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## NCR gasps, GRAP III invoked



Photo: Ranjan Dilmir/Pioneer

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi's air quality has reached 'hazardous' levels, prompting the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) to implement Stage III of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) restrictions, effective from eight am on Friday. Under the third stage of the GRAP, all inter-state buses from National Capital Region (NCR) states, except electric vehicles, Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) vehicles and BS-VI (Bharat Stage Emission Standards six), diesel buses, will be prohibited from entering Delhi, alongside a stringent ban on construction and demolition activities,

suspension of mining-related activities. Chief Minister Atishi said that all primary schools in Delhi will shift to online classes. "Due to rising pollution levels, all primary schools in Delhi will be shifting to online classes, until further directions," she tweeted. There will also be restrictions on the plying of BS-III petrol and BS-IV diesel vehicles in Delhi and the districts of Gurugram, Faridabad, Ghaziabad and Gautam Budh Nagar. The National Capital's Air Quality Index (AQI) has been categorised as 'severe', with a reading of 428, the worst in the country for the past two days. The decision to invoke the third stage of GRAP was announced by Commission for

Air Quality Management on Thursday, hours after Delhi Environment Minister Gopal Rai claimed that the stage III of Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) would not be imposed yet as the situation is expected to improve from Friday. As per its statement, CAQM Sub-Committee on GRAP imposes Stage-III of revised GRAP in the NCR, w.e.f. 8 am November, 15 (Friday). "In an effort to prevent further deterioration of the air quality, the Sub Committee decided that ALL actions as envisaged under Stage III of the GRAP - 'Severe' Air Quality (DELHI AQI ranging between 401-450) be implemented in right earnest by all the agencies concerned in the NCR, in addition to the Stage-I and II

actions already in force, from 8 am of 15th November, 2024 in the National Capital Region (NCR)," the statement read. The GRAP III restrictions also include road construction activities and major repairs; Transfer, loading / unloading of dust generating materials like cement, fly-ash, bricks, sand, murrum, pebbles, crushed stone etc. anywhere within / outside the project sites; Movement of vehicles carrying construction materials on unpaved roads; Laying of sewer line, water line, drainage and electric cabling etc. by open trench system, brick / masonry works and painting, polishing and varnishing works. The GRAP comprises specific measures to tackle

deteriorating air quality in Delhi and NCR regions. GRAP is announced when the Air Quality Index (AQI) reaches 'severe' category, implementing various limitations on activities that contribute to pollution in addition to the restrictions implemented under GRAP I and II. Earlier, Delhi woke up to dangerously high levels of toxic smog covering several cities surrounding the National Capital Region for the second consecutive day on Thursday, disrupting flight operations and train schedules. Adding to the alarm, Delhi airport saw significant disruptions on Thursday, with 151 incoming flights delayed and one cancelled, while 282 departures faced delays averaging 45 minutes, according to the flight tracker website.

The AQI in Delhi's Anand Vihar was 466 ('severe plus'), IGI Airport (T3) 435, and ITO 421 at 10am on Thursday. The city's average AQI stood at 432. Ashok Vihar, Bawana, Dwarka, Jahangirpuri, Mundka, Najafgarh, Lajpat Nagar, Patparganj, Punjabi Bagh, RK Puram, Rohini, Vivek Vihar, and Wazirpur are among several areas in Delhi where the average AQI was recorded in the 'severe' category, exceeding 450, at 6 am. The air quality crosses over 400, which falls under the severe category. As the national capital faces this ongoing crisis, residents are left wondering whether the government will enforce more stringent measures, including Stage 3 of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP), to tackle the worsening air quality.

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Arms and ammunition recovered during a cordon and search operation conducted by Manipur Police and Security forces in Jiribam district

PTI

## AFSPA returns to Manipur

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre has re-imposed the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA) in Manipur's six police station areas, including the violence-hit Jiribam. An area or district is notified as "disturbed" under AFSPA to facilitate the operations of the armed forces. The AFSPA gives Armed Forces operating in disturbed areas powers to search, arrest and open fire if they deem it necessary for the "maintenance of public order". In a notification, the Union Home Ministry said the decision was taken given the continuous volatile situation there due to the ongoing ethnic violence. The police station areas where AFSPA has been reimposed are Sekmai and Lamsang in Imphal West district, Lamlai in Imphal East district, Jiribam in Jiribam district, Leimakhong in Kangpokpi and Moirang in Bishnupur. The fresh order came after the Manipur government imposed AFSPA in the entire state on October 1, barring 19 police station areas that include these six.

The police stations excluded from the Manipur government's October 1 order were Imphal, Lamphal, City, Singjamei, Sekmai, Lamsang, Patsoi, Wangoi, Porompat, Heingang, Lamlai, Iriblung, Leimakhong, Thoubal, Bishnupur, Nambol, Moirang, Kakching, Jiribam. Eleven suspected militants were killed in a fierce gunfight with security forces on Monday after insurgents in camouflage uniforms and armed with sophisticated weapons fired indiscriminately at a police station and an adjacent Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) camp in Manipur's Jiribam district. A day later, six civilians, including women and children were abducted by armed militants from the same district. The ethnically diverse Jiribam, which was largely untouched by the clashes in Imphal Valley and the adjoining hills, witnessed violence after the mutilated body of a farmer was found in a field in June this year. The disturbed area declaration was in force in the entire Manipur (except the Imphal municipality area) from 2004 till early 2022.

In April 2022, the Manipur government issued a notification where it said the disturbed area tag will no longer be applicable in seven police station areas of Imphal West district, four police station areas under Imphal East district and one police station area each in the districts of Thoubal, Bishnupur, Kakching and Jiribam. There are 16 districts in Manipur. Meanwhile, Manipur Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) president Sharda Devi on Thursday called for the immediate release of the three women and three children allegedly abducted by militants in Jiribam district. She termed the alleged abduction of six members of a family from Borobekra and Jakuradhor in Jiribam as "unfortunate" and demanded their release on humanitarian grounds. "We demand the immediate release of the abducted six members of a family without any harm on humanitarian grounds. We from BJP appeal to them (armed miscreants) for their release", Sharda Devi told reporters at the BJP office in Imphal.

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## Dominica Award of Honour for PM Modi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Commonwealth of Dominica will bestow its highest national award, the Dominica Award of Honour, upon Prime Minister Narendra Modi this month, the Dominica government said. The award is in recognition of PM Modi's contributions to Dominica during the COVID-19 pandemic and his dedication to strengthening the partnership between the two countries.

In a statement, the office of the Dominican Prime Minister said President of the Commonwealth of Dominica Sylvanie Burton will confer the award during the upcoming India-CARICOM Summit scheduled to take place in Georgetown, Guyana, from November 19 to 21. "In February 2021, Prime Minister Modi supplied Dominica with 70,000 doses of the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine - a generous gift which enabled Dominica to extend support to its Caribbean neighbours," it stated.

The award also recognises India's support for Dominica in healthcare, education and information technology under PM Modi's leadership as well as his role in promoting climate resilience-building initiatives and sustainable development on a global level, the statement read.

The statement quoted PM Roosevelt Skerrit as saying that the award is an expression of Dominica's gratitude for Prime Minister Modi's solidarity with Dominica and the wider region. "Prime Minister Modi has been a true partner to Dominica, particularly during our time of need amid a global health crisis. It is an honour to present him with Dominica's highest national accolade as a symbol of our gratitude for his support and as a reflection of the strong ties between our countries. We look forward to building on this partnership and advancing our shared vision of progress and resilience," he said.

In accepting the offer of the award, PM Modi emphasised the importance of collaboration in tackling global challenges such as climate change and geopolitical conflicts, and affirmed India's commitment to working alongside Dominica and the Caribbean in addressing these issues, the statement underlined. President Burton and Prime Minister Skerrit will attend the India-CARICOM Summit, a forum to discuss shared priorities.

## Wholesale price inflation to affect retail market

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Wholesale price inflation rose to a four month high of 2.36 per cent in October as prices of food items, especially vegetables, and manufactured goods turned dearer, showed the government data released on Thursday. The Wholesale Price Index (WPI) based inflation was 1.84 per cent in September 2024. As per the data, inflation in food items shot up to 13.54 per cent in October, as against 11.53 per cent in September. This was led by

63.04 per cent inflation in vegetables, as against 48.73 per cent in September. Inflation in potato and onion remained high at 78.73 per cent and 39.25 per cent, respectively, in October. Fuel and power category witnessed deflation of 5.79 per cent in October, against a deflation of 4.05 per cent in September. In manufactured items, inflation was 1.50 per cent in October, as against one per cent in the previous month. October witnessed the second consecutive month of rise in WPI inflation. The WPI higher than



October's level was recorded last in June 2024, when it was 3.43 per cent. "Inflation in October 2024 is primarily due to increase in prices of food articles, manufacture of food products, other manufacturing, manufacture of machinery & equipment, manufacture of motor vehicles, trailers & semi-trailers, etc." the Ministry of Commerce & Industry said in a statement. According to ICRA Senior Economist Rahul Agrawal, food inflation alone pushed up the headline WPI print by 63 basis points between September and

October 2024. On a year-on-year (YoY) basis, the core WPI print rose to 0.3 per cent in October 2024 from 0.1 per cent in September 2024, while remaining muted. "Owing to the expected softening in food inflation, ICRA estimates the WPI inflation to ease to approximately 2 per cent in November 2024," Agrawal said. Looking ahead, the robust increase in Kharif output for most food items, and the healthy outlook for Rabi crops amid elevated reservoir levels augurs well for the WPI food inflation prints in the near term. However,

the outlook for the headline WPI inflation remains vulnerable to movements in global commodity and crude oil prices, Agrawal said. The consumer price index data released earlier this week showed retail inflation surged to a 14-month high of 6.21 per cent with a sharp rise in prices of food items. The level is higher than the upper tolerance limit of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), which may make cutting the benchmark interest rates difficult in the policy review meeting in December.

## India will seek Arsh Dalla extradition

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

India will seek extradition of Arsh Singh Gill alias Arsh Dalla, the de facto chief of the Khalistan Tiger Force, from Canada as he is a proclaimed offender here. He was reportedly arrested there recently and it is expected that he will be extradited or deported to face justice in India, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said here on Thursday. "We have seen media reports circulating since 10 November on the arrest in Canada of proclaimed offender Arsh Singh Gill alias Arsh Dalla, the de facto chief of the Khalistan Tiger Force.



Canadian print and visual media have widely reported on the arrest. We understand that the Ontario Court has listed the case for hearing," MEA said. Arsh Dalla is a proclaimed offender in over 50 cases of murder, attempt to murder, extortion and terrorist acts including terror financing. In May 2022, a Red Corner Notice was issued against

him. He was designated in India as an individual terrorist in 2023. In July 2023, Government of India had requested the Canadian government for his provisional arrest. This was declined. Additional information was provided in this case, it said. A separate request was also sent to Canada under the Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty (MLAT) to verify Arsh Dalla's suspected residential address, his financial transactions to India, moveable/immovable properties, details of mobile numbers etc. all of which were provided to Canadian authorities in January 2023.

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## Students win, PCS exams back to one shift

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

After four days of relentless protests by nearly 20,000 students, the Uttar Pradesh Public Service Commission (UPPSC) has reversed its decision to conduct preliminary exams over two shifts agreeing to hold the PCS (Provincial Civil Services) preliminary exam in a single day as per the old pattern. The Review Officer/Assistant Review Officer (RO/ARO) exam, scheduled for December 22 and 23, has been postponed. A special committee will evaluate the best approach for conducting the RO-ARO exam fairly and transparently. In a bid to address student concerns, UPPSC Secretary Ashok Kumar addressed the crowd on Thursday. "The preliminary examination will be conducted in one shift. For the RO/ARO (Review Officer/Assistant Review Officer) Examination-2023,



a committee will review all aspects and submit a detailed report. The final decision on the RO/ARO exam will be taken based on this report," he announced, signifying that the proposed changes had been officially withdrawn. Consequently, the PCS prelims will occur on a single day, while the

RO/ARO exam, initially scheduled for December 22 and 23, has been postponed. According to Prayagraj District Magistrate Ravindra Kumar, the revised exam date will be announced soon. "The date for the PCS exam will be released by the UPPSC shortly," he confirmed.

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## Congress scheming to restore Article 370: PM

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ MUMBAI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday said the Congress and its allies are hatching a scheme to have a separate Constitution for Kashmir, and making all efforts for restoration of Article 370. "Will the people of Maharashtra support the Congress and its allies who speak the language of Pakistan," PM Modi said, addressing a rally in Chhatrapati Sambhaji Nagar for the November 20 state Assembly elections. "Congress and its colleagues have passed a resolution to restore Article 370," he said. "When we made Kashmir



Prime Minister Narendra Modi being felicitated by Maharashtra CM Eknath Shinde and other leaders during a public meeting

free from Article 370, Congress opposed this in Parliament and court. Now they are again hatching a scheme to restore Article 370 and have a separate Constitution in Kashmir," PM Modi said. "Kashmir is an integral part of India.

Every Indian wants that there should be only Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar's Constitution in Kashmir," Modi said. "The Congress used to say that reservations were against the country. It considered reservations were against merit. The

agenda of the Congress remains unchanged. Therefore, they can't come to terms with the fact that someone from OBC has been the PM of the country for the last 10 years," he said. "The Prince of Congress, while he is abroad, openly claims that his party will scrap reservations. To further their agenda, Congress and Maha Vikas Aghadi are conspiring to divide SCs, STs and OBCs into small castes," he said. PM Modi also said the BJP-led Mahayuti government renamed Aurangabad as Chhatrapati Sambhaji Nagar, and fulfilled the wish of Shiv Sena founder Bal Thackeray.

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## 'Lottery King' Santiago Martin runs out of luck

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ CHENNAI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Thursday conducted fresh searches in multiple states against Chennai-based 'lottery king' Santiago Martin, one of the biggest donors to political parties, with over Rs 1,300 crore in electoral bonds, as part of a money laundering investigation. The action comes after the Madras High Court recently allowed the ED to proceed against Martin as the Tamil Nadu Police had decided to close the predicate or primary FIR against him and a few others and a lower court accepted this police plea.



Santiago Martin donated Rs. 542 crore to Trinamool Congress (TMC), Rs. 509 crore to DMK, Rs.154 crore to Yuvajana Sramika Rythu Congress Party (YSRCP), Rs.100 crore to Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Rs. 50 crore to Congress under the controversial Electoral Bond Scheme banned by Supreme Court. Officials said at least 20 premises linked to Martin, his son-in-law Aadhav Arjun and associates in Chennai and Coimbatore in Tamil Nadu, Faridabad in Haryana, Ludhiana in Punjab and Kolkata in West Bengal were being searched as part of a "comprehensive" action against his business empire.

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# Minor girl gang-raped by classmate's friends

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A minor student was allegedly gang-raped by two friends of a classmate, police said on Thursday. The victim, who had left home for school in Alambagh, met her classmate at the gate of the school. He took her along under the pretext of visiting an ailing friend. The Alambagh police registered a case against three accused, including the minor classmate, and arrested all of them.

As per reports, the teenager living in Alambagh area went to school on Monday morning. At the school gate, her classmate stopped her and told her that her friend was unwell. He took her to LDA Colony where her classmate's friend, identified as Akhilesh, met them. Akhilesh took the girl and her classmate to Ashiyana on his bike. They met another youth, Anirudh. Around 2 pm, Akhilesh and Anirudh took the girl to a

secluded place in PGI police station area where they allegedly gang-raped her. Later, both the accused dropped the girl near Parag crossing and sped off the scene. The girl reached home and narrated her ordeal to her family. Her family filed a complaint, based on which the police registered a case against the trio and arrested all of them. In another incident, a woman from Saadatganj accused a youth of sexually exploiting her after promising to marry her. She identified the accused as Amit Dwivedi, whom she had met six years ago. The woman said that when she pressured him to marry her, they got married in a temple. Later, she came to know that Amit was already married. He abandoned her when she became pregnant. In due course of time, the woman gave birth to a baby boy. She alleged that Amit was threatening to kidnap their son.

She also alleged that he had also taken away Rs 3 lakh from her. Meanwhile, a middle-aged neighbour allegedly attempted to rape a 9-year-old girl after her parents left for a doctor's clinic after leaving her with him, in Nigohan police station area on Thursday. The accused, identified as Chaturi (50), would reportedly frequent the victim's house. On Thursday, the girl's parents left her with the accused and went to get some medicines. He took advantage of this and allegedly attempted to rape the girl. The 9-year-old girl is a Class 1 student. When caught by police, the accused confessed to his crime. He confessed that finding the victim alone, he attempted to do the wrong with her. When her parents returned home, she narrated her ordeal to them. Upon being informed, police reached the spot and rounded up the accused.

