by securing a victory in the key battleground state of Wisconsin.

According to races called by the Associated Press up to 4 pm (IST), 277 electoral votes had gone to Republican candidate Trump and 224 to Democratic Party's Kamala Harris.

"Congratulations President-elect Trump on your historic election victory. I look forward to working with you in the years ahead," Starmer said in a statement released by 10 Downing Street in London.

"As the closest of allies, we stand shoulder to shoulder in defence of our shared values of freedom, democracy and enterprise. From growth and security to innovation and tech, I know that the UK-US special relationship will continue to prosper on both sides of the Atlantic for years to come," he said.

Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu congratulated Trump for his "historic return to the White House". Addressing Trump and his wife Melania Trump, Netanyahu in a post on X said, "Congratulations on history's greatest comeback! Your historic return to the White House offers a new beginning for America and a powerful commitment to the great alliance between Israel and America. This is a huge victory!"

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese congratulated Trump on his "election victory". "Australians and Americans are great friends and true allies. Working together, we can ensure the partnership between our nations and peoples remains strong into the future," he posted on X.

French President Emmanuel Macron in a post on X said, "Ready to work together as we were able to do during four years. With your convictions and mine. In respect and ambition. For more peace and prosperity."

Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelensky congratulated Trump on his "impressive" election victory. Recalling his "great meeting" with the Republican leader in September during which they discussed "the Ukraine-US strategic partnership, the Victory Plan, and ways to put an end to Russian aggression against Ukraine", Zelensky in a post on X said he appreciated "Trump's commitment to the 'peace through strength' approach in global affairs."

"This is exactly the principle that can practically bring just peace in Ukraine closer. I am hopeful that we will put it into action together. We look forward to an era of a strong United States of America under President Trump's decisive leadership. We rely on continued strong bipartisan support for Ukraine in the United States."

"We are interested in developing mutually beneficial political and economic cooperation that will benefit both of our nations. Ukraine, as one of Europe's strongest military powers, is committed to ensuring long-term peace and security in Europe and the Transatlantic community with the support of our allies," he said.

Zelensky said he is looking forward to personally congratulating Trump and discussing ways to strengthen Ukraine's strategic partnership with the US.

Congratulating Trump, Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni said Italy and the US are "sister" nations, linked by an unshakable alliance, common values, and a historic friendship.

"It is a strategic bond, which I am sure we will now strengthen even further," she said in a post on X. German Chancellor Olaf Scholz congratulated Trump, saying, "For a long time, Germany and the US have been working together successfully promoting prosperity and freedom on both sides of the Atlantic. We will continue to do so for the wellbeing of our citizens."

European Union Commission President Ursula von der Leyen in a post on X congratulated Trump and underlined that the EU and the US are "more than just allies". "We are bound by a true partnership between our people, uniting 800 million citizens. So let's work together on a strong transatlantic agenda that keeps delivering for them," she said.

Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban said Trump's win is the "biggest comeback" in US political history and is "a much-needed victory for the World".

No information on whether Putin will congratulate Trump

AP ■ MOSCOW

Ahead of the presidential race call, Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said he had no information on whether Russian President Vladimir Putin plans to congratulate Donald Trump but emphasised that Moscow views the US as an "unfriendly" country.

Peskov reaffirmed the Kremlin's claim that the US support for Ukraine amounted to its involvement in the conflict, telling reporters: "Let's not forget that we are talking about the unfriendly country that is both directly and indirectly involved in a war against our state."

Asked if Putin's failure to congratulate Trump could hurt ties, Peskov responded that Russia-US relations already are at the "lowest point in history," adding that it will be up to the new US leadership to change the situation.

He noted Putin's statements about Moscow's readiness for a "constructive dialogue based on justice, equality and readiness to take mutual concerns into account".

Peskov noted Trump's campaign statements about his intention to end wars, saying that "those were important statements, but now after the victory, while getting ready to enter the Oval Office or entering the Oval Office, statements could sometimes change."

Republicans get Senate majority

AP ■ WASHINGTON

Republicans seized control of the US Senate late Tuesday after flipping Democratic held seats, holding onto GOP incumbents and wresting away the majority for the first time in four years.

The unexpected battleground of Nebraska pushed Republicans over the top. Incumbent GOP Sen Deb Fischer brushed back a surprisingly strong challenge from independent newcomer Dan Osborn.

Democrats watched their efforts to salvage their slim majority slip out of reach as tallies rolled in across a map that favoured Republicans. Early in the night, Republicans flipped one seat in West Virginia, with the election of Jim Justice, who easily replaced retiring Sen Joe Manchin.

Democratic efforts to oust firebrand Republicans Ted Cruz of Texas and Rick Scott of Florida collapsed. While Texas hasn't elected a Democrat statewide in almost 30 years, Colin Allred, a Dallas-

area congressman and former NFL linebacker, positioned himself as a moderate and leaned into his support for reproductive rights amid Texas' abortion ban, which is one of the strictest in the nation.

Cruz's victory came after Democratic efforts to salvage their Senate majority evaporated when Democratic Sen Sherrod Brown in Ohio lost his reelection to Republican Bernie Moreno, a wealthy Trump-era newcomer.

Brown's loss to Moreno, an immigrant from Bogota, Colombia, who built a fortune as a luxury car dealer and blockchain entrepreneur, puts the Democrats on the edge of losing Senate control. A three-term senator, he is the first incumbent to lose reelection.

The Ohio race between Brown and Moreno, who was backed by Donald Trump, is the most expensive of the cycle, at some \$400 million.

With control of Congress at stake, the contests for the House and Senate will determine which party holds the majority

and the power to boost or block a president's agenda, or if the White House confronts a divided Capitol Hill.

The focus now turns to the Democratic "blue-wall" states of Pennsylvania, Michigan and Wisconsin, where Democrats are fighting to protect seats in what's left of their slim hold on the Senate.

In the end, just a handful of seats, or as little as one, could tip the balance in either chamber. With a 50-50 Senate, the party in the White House determines the majority, since the vice president is a tie-breaker.

Already several states will send history-makers to the Senate. Voters elected two Black women to the Senate, Democrat Lisa Blunt Rochester of Delaware and Democrat Angela Alsobrooks of Maryland, in a historic first.

Blunt Rochester won the open seat in her state while Alsobrooks defeated Maryland's popular former governor, Larry Hogan. Just three Black women have served in the Senate, and never before have two served at

Iran's currency at all-time low as Trump wins

AP ■ TEHRAN

Iran's currency fell on Wednesday to an all-time low as Donald Trump clinched the US presidency again, signalling new challenges ahead for Tehran as it remains locked in the wars raging in the Middle East.

The rial traded at 703,000 rials to the dollar, traders in Tehran said. The rate could still change throughout the day. Iran's Central Bank could flood the market with more hard currencies as an attempt to improve the rate, as it has done in the past.

The slide comes as the rial already faces considerable woes over its sharp slide in value — and as the mood on the streets of Tehran among some darkened.

"One-hundred per cent he will intensify the sanctions," said Amir Aghaiean, a 22-year-old student. "Things that are not in our favour will be worse. Our economy and social situation will surely get worse."

He added: "I feel the country is going to blow up." In 2015, at the time of Iran's nuclear deal with world powers, the rial was at 32,000 to USD 1. On July 30, the day that Iran's reformist President Masoud Pezeshkian was sworn in and started his term, the rate was 584,000 to USD 1.