# Bizman's murder: Police yet to identify accused

## Maalkhana theft case: Police clueless about accused

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A day after the recovery of the body of a missing cosmetics businessman, police are yet to lay their hands on those accused of his murder. The body of the cosmetics businessman, Farid, who had left home on his bike saying he was going to get medicine, was found near Kathua lake in Chinhat on Wednesday morning. There were marks of strangulation on his neck, and he had injuries on several body parts. The family has filed a complaint with Chinhat police, alleging, Farid, a resident of Indiranagar (Sector-9), ran a cosmetics business in Phoolbagh, Madaoan. He left home around 12 noon on Tuesday, saying he was going to RML hospital to get medicine. His brother Moeed Anwar said that when Farid did not return by around nine in the evening,

his sister called him. Farid said he would be home soon and disconnected the call. When he did not return by midnight, the family tried calling him again, but his phone was switched off. The family searched for him, but to no avail. On Wednesday morning, the police informed them that Farid's body had been found in Chinhat. Blood had oozed from wounds on his body, and there were injury marks on his back, legs, and eyes. His mobile phone was also missing. The family alleged that Farid was murdered and his body dumped. The police said the report of post-mortem, conducted on Thursday, was yet to be received, and the cause of death would be determined once the report is available. Action will be taken based on the findings. The call details of Farid's mobile phone are also under investigation.

Four days after a case was registered against unidentified accused for stealing goods from the sealed and locked 'maalkhana' (storeroom) inside the Hazratganj police station, police have yet to find any clues about the culprits. Inspector, Hazratganj, Vikram Singh filed the complaint after irregularities came to light during the opening of the storeroom. The storeroom was opened in the presence of a committee headed by ADCP (Central) Manisha Singh, in compliance with a court order to present the recovered goods before it in a criminal case. During the hearing of a case registered at

Hazratganj police station, the court had instructed the investigating officer to present the recovered goods as evidence to corroborate the crime committed by the accused. The storeroom had been locked and sealed since the death of its in-charge, Head Constable Priya Kumar Tripathi, on December 22, 2022. In 2019, Ashok Yadav (head moharrir) had been in charge of the entire storeroom at Hazratganj police station, holding the position of head clerk. Prior to Tripathi, on March 29, 2019, the then inspector-in-charge of Hazratganj, Radharaman Singh, had registered a case under sections 409/411 IPC against the then head constable, Ashok Yadav.

Following an investigation, Yadav was arrested and sent to jail. Subsequently, the charge of the maalkhana was handed over to Head Constable Priya Kumar Tripathi by the appointed committee. Head Constable Tripathi passed away in December 2022 due to a serious illness, after which the storeroom was locked due to ongoing disputes. Police sources suggested that it is highly unlikely that an outsider could have stolen goods from the locked and sealed storeroom without the involvement of policemen stationed at the police station. "It is possible that the late in-charge may have had knowledge of the theft in the storeroom, but that is mere speculation," the sources said.

# Fraudster held for duping doctor of ₹1.17 cr in land registration deal

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A fraudster who prepared forged documents and posed as a farmer during the registration of land, defrauding a doctor of Rs 1.17 crore, was arrested on Thursday. The prime accused, Karan Verma and Bhupendra Singh, both from Barabanki, were arrested in May this year, while their accomplice Jitendra Yadav is still at large. Rajkumar alias Nanak from Bariama Majra Baghaura in Safdarganj, Barabanki, falsely presented himself as a farmer during the sale of the land. The incident began when Karan Verma, who worked as a car rental agent, came into contact with Akash Singhal, a doctor from Sadar Bazar Cantt, New Delhi, currently residing in Sushant Golf City, Lucknow, who expressed interest in purchasing land in Lucknow for a charity hospital. Karan then introduced Dr Singhal to his friend, Jitendra

Yadav, a land dealer from Arjunganj, Sushant Golf City. Jitendra informed them of a plot of land being sold by a farmer named Jaipal in Sushant Golf City for Rs 2.40 crore. However, out of greed, Karan misrepresented the land price to Dr Singhal, claiming it was only Rs 1.17 crore. Dr Singhal agreed to the deal, arranging to pay Rs 60 lakh in cash and Rs 57 lakh through a bank transfer. Karan then met the real farmer, Jaipal, and gave him Rs 10 lakh as an advance while taking the land papers. Karan later showed the papers to Dr Singhal, convincing him the deal was legitimate. To proceed with the registration, Karan contacted his friend Bhupendra Singh, asking him to bring a person to impersonate Jaipal for the sale deed. Bhupendra then contacted Rajkumar alias Nanak, who had a fake Aadhar card created in the name of Jaipal. On September 22, 2023,

Rajkumar, posing as Jaipal, stood before the registrar during the land registration process, and the sale deed was fraudulently executed in Dr Singhal's name. Before the registration, Karan had already received Rs 60 lakh in cash from Dr Singhal. To secure the remaining Rs 57 lakh, Karan made an excuse to his friend Narendra Rana to encash a cheque and obtained the fake Jaipal's bank account details. Karan then transferred Rs 47 lakh from Dr Singhal's account into this fake account. Karan gave Rs 58 lakh out of the Rs 60 lakh cash to co-accused Bhupendra Singh, who then handed over Rs 3 lakh to the fake farmer, Rajkumar alias Nanak. A case was filed on December 7, 2023 at the local police station by Dr Singhal, and investigations led to the arrests of Karan Verma and Bhupendra Singh. Efforts to apprehend Jitendra Yadav are still ongoing.

# 'Green Corridor' project: Linking work to begin by December 5

LUCKNOW (PNS): The construction of road linking Shaheed Path with Piparaghat, under the third phase of the 'Green Corridor' project, is set to begin by 5 December this year. The instalment of funds allocated for this phase has been recently released by the state government. These funds will be provided to the officials or engineers involved in the project as required. LDA VC Prathmesh Kumar claimed that the linking work would begin as scheduled and would be completed within six months. A three-member committee has been formed to monitor the progress, with the chief engineer being one of the members. To maintain transparency, the accounts department will follow the VC's directives to release the money only after an inspection by the committee members and their approval. This step is intended to prevent misuse of funds, as has occurred in the past, when government money was mismanaged. The LDA will seek the assistance of the PWD and the Irrigation department in designing the four-lane road.

# SP MLA, aides booked for protest at police station

PTI ■ KANPUR

An FIR was lodged against Samajwadi Party MLA Amitabh Bajpai and over a hundred of his supporters for holding a protest at Fazalganj police station here, officials said on Thursday. The protest was held on November 9 when Bajpai and his supporters reached the police station to allegedly put pressure on police for the release of a man, they said. The development comes days ahead of the bypoll in the Sishamau assembly seat of Kanpur. Sishamau is among nine assembly seats where bypolls will be held on November 20. According to a police official, on a complaint by Sub-inspector Deepak Tiwari, the FIR has been filed under the BNS sections 191(2) (rioting), 221 (voluntarily obstructs public servant in discharge of public functions), 223 (disobedience to an order lawfully promulgated by a public servant), and 352 (intentional insult).

An investigation has been launched into the matter, said the official. In his complaint, Tiwari stated that he had made preventive arrest of Ashok Gupta (56), a resident of Fazalganj, under sections 170 (arrest to prevent commission of cognizable offences), 126 and 135 of Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita on November 8. After getting information about Gupta's arrest, Bajpai, SP MLA from Arya Nagar in Kanpur, along with Varun Jaiswal alias Golu and dozens of his supporters reached Fazalganj police station and mounted pressure on police to release Gupta, the SI said in the complaint. Bajpai later called his more supporters and party workers who left their vehicles before the police station gate resulting in chaos, he claimed. The MLA, along with others, sat on dharna inside the police station with intent to mount pressure that triggered panic among the visitors, the police official added.



Thousands of workers of Sahara India Pariwar paid homage to Subrata Roy along with senior members of the organisation. Sahara Group also unveiled the statue of "Saharasi". The statue is a tribute to Saharasi's stature as the guardian of the Sahara India Pariwar, a leader, teacher and a visionary and his services to the nation and its people. During the event renowned vocal artist Shri Kishore Chaturvedi performed 'Prarthana' and 'Bhajan'.

# Couple posted in ATS assaulted

Lucknow (PNS): A couple posted in the Anti-Terror Squad (ATS) of Uttar Pradesh Police were allegedly assaulted by a youth and his associates in the Krishna Nagar police station area. The woman complainant stated that both she and her husband work in the ATS. She alleged that the accused, Ankit Yadav, who has a shop near their residence and lives in the area, arrived at her doorstep with 4-5 companions around 8 pm on November 11. "Ankit Yadav and his companions suddenly began abusing me outside my door. When my husband intervened, they forced their way into our home with rods, grabbed me with ill intentions, and began molesting me, tearing off my clothes. When we tried to defend ourselves, they beat us, causing injuries to both me and my husband," she alleged. The woman further stated that a neighbour, Anu Yadav, rushed to their help, after which the attackers left the house. When they attempted to call the police on 112, the group threatened to kill them and continued to sit outside, issuing further threats. "They have attacked us like this before. A case is already registered against Ankit Yadav in Krishna Nagar and Sarojini Nagar police stations," she added.

**2 KILLED, DOZEN HURT IN ROAD ACCIDENTS**  
Etawah/Muzaffarnagar/Mathura (PTI): Two persons were killed while dozen others were injured in separate road accidents caused by low visibility due to fog in Muzaffarnagar, Etawah and Mathura districts in Uttar Pradesh on Thursday, police said. In Muzaffarnagar, a truck plunged into the Kali River in the Ratanpuri area, leaving one dead, they said. Circle Officer Gajendra Pal Singh said that the body, suspected to be that of the driver, has been fished out of the river. It is suspected that dense fog in the area caused the accident, he added. Another fatal accident was reported on the Etawah-Kanpur National Highway where an unidentified vehicle collided with a three-wheeler carrying passengers, Ikdil police station SHO Bhim Singh said. The accident occurred near the Birari Ashram on the highway where the vehicle rammed into the three-wheeler due to low visibility caused by dense fog, killing Rakesh Kumar Yadav (28), a resident of Patua village in Auraiya, on the spot, the SHO said. Meanwhile, a state transport bus heading from Mathura to Delhi collided with a truck on the Delhi-Agra National Highway, injuring around a dozen passengers.

# Man kills wife by slitting her throat

Lucknow: A man allegedly killed his wife by slitting her throat with a knife after they had an argument in the Shivpuram locality in Budaun, police said on Thursday. The incident took place under the Sadar police station area on Wednesday when Amit, who returned from Ahmedabad a few months ago, killed his wife Shweta alias Shikha (24) after they had an argument over some issue, police said. The couple's son Anubhav, who is an eyewitness in the case, said his father slit his mother's throat with a knife after a fight, police added. The landlady, Hemlata Singh, claimed the couple fought frequently due to which she had asked them to vacate the house, they said. The landlady also confirmed that there was a fight on Wednesday night as well.

The police have registered a case based on a complaint filed by Shweta's family members, Senior Superintendent of Police Brijesh Kumar Singh said, adding that efforts are on to nab the accused who is absconding. Meanwhile, a man accused of cow slaughter was injured in a police encounter in Mawana area of Meerut when he attempted to flee, an official said on Thursday. The incident occurred on Wednesday. Police were recovering equipment used for slaughtering cows from Amir when he tried to snatch the pistol of a sub-inspector in a bid to escape. Rajesh Kumar Kamboj, Station House Officer of Mawana police station said. "As the police personnel tried to catch him, Amir fired at them. In retaliatory firing, the accused sustained gunshot

wound in one of his legs," he said. Amir has been admitted to a local hospital and the police have registered a case against him under the relevant sections of Bharatiya Nayaya Sanhita and the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, the SHO said. **THREE HELD WITH SMACK WORTH OVER ₹1 CRORE**  
The police on Thursday arrested three suspected drug traffickers and seized 1.2 kg of smack from their possession in Bahraich district, officials said. In a joint operation, the Dargah Sharif police, the Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) team, and the surveillance cell made the arrests from the Chandpura Tiraha area in Bahraich, they said. "Based on a tip-off, the joint team intercepted and apprehended three individuals at

Chandpura Tiraha and seized smack weighing 1.2 kg with an estimated value of more than Rs 1 crore from their possession," Additional Superintendent of Police (ASP) Ram Anand Prasad Kushwaha told reporters. The police also seized electronic scales, weights, packaging material, and Rs 12,000 in cash from the suspects, Kushwaha said. The accused have been identified as Shanu (34) and Javed (30) from Barabanki, and Sahadat Ali alias Pehalwan (55) from Bahraich. While Shanu was the primary supplier and Javed acted as a carrier, Sahadat Ali was their distributor, the ASP said. The accused have been booked under the relevant sections of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, he added.

# CITYBRIEFS

**SPORTS FEST**  
On the second day of the Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Inter-Technical University Sports Fest 2024-25 (state level) at Shri Ramswaroop Memorial College of Engineering and Management on November 13, Vice-Chancellor of Prof JP Pandey was present on the occasion. Also present were DSW, AKTU, Prof OP Singh, and Associate Dean Dr Manoj Kumar. Pandey recognised the achievements of the winning teams and individual students by awarding them certificates and medals.



Thursday by NRMU of the Diesel Shed in Alambagh, ahead of the union elections, Mishra highlighted the significant work done by the employees' union in the interest of railway workers. He also spoke about the achievements made under NRMU's initiatives, including the approval of the Unified Pension Scheme, which guarantees pension,

family pension, and minimum pension for government employees. He assured that any shortcomings in the scheme would be addressed once the official gazette notification is issued. Mishra further stated that the Railway Ministry's Largesse Scheme, which had been closed, would be revived, and that General Departmental Competitive Examinations (GDCE) and Limited Departmental Competitive Examinations (LDCE) would be regularised. He also mentioned that child care leave for women would be extended with full salary for the second year, residential facilities would be improved, and greater promotion opportunities for employees would be pursued.

**PUNJAB STATE POWER CORPORATION LTD.**  
(Regd. Office: PSEB Head Office, The Mall Patiala-147001)  
Corporate Identity Number U40109PB2010SG033813 Website- www.pspsc.in  
(Contact number 9646117606)

**E-Tender Enquiry No. 116/MM-IBMC-336(B)O&M/GHTP/2024**  
Dated: 14-11-2024  
Dy. Chief Engineer, Mechanical mtc. Circle-II GHTP, Lehra Mohabbat invites E-tender for Capital/Major Overhauling of Valves & Piping, Coal Piping, Ducts, Dampers & Gates, Expansion Joints and LDO/HFO Pumps (210MW, OEM-BHEL) at GHTP, Lehra Mohabbat on Lump sum rates. For detailed NIT & tender specification please refer to <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in> from 14/11/2024 from 05:00 PM onwards.  
Note: Corrigendum and addendum, if any will be published online at <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in>  
76155/12/3638/2023/39064 Dated CHD :- 11/14/2024 GHTP-94/24

**verka**  
Tender Notice for Outsourcing of Verka Milk Booths

Name of Verka Dairy	Milk booths available for Outsourcing for a period of 3 years:-	No. of Milk booths
i. Verka Mohali Dairy		37No's
ii. Verka Sangrur Dairy		01No.
iii. Verka Ludhiana Dairy		05No's
iv. Verka Amritsar Dairy		13No's
v. Verka Ferozpur Dairy		03No's
vi. Verka Jalandhar Dairy		33No's
vii. Verka Hoshiarpur Dairy		04 No's
viii. Verka Gurdaspur Dairy		03No's
ix. Verka Bathinda Dairy		09No's
<b>Total</b>		<b>108 No's</b>

NOTE:  
- For complete details of the above mentioned number of both dairy wise, please visit our website i.e. [www.verka.coop](http://www.verka.coop).  
NA/12/26309/2023/39031 Dy. General Manager (Purchase)

**GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA**  
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER  
MINOR IRRIGATION DIVISION, KEONJHAR

**NOTICE INVITING TENDER e-Procurement**  
Bid ID No. 08 SEMID (KJ/R/2024-2025) Dt. 08.11.2024  
The Superintending Engineer, Minor Irrigation Division, Keonjhar on behalf of the Governor of Odisha invites online percentage rate tender through "e-procurement" to be received in online mode for the works as detailed in the Annexure to this bid notice.

Name of work: Civil Construction works  
No. of Works: 8 (Eight) Nos.  
Estimated Cost: Rs. 172.5 Lakhs  
Tender Paper Cost: Mentioned in Column No. 6 of Tender call notice  
Period of completion: 03 (Three) calendar months  
Availability of Bid Documents: From 16.11.2024 to 26.11.2024 during office hours in Website ([www.tendersorissa.gov.in](http://www.tendersorissa.gov.in))  
Period of receipt of Bid through online: From 16.11.2024 to 26.11.2024 through online.  
Date of Opening of Technical Bid Documents: At 11.00 A.M. on 27.11.2024 in the office chamber of the Superintending Engineer, M.I. Division, Keonjhar  
Date of Lottery: At 11.00 A.M. on 04.12.2024 in the office chamber of the Superintending Engineer, M.I. Division, Keonjhar  
Digital Signature Certificate of Bidder: The bidder must possess compatible digital signature certificate (DSC) of Class-II or Class-III  
Name and Address of the OIT: Superintending Engineer, M.I. Division, Keonjhar, Near Parkline Keonjhar, A/Po-Keonjhar, Dist- Keonjhar, Pin-758001, E-Mail [idssemir@vsnl.com](mailto:idssemir@vsnl.com)  
Further Details can be seen from the web site: [www.tendersorissa.gov.in](http://www.tendersorissa.gov.in) (Er. Sudhanshu Sekhar Sahoo) Superintending Engineer M.I. Division, Keonjhar  
OIPR-3212311/0006/2425

**JITF INFRALOGISTICS LIMITED**  
CIN NO. : L60231CT2008PLC016434  
Registered Office: A-11 (7), Udyta Society, Sector-3, Tatibandh, Dharsiwa, Raipur- 492099, Chhattisgarh, India.  
Website: [www.jindalinfra.com](http://www.jindalinfra.com), E-mail: [contactus@jindalinfra.com](mailto:contactus@jindalinfra.com)

**NOTICE OF THE EXTRA ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING**

Notice is hereby given that the Extra Ordinary General Meeting ("EGM") of the Company will be held on Tuesday, 10th December 2024 at 12.30 PM at A-1, UPSIDC Industrial Area, Nandgaon Road, Kosi Kalan, District Mathura-281403, (U. P.) to transact the business as set out in the Notice of Extra Ordinary General Meeting. The Notice of EGM has been sent to the members who hold shares as on record date, i.e., 08th November 2024, by email, whose email id is registered with the Company/Depository(s) and the physical copy to all the other members. The said documents can also be viewed on the company's website at [www.jindalinfra.com](http://www.jindalinfra.com).  
Further, pursuant to the provisions of section 108 of the Companies Act, 2013 read with rule 20 of Companies (Management and Administration) Rules, 2014 and regulation 44 of SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015, the Company is providing remote e-voting facility to its members to cast their vote electronically on the resolutions to be transacted at EGM of the Company.  
The member please note the following:  
a. The remote e-voting shall commence at 9.00 a.m. on Saturday, 07th December 2024 and shall end at 5.00 p.m. on Monday, 09th December 2024.  
b. The remote e-voting shall not be available beyond 5.00 p.m. on Monday, 09th December 2024.  
c. The cut-off date for determining the eligibility of members for remote e-voting and voting through poll at EGM is 03rd December 2024.  
d. Any person who becomes member of the Company after dispatch of notice of the meeting and holding shares as on cut-off date i.e. 03rd December 2024, may obtain the user id and password by contacting RCMC Shares Registry (Pvt.) Ltd., R & T Agent of the Company at B-25/1, Okhla Industrial Area Phase II, New Delhi - 110020, phone-011-26387320-21, Fax-011-26387322, Email-[evoting.services@rcmcdelhi.com](mailto:evoting.services@rcmcdelhi.com).  
e. The members who cast their vote through remote e-voting may also attend the EGM but shall not be allowed to cast their vote at EGM.  
f. The facility of voting through poll shall be available at the EGM to those members who have not casted their vote through remote e-voting.  
g. Members may go through the e-voting instructions provided in the EGM Notice or visit <https://evoting.nscdl.com> and in case of any queries, you may refer the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for members and e-voting User Manual for members available at the download section of <https://evoting.nscdl.com>

For JITF Infra Logistics Limited  
Sd/-  
Alok Kumar  
Company Secretary  
ACS-19819

Place: New Delhi  
Date: 14.11.2024



# Cong, Communists, JMM, RJD 'eat and loot together': Yogi

PNS ■ DHANBAD/BOKARO

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, on Thursday, accused the ruling Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM), Congress, Rashtriya Janata Dal and the Leftists in Jharkhand of "eating from the same plate and looting the state together".

The UP chief minister was speaking during his election campaign in Jharkhand. He remarked, "The trend from the first phase of voting shows that JMM, Congress and RJD, who have looted Jharkhand, will be ousted from power, and the Bharatiya Janata Party is set to form a government with full majority."

Yogi extended his wishes to the people on the auspicious occasion of Dharti Aaba Bhagwan Birsa Munda's birth anniversary and Jharkhand's foundation day, celebrated on November 15.

Addressing a public meeting, Yogi appealed to the people to support the BJP candidates in the upcoming elections, including Aparna Sengupta from Nirsra assembly constituency, Tara Devi from Sindri, Biranchi Narayan from Bokaro, Amar Kumar Bauri from

Chandankyari, Ravindra Kumar Pandey from Bermo, and Lambodar Mahato from Gomia.

Yogi highlighted that on November 15, 2000, late Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee laid the foundation for the creation of Jharkhand with the vision that if Jharkhand develops, India will develop. However, Yogi expressed concern that attempts were being made to worsen the situation in the state. He pointed out that when Jharkhand was being formed, Congress and RJD opposed it.

The UP chief minister criticised these parties for misleading Jharkhand while aligning with JMM, stating that they were looting the state and, at the same time, empowering Leftist leaders who were pushing Jharkhand towards becoming a hub of Naxalism. He emphasised that such forces must not be allowed to thrive.

Yogi expressed his concern over the situation in Dhanbad, calling it the "coal capital" of India. He pointed out that coal workers in the region are being exploited by the Leftist groups who blackmail them. "These groups manipulate the workers by inciting strikes, protests



Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath with other BJP leaders during a public meeting ahead of the second phase of Jharkhand Assembly elections, at Nirsra Assembly constituency in Dhanbad district, Jharkhand. PTI

and rising slogans, only to profit from the situation while the workers remain in the same condition," he said.

He further criticised these groups for resorting to violence, including the brutal killing of those who try to build

barriers. He also referenced the incident involving BJP candidate Aparna Sengupta's husband, emphasising the need to drive out the people chanting 'Lal Salaam' and free the region from their influence.

The UP chief minister accused

the JMM, Congress, RJD and Communists of misappropriating the ration sent by Prime Minister Narendra Modi for the people of Jharkhand. He stated that during the Congress-led government at the Centre, Jharkhand's soldiers

were martyred regularly, while these groups would tell the soldiers to wait for the enemy to shoot before firing back.

However, Yogi emphasised that under the leadership of Prime Minister Modi, India has taken a strong stance against infiltrators and terrorists, eliminating them swiftly, making even Pakistan tremble at the consequences of their actions.

Yogi further accused the opposition of turning Jharkhand into a hub for love jihad and land jihad. He claimed that these groups are manipulating tribal daughters through second, third and fourth marriages, leading to the illegal occupation of land. "JMM, RJD and Congress have come to break into the security of Roti, Mati and Beti," he remarked.

The UP chief minister further alleged that through love jihad and land jihad, these parties were attempting to bring in illegal Bangladeshi immigrants and Rohingya Muslims to destabilise the region. "These actions threaten the safety of daughters, create unemployment and disrupt food security," Yogi said, asserting that only the BJP could stop these attempts and protect the state's

interests.

Yogi criticised the Congress leaders, accusing them of making false promises to provide cooking gas cylinders when they came to power. He further alleged that these parties are offering the rights of Hindus and tribals to illegal immigrants. In contrast, he asserted that the BJP would ensure that benefits of government schemes reach the indigenous people of Jharkhand, not to the infiltrators.

Referring to corruption, the UP chief minister pointed out that a Congress MP had Rs 350 crore at his house and a minister from the JMM had Rs 35 crore. He emphasised that this money belonged to the people of Jharkhand and had been looted by a few individuals for personal gain. He said that there was no place for corrupt politicians in the system and that the BJP was essential to stop such corruption.

The UP chief minister highlighted the attack on the Durga idol procession in Chandankyari, where the idol was broken and the devotees were not allowed to worship. He stated that the only solution to such acts of hooliganism and anarchy is the BJP.

Referring to Uttar Pradesh before 2017, Yogi explained that similar situations existed there, but now everything is peaceful. He accused Congress, JMM and RJD of creating divisions along caste lines, pitting communities like Munda against Santhal and Paswan against Musahar. He warned that if Jharkhand continues to divide, it could lead to chaos and communal tensions, similar to how Pakistan and Bangladesh were created in the past.

The UP chief minister emphasised the importance of unity for safety and peace, stating "ek rahenge toh safe rahenge" (we will be safe if we stay united). Meanwhile, before addressing the rally in Nirsra, Yogi paid a visit to the Shri Ram temple and Maa Kali temple in Naya Danga. He expressed his appreciation to the temple committee members, saying, "While we may have lagged behind, Nirsra has already built magnificent temples of Lord Ram and Maa Kali." He praised the grandeur of the temples, acknowledging the efforts of the people of Nirsra and extending his gratitude to them for their dedication to these spiritual landmarks.

## Over 2.86 lakh MT of paddy procured in UP so far

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Under the Kharif procurement season 2024-25, paddy procurement in Uttar Pradesh has surged, with 2.86 lakh metric tons procured so far — an increase of 65,820 metric tons compared to the same period in 2023-24.

Payments to farmers have also been expedited, with Rs 543 crore disbursed thus far, ensuring that payments reach farmers within 48 hours, as directed by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.

Last year, by November 13, 2.20 lakh metric tons of paddy was procured, benefiting 35,863 farmers whereas 42,845 farmers have already sold their produce this year. In a recent review meeting, Yogi emphasised promptness and transparency in the procurement process. He instructed officials to ensure timely payments to farmers, provision of essential facilities at procurement centres, and regular inspections to monitor the procurement process closely. With the Food department, PCF, UPSS, UPPCU, Mandi Parishad and FCI actively engaged in the procurement, these efforts reflect the state's commitment to supporting farmers and counterclaims made by opposition leaders, reinforcing that such criticisms are far removed from the ground reality.

Paddy procurement began in western Uttar Pradesh on October 1 and will continue up to January 31, 2025, covering districts including Bareilly, Moradabad, Saharanpur, Agra, Aligarh, Meerut, Jhansi, Hardoi, Sitapur and Lakshimpur Kheri.

In eastern UP, procurement started on November 1 and will run until February 28, encompassing Ayodhya, Gorakhpur, Basti, Devidat, Azamgarh, Varanasi, Vindhyachal, Prayagraj, Kanpur, Chitrakoot, and parts of Lucknow division like Rae Bareilly and Unnao.

The government has increased the minimum support price (MSP) of paddy by Rs 117 per quintal this year. It has fixed MSP at Rs 2,300 per quintal for paddy and Rs 2,320 for Grade A paddy, with an additional Rs 20 per quintal to cover unloading, sieving and cleaning costs.

To facilitate smooth sales, a total of 4,160 purchase centres of the Food and Civil Supplies department and other purchasing agencies have been set up in all the districts of Uttar Pradesh for the sale of paddy by farmers. They operate from 9 am to 5 pm. Sharecroppers are also participating this year with renewed registrations.

For any assistance, farmers can contact the toll-free helpline at 18001800150. Additionally, they may reach out to the food marketing officer in their district, the regional marketing officer in their tehsil, or the marketing inspector in their block to resolve any concerns.

## Govt to open prosecution offices in 11 more dists

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Yogi Adityanath government in Uttar Pradesh is taking significant steps to strengthen the law and order in the state, particularly through a more robust prosecution system.

The government has already seen considerable success in putting criminals behind bars over the past seven and a half years owing to effective advocacy in courts.

Now, in a continued effort to reinforce the Prosecution department, the government is set to set up offices of joint director prosecution in 11 districts of the state. Land has already been allocated for these new offices in each of the selected districts.

Additionally, the government has sent a formal request for the necessary budget to begin the construction of these offices. Once the funds are approved, construction will begin, further enhancing the efficiency and capacity of the prosecution system and contributing to a stronger law enforcement framework in UP.

Additional Director General, Prosecution, Deepesh Juneja disclosed that Chief Minister

Yogi Adityanath had issued instructions for establishment of new joint prosecution offices in 11 districts to strengthen and empower the department.

As part of this initiative, land has been allocated for the new offices in Shravasti, Chandauli, Chitrakoot, Banda, Sant Kabir Nagar, Ghaziabad, Maharajganj, Lalitpur, Sonbhadra, Auraiya and Firozabad districts. Sant Kabir Nagar District Magistrate Mahendra Singh Tanwar said that 4.05 hectares (one acre) of land had been allotted for the establishment of the prosecution office and residential facilities in village Badgo. This land is registered under plot numbers 725, 727, 728, 729, and 730, and has already been marked by the tehsildar, he added.

For the construction of the office building, two estimates have been prepared: one by the Public Works Department (PWD) for Rs 740.64 lakh and another by the Rural Engineering Department (RED) for Rs 793.02 lakh. These estimates have been submitted to the director general of police, Prosecution Directorate, for approval.

In Shravasti, one acre of land has been allocated at village Galkatwa in Bhonga tehsil. In Chandauli, 0.100 hectares has been allotted at village Dhirkot; in Chitrakoot, 0.050 hectares in village Tarauha, Karvi tehsil; in Banda, 0.770 hectares at village Mawai Buzurg; in Ghaziabad, 0.100 hectares at village Noornagar. In Maharajganj, a 30x50 metre plot of land has been allocated at the district headquarters, while in Lalitpur, 20x30 metre land has been allocated at Hada in Lalitpur tehsil. In Sonbhadra, 2.0240 hectare land has been allocated at village Rop in Robertsganj tehsil, and in Auraiya, 0.093 hectares has been allocated in village Kakore Buzurg. Besides, 3,500 square meter land has been allocated in the collectorate complex of Ayodhya.

The establishment of these offices is expected to significantly improve the prosecution process. It is expected to expedite legal proceedings against criminals, leading to quicker resolutions in courts. This will also reduce the pressure on the judicial system, ensuring faster and fairer resolutions of cases.

## One becomes 'yogi' by thoughts and words, not clothes: Akhilesh

PNS/PTI ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav on Thursday took a veiled jibe at UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, saying without taking his name that one becomes a "yogi" by thoughts and words and not clothes.

"No one becomes a 'yogi' by their clothes. One becomes a 'yogi' by their thoughts and words," he said.

He also hit out at the Bharatiya Janata Party-led government in Uttar Pradesh for its handling of the protest by Uttar Pradesh Public Service Commission exam aspirants in Prayagraj and failure to properly organise the exams.

Akhilesh Yadav, who was addressing an election rally in Phulpur, said the government used lathi on the youth seeking jobs and after arresting them and sent them to jail. Every section, including students, youth, women, poor, farmers and businessmen is troubled under the BJP government. Yadav, who was addressing an election rally in Phulpur where the Samajwadi Party is backing Mustafa Siddiqui, also claimed that the chief minister was on his way out.

The former chief minister of UP said that today injustice was being done to the farmers in the state. "Farmers are not able to get DAP. DAP is being stolen. The government is not able to arrange fertiliser, water, electricity for irrigation. Attempts were being made to suppress the agitating students by force," he said.



"People know this government is on its way out," he said and added that Yogi Adityanath's chair would not be spared regardless of the outcome of the Maharashtra elections. The SP chief had earlier hinted at tensions between Yogi Adityanath and the BJP's

central leadership.

He had also claimed during the Lok Sabha election campaign that Yogi Adityanath would be removed if the BJP was elected to power again.

Commenting on Yogi Adityanath's rhetoric, Akhilesh Yadav said, "Our chief minister is very knowledgeable but he speaks too much where less is needed. That is why we have the tradition of 'mauni baba' - to speak less. Whenever he speaks, it is bitter. His negative mindset is reflected in his negative language."