Trump unilaterally withdrew America from the accord in 2018, sparking years of tensions between the countries that persist today.

Iran's economy has struggled for years under crippling international sanctions over its rapidly advancing nuclear program, which now enriches uranium at near weapons-grade levels.

Pezeshkian, elected after a helicopter crash killed hard-line President Ebrahim Raisi in May, came to power on a promise to reach a deal to ease Western sanctions.

However, Iran's government has for weeks been trying to downplay the effect on Tehran of whoever won Tuesday's election in the United States. That stance continued on Wednesday with a brief comment from Fatemeh Mohajerani, a spokeswoman for Pezeshkian's administration.

Six Indian Americans taste success

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Six Indian Americans have won the elections to the House of Representatives, increasing their number from five in the current Congress.

Indian-American lawyer Suhaz Subramanyam created history by becoming the first from the community to be elected from Virginia and the entire East Coast.

Subramanyam defeated Mike Clancy of the Republican Party. He is currently a Virginia State Senator. There is a possibility that the number of Indian Americans in the House of Representatives could increase to seven as Dr Amish Shah was leading by a slender margin against his Republican incumbent in the first Congressional District of Arizona.

"I am honoured and humbled that the people of Virginia's 10th District put their trust in me to take on the toughest fights and deliver results in Congress. This district is my home. I got married here, my wife Miranda and I are raising our daughters here, and the issues our community faces are personal to our family. It is an honour to continue serving this district in Washington," Subramanyam said.

Subramanyam, who previously served as a White House Advisor to President Barack Obama, is a Hindu by faith and is popular among Indian Americans nationwide.

He joins the 'Samosa Caucus' in the Congress that currently comprises five Indian Americans — Ami Bera, Raja Krishnamoorthi, Ro Khanna, Pramila Jayapal and Shri Thanedar.

All the five existing Indian American members were re-elected to the House of

Representatives. Shri Thanedar was re-elected for the second consecutive term from the 13th Congressional District of Michigan. He won it for the first time in 2023. Raja Krishnamoorthi won the seventh Congressional District of Illinois for the fifth consecutive term. While the battles for control of the White House and Congress remain close, I am honoured that the people of Illinois' 8th District have extended my contract to represent them in Congress," Krishnamoorthi said.

"My parents came to this country with little more than a dream for their family's future and the faith that they could achieve it here in America," Krishnamoorthi concluded.

"Despite some hard times, we did." "My mission in Congress is to fight for all the other families that are pursuing their

dreams, no matter where they come from, how they worship, or the number of letters in their names... there are 29 in mine." So did Ro Khanna who represents the seventeenth Congressional District of California and Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal, who represents the seventh Congressional District of Washington State.

A physician by profession, Dr Ami Bera is the senior-most Indian American Congressman representing the sixth Congressional District of California since 2013. He was re-elected for the seventh consecutive term.

In Arizona, Shah from the Democratic Party was slightly ahead of his Republican Party's incumbent David Schweikert. He has 132,712 votes as against his rivals 128,606 votes when 63 per cent of the votes were counted.



Supporters of Republican presidential nominee former President Donald Trump hold banners as they take part in Trump's Election Night Watch Party, at Palm Beach (Florida). PTI

European leaders seek common future at summit but all eyes on Washington

AP ■ BUDAPEST

Dozens of European leaders will be gingerly seeking to chart a more common future during a one-day summit in Hungary's capital on Thursday. Yet despite myriad economic challenges and two wars in the neighbourhood, all eyes will be glued on Washington to see whether the pivotal US election will cause a political rift throughout the continent.

The transatlantic relationship will doubtless change after the vote, leaders and experts have said. The impact of the US results could be felt for years to come, on issues including the war in Ukraine, the

European Union's trade relations with the rest of the world, migration, the Middle East conflict and climate change.

"All this is putting peace, stability and prosperity at risk in our region," said the invitation letter to the leaders of the European Political Community, which unites almost 50 nations in Europe and its near abroad, bar Russia and Belarus.

Orbán makes plain his support for Trump. Not so long ago, such a meeting — which is also expected to include leaders from non-EU countries like Turkey, Serbia and the United Kingdom — would end with praise for European unity and a common political direction.

Yet with Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban as the host of the summit, friction is as good as assured. Orban, who has openly thrown his weight behind

The impact of the US results could be felt for years to come, on issues including the war in Ukraine, the European Union's trade relations with the rest of the world, migration, the Middle East conflict and climate change.

Trump and argued the former president is a "man of peace," has predicted a Trump victory and suggested that civil and criminal cases against him were the result of a politically motivated Department of Justice — a common Trump refrain.

Having played the obstructionist for years within the 27-nation EU, Orban now holds the bloc's rotating presidency, giving him a more prominent platform and making him the host of Thursday's EPC summit, as well as another gathering of EU leaders on Friday.

The presidency under Orban caused turmoil from day one, when he declared "Make Europe Great Again" the motto of his six months in

charge. It was a strikingly clear reference to his affection for Trump, which he followed up with unannounced visits to Moscow and Beijing, angering EU leaders who said he was not acting on their behalf.

In response to Orban's self-styled "peace mission," many EU countries began boycotting presidency meetings in Budapest, or sending only lower-level bureaucrats rather than ministers. However, no boycotts are expected for this week's summits.

While Orban has cast the result of US elections as determinative of Europe's future — he's even delayed passing Hungary's 2025 national budget until after a

new president is elected — not all EU leaders are comfortable with the bloc's fate being so tightly bound up with the movements of American politics.

Total vehicle retail sales in India in October sees 32 per cent Y-O-Y rise to 28,32,944 units: FADA

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The total vehicle retail sales in India witnessed a 32 per cent Y-O-Y rise in October to 28,32,944 units with all segments including two-wheelers and passenger vehicles registering strong growth, Federation of Automobile Dealers' Association (FADA) said on Wednesday.

The total vehicle retail sales in October 2023 stood at 21,43,929 units, as per FADA. The strong growth in October this year was largely driven by the rural market, especially boosting two-wheeler and passenger vehicles sales, supported by increased Minimum Support Price (MSP) for Rabi crops,



FADA said. Passenger vehicle sales grew 32.38 per cent to 4,83,159

units in 2024, from 3,64,991 units retailed in October 2023, it stated.

Two-wheeler sales for the previous month were recorded at 20,65,095 units, as compared to 15,14,634 units in October 2023, registering a growth of 36.35 per cent, while three-wheeler sales were up 11.45 per cent year-on-year to 1,22,846 in October 2024, it said.

Tractor sales, according to FADA, increased 3.08 per cent during October to 64,433 units, from 62,542 units a year ago.

The convergence of major festivals (Navratri and Diwali) in October significantly boosted consumer demand; attractive festive offers, new model launches, and improved stock availability led to a 36 per cent year-on-year and 71 per cent month-on-month

growth in two-wheelers, according to FADA. Besides, rural sentiments, favourable monsoon and good crop expectations, further contributed to the growth, it stated.

Moreover, the 32 per cent year-on-year and 75 per cent month-on-month rise in passenger vehicle sales was driven by festive demand, aggressive offers, and new model introductions, it said.

FADA remains optimistic about near-term growth of the overall automobile industry particularly with the wedding season ahead. However, potential challenges such as inventory overstock and economic headwinds may affect sales momentum towards the end of the year, it said.