Yadav also attacked the ruling party for getting the bypolls to nine assembly seats in the state, originally scheduled for November 13, postponed to November 20. "The BJP will face defeat in these bypolls," he asserted.

Taking a jibe at BJP leaders, the Samajwadi Party supremo called them "negative people" and mockingly claimed, "Even NDA (National Democratic Alliance) starts with an 'N' for 'Negative'."

He also defended the Samajwadi Party's stance, saying PDA - an acronym coined by him to denote 'Pichhde (backwards), Dalits and Alpsankhyak minorities' - stood for "positive and progressive" in contrast to the BJP's negativity.

He said that some people are feeling pain seeing the PDA united. Reiterating his concern for the state of democracy and the Constitution, Akhilesh Yadav said, "Both are in danger. The only way to save them is by removing the BJP government from Lucknow and Delhi."

## Key conspirator in Bahraich violence arrested, had fled to Nepal: Police

**Bahraich (PTI):** The Bahraich police on Thursday arrested Khurshid Ahmad, the suspected main conspirator behind the communal violence that erupted during a Durga idol immersion procession on October 13 in Maharajganj town.

Senior police officials said Ahmad had fled to Nepal following the incident and was apprehended upon his return to India on the morning of October 13, during the Durga idol immersion procession in Maharajganj, a premeditated conspiracy led to the brutal murder of a young man named Ram Gopal Mishra. This was followed by arson, looting and vandalism in the area.

Additional Superintendent of Police (Rural) Durga Prasad Tiwari told reporters.

"Khurshid Ahmad and his associates were responsible for disrupting the procession by stopping the DJ, creating tensions that escalated into violence and the fatal shooting of Mishra," the officer said.

Prior incidents revealed that Ahmad and his associates had attempted to disrupt a Ganesh idol immersion procession in the area, he added.

"It was evident that he had planned to target the Durga idol immersion procession as well and he orchestrated the attack with his associates before fleeing to Nepal. Our teams acted swiftly upon his return to

India and took him into custody," Tiwari said.

The officer said Ahmad would now be produced in court. The police arrested another key conspirator, Shakeel, on Sunday.

In total, 122 individuals from both sides have been detained in connection with the violence.

Superintendent of Police (Bahraich) Vrinda Shukla has announced a cash reward of Rs 10,000 for information leading to the arrest of three additional suspects — Saif Ali, Javed and Shoaib, who remain at large. In response to the violence, the Bahraich police filed around 15 cases against more than a dozen identified individuals and over 1,000 unidentified persons.

A specialised police team comprising IT experts was formed to analyse more than 1,000 video recordings of the events, with a dedicated control room established to support the investigation.

Mishra (21), a resident of Rehua Mansoor village, was killed during the violence on October 13. The matter was allegedly triggered by loud music being played outside a place of worship during the procession. The incident triggered two days of unrest, as communal clashes spread to Mahsi, Maharajganj, and Bahraich city, resulting in extensive damage to property.

Land linked to Pak ex-pres Musharraf family: Buyers deposit 25% of amount

## Land linked to Pak ex-pres Musharraf family: Buyers deposit 25% of amount

**Baghat (PTI):** Three people who bought for about Rs 1.38 crore a two-hectare land parcel here linked to the family of Pakistan's former president Pervez Musharraf have deposited 25 per cent of the amount, officials said on Thursday.

The property is located in Kotana village, Baraut tehsil of Baghat, and was declared as enemy property in 2010. Additional District Magistrate (ADM) Pankaj Verma told PTI that three people (names not revealed) bought eight plots measuring 13 bighas for Rs 1,38,16,000 through an online auction in September.

"Buyers are required to deposit

the money in four months. Twenty-five per cent of the amount has been deposited in the first month. The remaining 75 per cent will have to be deposited in the next three months," he said.

Verma said that after the entire amount was deposited, the names of the buyers will be registered in the revenue records. The classification of enemy property pertains to assets owned by Pakistani nationals in India which are managed by the Custodian Of Enemy Property, a department under the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).

Musharraf, a former Pakistan

military chief who seized power after a coup in the country in 1999, died in 2023. He was born in Delhi.

According to ADM Verma, the auctioned property was registered in the name of Nuru. In the revenue records, the land, located about eight kilometres from Baraut tehsil in Kotana village, is not classified as residential.

The auctioned property is being described on social media as belonging to the family of Pervez Musharraf.

In September, when the land was auctioned, a senior district administration official had confirmed Musharraf's grandfa-

ther lived in Kotana.

"As far as the former Pakistan president is concerned, he was born in Delhi. He never came here. These people have joint land here.

"Former Pakistan president Pervez Musharraf's father Syed Musharrafuddin and mother Zarin Begum never lived in the village but his uncle Humayun lived here for a long time," the officer had told PTI.

He said there is also a house in the village where Humayun lived before Independence. In 2010, this piece of land was declared enemy property and its auction was finalised on September 5, he added.

## Villagers booked for casteist slurs, disruption of Dalit's funeral

**Muzaffarnagar:** A village head and three others have been booked by the Khatoli Police for allegedly obstructing the funeral of a Dalit and making casteist remarks in Bhensi village of this district. Baburam, a Dalit, died on November 9, according to the complaint filed by a woman named Sonia. "As per the complaint when the body was being carried to the village crematorium, a group led by village head Amit Ahlavat obstructed the last rites, making derogatory remarks against the Dalit community," said Circle Officer Ramashish Yadav. The police intervened and facilitated the cremation on November 9. A case has been registered against the accused under various sections of the BNS, including those related to caste-based discrimination and atrocities. The matter is being further investigated, the officer said.

## 'UPPSC decision victory of students' unity'

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Veteran Congress leader Pramod Tiwari, who is deputy leader of Rajya Sabha, termed the decision of Uttar Pradesh Public Service Commission to conduct the PCS preliminary examination on a single day as a victory of student power.

He said that till Wednesday, the UPPSC was saying that it will not change its decision. But under the pressure of the by-elections for nine seats of the Uttar Pradesh assembly, the government had to accept the legitimate demands of the students. Tiwari said that the students' movement was completely non-political and the students fought for the truth. "The heat of the students' peaceful movement, which was run in a non-

political manner, reached across the country, including Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra. In such a situation, due to the pressure from all sides on the students' genuine demands and the struggle for the security of their future, the UPPSC had to give up its stubbornness and finally bow down to a new decision," the Congress leader said.

Tiwari said that although this decision had been announced verbally by UPPSC, the Bharatiya Janata Party government was completely against the interests of students, unemployed, workers, youth, farmers and the common man.

He said the serious issue of 69,000 teachers was still pending. "Paper leaks or some technical difficulties in examinations have also exposed the irresponsible face of the government in

playing with the future of students." He said.

Meanwhile, the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) termed the acceptance of demands of thousands of PCS aspirants who took to streets for three days while bravely facing police harassment in front of the UPPSC office in Prayagraj, as the great victory of the movement and congratulated them.

CPI (ML) state secretary

Sudhakar Yadav said in a statement on Thursday that after the farmers' movement on the Delhi border, this was the second shining victory of the street movement and the defeat of the Narendra Modi-Yogi Adityanath governments. "Due to fear of defeat in the by-elections, the Bharatiya Janata Party government had to step back. After Prayagraj, the students' movement had spread to Lucknow and Delhi. The outcome of the recent student movement in neighbouring Bangladesh was also in front of the BJP," he said.

The CPI (ML) leader demanded immediate and unconditional release of the arrested students, withdrawal of cases against them, and punishment to the police officers guilty of lathi-charge and misbehaviour with the girl students.

**25 INJURED AS BUS OVERTURNS**

**Pilibhit:** A bus carrying a group of workers overturned into a ditch here on Thursday, injuring 25 people, officials said. Station House Officer Deepak Kumar said the bus was transporting around 60 workers from Nawabganj and nearby villages in Bareilly district to a kiln in Bihar. The bus veered off the road near Balrampur Chowki. Among the injured, two women, Rukhsana and Jannati Begum, sustained critical injuries and were rushed to hospital. The remaining injured are being treated at the CHC in Purnapur and private hospitals. PTI



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# Stage set for Dev Deepawali celebrations in Kashi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The stage is set for grand Dev Deepawali festival when on Friday evening 84-odd Ganga ghats spread about seven kilometres will be illuminated with over 12 lakh diyas (earthen lamps). Besides, almost equal number of diyas will be lit at Varuna river and Trans-Ganga Ramnagar ghats, famous kund and talabs (ponds) and houses in this religious city. Not only this, on this auspicious occasion of Karthik Purnima, Gurdwaras will also be lit up as it is the day of Guru Nanak Dev Jayanti apart from Buddhist township of Sarnath. In the morning, thousands of devotees will take a holy dip in the sacred water of Ganga river. Preparations have been completed by the administration for organising Dev Deepawali and all other important events on Friday, right from cleaning to decoration work. Along with this, tight security arrangements have also been made in view of the crowd on the ghats. Top police officers, including Commissioner of Police (CP) Mohit Agrawal and others apart from District Magistrate (DM) inspected ghats as Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar, Governor Anandiben Patel, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and other dignitaries will attend the event at Namoh Ghat where American 'Sapt Nand' group will present a dance on the theme 'Cosmic Shiva' based on the glory of Lord Shiva. According to the DCP Kashi Zone Gaurav Bansal, strict security arrangements have been made to maintain peace on the Ganga ghats and barricading has been done to control the rush of crowd. Besides, ghats will also be monitored with CCTV cameras. Apart from Namoh Ghat, as per tradition 'Maha Aarti' programmes will be organised at

## Dhankhar to inaugurate Namoh Ghat today

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar will on Friday inaugurate the newly-developed Namoh Ghat in Kashi, which features a magnificent 'Namaste' sculpture to greet visitors. Governor Anandiben Patel, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and Union Petroleum Minister Hardeep Puri will also be present on the occasion. Renovated under the leadership of CM Yogi, the Namoh Ghat has already become an attraction for visitors from both within the country and abroad, especially its stunning 'Namaste' sculpture, that seemingly greets the rising sun over the sacred Ganga river. The crescent-shaped ghats of Kashi, bathed in the golden hues of dawn, have long enchanted visitors and Namoh Ghat now adds a fresh allure to this experience. Namoh Ghat, now equipped with world-class amenities, will provide visitors with an enhanced view of the divine Subah-e-Banaras. With its blend of faith, tourism and employment facilities, this new addition to the city is designed to offer both locals and tourists an exceptional experience. Meanwhile, a new modern ghat has been added to the ancient city of Kashi's famous ghats. Known as Varanasi's first model ghat, this ghat stretches from Namoh Ghat to Adikeshav Ghat covering about 1.5 kilometres. The unique Namaste sculpture and international-standard facilities are drawing tourists to this new destination. This ghat, which can be accessed by water, land, and even air, is the first in Varanasi where helicopters can land. It also includes a floating CNG station, an open-air theatre, pools, a floating jetty with bathing areas and changing rooms. Besides, the visitors will find a yoga area, water sports, a children's play area, and a cafe, along with other amenities. This is also Varanasi's first ghat designed to be accessible for differ-



Namaste sculpture at Namoh Ghat in Varanasi which will be inaugurated by Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar on Friday

ently-abled individuals. The reconstruction of Namoh Ghat, spanning 81,000 square metres at a cost of Rs 91.06 crore, was completed in two phases. The project is funded by the Smart City Mission and the Indian Oil Foundation. Namoh Ghat now stands as a world-class site, with the 'Namaste' sculpture as its iconic symbol, greeting the rising sun each morning. Varanasi Divisional Commissioner (DC) and Smart City President, Kaushal Raj Sharma, shared that the redevelopment of Namoh Ghat has focused on the 'Make in India' initiative, emphasising local craftsmanship. Visitors to Namoh Ghat will experience the essence of 'Vocal for Local', with attractions like water adventure sports and heli-tourism planned for the future. Additionally, the ghat offers facilities for morning walks, exercise and yoga for health-conscious visitors and has a ramp

allowing easy access for the elderly and differently-abled individuals to the river. Amenities at Namoh Ghat include an open-air theatre, library, lounge, bathing pools, a food court with Banarasi cuisine, and a multipurpose platform for events. The site is equipped for helicopter landings, making it suitable for events and crowd management. From the jetty, visitors can take boat rides to witness the Ganga Aarti and visit Shri Kashi Vishwanath Dham. To help keep the Ganga river pollution-free, the country's first floating CNG station for boats has been installed at Namoh Ghat, along with a separate CNG station for other vehicles. From Namoh Ghat, tourists can also enjoy cruises to nearby cities, enhancing the tourism experience in the area. The DC further shared that the large Namaste sculptures at Namoh Ghat were built in two phases: in phase-1 two statues were installed, one standing 25 feet tall and the other 15 feet, while phase-2 added a grand 75-foot metal sculpture. This towering 'Namoh Namah' statue, installed to commemorate India's 75th year of independence as part of the 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' celebrations, inspired the name Namoh Ghat. Special features at Namoh Ghat include a unique pond and extensive greenery along the riverbanks to prevent soil erosion, with plants lining the edge. Like other ghats, Namoh Ghat has solidly constructed steps for taking ritual baths, along with a ramp for easier access, and a bathing jetty is also installed for visitors. The ghat is reinforced with gabion and retaining walls to withstand floods and is designed to look like Varanasi's traditional ghats. The visitors can drive directly to Namoh Ghat, where parking is available, making access easy. The redevelopment of Namoh Ghat was completed in two phases, transforming it into a modern yet culturally resonant space.

some ghats with 'batuks' (males) and 'riddhi-siddhis' (females) which will enhance the beauty of the entire festival. The 'Maha-Aarti' events will be

performed under the auspices of Ganga Seva Nidhi, Gangotri Seva Samiti and Kendriya Dev Deepawali Mahasamiti. With the festival, the month-long

event of lighting Akashdeeps in memory of martyred soldiers and police personnel will also conclude. At Dashashwamedh Ghat, senior officers of Army,

Air Force, CRPF, NDRF and others will attend the programme. Besides, at the mythological Panchganga ghat, Hazara will be lit as per the tradition.

# Minister listens to problems of people



UP Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Stamp and Court Fee and Registration Ravindra Jaiswal listening to problems of the people at PM's Parliamentary Office in Varanasi on Thursday.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Uttar Pradesh Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Stamp and Court Fee and Registration Ravindra Jaiswal on Thursday heard the problems of the people at the Prime Minister's parliamentary office in Jawahar Nagar. During the public hearing, people informed the minister about their problems. When Gunja Devi of Chandauli

informed about her family problem, the minister directed the officer concerned to ensure immediate disposal of the case over phone. During the public hearing, applications related to various family problems as well as basic facilities related to road, electricity, water were received. Later, Jaiswal asked the departmental officers concerned for immediate disposal of these complaints.

## Man commits suicide

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

A 30-year-old man, troubled by domestic discord, committed suicide by jumping in front of a speeding train on the Asepur railway track on Thursday. On getting information about the incident police took the body into possession and sent it for post-mortem examination. His family members, including his wife, Sheela Devi are inconsolable. According to a report received here, Kishore Kumar of Asepur Saidabad,

was a driver. He used to support his family by driving a car. Troubled by domestic discord Kishore ended his life by jumping in front of the train on Thursday. Saidbad police station Station House Officer (SHO) Raghvendra Singh said the police sent the body for postmortem. The deceased was the youngest of three brothers and was married and has one son and two daughters. In another incident the driver died after tractor trolley overturned in a pit in the Ghurpur area here.