Rubicon Research, Sai Life Sciences and two others get Sebi's nod to float IPOs

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Four companies, including pharmaceutical formulation firm Rubicon Research and TPG Capital-backed Sai Life Sciences, have received Sebi's go-ahead to raise at least Rs 3,000 crore collectively through Initial Public Offerings (IPOs), an update with the markets regulator showed on Wednesday.

The other two firms that obtained the regulator's clearance are yarn manufacturer Sanathan Textiles and auto components maker Metalman Auto.

Meanwhile, BMW Ventures, which filed its preliminary IPO papers in September, withdrew the documents on October 28.

The four companies - Rubicon Research, Sai Life Sciences, Sanathan Textiles and Metalman Auto -- which filed their draft IPO papers with Sebi during July and August, obtained the regulator's observations on October 31, the update showed.

In Sebi's parlance, obtaining observations means its go-ahead to float public issues.

The Rs 1,085-crore IPO of Rubicon Research is a combination of a fresh issue of equity shares worth Rs 500 crore and an Offer For Sale (OFS) of shares valued at Rs 585 crore by the promoter, General Atlantic Singapore RR Pte Limited, according to the



Draft Red Herring Prospectus (DRHP).

At present, General Atlantic owns over 57 per cent stake in Rubicon Research.

The company proposes to utilise proceeds from the fresh issue to the tune of Rs 310 crore for payment of debt. Also, funds will be used for supporting inorganic growth through unidentified acquisitions as well as other strategic initiatives and general corporate purposes.

Hyderabad-based Sai Life Sciences' proposed IPO comprises a fresh issue of equity shares worth Rs 800 crore and an OFS of 6.15 crore shares by a promoter, investor shareholders and other shareholders, the DRHP showed. Of the IPO proceeds, funds to the tune of Rs 600 crore will be used for debt payment and a portion will be used for corporate general purposes, the draft papers filed showed.

Sanathan Textiles' IPO is a mix of a fresh issue of equity shares aggregating up to Rs 500 crore and an OFS of up to Rs 300 crore by promoters and promoter group entities, it stated. Proceeds from the fresh issue of shares worth Rs 210 crore will be used for investment in the company's subsidiary - Sanathan Polycot Private Limited - for funding its long-term working capital requirements, Rs 175 crore for repayment of debt, besides general corporate purposes.

The proposed IPO of Metalman Auto is a combination of a fresh issue of equity shares worth Rs 350 crore and an OFS of up to 1.26 crore shares by its promoters. Proceeds from the fresh issue to the tune of Rs 25 crore will be used to part financing the capital expenditure towards procurement of plant and machinery at Pithampur manufacturing unit two in Madhya Pradesh.

FSSAI to hold CAC meet to discuss food safety issues on e-commerce platforms

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) will hold meeting of its Central Advisory Committee (CAC) on November 7-8 to discuss food safety issues on e-commerce platforms among others challenges.

The meeting, to be held under the chairmanship of FSSAI's CEO G Kamala Vardhana Rao, will see participation of food commissioners from all states/Union Territories or their representatives.

According to sources, the CAC meeting will be held on November 7 to November 8 to discuss the various issues, including how to strengthen surveillance and testing of food products across all states to ensure food safety. The CAC will also discuss measures to be adopted to

ensure sale of quality food products on e-commerce platforms, they said.

The committee will discuss this issue amid reports of sale of food products nearing expiry on e-commerce platforms.

Sources said FSSAI is likely to call a meeting of big e-commerce players next week to ensure food safety.

As per the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, the food authority constitutes the CAC for close cooperation between the Authority and enforcement agencies/organisations operating in the field of food.

The committee generally meets three to four times a year and advises the Authority on various matters including prioritisation of work, identifying potential risks and the pooling of knowledge.

Thailand replaces Maldives to emerge as top honeymoon destination for Indian couples: MakeMyTrip

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Thailand has emerged as the favourite international honeymoon destination for Indian couples, replacing Maldives, as it recorded the highest share of honeymoon package bookings between October 2023 and September 2024 on MakeMyTrip, the travel booking platform said on Wednesday.

The Maldives saw a 16.2 per cent Year-on-Year decline in honeymoon package bookings while all other top five international destinations - Indonesia, Mauritius, and Vietnam - gained share this year, the travel booking platform stated.

MakeMyTrip's 'How India Travels for Honeymoon', analyses booking data from October 2023 to September

2024, compared to the same period in the preceding year. Thailand increased its booking share by 5.2 per cent year-on-year, surpassing the Maldives, which led the rankings last year.

On the domestic front, the Andamans replaced Kerala as the most booked honeymoon destination, increasing its share of honeymoon package bookings by 6.9 per cent YoY.

Air India deploys additional resources at touch points, airports to help Vistara passengers

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Air India has deployed additional resources, including help desk kiosks, at touch points and airports to ensure a smooth experience for Vistara passengers post its merger with the airline next week, an official said on Wednesday.

Full-service carriers - Air India and Vistara, a joint venture between Tatas and Singapore Airlines - set to be merged on November 11. Post-merger, the routes and schedule operated by Vistara and the Vistara in-flight experience will remain the same.

Also, Vistara aircraft will be identified by a special four-

digit Air India code beginning with the digit '2'. The official in the know said Air India deployed additional resources across touch points in India, including help desk kiosks, at the curbside before terminal entry at hubs and metro city airports.

There will be "customer support staff wearing 'How

may I assist you?' Air India x Vistara branded t-shirts for support", the official added.

In due course, Vistara airport ticketing offices and check-in terminals will become that of Air India.

Over the last few months, 2,70,000 customers who had booked Vistara flights have been migrated to Air

India, and more than 4.5 million Vistara loyalty programme members are being migrated to Air India's loyalty programme.

There are concerns in certain quarters on whether Vistara passengers will continue to get the same services post-merger as Air India, which is in the transformation phase, has

been facing certain service issues in recent times.

The Tata Group-owned Air India has emphasised that the Vistara experience will remain post-merger.

The integrated entity will have a fleet of more than 200 planes, offering connectivity to 90 domestic and international destinations.

Incoming data on GDP growth mixed but positives outweigh negatives: Reserve Bank Governor

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Reserve Bank Governor Shaktikanta Das on Wednesday said the incoming data on economic growth is "mixed", but the positive factors outweigh the negative ones.

Speaking at Business Standard's annual BFSI event here, Das stressed that the underlying economic activity by and large remains strong. "Data which is coming in is mixed but the positives outweigh the negatives and by and large underlying activities remain strong," Das said.

It can be noted that many analysts have been voicing concerns about growth, especially after official data showed growth slowing to a 15-quarter low of 6.7 per cent in the first quarter of FY25.

The RBI, however, has been holding onto its estimate of



7.2 per cent real GDP growth for FY25, even as some expect it to be lower than 7 per cent. Das said the RBI tracks over 70 high-speed indicators to arrive at its estimates and described both the positive factors pushing the number and the negatives pulling it down.

The industrial production or IIP data, and moderation in

urban demand being witnessed by fast-moving consumer goods companies are the negative factors. Besides, subsidy outgoes have increased in the September quarter and will impact the Q2 GDP number, Das said.

The positives include the handsome growth in GST e-way bills, toll collections, air passenger traffic, and steel

and cement industry performance, Das said.

Amid the increased discussion on the auto sector prospects recently with concerns around rising inventory amid lower demand, Das said the sector has done exceedingly well in October with a 30 per cent growth which includes a 23 per cent rise in four-wheeler sales.

Additionally, the agriculture and services sectors are also doing well, Das said.

"I would not rush to declare that the economy is slowing down," the RBI governor said amid some analysts saying that the economy is in a cyclical growth slowdown.

When reminded of his animal analogies on inflation and asked to choose the animal which describes the Indian economy, Das said national animal "tiger" which is also

there in the RBI logo best describes the country.

He said the economy has got the strength of a tiger, while RBI provides the "agility", which is another key attribute of the tiger.

On inflation, Das said the October headline consumer price inflation number to be announced on November 12 will be higher than September's 5.5 per cent, but added that the central bank had already pencilled in the higher numbers for the two months.

The shift in stance of the monetary policy should not be seen as a precursor to a rate cut at the very next meeting of the rate-setting panel, Das said adding that the panel is under no pressure on the next course of action.

On the issue of regulatory and supervisory actions against four non-banks recently, Das

reiterated that the RBI has acted against a very small number if one were to compare the overall number of NBFCs (non-banking financial companies), which is 9,400.

Asserting that the central bank actions are "calibrated, selective and measured", Das said such decisions are not abrupt and are preceded by months of bilateral engagement with an entity.

It is only when an entity refuses or delays RBI's suggestions that such actions are taken, Das said, adding that the number of entities marked out for the need to improve is far higher than the ones against whom actions are taken.

Detailed reasons on why an action has been taken are given to the entity, Das said, underlining that these actions are not "punitive" but

"corrective" in nature wherein the RBI takes back the measures if it sees improvements sought.

The RBI has done a quick study to understand the use of borrowed funds being deployed to punt on the capital markets, Das said and added that this phenomenon does not pose a major risk to the banking sector or lead to "systemic instability".

He urged banks to look at the end use of funds even in unsecured loans, admitting that it is very difficult to monitor the same.

The RBI does not have a prescribed credit deposit ratio for the banks, Das said, adding that this ratio has improved to 80 per cent at the systemic level in the last few months.

However, there are a few entities which are the outliers on this, he admitted.

Quality of loan underwriting

and the ability to sustain the loan growth are two important aspects that the central bank looks at while understanding loan growth, Das specified. He also made clear that the central bank does not have a view on credit growth.

The RBI endeavours to "smell around" constantly, and be preemptive in identifying and rectifying risks before they become into systemic trouble, he said.

Replying to a question on the future of central bank digital currency (CBDC), Das said the RBI is in no hurry to have a national launch of what is a pilot project at present and added that new use cases are emerging like Odisha's transfer of cash support to beneficiaries under a scheme or some corporates transferring lunch vouchers to employee wallets.

Maruti Suzuki seeking to enhance exports with upcoming new Dzire sedan

PTI ■ DABOLIM/GOA

Maruti Suzuki India is targeting markets like UAE, Saudi Arabia, Chile, Mexico and other Latin American countries with its upcoming new version of compact sedan Dzire to accelerate exports as it eyes over 3 lakh units of overseas shipments this fiscal, a senior company official said on Wednesday.

In the domestic market, the company hopes to enhance its share in the sedan market amid the passenger vehicles market shifting towards SUVs (Sports Utility Vehicles), with the new Dzire which is slated for launch next week.

"We have been growing (exports) at a rate of about 11.9 per cent in the first seven months of the financial year and we hope to continue on that momentum. So we hope to do more than about 3 lakh car exports within this financial year," Maruti Suzuki India Executive Director Corporate Affairs



Rahul Bharti told PTI here. In contrast, just about four years ago, the company's exports were below one lakh per year, he added.

"So, now we'll be doing about three times of that, and by the turn of the decade, we hope to multiply it another three times over to something like 8 lakh units a year," Bharti added.

Elaborating on the export strategy, Bharti said, "One of the biggest enablers of increasing export is more models in more geographies. So, we are adding the number of models, and we are adding the markets also." At the moment, he said, the

company is exporting to Latin America, the Middle East and Southeast Asia.

Further, he said, "At some point in time, we will re-enter Europe and Japan also (with upcoming electric SUV eVitaro)." With the upcoming new version of Dzire compact sedan, Bharti said, "We hope to increase our exports also because with the new sleek design, technologies, six airbags, as standard, it is being widely accepted in the market." He further said, "We have to increase the density in those (existing) markets. We will target markets like the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Chile, Mexico, other countries in Latin America and maybe some markets in Southeast Asia also." The existing Dzire model was among the top three export models in October, he added. On the domestic front, Maruti Suzuki India Senior Executive Officer, Marketing and Sales, Partho Banerjee said the company hopes to

enhance its share in the sedan market with the new offering.

Last year, the outgoing version of Dzire clocked over 1.6 lakh units, he said, adding that with the new offering coming in the company expects more growth. "Every second car which is sold in the sedan segment (in the domestic market) happens to be from Maruti...We are, in fact, increasing our market share in the sedan segment," he asserted.

Banerjee acknowledged that with the SUVs growing faster, the sedan segment is shrinking but sedans will continue to have its market as SUV demand stabilises at some point in time. "Being the market leader we need to be present in all the segments. Our take is this, in each segment, we need to be present and offer products to the consumers. Let the consumer decide which form factor they want to go," Banerjee said.

Brand Street Integrated expands with new operations in Kerala

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Brand Street Integrated has announced the expansion of its Southern operations with the launch of its Kerala office. Following successful initiatives across Hyderabad and other Southern regions, the Kerala expansion is a significant step in their strategic journey to bring innovative and localised marketing solutions to brands across India.

Leading the new Kerala division are two of Brand Street Integrated's experts namely, Rajinikanth Manickam, bringing over five years of experience within the company, and Joe Matthew, both of whom possess a deep understanding of the local market and consumer behavior. Their expertise will be instrumental in offering

clients tailored, on-ground marketing solutions that resonate with the region's unique audience. "We are incredibly excited to strengthen our presence in the South by launching operations in Kerala," said Surendra Singh, CEO of Brand Street Integrated. "Kerala represents a vibrant market with a wealth of opportunity, and expanding here allows us to offer brands even more localised and impactful marketing solutions." Brand Street Integrated's Kerala operations will provide the full spectrum of experiential marketing services, including rural and digital marketing, OOH advertising, and merchandising solutions, all backed by a unique, data-driven approach to ensure optimal engagement.

INBRIEF

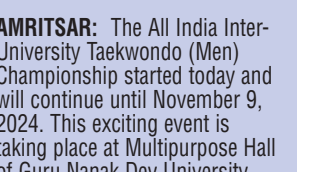
PSPCL AND GNDEC LUDHIANA SIGN MOU

LUDHIANA: Punjab State Power Corporation Limited (PSPCL) and Guru Nanak Dev Engineering College (GNDEC), Ludhiana, have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) under the guidance of Power Minister of Punjab, Harbhajan Singh ETO.



ALL INDIA INTER-UNIVERSITY TAEKWONDO (MEN) CHAMPIONSHIP BEGINS

AMRITSAR: The All India Inter-University Taekwondo (Men) Championship started today and will continue until November 9, 2024. This exciting event is taking place at Multipurpose Hall of Guru Nanak Dev University.



CRICKET MATCH ORGANISED BY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

AMRITSAR: Department of Education of Guru Nanak Dev University organized its first annual department cricket match to foster the sense of healthy competitions among the students of the department.