# 'Empowering patients through awareness and education vital for diabetes prevention & mgmt'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Every year on November 14, World Diabetes Day focuses attention on diabetes, a disease impacting millions of people worldwide. Research recently conducted by the Indian Council of Medical Research has shown that over 10 crore people are affected with it in India, which reflects an increased call for increasing prevention efforts and increasing healthcare resources. With the rising prevalence of diabetes especially Type 2 often attributed to lifestyle, this day educates patients on the simplest interventions that need to be implemented so as to prevent complications and enhance results in this patient population. The theme of this year is "Breaking Barriers, Bridging Gaps," taking into account how important it is to remove

barriers to care and to ensure everyone diagnosed with diabetes receives high-quality comprehensive care that is both accessible and affordable. Diabetes is a chronic disease affecting the body's mechanism for regulating blood sugar and causes severe and sometimes life-threatening complications such as heart disease, kidney damage, and vision loss and nerve complications. Type 1 is an autoimmune condition; the other, type 2, tends to be associated with a poor diet, lack of exercise, and obesity. According to experts, effective management of both types depends on raising awareness, promoting early detection and improving access to care. Improvement in public education and preventive measures is the only way to reduce the impact of diabetes, which is best derived from simple yet consistent steps: spreading balanced nutrition, regular

physical activity, and routine health screenings. Availability of greater community-based support and resources to people to identify early symptoms, their individual risk factors, and medical treatment before their complications come must be increased. "Empowering patients through better awareness and education is absolutely vital for diabetes prevention and management," said Dr Neha Agarwal, paediatric endo at Regency Hospital here. "We need to focus on early detection and encourage lifestyle modifications that can help prevent serious complications. This World Diabetes Day, our goal is to drive home the importance of proactive, informed choices in managing diabetes and promote resources to support sustainable changes for those at risk." "It is a day that reminds us that the gaps need to be filled

in our healthcare system. Policies and programmes of health communities need to be more focused on education, prevention and easy access to services that minimise the risk and deaths by diabetes. More investment in screening and public education, affordable medicines can make diabetes care accessible to all who require it. Through a concerted approach that combines accessible healthcare, robust public awareness and targeted support for vulnerable populations, World Diabetes Day reminds us that preventive action can help stem the tide of diabetes and improve millions of lives. This day underscores that with proactive steps, we can create a future where diabetes is met with informed management, early intervention and fewer barriers to life-saving care," she said.

# Health camps organised

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

In view of the seriousness of diabetes, World Diabetes Day is observed every year on November 14 and its theme of the year 2024 was "Breaking Barriers, Bridging Gaps". In this direction, health camps were organised at Pt Deendayal Upadhyay (D D U) Government Hospital, SSPG Hospital, Kabirchaura, as well as all CHCs, PHCs and all Ayushman Arogya Mandirs. Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Dr Sandeep Chaudhary said diabetes is a problem that is spreading rapidly in the world. On the other hand, if we talk about India, then our country is becoming the biggest victim of diabetes, he said, talking about the reasons for the spread of this disease. He said that changes in food and lifestyle are the biggest causes of diabetes and it is very important to con-

trol diabetes at the very beginning. He said that when the production of insulin in the body decreases, the level of glucose in the blood increases, such a condition is called diabetes. "The work of insulin is to convert food into energy in the body and due to this hormone, the amount of sugar in the body is also controlled. When a person's body has a problem in converting food into energy, then in such a situation the amount of sugar in the body is not controlled and the person becomes a victim of diabetes", he said. Deputy Chief Medical Officer and Nodal of NCD Programme Dr YB Pathak said that 140 people were tested for diabetes in the NCD clinic of DDU Hospital and 40 people were tested in Elderly Clinic SSPG Kabirchaura. Camps were also organised in all CHCs, PHCs and all Ayushman Arogya Mandirs.



A health programme being held at World Diabetes Day in Varanasi on Thursday.

# Cash, jewellery worth lakhs stolen

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Cash and jewellery worth lakhs of rupees were stolen from a house in Sajeti under Ghatampur Kotwali police station area on Wednesday night. Police along with sniffer dog squad rushed to the spot and carried out investigation. The miscreants broke into the house by dismantling the bricks of a wall. Neelu wife of Shrawan Kumar of Beria village under Sajeti police station informed the police that her husband was in a private job outside the village. She lived with family members in the village. Late night when she was sleeping in her room, the miscreants broke into the house by dismantling the bricks of the backside wall and stole jewellery worth lakhs of rupees apart from ₹10,000 cash from there. On seeing the ransacked household goods on Thursday, family members informed the police which rushed to the

spot and carried out investigation. Station Officer Sajeti Kamlesh Rai said a probe was on in the case and claimed that it will be worked out soon. **ARRESTED:** The STF squad arrested a wanted criminal carrying a cash reward of ₹1 lakh from Colonelganj police station area here on Thursday. He was identified as Chatur Singh alias Tribhubhu Singh alias Babu Singh alias Kaliya. **MISHAP:** An elderly cyclist was killed by a speeding truck on Bachhrawa-Maurava road in Unnao on Thursday. SDM and CO pacified the agitating people by assuring action against the guilty driver and recommendation for financial aid to the kin of the deceased. Station House Officer Chandra Kant Singh said the body had been sent for autopsy and the truck driver had been taken into police custody and the vehicle had been impounded.

# Filaria Eradication Programme: Night blood survey conducted

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Under the Filaria Eradication Programme, the Health department conducted the night blood survey from November 4 to 12 to protect people from filariasis in the district. The objective of this programme is to assess the potential for spread of micro filariasis in the area after feeding the medicine. In this direction, after three successful MDA/IDA in the last three years in the district, the work of TASS-1 (Transmission Amount Survey) has been completed. Blood samples are collected at night to find patients suffering from filariasis. If found positive in the investigation, the patients are treated free of cost by the Health department. This information was given by Chief Medical Officer Dr Sandeep Chaudhary. He said that this disease is caused by the bite of Culex mosquito. Filaria worms are more active at night so samples are taken at night only. Filaria patients are searched once every year at the national level under the Mass Drug Administration Programme but this disease can be defeated by taking medicine. District Malaria Officer Sharat Chand Pandey said in 33 planning units, the parasite load in

two planning units, urban area Jaitpura and rural CHC Cholarpur, is more than one per cent due to which the IDA programme was again run there. In view of its seriousness, night blood survey work was done in both the above places from November 4 to 12. As many as 997 filaria patients are registered in the district. Filaria unit in charge/biologist Dr Amit Kumar Singh said if the microfilaria rate in night blood survey and investigation is less than 1 per cent, then there is no possibility of finding/spreading any new patient at the said places, this is a good result of the filaria eradication programme. As part of this programme, night blood survey was conducted at two places in the district, sentinel site Ishwarganj Pokhara and random site Lohatia in urban area Jaitpura and random site Munari and sentinel site Jagdishpur in rural area Cholarpur in which 302 blood platelets were collected in Jagdishpur, 306 in Munari under Cholarpur and 301 in Ishwarganj and 302 in Lohatia under Jaitpura. After examination if the microfilaria rate is more than one per cent then IDA campaign will be run again in that area in which all the people of that area will be given medicine to prevent filariasis.

# Children are our future: DRM

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The National Children's Day-2024 was celebrated on Thursday at the Mini NER Stadium of North Eastern Railway (NER), Lahartara under the chairmanship of Divisional Railway Manager (DRM) Vineet Kumar Srivastava. Various sports, race and musical chair competitions were organised in the age groups of 8-12 and 12-14 years for boys and girls. The DRM inaugurated the programme by hoisting the flag and releasing balloons with the children. He highlighted the international values and important dates regarding child rights. Addressing the children, he said that the truest time in the world, the best day in the world, the most beautiful moment in the world, is found only in childhood. "Children are our future, they have infinite potential", he said, appealing to the children to believe in themselves that they can do whatever they want. He said the day is celebrated as Children's Day because it is the birth anniversary of country's first Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, who loved children very much. On the occasion, Additional Divisional Railway Manager



DRM VK Srivastava addressing Children's Day function at Mini NER Stadium in Varanasi on Thursday.

(ADRM/Operations) Rajesh Kumar Singh, Assistant Divisional Personnel Officer (ADPO) Virendra Yadav, Assistant Personnel Officer (APO) Anirudh Kumar, Assistant Personnel Officer Ramesh Upadhyay along with children of officers and employees were present. In the sports competitions organised in the first phase, 100 metres race was conducted for boys and girls of 12 to 14 years category in which Shivam Kumar among boys and Anushka Pandey among girls got the first place, Akhilesh Yadav and Mahi Singh finished second while Ankit Kumar and Poonam Yadav got the third place. In

the 50 metres race for boys and girls of 8 to 12 years category, Abhishek Yadav and Santoshi Pal among the boys and girls respectively got first place while Anand Yadav and Shreya Tiwari second and Pritam Sharma and Sonam Yadav third places respectively. In the needle thread race for girls, Shreya Tiwari got the first place followed by Kajal Patel and Sonam Yadav while in hurdle race (sack race) for boys and girls, Aditya Saroj and Anushka Pandey got first place, followed by Ayush Rajbhar-Mahi Singh and Karan Yadav-Santoshi Pal. In the musical chair competition for girls, Jigyasa got the first place while Radhika Maurya second and Archana Rai third places respectively. On the occasion children recited poems and poems filled with national sentiments. Children of employees working in the divisional office, children of NER Junior High School located in Railway Colony, Scouts and Guides and Bulbul children participated in this event. The programme was conducted by chief inspectors Yogeshwar Mall, Satyaprakash and Anil Srivastava and vote of thanks was proposed by Anirudh Kumar, Assistant Divisional Personnel Officer.

# Knp Metro: 'Vidyarthi' TBM achieves major milestone

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Under the Kanpur Metro Rail Project, the 'Vidyarthi' Tunnel Boring Machine (TBM) achieved a major milestone, completing a 331-metre-long tunnel on the 'downline' and reaching Transport Nagar Station around 5:00 PM on Wednesday. The successful breakthrough was celebrated with a thunderous applause in the presence of Kanpur Metro Project Director Arvind Meena and other senior officials. On the 'upline' of the same stretch, the 'Azad' TBM has already completed tunnelling from Swadeshi Cotton Mill to Transport Nagar Station. Both TBMs will now be 'dragged' to the opposite end of Transport Nagar station and then will be launched towards Jharkarkati. From there, they will continue boring tunnels towards Kanpur Central. During its tunnel construction journey on the 'downline', the 'Vidyarthi' TBM successfully installed 230 rings and completed a tunnel approximately 331 metres long. In the coming days after the 'dragging' process is completed, the 'Vidyarthi' TBM will be launched from



Transport Nagar towards Jharkarkati. On the occasion Managing Director of Uttar Pradesh Metro Rail Corporation Ltd. (UPMRC), Sushil Kumar, stated, "The 'Vidyarthi' TBM has successfully completed the tunnel construction on the 'downline' from the ramp near Swadeshi Cotton Mill to Transport Nagar Station. I am pleased to see the Kanpur Metro team effectively managing the challenging task of tunnelling beneath one of the city's busiest and most congested areas. A trial run will soon take place from Motijheel to Kanpur Central, and the metro service from IIT to Kanpur Central is expected to begin by January 2025." **ACCOUNTANT KILLED:** The accountant of a brick kiln was killed after being hit by a tractor trolley in Ghatampur. The labourers took him to Ghatampur CHC where he

was declared dead by the doctors. Police sent the body for an autopsy and started a probe in the matter. Lallu Ram (55) of Bharua Sumerpur, Hamirpur, was an accountant in a brick kiln in Ghatampur police station area. On Wednesday evening a tractor trolley which come to collect bricks hit him and he was taken to the Ghatampur CHC by an ambulance where doctors declared him dead. Ghatampur inspector Dhananjay Kumar Pandey said the body had been sent for autopsy. On the basis of complaint, further action will be initiated in the matter, he said. Meanwhile a girl committed suicide by hanging herself in Bidhuna of Auraiya on Wednesday evening. After returning from school on Wednesday, she hanged herself in a room. Kin alleged that the girl, a student of class XI, ended her life after being teased and humiliated by her teacher. Police assured to initiate action against the teacher on a receipt of written complaint. Kotwali incharge Mahendra Singh said on receipt of complaint and on the basis of autopsy report, further action will be initiated in the matter.



## Coast guard evacuates critically ill from Lakshadweep

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Indian Coast Guard (ICG) evacuated a critically-ill patient from Agatti, Lakshadweep late on Wednesday, the defence ministry said here on Thursday. The 68-year old patient was diagnosed with acute exacerbation of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and type 2 respiratory failure and was in need of immediate medical evacuation, it said. Giving details, officials said ICG District Headquarters at Kochi, in coordination with its Lakshadweep Headquarters and the Lakshadweep Administration, launched a Dornier aircraft and medically escorted the patient to the General Hospital Ernakulam, Kochi. The swift and successful medical evacuation is part of the consistent support extended by the ICG to the Lakshadweep administration and the Islanders towards ensuring safety of life and sustained connectivity with the mainland, upholding the ICG motto, 'Vayam Rakshamah' - We Protect.

## Congress, BJP pay tributes to Nehru on birth anniversary



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi paid homage to Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first PM, on his birth anniversary on Thursday. Nehru was born on November

14, 1889 in Uttar Pradesh's Allahabad (now Prayagraj). He was one of the leading faces of the country's freedom struggle. He breathed his last on May 27, 1964. "On the occasion of his birth anniversary, I pay homage to our former Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru," PM

Modi wrote on social media post. The Congress paid rich tributes to Nehru. Rahul Gandhi, the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, said Nehru's democratic, progressive and inclusive values are the cornerstone of India and will always remain

so. Mallikarjun Kharge, president of the Congress, hailed Nehru as the architect of modern India and the one who took India from zero to the peak. Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, Congress general secretary, also paid tributes to Nehru at his memorial in Shantivan.

## DRDO successfully concludes flight test of Pinaka Weapons System



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) successfully completed the flight tests of Guided Pinaka Weapon System as part of Provisional Staff Qualitative Requirements (PSQR) validation trials. The flight tests have been conducted in three phases at different field firing ranges, the defence ministry said here on Thursday. During these tests, the PSQR parameters namely, ranging, accuracy, consistency and rate of fire for multiple target engagement in a salvo mode have been assessed by extensive testing of rockets. Twelve rock-

ets from each production agency from two in-service Pinaka launchers upgraded by the launcher production agencies have been tested, it said. The precision strike variant for Pinaka Multiple Launch Rocket System is a totally indigenous weapon system designed and developed by Armament Research and Development Establishment in association with Research Centre Imarat, Defence Research and Development Laboratory, High Energy Materials Research Laboratory and Proof and Experimental Establishment with Munitions India Limited and Economic Explosives Limited as production agencies for ammunition and Tata

Advanced Systems Limited and Larsen and Toubro for Pinaka launcher and Battery Command Post. Defence minister Rajnath Singh complimented the DRDO and the Indian Army for the successful PSQR validation trials of the system and stated that the induction of this Guided Pinaka Weapon System will further boost the artillery fire power of the Armed Forces. Dr Samir V Kamat, secretary, Department of Defence R&D and Chairman DRDO, also congratulated the teams associated with the trials and said the rocket system has completed all pre-requisite flight trials before induction into the Indian Army.

## MoD holds meeting on electronic warfare

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The annual meeting of the Joint Electromagnetic Board (JEMB), a subcommittee of the Chiefs of Staff Committee (COSC), was held on Wednesday to review all aspects of electronic warfare and spectrum management besides other issues, the Ministry of Defence

announced on Thursday. Giving the details, officials from the ministry, said the meeting was held under the chairmanship of Air Marshal Jeetendra Mishra, Deputy Chief of Integrated Defence Staff (Operations). The event was attended by senior officers from the three Services, Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), Department of

Defence Production (DDP), and industry representatives. The meeting covered multiple agenda items on joint operations and integration in areas such as electronic warfare, signature management, emerging technologies, EMI/EMC, spectrum management and human resource management. The event also featured the launch of the AI-enabled e-Tarang system.

## PM inaugurates Bodo festival

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi will inaugurate the first Bodoland Mahotsav on Friday at the SAI Indira Gandhi Sports Complex in Delhi and address a gathering on the occasion, Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said on Thursday. The two-day festival is a mega event on language, literature and culture to sustain peace and build a vibrant Bodo society, a statement from the PMO read. It aims to integrate the indigenous Bodo people residing not only in Bodoland but other parts of Assam, West Bengal, Nepal and international border areas of the Northeast. The theme for the festival is Peace and Harmony for Prosperous Bharat with a focus on the rich culture, language and education of the Bodo community along with other communities from the Bodoland Territorial Region. It aims to capitalise on the richness of cultural and linguistic heritage, ecological biodiversity and touristic potential of Bodoland. Significantly, the festival is also about celebrating the remarkable journey of recovery and resilience ever since the sign-

ing of the Bodo Peace Accord in 2020, the statement read. The peace agreement not only resolved decades of conflict, violence, and loss of life in Bodoland but also served as a catalyst for other peace settlements, it further read. The session on The rich Bodo culture, tradition and literature contributing towards Indian heritage and traditions, will be the highlight of the festival and witness deliberations on the rich Bodo culture, traditions, language and literature. Another session on the Challenges and opportunities of mother tongue medium-of-instruction through National Education Policy, 2020, will also be held. A thematic discussion on Indigenous cultural meet and discussion on building vibrant Bodoland region through culture and tourism, will be organised with the objective of promoting tourism and culture of the Bodoland region. The gathering will include more than 5,000 cultural, linguistic and art enthusiasts attending the event from the Bodoland region, Assam, West Bengal, Tripura, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, other parts of India, and also from neighbouring Nepal and Bhutan, among others.