REAL MADRID, MANCHESTER CITY BOTH HUMILIATED IN CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

AP ■ MILAN

European heavyweights Real Madrid and Manchester City both suffered big defeats in the Champions League. Defending champion Madrid was humbled 3-1 at home by AC Milan, while Erling Haaland missed a penalty and City squandered a fourth-minute lead as it lost 4-1 at Sporting Lisbon, whose coach will soon take charge of its crosstown rival. It was a much better evening for Liverpool, as Luis Diaz scored a hat trick and Cody Gakpo grabbed another goal in a 4-0 win over German champion Bayer Leverkusen at Anfield that marred Xabi Alonso's return to his old home. The Leverkusen coach was given a warm welcome on his return to the club where he became a fan favorite as a player over five seasons between 2004-09. Alonso won the Champions League with

Liverpool in 2005. Liverpool moved top of the league phase table with four wins from four games, followed by Sporting and Monaco, both on 10 points after three wins and a draw. Under the new 36-team format introduced by UEFA this season, the top eight teams advance directly to the next round, and those from ninth to 24th enter playoffs to reach it, while the bottom 12 are eliminated. **AMORIM'S AUDITION:** Before their game, Sporting fans displayed a huge tifo thanking Rúben Amorim in his last home game before he takes over Manchester United. Phil Foden then got City off to a flying start in the fourth minute, only the second goal Sporting has conceded in four games of the competition. But Swedish forward Viktor Gyökeres scored a hat trick as Sporting came roaring back. Gyökeres first equalized in the 38th after a perfect through ball from Geovany Quenda,



before Maximiliano Araújo made it 2-1 right after the break. Gyökeres then made it 3-1 from the penalty spot after Joško Gvardiol was penalized for a shove on Francisco Trincão in the area. Haaland's penalty hit the

crossbar, before Gyökeres showed the Norwegian how it's done with another spot kick at the other end to complete the scoring. It is the first time since 2018 that City has lost three straight games, coming off a defeat to

Tottenham in the English League Cup and a loss to Bournemouth in the Premier League. "In my seven and a half years at the club, I don't remember losing three games in a row," City midfielder Bernardo Silva

said. **MADRID FALTERING:** In Spain, Christian Pulisic sent in a corner for Malick Thiaw to head Milan into a 12th-minute lead, ensuring Madrid trailed in a third straight game in the Champions League this

season. The 15-time champion had already lost to surprise team Lille in their second game. Vinicius Júnior equalized from the penalty spot in the 23rd after he'd been tripped, but Álvaro Morata pounced on the rebound after Andriy Lunin saved Rafael Leão's shot to restore the visitors' lead against his former club. Morata had already been given a hostile reception from the home fans, who evidently remember the goal he scored to take Juventus through to the 2015 final at their team's expense. Tijjani Reijnders scored Milan's third goal as the home fans made their frustrations known at Santiago Bernabéu Stadium. "The last two defeats are inexplicable. We have to analyze and react quickly," Lunin said, referring to Madrid's 4-0 loss to Barcelona in its previous Spanish league game. It's the first time since 2009 that Madrid has lost two successive

games at home with at least three goals conceded in each, according to Opta. "We have to get back on track," Lunin said. **OTHER RESULTS:** German forward Nicolas Kühn scored twice as Celtic defeated Leipzig 3-1 at home, and Juventus drew 1-1 at Lille. Lille midfielder Edon Zhegrovca eluded two defenders before playing a perfect pass for Jonathan David, who fired inside the far post, but Dušan Vlahovic equalized with a penalty for the Italian club. Donyell Malen scored late for Borussia Dortmund to beat Sturm Graz 1-0 at home, and Thilo Kehrer did likewise for Monaco to win at Bologna 1-0. United States midfielder Malik Tillman scored one goal and set up another as PSV Eindhoven beat Spanish team Girona 4-0. Dinamo Zagreb dealt Slovan Bratislava its fourth straight defeat in the competition as the visitors came from behind to win 4-1 in Bratislava.

Cristiano Ronaldo scores as Al-Nassr beats defending champion Al-Ain 5-1

AP ■ RIYADH

Cristiano Ronaldo scored the second goal as Al-Nassr defeated defending champion Al-Ain of the United Arab Emirates 5-1 in the AFC Champions League Elite to put Saudi Arabian teams in the top three places in the 12-team standings. Al-Nassr has 10 points from four games, two behind local rivals Al-Hilal and Al-Ahli who both have a perfect record with four wins. Anderson Talisca opened the scoring in Riyadh after just five minutes with a shot into the bottom corner from the edge of the area. Ronaldo then netted his second goal of this season's competition from close range just after the half-hour mark after goalkeeper Khalid Eisa could only parry Sadio Mane's shot from outside the



area. The third came before the break as Angelo's low cross was deflected into his own net by Fabio Cardoso, but Al-Ain pulled a goal back 10 minutes after the restart as Park Yong-woo's shot hit the post but rebounded off the back of diving

goalkeeper Bento and into the net. Wesley and Talisca added late goals for Al-Nassr to cement the Saudi dominance of the western zone's group. The top eight from each of the two groups progress to the knockout stages. In the eastern zone, Vissel Kobe of Japan went top of the group with a 2-0 win over South Korea's Gwangju FC, the previous leader. Taisei Miyashiro scored with a penalty after 15 minutes and Daiju Sasaki sealed the victory after the break. Johor Darul Tazim of Malaysia went third with a 3-0 win over two-time champion Ulsan HD of South Korea. Just three days after lifting the Chinese Super League title, Shanghai Port lost 3-1 at Kawasaki Frontale of Japan. Australia's sole representative Central Coast Mariners picked up its first point with a 2-2 draw with Shanghai Shenhua.

Manas Dhamne can become Mr. Dependable of Indian tennis: Davis Cup coach Ashutosh Singh

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Manas Dhamne could be the answer to Indian tennis' desperate search for 'Mr Dependable', reckons new Davis Cup coach Ashutosh Singh, who is mightily impressed with the teenager's diligent approach and workmanlike attitude. Ashutosh, who replaced Zeeshan Ali as coach, observed the youngster from Malegaon in Stockholm, where India competed in the Davis Cup Group I tie against Sweden. Dhamne, 16, did not get to play a match but was part of the squad that travelled to Stockholm along with another youngster, Aryan Shah. It was a clear sign that the team management and the selectors wanted Dhamne and Shah to have the Davis Cup experience, what it means to be with the national squad and what it takes to represent the country at the World Cup of tennis. While India were bested 0-4 by the hosts, coach Ashutosh chose to see a silver lining in the forgettable outing in Sweden. "Manas is a quintessential hard worker with a workman like attitude," said Ashutosh, who is son of former Davis Cupper Balram Singh. "He just makes eye contact and nods 'ok' for any on-court work he's asked to do. He has potential to become the Mr Dependable in singles that Indian tennis has long been



searching for," remarked Ashutosh. "Of course it's miles to go but the road he's taken looks possible with his diligent approach. One has to keep in mind that Manas is only 16 and does need careful supervision in certain aspects of his workload management but it seems he's in experienced hands at his training base in Italy." India have just one player in top-100 in Sumit Nagal (83) and the next best is Ramkumar Ramanathan, way behind at number 309, followed by Sasi Kumar Mukund (365). All others are outside the top-500 bracket. Dhamne initially trained in Pune but left for Italy to train with renowned coach Riccardo Piatti at the Piatti Tennis Center in Bordighera. Dhamne made a quick impression when he won the singles titles at the ITF Asia-Oceania Junior (Under-18)

the excitement that the debuts of two young tennis players, which has largely gone unnoticed due to other important discussions going on. Talking about Aryan Shah, Ashutosh said he was a "skilful" player. "Aryan is hard working and a quick learner with an enterprising head on his shoulders. Being inquisitive is a good indication of the eagerness of a young mind to learn, Aryan definitely checks that box. "Alongside Manas, he brings much-needed unbridled energy of youth into the team. Having played all four junior grand slams in singles, he has foundation of top tier exposure to firmly understand the points of his game he needs to work on." Ashutosh had an interesting take on how India's junior players approach the domestic tournaments. He said it was worrying that many players, equipped with talent and the game, were not succeeding, simply because they were burning themselves out by playing more tournaments than necessary. "Till U12, players shouldn't play more than 12 weeks. U14 also should be 15-16 weeks because each player plays two age groups, and they end playing almost 30-40 weeks per year. So, there is no time for working on the game and fitness.

Gauff defeats Swiatek to reach the semifinals

AP ■ RIYADH

Coco Gauff earned her second victory over Iga Swiatek in 13 career matchups, winning 6-3, 6-4 at the WTA Finals to reach the semifinals of the season-ending tournament. The result means that Swiatek can't move up from No. 2 in the rankings this week, so Aryna Sabalenka will finish the year at No. 1 for the first time. It was Gauff's first victory over Swiatek since the 2023 Cincinnati Open, snapping a four-match losing skid head-to-head. Gauff, the 2023 U.S.



Open champion, also put an end to five-time Grand Slam champ Swiatek's six-match unbeaten run at the WTA Finals, an event the Polish star won a year ago.

two months. Krejčíková, the Wimbledon champion, kept her chances of advancing alive with a 6-3, 6-3 win over Jessica Pegula. That eliminated Pegula, who lost in straight sets to Gauff in their opening match in Saudi Arabia. Krejčíková was the last player to qualify for the event for the top eight players on the women's tennis tour, earning her berth thanks to her Grand Slam title at the All England Club in July. At No. 13, she became the lowest-ranked player to win a WTA Finals match since Magda Maleeva 22 years ago.



Standout boxing nation at Paris Olympics joins new body aiming to keep the sport at 2028 Games

AP ■ LAUSANNE

The most successful boxing nation at the Paris Olympics has joined the new governing body that aims to keep the sport in the 2028 Los Angeles Games after years of turmoil outside the ring. The boxing federation of Uzbekistan, whose fighters won five of the 13 gold medals in Paris this year, is among four new members of World Boxing, said the Switzerland-based body that is trying to win formal recognition by the International Olympic Committee. The IOC has set a deadline of "early 2025" to work with a new governing body replacing the Russian-led International Boxing Association, which was banished from the Olympic movement last year. In a years-long dispute with the IBA over finance and integrity concerns, the IOC has overseen boxing tournaments at the past two Olympics in Paris and Tokyo but does not want to organize for a third

time in Los Angeles. The dispute intensified in 2018 when boxing officials defied IOC warnings and elected Uzbek businessman Gafur Rahkimov as their leader. The IOC recently warned boxing federations that stay loyal to the IBA, now led by Russian Umar Kremlev, they will be cut off from funding and liaison with their national Olympic committee - effectively blocking their path to the 2028 Summer Games. "The addition of Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, which are two of the world's leading boxing nations, is a major coup for World Boxing," the emerging governing body said, which also added Guatemala and Laos to a roster of 55 members. World Boxing president Boris van der Vorst said the recruits "recognize it is the only way to keep the Olympic dreams of their boxers alive." The new members joined at a meeting in Pueblo, Colorado which hosted World Boxing's first global championships, at under-19 level.

Southern rivals strive to strike back after recent defeats

PTI ■ KOCHI

Southern rivals Kerala Blasters FC and Hyderabad FC will seek a turnaround in their fortunes when they lock horns in the Indian Super League here on Thursday, having suffered reverses lately. Kerala Blasters FC and Hyderabad FC currently stand at the 10th and 11th spots in the points table -- coming into this match on the back of defeats to Mumbai City FC and Mohun Bagan Super Giant respectively. This match gives them a chance to fix things up and get their respective seasons back on track. The wind can be said to be swaying in the favour of the Kerala Blasters, as the Kochi-based outfit has won three out of their last four matches against Hyderabad FC. However, they have never won thrice in a row in front of the visitors, presenting this match as an unprecedented opportunity for them to do so.

Hyderabad FC will be eyeing points on the road to build upon one win and draw each that they have accumulated in ISL 2024-25. Kerala Blasters FC have found the back of the net in each of their previous 14 ISL matches at home. They have struck at least twice in eight of those games, and only Chennaiyin FC, Delhi Dynamos FC and Bengaluru FC (16 games each) have gone on longer such runs in the competition. With the power-packed attacking duo of Noah Sadaoui and Adrian Luna in their ranks, the Mikael Stahre-coached team is all set to delight the home fans further with their offensive firepower this term. Simultaneously, Kerala Blasters FC have not kept a clean sheet in their previous 18 consecutive matches in the league. This is the joint second-longest such sequence in the ISL, along with FC Goa and Hyderabad FC, with only NorthEast United FC having conceded



goals in a longer stretch of matches. It might prove out to be difficult for the team to climb up the league ladder unless they set their backline in order. Hyderabad FC had snapped their four-game-long losing streak on the road by triumphing over Mohammedan SC by 4-0 in their previous away match. That win must have infused greater belief in them to produce similar such performances in unfamiliar conditions, and the offensive cohesion displayed by Hyderabad FC will keep the Kerala Blasters FC defence in check as well. Hyderabad FC have ended up conceding at least a goal each in seven out of their last nine away fixtures. They have been defeated in all those games, and in fact won the two matches when they kept a clean sheet, drawing a clear parallel between defensive discipline and a greater possibility of them capturing the three points.

Sauber signs Brazilian driver Gabriel Bortoleto to partner Nico Hülkenberg in F1 for 2025

AP ■ HINWIL (SWITZERLAND)

Sauber has signed 20-year-old Brazilian driver Gabriel Bortoleto to make his debut in Formula 1 next year as Nico Hülkenberg's teammate. The decision means that Sauber's current drivers Valtteri Bottas and Zhou Guanyu are without an F1 seat for 2025. Neither has scored a point all season and Sauber's car has been largely uncompetitive. Signing Bortoleto, who leads the Formula 2 standings with two rounds to go, gives Sauber a blend of youth and experience alongside the 37-

year-old Hülkenberg. German automaker Audi is taking over Sauber, which will be rebranded as the Audi works team for 2026. "This is one of the most exciting projects in motorsport, if not in all of sports. Joining a team that combines the rich motorsport history of Sauber and Audi is a true honor," Bortoleto said in a statement. "Beyond simply being a member, I aim to grow with this ambitious project and reach the pinnacle of motorsport. I'm incredibly grateful for the opportunity given to me by the team and for the chance to work



alongside an experienced driver like Nico." Bortoleto, who won the F3 championship last season, began racing in karting as a kid before his family moved to Europe. He is the first full-time Brazilian driver in F1 since Felipe Massa retired in 2017. Pietro Fittipaldi did two races in 2020 as an injury replacement. Bortoleto joined the McLaren's driver program last year and the team said he will be released at the end of the 2024 season so he can pursue his F1 career. "All the best for the future," McLaren said. Bottas and Zhou had been

with Sauber since 2022. "After open and constructive discussions with Valtteri Bottas and Zhou Guanyu, we mutually concluded that conditions to continue together could not be met so we agreed that it is time to part ways," Sauber said. "We would like to thank both for the contribution they have made to the team in the last three years. They have been the embodiment of professionalism, using their experience and enthusiasm to support our growth." Bottas, who had joined from Mercedes, could reportedly return to his former team in a reserve role.