## Rajnath to visit Laos for ASEAN ministers' meet



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Rajnath Singh, Union Minister of Defence, will pay a three-day visit to Laos next week to attend a meeting of a grouping comprising 10-nation ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) and some of its dialogue partners, which is expected to deliberate on evolving regional security situation. He is likely to present India's position on dealing with major

security challenges facing the region at the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus), sources said. The defence minister will visit Laos from November 20 to 22, he said. ADMM-Plus is a platform comprising 10-nation ASEAN and its eight dialogue partners - India, China, Australia, Japan, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, Russia and the United States. Laos is hosting the meeting in its capacity as the current chair of ADMM-Plus.

The meeting is likely to deliberate on the situation in the Indo-Pacific as well as ways to combat the threat of terrorism. Singh is likely to hold bilateral meetings with the defence ministers of a number of participating countries. India became the dialogue partner of the ASEAN in 1992 and the inaugural ADMM-Plus was convened in Hanoi in October 2010. Since 2017, the ADMM-Plus ministers have been meeting annually to bolster security cooperation.

## Naval seminar concludes

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Issues including cyber security, risks in aviation operations and challenges posed by unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) were discussed during the two-day Flight Safety Seminar (FSS) and Annual Naval Flight Safety Meeting (NFSM) ending Wednesday at INS Dega, Visakhapatnam, the defence ministry announced on Thursday. Giving details,

officials said the meeting was organised under the aegis of the Headquarters Eastern Naval Command. Vice Admiral Rajesh Pendharkar, Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief Eastern Naval Command, delivered the key note address. Centering on the theme Emerging Threats and Challenges - Naval Air Operations and Compliance with Flight Safety, the seminar focused on contemporary topics.

## Panagariya argues for local bodies to self finance

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Rural and urban local bodies should look at raising their own resources as it will mobilise citizens in terms of their expectations and their demands from the local bodies, said Arvind Panagariya, chairman of the 16th Finance Commission, on Thursday. Speaking at a one-day conclave of the Finance Commissions themed Devolution to Development organised by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Panagariya also said that a convergence is being witnessed in the demands of the urban and rural local bodies.



Among the topics in focus at the conclave were deliberations on addressing systemic challenges, ensuring timely constitution of the state finance commissions, implementation of recommendations and strengthening institutional mechanisms to ensure a smooth flow of funds to the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), and fostering financial autonomy and self-reliance among the panchayats. The issue of panchayat finances, including devolution of funds, functions and functionaries, along with strategies to enhance local revenue sources were among the key issues. Panagariya said that local bodies should look at raising their own resources as well. "From the view point of service provision it is important to raise

some own resources also When citizens pay taxes, they are also aware of services that ought to be rendered to them," he said. "It is also the logic of devolution of the functions at local levels. Locals know what they need and want. That knowledge will convert into a more activist kind of demand." Panagariya said it will also mobilise the citizens. "In some way efforts should be made by the panchayats and urban local bodies to raise at least some part of their revenues from their own jurisdiction. That is an important way to mobilise citizenry in terms of its expectations and demands," he said. Meanwhile, Vivek Bhadwaj, Secretary, Panchayati Raj said the conclave brings together stakeholders so that there is an integration in thought and

action. "For the 2.5 lakh panchayats and people, the Finance Commission is responsible for devolution of resources. We have been trying that there should be an integration of action and thought between the central and state finance commissions. Through this conclave, all stakeholders have come on one platform," he said. The conclave, organised by the Panchayati Raj Ministry, brings together key representatives from the 16th Finance Commission, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, the Ministry of Rural Development, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, as well as eminent experts and representatives from the State Finance Commissions and other relevant institutions.

## How India is reshaping its relationship its tribal populations

RANI SINGH RAJPUT ■ NEW DELHI

For the first time in India's history, the nation's tribal communities are experiencing a wave of transformative initiatives that recognise and uplift them across all spheres. After years of systemic neglect, a newfound focus on tribal welfare is not only closing gaps but also celebrating their heritage, empowering their youth, improving healthcare access, and providing economic opportunities. Droupadi Murmu's election as India's first tribal President is also a monumental step for tribal representation, sending a powerful message of inclusion and breaking barriers at the highest level of government.

With these monumental steps, India is reshaping its relationship with its tribal citizens-bringing prosperity, dignity, and equality to communities long overlooked. Here is a look at these historic firsts that are building a brighter, more inclusive future. India has expanded its financial commitment to tribal welfare to record levels. Funds for Development Action Plan for Scheduled Tribes (STs) have seen a five-fold increase, from less than Rs 24,600 crore in 2013-14 to an incredible Rs 1.23 lakh crore in 2024-25. This leap in funding is fueling initiatives across education, healthcare, housing, and more, marking a powerful commitment to empowering tribal communities.



Tribal students are finally receiving the educational opportunities they deserve, with enrollment soaring from 34,000 in 2013-14 to over 1.3 lakh in 2023-24. The growth of

Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS) has been a cornerstone of this shift, with the number of schools nearly quadrupling, from 123 to 476 in just a decade. These schools

are not only educating but transforming prospects for tribal youth across the country. With the first-ever Sickle Cell Anaemia Elimination Mission, India is tackling a health issue

that disproportionately affects tribal communities. Already, over 4.6 crore people have been screened, with a goal to reach seven crore within three years. This mission to eradicate sickle cell disease isn't just about health; it is about creating a healthier, more resilient future for India's tribal populations. For the first time, tribal students are receiving extensive scholarship support. Scholarships now benefit over 30 lakh students annually, with a total disbursement of Rs 17,000 crore in last 10 years. These scholarships are more than financial aid; they're a pathway to empowerment for tribal youth. The contributions of tribal freedom fighters are now being

recognised on a national scale, with 10 museums established in their honor. The birth anniversary of Bhagwan Birsa Munda has also been designated as Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas, paying tribute to his legacy and the resilience of India's tribal communities. For the first time, the stories of tribal heroes are celebrated, fostering pride and preserving cultural heritage. In a landmark push for tribal entrepreneurship, 3900 Van Dhan Vikas Kendras have been set up, providing resources to nearly 12 lakh tribal entrepreneurs. These centers are enabling tribals to transform traditional skills into profitable ventures, promoting economic self-reliance and innovation.

Under PM-JANMAN, essential services like housing, clean water, sanitation, and healthcare are reaching the most vulnerable tribal groups for the first time. With a budget of over Rs 24,000 crore dedicated to 75 Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) and more than 45 lakh families, this initiative is a lifeline for remote tribal communities. Further, with the abrogation of Article 370, ST communities in Jammu & Kashmir now have expanded access to education and employment opportunities, opening doors to a brighter future and fostering inclusion for tribal groups in the region. Also, in a first, bamboo has been declassified as a tree, allowing tribal communities to harvest it freely.





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PAPER WITH PASSION

## Bulldozer justice quashed

The SC strikes down 'bulldozer justice,' mandating strict accountability for officials involved in illegal demolitions

The Supreme Court of India has delivered a landmark judgement against the practice of "bulldozer justice," emphasising that officials who engage in illegal demolitions will now be held personally liable to restore properties and pay damages. The judgement is a response to the growing concern over arbitrary demolitions used as punitive measures, often targeting properties associated with individuals accused of crimes. The judgement introduces strict procedural requirements and enforces personal accountability for officials. This liability includes covering the cost of restoring the demolished properties and compensating affected parties. This measure is designed to deter officials from disregarding due process and underscores the responsibility that comes with exercising state power. The Supreme Court has established mandatory procedural guidelines to prevent arbitrary demolitions— A 15-day prior show-cause notice is required, along with a personal hearing; a detailed final order justifying why demolition is the only viable action must be provided and a 15-day grace period post-final order allows the affected party to seek legal recourse or vacate the premises.



The Supreme Court has mandated real-time updates on a digital portal for all demolition notices and orders to prevent arbitrary actions and foster transparency. Additionally, the entire demolition process must be videographed, with a list of officials involved to ensure accountability and adherence to procedure. Officials violating these directives risk contempt proceedings and prosecution,

underscoring the Court's commitment to upholding the rule of law. The judgement holds far-reaching implications for governance, rule of law and individual rights in India. By restricting demolitions carried out as a form of punishment, the Supreme Court reinforces the fundamental legal principle that the executive cannot act as judge and enforcer. The decision underscores the judiciary's role in protecting individuals' rights against arbitrary state action, affirming that everyone is entitled to due process before facing punitive measures. The decision is laudable because it is tough on arbitrary demolitions, which often infringe on the right to shelter, impacting families and communities and safeguards citizens' fundamental rights, emphasising that actions targeting individuals suspected of crimes must follow legal due process. The judgement must come as a relief to many families who dread the demolition as one of them might have been on the wrong side of the law. However, the judgement falls short of putting onus on the political masters of the bureaucrats on whose behest such actions are often taken. Nevertheless, it would rein in the erring officers who go out of way to please their political masters. It is a bold move that could reshape administrative conduct.

## PICTALK



A crow quenches its thirst by drinking water from a fountain, in New Delhi

# India's cricket boycott is a safety issue, not politics



BHOPINDER SINGH

As the deadliest year in Pakistan's recent history unfolds, calls for separating sports from safety concerns overlook the urgent realities facing the nation

Global Terrorism Index 2024 reports that Pakistan had the highest recorded terror attacks of any country in the world. 490 attacks were formally recorded with spiralling instances in the fourth successive year of increased deaths and terror incidents. The US Department of State currently maps the situation at "level 3" i.e., warning its citizens to "Reconsider Travel". Similarly, British authorities "advise against all travels to parts of Pakistan" and note bluntly, "No travel can be guaranteed safe".

There are two dedicated Pakistani Army Divisions deployed to secure Chinese personnel and assets of the various Chinese-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) imperatives in Pakistan, yet the same gets targeted with seeming impunity and deadly consequences. Even royals from various Arab sheikhdoms who used to descend into the Pakistani hinterland for the annual Houbara hunting season have desisted from the same, given the acute security concerns prevailing. Whereas India has rightfully slammed Pakistan for being the "world's terrorism factory" for its nefarious record in fanning religious extremism and armed insurgency on Indian soil, since independence.

Stating that there is a grave security concern in Pakistan is not a political statement but a statement of fact. The fact that it was featured prominently in the Grey List of the global anti-terror watchdog agency, Financial Action Task Force (FATF) till very recently, is also a fact. Amidst this undeniable security landscape in Pakistan, Pakistani authorities pooh-pooh concerns of the Indian Cricket Board, i.e., BCCI (Board of Control for Cricket in India), to avoid sending the Indian Cricket Team to play in Pakistan owing to security concerns, is not political one-upmanship but the expected concern of any board towards the safety and welfare of its team. That several India-facing terror groups are thriving on Pakistani soil is a very old story that needs no reiteration, and that itself makes the threat to the Indian team especially severe. The official breakdown and



downgrading of diplomatic ties between Delhi and Islamabad since 2019, do not help mend popular mood or perceptions about India or Indians in Pakistan (or vice versa), either.

While it is certainly true that sporting ties between the two restive nations were always given to political 'point-scoring' and even positive leverage in the form of 'cricket diplomacy' (to thaw bilateral freeze) — this time the security situation in Pakistan has deteriorated to such levels, that to suggest that it is the usual 'point-scoring' diplomacy is to live under a rock. The reality of the situation is even beyond the intellectual debate of allowing or disallowing sports between two 'enemy' countries. Sometime back, India did choose to conflate sports with other bilateral engagements owing to Pakistan's established role in sponsoring terrorism in India, but even if one were to delink the two, the security situation in Pakistan itself warrants a cautionary note from the Indian side.

Understandably the Pakistanis are miffed and embarrassed about what they perceive as a deliberate Indian affront, but deep down they know better given that 2024 has emerged as the deadliest year ever, from the perspective of terrorism in



PAKISTAN IS IN THE MIDST OF AN UNDENIABLE AND COMPLEX SECURITY CRISIS AND WILL ONLY BE ABLE TO RESUME EVENTS WITH INDIAN PARTICIPATION, ONCE THE GROUND SECURITY SITUATION CHANGES

Pakistan. However, coming from its imagined nemesis i.e., India, it is a bitter pill to swallow openly. Given that Pakistan's Interior Minister, Mohsin Naqvi, also double-hats as the Chairman of the Pakistani Cricket Board (PCB) — the Pakistani reaction to BCCI concern assumes a political reaction. He has cavalierly downplayed the 'Hybrid Option' (wherein India plays its matches in a neutral venue, while others can play in Pakistan) by countering, "one of the options the government is mulling is that of asking the PCB to ensure Pakistan don't participate in the Champions Trophy", as a political face-saving comeback. He also fumed that the PCB ought not to be expected to "carry on with their good gestures" of playing in India, as Pakistanis did earlier. This wounded statement misses the point of contrasting the security situation existing in India, vis-à-vis Pakistan, currently.

The Pakistani Government may be tempted to 'retaliate' optically and go as far as asking its team to desist from playing against India in any of the ICC or Asian Cricket Council tournaments, to negate the perceived sleight. Currently, the heavily invested narrative of a perennial 'enemy' in India leads to an instinctive ostrich-

like head in the soil, and denials by Pakistan. Situational irony is magnified by the chairing of the global body of cricketing governance i.e., the ICC, by the son of India's Home Minister (equivalent of Interior Minister in Pakistan), Jay Shah.

Pakistani social media is agog with memes of Kathik-calling-Karthik allusions and its questionable neutrality in handling the current situation. Fair as that concern might be from a Pakistani perspective in normal times, it still does not take away from the genuineness of security concerns in Pakistan. For Pakistan to give examples of the security cover afforded to India's Foreign Minister on a recent visit to Pakistan as an example of its preparedness to host matches with tens of thousands of spectators and other accompanying circumstances, is contrived and grossly stretched logic. Pakistan is in the midst of an undeniable and complex security crisis and will only be able to resume events with Indian participation, once the ground security situation changes. For now, it is clearly beyond political one-upmanship.

(The writer, a military veteran, is a former Lt Governor of Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Puducherry; the views expressed are personal)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### CLIMATE CRISIS IGNORED

Madam — The editorial, 'Deliver tangible results' (November 13), should sensitise all the concerned. The COP29 is seen more as a ritual congregation than as producing anything tangible in the interest of humanity. The present economic order, marked by rabid chasing of capital for instant profits with its predatory character, knows no sentiments. As capital has gained such power over the policies of a government or even changed the government itself to make its course further smooth. In this background, Trump regaining his political power grossly reduces the scope for any further positive developments in this affair. He is for outright support for faster exploitation for mines and oil wealth to enrich the rich at the cost of the very survival of the living beings.

The latest manifestations of climate change are serious signals to attend to the damages inflicted on the environment but have yet to be taken seriously by any country. COP 29 that meets periodically, discusses the issue, receives consents and commitments for its resolutions from members but utterly fails to put in practice to bring about any tangible improvements in the status. The Indian government is not different. The amendments brought in by the Forest Act last year will see more damage to forests and more men and material loss. Attaching more importance to money has its toll on living beings, which, under the present economic order, is very difficult to infuse a humane face to it.

A G Rajmohan | Anantpur

### VISTARA MERGED WITH AIR INDIA

Madam — The Indian full-service airline called Vistara Airlines has finally reached its merger completion stage with Air India. With this, it is now only the Tata Group-owned Air India in the country to manage the full-service flight facility in India. The ten-year-old Vistara, which is a joint venture between Indian and Singaporean companies, has finally flown its last flight from Delhi to Singapore with the code name UK. The premium Club

## Inflation rates surge



The inflation rate based on the consumer price index increased to 6.21 per cent in October, up from 5.49 per cent in September, according to the data released by

the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation. The increase was driven by the prices of food products, particularly the vegetables, especially tomatoes, onions and potatoes (TOP), rising above 42 per cent.