Stokes missing as Draca, Netravalkar line up in long list for IPL mega auction

PTI ■ MUMBAI

England Test skipper Ben Stokes is missing from the list of 1,574 players while his former teammate James Anderson, Italian quick Thomas Draca and India-born USA medium pacer Saurabh Netravalkar have all registered for the IPL mega auction to be held in Jeddah on November 24 and 25.

The list, which will be shortened after the franchises provide their inputs, has all the marquee Indian players who were released from their teams including Rishabh Pant, Shreyas Iyer, KL Rahul, R Ashwin and Yuzvendra Chahal. Each of these five cricketers have listed themselves at a base price of Rs 2 crore.

India quick Mohammed Shami, who has been sidelined from action due to various injuries since last November, was also released by his former team Gujarat Titans and has listed himself at Rs 2 crore and so has left-arm pacer Arshdeep Singh. Among the other Indian players in the list with the maximum base price of Rs 2 crore are Khaleel Ahmed, Mukesh Kumar, Venkatesh Iyer, Avesh Khan, Deepak Chahar, Ishan Kishan and Bhuvneshwar Kumar.

This list also includes Shardul Thakur, Mohammed Siraj, Devdutt Padikkal, Krunal Pandya, Harshal



Patel, Prasad Krishna, T Natarajan, Washington Sundar and Umesh Yadav.

India batters Sarfaraz Khan and Prithvi Shaw, who were unsold in the last IPL auction, have registered themselves at the base price of Rs 75 lakh each.

Stokes, who had decided to give the last season of the IPL a miss in order to manage his workload and



focus on his fitness, has opted out for the 2025 edition as well.

The 42-year-Anderson, who retired from Test cricket earlier this year, has registered for the IPL for the first time. The veteran pacer last played a T20 10 years ago in 2014. He has never competed in a global franchise T20 league. He has a base price of Rs 1.25 crore.

Netravalkar, who rose to



prominence due to his stupendous performance for USA during the T20 World Cup earlier this year, has also lined up to go under the hammer in Jeddah. The software engineer in Oracle has a base price of Rs 30 lakh.

Ace Australian off-spinner Nathan Lyon, who has gone unsold in previous auctions, has also entered the fray with the a base price of Rs 2 crore.

Australian pacer Mitchell Starc, who was the most expensive buy in the IPL's last auction at a price of Rs 24.50 crore, is back in the pool for this year's auction with a base price of Rs 2 crore.

England quick Jofra Archer, who last played in the 2023 edition, is also listed for the same base price.

DRACA BECOMES FIRST ITALIAN PLAYER TO REGISTER: Medium pacer Thomas Draca has become the first player from Italy to register for the IPL. The 24-year has played four T20 Internationals since making his debut for Italy in June this year. He impressed with his recent performance at the Global T20 Canada in August. Draca was the joint second-highest wicket-taker

of the tournament with 11 wickets to his name from six innings at an average of 10.63 and an economy of 6.88.

The Italian pacer was recently signed by the Mumbai Indians owned MI Emirates for the upcoming season of the IIT20 in the UAE.

Draca has registered himself at base prices of Rs 30 lakh in the all-rounders' category.

With up to six players permitted to be retained ahead of the mega auction, IPL teams can build a squad of 25 players each and there will be 204 slots available after 46 players were retained by 10 teams put together.

Each team will have a total purse of Rs 120 crore as Punjab Kings have Rs 110.5 crore available with them, followed by Royal Challengers Bengaluru with Rs 83 crore, Delhi Capitals with Rs 73 crore and Gujarat Titans with Rs 69 crore. Lucknow Super Giants will also have Rs 69 crore in their purse while five-time winners Chennai Super Kings will have Rs 55 crore. Last year's winners Kolkata Knight Riders will come into the auction with Rs 51 crore in purse while five-time champions Mumbai Indians will have Rs 45 crore, last year's runner-up Sunrisers Hyderabad will have Rs 45 crore and Rajasthan Royals will have Rs 41 crore.



Rishabh Pant climbs five places to sixth spot in ICC Test batters' rankings

PTI ■ DUBAI

India wicket-keeper batter Rishabh Pant on Wednesday rose five places to sixth spot in the latest ICC Men's Test Batter Rankings following his strong performance in a losing cause in third Test against New Zealand in Mumbai last week.

Pant made the jump on the back of a pair of half-centuries during the Mumbai Test, in a sure sign that he is back to his best following a serious car accident, with the attacking left-hander now just one spot behind the career-best fifth position he first occupied in July 2022. The other Indian batter in top Test batter's chart is young left-handed opener Yashasvi Jaiswal, who dropped a rung to fourth.

New Zealand secured a narrow 25-run victory in Mumbai to claim an unprecedented 3-0 series whitewash over India, with Pant and visiting side's Daryl Mitchell the main beneficiaries in the top 10 Test batter rankings.

Mitchell jumped eight places to seventh after scoring 82 in the first innings against India in the Mumbai Test, joining teammate Kane Williamson (second) as the only New

Zealanders inside the top-10. England right-hander Joe Root maintained his healthy lead at the top of the list, with Williamson, Harry Brook (third), Jaiswal (fourth) and Steve Smith (fifth) his closest challengers.

India's Shubman Gill (up four places to 16th) also makes some ground on the list for Test batters following a score of 90 in the first innings against New Zealand in Mumbai, while player-of-the-series Will Young of New Zealand gained 29 spots to move to 44th overall.

Ravindra Jadeja climbed two spots to sixth in the Test bowler rankings after taking 10 wickets against New Zealand, placing him just behind top-ranked Kagiso Rabada.

Australia's Josh Hazlewood occupied the second spot ahead of India pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah and Pat Cummins and Ravichandran Ashwin.

Teammate Washington Sundar jumped seven places to move to 46th on the same list for Test bowlers, while spin duo Ajaz Patel (up 12 places to 22nd) and Ish Sodhi (up three rungs to equal 70th) are among the gainers from New Zealand.

Ponting predicts 3-1 win for Australia, says India will struggle without Shami

PTI ■ DUBAI

Former captain Ricky Ponting reckons Australia will clinch the Border-Gavaskar Trophy 3-1 against India as the visitors will find taking 20 wickets in a Test as their "biggest challenge" in absence of Mohammed Shami.

Australia are keen on ending their barren run in the Border-Gavaskar with India winning each of the four series since 2014-15, including the historic triumphs Down Under in 2018-19 and 2020-21.

However, with India suffering the historic low of a first-ever whitewash by 0-3 against New Zealand, Ponting believes the hosts have a better chance of defeating India now. "Probably more so now (than before)," Ponting said about Australia's chances on the ICC Review Show.

Shami has been out of action since last November due to injuries and Ponting believes his absence leaves a big hole in India's bowling attack comprising Jasprit Bumrah,

Mohammed Siraj, Akash Deep, Prasad Krishna and the uncapped Harshit Rana.

Ponting said, "Shami just leaves such a big hole in that bowling group. Back then (in August), there was still some conjecture whether Shami would be fit or not."