The food inflation rose sharply to 10.87 per cent in October from 9.2 per cent in the preceding month. There is a greater need for the government to implement additional supply-side measures to stabilise food prices. A weakening of the rupee to an all-time low (November 13, rupees 83.40 against one dollar) against the dollar has also raised the specter of India's oil import bill climbing, which could stoke inflation if retail fuel prices go up. Since this is man-made inflation, the government, which has virtually failed to check inflation, needs to make all-out efforts to check it to give a sigh of relief to the poor.

S K Khosla | Chandigarh

Vistara tickets and pre-booking orders of Vistara have already been shifted to the Maharaja Club of Air India.

Although this whole merger and amalgamation process of Vistara is quite heartening, as Vistara is renowned for its quality service, while Air India grapples with some service issues. Although Air India is in its process of transitioning, any comment with respect to its services quality and experience post merger with Vistara would be too early. Tata's are the trusted group of India, and let's not forget that their airline's contribution holds a long history. They have been in national service in India since 1932, with the visionary mentality of JRD Tata. The expansion of Air India with the merger of Vistara will surely improve the aviation operations of Air India and also help the Air India group to focus more on customer-centric service with a memorable quality experience in every flight.

Kirti Wadhawan | Kanpur

### PROMISES AND POLITICS

Madam — The political scenario is getting hotter as the stakes are very high in the

Maharashtra state elections. Honours are even and fighting for supremacy is gearing up in a fancy mood. Allegations and counter-allegations are mounting up and a war of words is now in a now-or never situation. Freebies funds find routes in a big way, finding routes from the household items and electronic items.

As the manifestos are out, the realities come to light in the electioneering. In the public view, election manifestos are issued solely to sway voters, who know they will hear about these promises again only when the next election comes. People will have to simply wait and watch as mute spectators. If parties truly believe in the validity of their manifestos, they should allow voters to judge these promises on their own merits, rather than muddying the waters with divisive or defamatory statements. The real lie lies in cheating voters. Lies lay low in a political flow of fight between EVMs and electorates.

C K Subramaniam | Mumbai

# Pathway to a knowledge-rich, future-ready nation

By promoting multilingualism, skill development and character-building, NEP 2020 aims to empower students to tackle both national and global challenges

On July 29, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 completed four years, a transformative framework that has reshaped the country's educational landscape by connecting contemporary needs with its traditional roots. NEP 2020 stands as the first education policy since independence that genuinely aligns with Bharat's ancient traditions, advocating for accessible, quality education with an emphasis on relevance and inclusivity.

The policy introduces a host of progressive features, such as flexible study options, multiple entry and exit points, the Academic Bank of Credits (ABC), credit transfer mechanisms, and a focus on online courses, aiming to create a seamless, adaptable educational journey for learners across the nation. A defining aspect of NEP 2020 is its commitment to the five foundational pillars of Access, Equity, Quality, Affordability and Accountability. NEP 2020 brings traditional values, arts, languages and culture into the mainstream curriculum, underscoring



Bharat's ambition to reclaim its heritage as a knowledge superpower. One of the most notable additions is the incorporation of the Indian Knowledge System (IKS), promoting the revival and research of traditional subjects such as Vedic mathematics, Ayurveda, environmental studies, linguistics, Yoga and other indigenous disciplines. This shift helps bridge the gap left by prior policies, which often neglected or excluded these areas under the influence of Western paradigms. The NEP also recommends a three-language formula, promoting multilingualism by including at least two Indian languages in school curricula. While this policy is intended to support India's linguistic diversity, it

faced resistance in some non-Hindi-speaking states, where concerns about linguistic hegemony and regional language preservation surfaced. The central government may need to address these concerns carefully, especially given education's status on the Concurrent List, to ensure a balanced approach that respects regional identities while achieving national integration. The policy's emphasis on Sanskrit, often regarded as a foundational element of Bharat's cultural heritage, is a major milestone. With Sanskrit included as an optional language under the three-language formula, both school and higher education institutions are encouraged to integrate it into their curricula. NEP serves as a turning point in Bharat's educational history, aiming to foster character development and national pride alongside academic excellence. NEP 2020 emphasises two overarching themes: nurturing Indian values and fostering character-building among students. This holistic approach is intended to develop responsible, ethical citizens ready to tackle both national and glob-

al challenges. Despite allegations of "saffronisation", proponents argue that the NEP aims to realign the educational system with what benefits the nation and its people. Science and history, though based on facts, are often viewed through the lenses of time and place. A major thrust of NEP 2020 is skill development, with the objective of enhancing employability by integrating vocational training and practical learning into the curriculum. The inclusion of courses on data structures, programming, machine learning and artificial intelligence is intended to prepare students for a tech-driven future. NEP 2020 also encourages societal engagement through initiatives like internships and community visits, fostering creativity and real-world problem-solving skills. Institutions like NIT Uttarakhand have already embraced the NEP's multidisciplinary model, focusing on research and innovation to build a skilled and socially conscious workforce.

(The author is the BJP Councilor, New Delhi; views are personal)



UMANG BAJAJ

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## FIRST COLUMN

## UNVEILING THE SHAKTIS

Shakti forms are central to authentic spiritual practice.

Nature's energies are accessible but require dedication



ASHWINI GURURJI

The creation is governed by certain *Shaktis*. As you progress in your *sadhana*, you can experience their forms. Every day, each one of the 365 days, is governed (sanchalit) by a specific *shakti*. That is why the importance of *niyam* and daily practice is insisted upon in yoga. If one misses the *sadhana* for even a single day, the *shakti* of that day is left behind and the *sadhana* of an entire year goes to waste because in Brahmand, if a single thing goes missing then its effect is felt on everything — our body, the earth, as well as other planets and stars. Every *Shakti* has a day, but one need not perform rituals to access them. In yoga and *tantra*, there is no ritual, just the *sadhana* of *Shakti*. It is important to understand the *shakti* of each day and the *Swaroop* of that *shakti*. There is a name for every form of *Shakti*, but at the present moment, we will only be discussing their forms. The names are taken only after generating the capacity in the body, through specific *sadhanas*. At a basic level, when you do *dhyana* with your *guru*, you can see certain forms in him/her, like the sun or even the moon. Ever wondered where these forms come from and what they represent? There are many *sadhaks* who have reported seeing the form of the sun in *dhyana*. What is so special about the Sun? If you look at the Sun at the time of Sunrise and Sunset, keeping the awareness of *Manipoorak* and chanting the mantra 'Ram', you will find a certain glow starts coming into the body and just within a month you will start looking very different (A word of caution here, for any yogic practice it is important to have a Guru who guides you as per your capacity). Just like the sun, the moon too is an extremely interesting energy. The moon merely reflects the light of the Sun, but with that



light, it can attract the tides as well as the earth's surface on a full moon night. Have you ever thought about it—what is so special about the moon? Not just that, on a full moon night, animals become violent, the mentally unstable start behaving funny and accidents and fights are on the rise. Right now I am only discussing the basic aspects, to give you a hint that there is something different about these forms. What that is, is a subject of experience and you will get that experience with the correct practice of *Sanatan Kriya*.

The speciality of the Moon is that it looks calm and peaceful but it is more volatile than even the Sun. When you look at the moon under the guidance of a *Guru*, you will be able to see all the mantras in its form because you cannot see the sun, which channelises that *Shakti*. There are certain *shaktis* which you cannot see and so there are certain other *shaktis* through which you can see and feel their effect, it becomes an experience for you. And till you have that experience, yoga is a waste for you, nothing can happen and nothing is possible.

Experience is the basis of yoga. All the things that we see in the sky and on the earth, there are so many flowers of so many different kinds and colours, if you simply look at them without blinking your eyes under *Guru Sanidhya*, all the defects and imbalances in the body disappear. But there is a small problem... *niyam*. There should be no break in the practice, and the break will come if you do not have the capacity for that *Shakti* or if you don't have a *Guru*. Nature, everything that we see around us, has all the *swaroops* of *shaktis* hidden in it and all these *shaktis* are very easily accessible. If one makes him/herself stir on these *shaktis* and accesses them properly, then they start following that person. The nine days leading to Diwali are especially powerful because of the congregation of specific *shaktis* during these days. Our ancestors prescribed observing the *vrat* of *brahmacharya* during these days to make the body strong enough to accept these *Shaktis*.

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

## AI revolutionises the beauty and wellness industry



DINESH SOOD

As global demand for unique beauty solutions surges, the sector's embrace of AI reflects a profound shift towards customisation, efficiency and consumer satisfaction



Innovative products and services utilising new technologies are beginning to disrupt the beauty and wellness sector. As a result, traditional skills need to be strengthened and combined with modern technological skills such as artificial intelligence (AI), app development, augmented reality for try-on services, data analytics and enhanced customer engagement strategies. AI has made significant advancements in the beauty and wellness sector, particularly as the demand for customisation and personalisation has increased.

This trend reflects diverse customer preferences, lifestyles, body types and genetic factors. Recent news about Maybelline's AI-powered "makeup" filters for Microsoft teams has reignited discussions on AI's role in the beauty sector. It is crucial to explore how AI is transforming the industry and to stay updated on the latest developments. The global beauty industry market utilising AI was valued at \$216.12 billion in 2020 and is projected to reach \$1.26 billion by 2027. An industry report indicates that the annual growth rate (CAGR) of AI in the beauty sector from 2021 to 2027 is expected to be 33.2 per cent. Several laboratories have developed AI-driven skin consultation tools that integrate augmented reality and artificial intelligence to analyse skin ageing.

These tools can identify signs of ageing and assess skin strength, providing tailored skincare recommendations to prevent further deterioration. Their algorithms are based on 10,000 images and 15 years of dermatological expertise. Users can take a selfie and provide their age and skin type to receive an estimate of their skin condition along with a personalised analysis. They will then receive customised skincare prescriptions. AI assists in analysing skin conditions, recommending personalised skincare and wellness routines and even predicting trends, ultimately enhancing product development and customer satisfaction. Acne is a common concern worldwide, affecting 80 per cent of teenagers and 40 per cent of adults.

With AI, a database of 6,000 images representing various ethnic skin types

enables accurate analysis and personalised routine recommendations for those suffering from acne. This groundbreaking AI technology draws from a library of 10,000 authentic images evaluated by real dermatologists, achieving an accuracy rate of nearly 97 per cent across eight clinical parameters and a wide array of skin types.

In the ever-evolving beauty and wellness industry, where innovation fosters confidence and self-expression, AI has become a powerful ally in creating more effective and personalised product formulations than ever before. By leveraging its diverse applications and capabilities, AI is driving a revolution that is changing how beauty and wellness products are developed, personalised, and marketed.

IN THE EVER-EVOLVING BEAUTY AND WELLNESS INDUSTRY, WHERE INNOVATION FOSTERS CONFIDENCE AND SELF-EXPRESSION, AI HAS BECOME A POWERFUL ALLY IN CREATING MORE EFFECTIVE AND PERSONALISED PRODUCT FORMULATIONS THAN EVER BEFORE

From trend spotting to precise product formulation, AI is reshaping the beauty industry in exciting and groundbreaking ways. Integrating AI into the formulation process can also ensure product effectiveness. AI algorithms can simulate how ingredients are absorbed and metabolised by the skin, identifying potential unwanted interactions or side effects.

This approach minimises the risks associated with bringing new products to market and ensures consumers achieve optimal results without compromising their wellbeing. Traditionally, skincare products have been developed with a one-size-fits-all approach, often failing to meet individual consumers' unique needs. AI changes this methodology by analysing various data points, including skin type, age, environmental factors and personal preferences.

By using AI-powered tools, brands can create customised skincare products tailored to each customer's specific requirements. For instance, AI algo-

ritms can assess a user's skin condition through photographs and questionnaires, recommending or formulating products with particular concentrations of active ingredients that address individual skin concerns. Additionally, AI can analyse molecular structures to predict how new compounds will interact with human skin, significantly reducing the time and cost of traditional trial-and-error methods.

The AI system recommends suitable ingredients, products and skincare routines tailored to each individual's needs. It can also suggest branded products that address specific conditions in the beauty and wellness industry, aiming to connect deeply with each customer's preferences. As technology continues to evolve, it promises solutions that will enhance both appearance and wellbeing in the future. Importantly, your data remains private; it is not stored and only you can view the results unless you choose to share your information with others. A personalised experience is crucial for success in the beauty and wellness industry. AI technology plays a significant role in identifying each customer's unique preferences and addressing their individual needs.

As technology advances, beauty companies are expected to introduce innovative services that enhance customer interaction and contribute to the global growth of the beauty market. Online services are evolving rapidly alongside these technological advancements. The importance of websites, engaging social media platforms and online marketplaces is increasing. The share of online revenue in the beauty and personal care sector, which was approximately 4.6 per cent in 2017, is projected to rise to 18.2 per cent by 2025. The

future of the beauty and wellness industry will depend on an omnichannel experience that seamlessly integrates online and offline interactions, utilising a range of digital tools to enhance the consumer experience.

Virtual try-ons and consultations have become standard in beauty retail; however, replicating the human connection remains a challenge. Online influencers and "show me how" content are gaining popularity as consumers learn to master services that they previously sought from professionals. Additionally, live streaming on platforms like Facebook Live and Instagram significantly engages younger consumers. In India, the beauty and wellness industry is growing rapidly, expanding twice as fast as that of the United States and Europe. Greater consumer awareness and aspiration have led to increased spending on beauty and wellness products and services.

Per capita spending on beauty and personal care products rose from Rs 450 per annum in 2017 to Rs 684 in 2022, with a further increase projected to Rs 772 by 2025. Today's consumers demand unique experiences, making traditional approaches less effective. There is a growing preference for convenience and on-demand services, which have become essential in the fast-paced lives of working professionals. As a result, there is an increasing need for transferable skills within the workforce in the beauty and wellness sector, as customer service expertise becomes more in demand.

(The writer is co-founder and MD of Orane International, a training partner of the National Skill Development Corporation and a network Member of India International Skills Centres, an initiative of GoI; the views expressed are personal)

## Cybersecurity: Safeguarding a digital future amid rising cyber threats

India must act swiftly to secure its digital future in an era where technological prowess is now essential for national security

Today, cyber-attacks impact every aspect of life, from government agencies and corporations to individuals' personal data and privacy. While the reach of cybercrime is vast, the underlying complexity remains poorly understood by many, with significant security consequences for nations that fail to address these threats adequately. Cyber-attacks threaten national security and underscore the vulnerabilities associated with our increasing dependence on digital infrastructure. Although the internet has revolutionised the world by providing incredible convenience, connection and comfort, these benefits come with the challenge of safeguarding critical data and



VINAY PATHAK

infrastructure. As cybersecurity becomes the essential defense for peace, prosperity, and privacy in the digital age, recent incidents such as the breach of 7.9 million customer records at India's stock-broking firm Angel demonstrate the necessity of strengthening digital protections. While the internet facilitates ease of access, it also introduces serious vulnerabilities that call for immediate,

concerted efforts.

The recent cyber-attack on Iran marks a chilling advance in digital warfare, illustrating that no nation is immune to the risks of a hyperconnected world. As countries, corporations, and citizens expand their online presence, the scope for potentially devastating cyber-attacks rises dramatically.

This incident serves as a reminder of the need for nations to address cyberspace's complex, escalating risks. India, for example, is undergoing a digital revolution with over 936 million internet users as of December 2023. These "Digital Nagriks" fuel a dynamic digital economy, supporting critical sectors such as healthcare, education, finance and agricul-

ture. However, the rapid pace of digital adoption has outpaced India's cybersecurity measures, creating opportunities for cybercriminals to exploit these gaps.

According to the 2024 Cisco Cybersecurity Readiness Index, only 4 per cent of Indian companies are fully prepared to counter cyber threats, exposing significant vulnerabilities within the nation's digital framework. These threats arise not only from criminal organisations but also from state-sponsored entities targeting India's economic and strategic assets. Moreover, emerging technologies like artificial intelligence (AI) enable more sophisticated cyber-attacks, including deepfake technology and disinformation cam-



paigns, adding complex layers to cyber defenses. In today's world, technological prowess in fields such as AI and cybersecurity equates to national security, rivaling traditional military strength. However, India faces several challenges in coordinating an effective cyber defense. While initiatives like Cyber Surakshit Bharat have shown early progress, a comprehensive national cybersecurity

strategy is still missing, which limits effective threat response and assessment. A recent step forward has been the Prime Minister's Office's appointment of a cybersecurity oversight official, but gaps remain in the infrastructure needed to support comprehensive defence. Cyberspace's borderless nature complicates defence efforts, as attacks can target both military and civilian assets globally, bypassing traditional political and geographic constraints.