"I think taking 20 wickets in a Test match for India is going to be the biggest challenge. I think they'll bat well enough out here with the current group of batters that they've got."

While hailing Australia as a more settled unit, Ponting backed India to not be absolute pushovers when the series gets underway from November 22 in Perth. "I think India will win a Test match somewhere through the five Test matches," Ponting predicted.

"But I still think now, Australia probably look a bit more settled, a bit more experienced and we know that they're a very hard team to beat at home. So I'll stick with the 3-1."

Ponting feels one among the veteran Steve Smith or the flamboyant Rishabh Pant would be the highest



run-scorers over the five Tests. "Leading run scorer, I'm going to go Steve Smith or Rishabh Pant," Ponting said.

"I think Smith, the fact that he's moved back down from opener to No 4 probably makes it feel like he's got more of a point to prove... that maybe

he shouldn't have gone up to open in the first place," he added.

"...And that No 4 is his spot and where he should have probably been the whole time and where he probably finished his career now."

Pant, who was the highest run-getter during the series against New Zealand, appeared to be the only in-form batter heading to Australia.

"With Rishabh back in the side and probably coming into bat in the middle order when the ball's probably lost a bit of its shine and a bit of its hardness, and the form that he's in, I'll go for him as one of the leading run scorers as well," Ponting said.

The legendary Ponting picked Josh Hazlewood to get more wickets for Australia than his fast bowling partners Mitchell Starc and Pat Cummins.

"I think Hazlewood out of the Australian quicks, is right at the moment, is probably at the peak of his powers more than the other guys. So I'll go with him for the leading wicket-taker," Ponting said.

India A players protested against replaced ball, claims report

PTI ■ SYDNEY

India A players expressed dissatisfaction over the condition of the replaced ball provided during the final day's play against Australia A in their first unofficial Test, a report has claimed, even as David Warner and Ed Cowan have called on Cricket Australia to clarify what transpired.

On the final day of the four-day game in Mackay last week, the umpires provided the Indian players with a different ball to use at the start of play.

The Indian players, particularly Ishan Kishan, were unhappy with the decision with the wicketkeeper-batter terming it "a very stupid decision."

A report in Sydney Morning Herald said on Wednesday that the argument from the Indian camp was not about the replacement of the ball but the condition of the ball which was provided as replacement.

"What has not been known before now is that the angst on show from India A, led by Ishan, was not because the ball had been changed," the media house said on its website.

"Instead, it was because the touring team were unhappy with the condition of the replacement ball: a drama, but not a major one, since umpires and players have debated the condition of replacement balls for decades," it added.

The report described umpire Shawn Craig for his "straight shooting" who was heard on the stump mic telling the Indian players, "You scratch it, we change the ball. There will be no more discussion, let's play. This is not a discussion, you will be playing with that ball."

Kishan retorted: "So we are going to play with this ball... that's a very stupid decision."

Former Australia openers David Warner and Ed Cowan have now called on Cricket



Australia to clarify what transpired on the final day of the match at Mackay.

Warner, whose years-long leadership ban has just been lifted by CA, has said the board "squashed" the matter "as quickly as possible" since the Indian senior men's team is bound for a five-Test series Down Under.

"I think the ultimate decision's with CA, isn't it? I think they've obviously squashed it as fast as they could, given that India's coming out here this summer," Warner said.

"But if the umpires deem that something happened, then I'm sure there'll be a follow-up and I think the umpires or the match referee should be

standing here answering those questions."

"I think the match referee should be coming out and addressing his own staff, who are the umpires, and if they're sticking by the umpire's decisions, then you've got to stand up for that. I think that's obviously a statement that CA probably need to release," he added.

Warner's former opening partner and current board director of the New South Wales Wales Cowan said the reaction perhaps could've been different if the opposition team wasn't India.

"Part of me just thinks if this wasn't India there would be a totally different reaction," Cowan said.

"If that was Pakistan A, or England A, or choose any A team, or even a Shield game, the reaction would be totally different and for me, that's the wrong approach."

"To be fair, it's just us joining dots. These dots may be

totally incorrect, we'd have imperfect information, but I do think it's on Cricket Australia to clarify this, and it's also probably imperative on the BCCI to clarify this," he said.

Hours after the game finished, CA issued a statement saying, "The ball used in the fourth innings of the match was changed due to deterioration. Both teams' captain and manager were informed of the decision prior to the start of play. No further action is being taken."

Under the laws of cricket, a five-run penalty is imposed if the umpires change the ball after determining it has been unfairly altered.

However, CA's playing conditions include an additional clause that allows the umpires to change the ball without applying penalty runs if it's unclear how the ball became damaged. Australia A were not awarded five penalty runs.

PTI ■ SYDNEY

David Warner was on Wednesday appointed as captain of Big Bash League side Sydney Thunder, returning to a leadership role in Australian cricket six years after being implicated in the ball-tampering scandal on a tour of South Africa.

His lifetime leadership ban was overturned by Cricket Australia last month, paving the way for his captaincy before he bids goodbye to competitive cricket.

He had retired from the international game after Australia's elimination from the T20 World Cup in the Caribbean in June.

Warner, 38, served a one-year ban from the game for his involvement in the Newlands

Warner named Sydney Thunder Captain, returns to leadership role in Australian cricket after six years

ball-tampering scandal in 2018 alongside Steve Smith and Cameron Bancroft.

Returning to the leadership role is a huge moment for Warner and the significance was not lost on the swashbuckling opener who regaled everyone with his explosive batting.

"Captaining the Thunder again this season means a lot to me. I was part of the team from the start, and now to be back with that 'C' next to my name feels fantastic. I'm looking forward to leading from the

front and sharing my experience with the young talent coming through," Warner said in a statement on Wednesday.

The former Australian player replaced all-rounder Chris Green as Thunder's captain ahead of this year's campaign. The 2016 BBL winners finished at the bottom of the table in the last edition.

Despite CA imposed leadership ban, Warner has captained teams in franchise cricket around the world including Sunrisers



Hyderabad (SRH) and Delhi Capitals (DC) in the IPL.

Warner, who has played 110 T20 Internationals for Australia, has previously led Thunder back in 2011.

Warner became eligible for captaincy after Cricket Australia's Code of Conduct Commission revoked the ban citing it has "achieved its purpose", after the combative cricketer had appeared before the independent panel comprising three members.

BACKS MCSWEENEY TO OPEN AGAINST INDIA:

Warner backed Australia A captain Nathan McSweeney to open for Australia in the upcoming five-match Test series against India.

Since Warner's retirement from the format in January, Australia have struggled to find a player good enough to fill the huge void at the top of the order. But Warner has picked McSweeney as the man for the challenge against India, terming him a "complete player."

"I think McSweeney's got the runs on the board, but I think

you look further down the track as well. I know you've got Marnus (Labuschagne) and Travis Head and Mitch Marsh, but he's got leadership potential as well," Warner was quoted as saying by Fox Sports.

"He looks a complete player, and I think he's a good fit with Uzzie (Usman Khawaja) at the top of the order. We're in a good position, and we've got a lot of talent, which is exciting," he added.

McSweeney has so far scored 2213 runs in 33 first-class matches at an average of 38.82. The upcoming Border-Gavaskar Trophy will start on November 22 in Perth, followed by matches in Adelaide (December 6-10), Brisbane (December 14-18), Melbourne (December 26-30), and Sydney (January 3-7).

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