India has implemented several initiatives to tackle cyber threats. For instance, the Cyber Fraud Mitigation Centre (CFMC) at the Indian Cybercrime Coordination Centre in New Delhi unites major players—including

banks, telecom providers and law enforcement agencies—to combat online financial crimes. This initiative, exemplifying "Cooperative Federalism," enables swift responses to fraud. The government has also introduced the Samanvaya Platform, a centralised repository of cybercrime data to foster interagency cooperation. Despite these initiatives, further action is required to establish a comprehensive cybersecurity framework. Without unified regulatory standards, gaps remain in protecting the public and private sectors, especially for small businesses that may lack the resources for robust cybersecurity protocols. This vulnerability could undermine both national

security and public trust in India's digital infrastructure. Programs like Cyber Surakshit Bharat, the National Cybersecurity Coordination Centre (NCCC), and CERT-In have all aimed to strengthen India's defences, with additional measures such as the Information Security Education and Awareness Project (ISEA) helping to create a culture of security consciousness among citizens. The 2023 Digital Personal Data Protection Act reinforces this commitment by aligning with global data security standards to improve transparency and accountability among companies.

(The writer is an assistant professor, Indian Institute of Information Technology, Sonapat; views are personal)



# After Jharkhand, Prime Minister Modi repeats Rohingaya-Bangladeshi chorus in Maharashtra



TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Accusing the Congress of playing vote bank politics and trying to push people back into poverty in the country, Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi on Thursday alleged that the leaders of the grand old party were openly talking about giving free cylinders to Rohingyas and Bangladeshis. Addressing elections rallies at Kharghar in Navi Mumbai, Modi sharpened his attack against the Congress by bringing in Rohingyas and Bangladeshis in electoral debate in Maharashtra. Modi, who is still in the Jharkhand Assembly poll mode, said: "On one hand the Congress is questioning us on providing free ration to the poor, while on the other one of the Congress leaders from

Jharkhand has gone to town announcing to give free cylinders to Hindus, Muslims and infiltrators too. If anything, the Congress leaders are openly talking about giving free cylinders to Rohingyas and Bangladeshis". "By speaking about giving free cylinders to Rohingyas and Bangladeshis, the Congress is playing with the future of the country as well as your children to get votes. Don't forget that the Congress is the pioneer of vote bank politics and it is the enemy of the poor," Modi said. "The Congress asks why 25 crore people, who have come out of poverty, are getting free ration. That means that the Congress wants the expenditures of these people to go up so that they will go back into poverty. If the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) people

get a chance, they will do the same in Maharashtra," the Prime Minister said. Charging that the Congress governments did not want the poor to come forward, Modi said, "No wonder the Congress vehemently opposes every welfare scheme for the poor. That is why my poor man has not come out of the difficulties of life. Even after 70 years of independence, most of the people in the country are struggling to get food, clothing and shelter". Alluding to "garibi hatao" slogan coined by late Mrs Indira Gandhi in her 1971 election campaign, Modi said, "The Congress has always worked on the agenda of keeping the poor poor. These people (Congress) have - for generations after generations -- been mouthing the false slogan of eradicating poverty.

But actually in the name of the slogan of eradicating poverty, the Congress has been looting the poor". Talking about achievements of the BJP-led MahaYuti government, Modi said that Maharashtra would become the most important growth engine of developed India "Your entire belt of Panvel-Raigad is rich in marine wealth. We are empowering the coastal economy and working for our fisherman brothers and sisters. Our first priority is the development of the Maharashtra MahaYuti government. We are working towards ensuring a bright future for Maharashtra. We have done so many things that the previous governments had failed to do," Modi said, as he exhorted the people to re-elect the BJP-led MahaYuti government.

Earlier, speaking at a rally at Chhatrapati Sambhaji Nagar (erstwhile Aurangabad), Modi charged that the Congress and the MVA had failed to rename after Marath king Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj. "It was only after the MahaYuti government came to power in the state that we renamed Aurangabad as Chhatrapati Sambhaji Nagar... In this election, on one side there are patriots who are believers of Sambhaji Maharaj, while on the other, there are people heap praise on Aurangzeb". Modi said that by renaming Aurangabad as Chhatrapati Sambhaji Nagar, the BJP-led MahaYuti government had fulfilled late Bal Thackeray's wish. "The Uddhav Thackeray-led MVA government was in power for 2.5 years. But, it did not have the courage to rename Aurangabad, all because it was under the Congress' pressure. On the other hand, the MahaYuti government renamed the city as soon as it came to power. We fulfilled your wish and also we fulfilled late Balasaheb Thackeray's wish," Modi said. Harping on how the Congress was opposed to ensuring the progress of Dalits, backward classes and tribals, Modi said: "The Congress stops Dalits, backward classes and tribals from progressing so that they can retain power from generation to generation. That is why Congress has been against reservations right from the day one" "The Congress leaders used to say that reservations were against the country. ...The mentality and agenda of the Congress has remained unchanged. They can never come to terms with the fact that an OBC has been the PM in the country for the last 10 years," Modi said.

# Bhujbal faces tough fight on home ground

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Chhagan Bhujbal, senior Ajit Pawar-led NCP leader and five-time MLA, is struggling to retain his home seat of Yeola in Nashik district of north Maharashtra in the face of stiff resistance unleashed by his erstwhile mentor and NCP (SP) supremo Sharad Pawar. Seventy-seven year-old Bhujbal, who is the face of the OBCs in Maharashtra, has never had the going tough in his nearly five decade-long political career. Sharad Pawar, who considered Bhujbal his protégé and made him a deputy chief minister when the Congress-NCP government came to power in 1999, has made it a prestige issue to defeat Bhujbal in the Assembly polls. After serving a 2.5-year-term behind bars in an alleged money laundering case, Bhujbal has begun to face the heat in Yeola, a constituency from which he has been getting elected consistently to the State Assembly since 2004. Unlike in the past when he would have a cakewalk in Yeola, the odds are against him. This time, Bhujbal faces Manikrao Shinde, a Maratha pitted by Sharad Pawar. Shinde is son of former MLA Madhukarrao Shinde. What has made the contest difficult for Bhujbal is the fact that Sr Pawar has named him as "betrayer", after he junked him and went with Ajit Pawar to join the BJP-led MahaYuti government in July last year. So much so that the NCP (SP) chief went hammers and tongs against Bhujbal over the manner in which the latter betrayed him.



In his first rally that he addressed at Yeola after Bhujbal's exit from his party, Sharad Pawar said: "I erred in trusting some people, but won't repeat the mistake. I miscalculated and I apologise for it. You trusted me and voted for my party but my decision turned out to be wrong and hence I owe the apology." In an election rally that he addressed on Tuesday, Sr Pawar said: "He (Bhujbal) has no faith in ideology. He betrayed the party, leadership and the people, too. He defamed Yeola, which stood by him for years. So now, it's time to teach him a lesson. I will give you full support, and we will win, win, win." Apart from the stiff opposition from Maratha leader Sharad Pawar, what is working against Bhujbal is that he has taken an open stand against Maratha quota. Maratha quota crusader Manoj Jarange-Patil has exhorted the Maratha community to defeat Bhujbal. In his book '2024: The Election that Surprised India', Journalist Rajdeep Sardesai has quoted Bhujbal as saying that he left the Sharad Pawar camp and joined Rebel leader Ajit Pawar to become part of the BJP-led Maha Yuti (NDA) because of a fresh ED notice.

# Chandigarh records worst AQI in the country

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Chandigarh recorded the worst air quality in the country on Thursday, with its Air Quality Index (AQI) falling in the 'severe' category for the first time this season. The air quality in many parts of Haryana and Punjab was also recorded in the 'very poor' category and the 'poor' bracket. Chandigarh recorded its air quality index at 427 at 12 noon, according to the Central Pollution Control Board's Sameer app, which provides hourly updates. The AQI was 460 at the ambient air quality monitoring station at Sector 22, 365 at Sector 25 and 455 at Sector 53 in the city, the data showed. Chandigarh's air quality was worse than Delhi, which recorded its AQI at 424 at 12 noon, as per the data. For the past few days, the air quality of the union territory continued to remain in the 'very poor' bracket, becoming one of the few cities with the worst air quality in the country. In Haryana, the AQI was 323 in Gurugram, 299 in Panchkula, 293 in Bahadurgarh, 289 in Hisar, 269 in Sonapat, 246 in Kaithal, 223 in Kurukshetra and 228 in Yamunanagar. AQI between zero and 50 is considered 'good', 51 and 100 'satisfactory', 101 and 200 'moderate', 201 and 300 'poor', 301 and 400 'very poor', 401 and 450 'severe' and above 450 'severe plus'. Stubble burning in Punjab and Haryana after harvesting the paddy crop in October and November is blamed for the rise in air pollution in Delhi. As the sowing window for Rabi crop is very short, farmers set their fields on fire to clear the crop residue.

# Students win, PCS exams back to...

From page 1

The announcement came after discussions at UPPSC, driven by widespread concerns over the normalisation process, which students feared could introduce scoring inconsistencies. Protesters camped outside the UPPSC office in Prayagraj for four days, demanding changes. In response, a government spokesperson explained that the state's initial decision to hold exams in multiple shifts stemmed from recent cases of paper leaks in various regions,

some involving organised networks. "To ensure purity and transparency in selection exams, the state government had initiated steps to conduct exams in multiple shifts," the spokesperson said, emphasising that the two-shift format aimed to minimise security risks and accommodate over 500,000 candidates in government centres alone. The PCS-Pre exam, scheduled for December 7-8 in 41 districts, was originally split over two days with a

normalisation process to adjust for varying exam conditions. UPPSC now confirms that the exam will be held in a single shift, with further details to follow soon. Earlier in the day, tensions escalated as plainclothes police attempted to disperse the crowd forcibly. When the police moved in, the students lay down in solidarity, blocking the removal efforts. Protesters accused the police of misbehaviour, including using abusive language and manhandling female students, fueling further anger. Within

an hour, over 10,000 additional students had gathered, pushing through barricades and advancing to the commission's gate.

The issue had drawn national attention, with Congress Member of Parliament Rahul Gandhi condemning the UP Government's handling of the protests. In a post on X, he stated, "The treatment of competitive students in Prayagraj by the UP government and UPPSC is both insensitive and unfortunate. The non-

transparent normalisation process is unacceptable, and the demand for a single-shift exam is completely justified. Why should students bear the cost of an incompetent government that is dismantling the education system? These hardworking students, away from their families, are now forced to 'fight' on the streets, facing harassment by the police. We support the students' demands unequivocally. Their democratic rights cannot be stifled by authoritarian actions."

# Saurabh Bharadwaj opens Delhi Pavilion at IITF

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Saurabh Bharadwaj, Delhi industries minister, on Thursday afternoon inaugurated the Delhi Pavilion at the annual International Trade Fair held at Pragati Maidan. Stalls from various departments of the Delhi government have been set up in the pavilion, with officers from the respective departments present. At these stalls, visitors to the fair are informed about the work done by the department, future projects, government schemes, and other relevant information. Additionally, many stalls showcasing the art and culture of Delhi can also be found in the pavilion. Not only are there stalls from the government, but also stalls set up by traders and producers from Delhi in the pavilion, where they promote their goods and work to expand their businesses. While speaking to the media at the inauguration, Bharadwaj stated, "Like every year, this year's trade fair has been organised on a very large scale at Pragati Maidan. Traders from Delhi, the country, and abroad wait for this fair throughout the year."

# BJP leader alleges threat to life, TMC rubbishes claim

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Arjun Singh, senior Bengal BJP leader and former MP, on Thursday claimed that he had reliable inputs about a conspiracy being hatched by the powers that be in the State to eliminate him and Suwendu Adhikari, the leader of Opposition in West Bengal. Moments after emerging from the Bhawani Bhawan, headquarters of the state Criminal Investigation Department (CID), where he was interrogated by top officers --- regarding a Rs 4.5 crore e-tender scam in Bhatpara Municipality, where he was a former chairman --- Singh Said, "There is specific input that a conspiracy is being hatched to eliminate me and Suwendu Adhikari which is why the security ring around us has been tightened." Saying that he would make relevant points on his social media handle he said, "I have already said that if you find me dying of multi-organ failure in the coming six months then be sure that it has been the handiwork of the conspirators." Adding, not only him and Adhikari, but four other BJP leaders were also in the TMC's 'hit list.' He, however, did not name

them. Incidentally the security arrangement around Adhikari was recently upgraded by the Union Ministry of Home Affairs to Z-category. "I have information from reliable sources that some chemical from Russia could be used to slow poison me ... even they can silently spray these on me without my notice" he said. When asked as to whether he would like to specify the names that were behind the "conspiracy to kill" him he said, "If you insist I must say it is the Agencies ... that is the state agencies who will have been deployed to eliminate me." When asked to comment on Singh's statements senior Bengal Minister and Kolkata Mayor Firhad Hakim said the BJP leader had gone berserk. "He has been a political worker but now it seems that he has become a mental patient. It is better he visits some psychologist," he said. Another senior party leader Kunal Ghosh said that the BJP leader was, "Making such statements out of fear and nervousness. He knows the truth behind the scam, so he is making ridiculous statements."

# Lottery King' Santiago Martin...

From page 1

A clutch of police FIRs have been taken into cognisance by the ED to initiate the latest action against Martin and his business network for lottery "fraud" and "illegal" sale of lottery. The ED had last year attached assets worth about Rs 457 crore in a case against Martin linked to an alleged loss of over Rs 900 crore to the Sikkim government by fraudulent sale of the State lottery in Kerala. Martin's firm Future Gaming Solutions India Pvt. Ltd. Is the master distributor of Sikkim lotteries and the ED has been investigating Martin, known as 'lottery king' in Tamil

Nadu, since 2019. The Madras High Court last month allowed the ED case against Martin and his linked persons to go on as it set aside a lower court order which had accepted a closure report filed by the Chennai Police crime branch in a case related to the seizure of "unaccounted" Rs 7.2 crore from his Chennai home. His other companies include Martin Builders Pvt. Ltd, And Daison Land and Development Pvt. Ltd. The ED had said earlier that these firms "acquired" immovable properties worth Rs 19.59 crore from the loans and advances given by Martin and his family members.

# India will seek Arsh Dalla's...

From page 1

In December 2023, the Department of Justice of Canada sought additional information on the case. A reply to these queries was sent in March this year, MEA said. "In view of the recent arrest, our agencies will be following up on an extradition request. Given Arsh Dalla's criminal record in India and his involvement in similar illegal activities in Canada, it is expected that he will be extradited or deported to face justice in India," it said.

# Congress scheming to restore Article 370: PM

From page 1

"The whole Maharashtra knows that the demand to rename this city as Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar was raised by Balasaheb Thackeray," he said. The Congress party went to the court to overturn this decision, he added. The Maha Vikas Aghadi government was in power for two-and-a-half years but did not have the courage to rename the city under pressure from the Congress, he said. "This election in Maharashtra is not just an election to elect a new government. In this election, on one side there are patriots who believe in

Sambhaji Maharaj and on the other side there are people who praise Aurangzeb," Modi said. "BJP-Mahayuti ahe, tar gati ahe, Maharashtrachi pragati ahe (If there is Mahayuti there is progress in Maharashtra)," Modi said. The people of Maharashtra and Marathwada had been demanding for decades to give classical language status to Marathi, Modi said. This work related to Marathi pride was completed by the BJP, he added. "Maharashtra has attracted the maximum FDI after the formation of the Mahayuti government. The people have benefited due to the investment," he said.

# NCR gasps, GRAP III invoked

From page 1

In many parts of Delhi, roads, bridges, buildings, offices, and flyovers, were hardly visible as they were covered by a thick layer of smog. There was an average 20 minutes delay in arrivals and a significant 54-minute average delay in departures at the Indira Gandhi International Airport. Delhi's Indira Gandhi International (IGI) Airport issued an advisory on Thursday, informing passengers that "low visibility procedures" are being implemented due to

the thick smog and rising air pollution in the city. The airport clarified that all flight operations are "currently normal" but urged passengers to contact their respective airlines for "updated flight information." The advisory said, "Low Visibility Procedures are in progress at Delhi Airport. All flight operations are presently normal. Passengers are requested to contact the airline concerned for updated flight information." Visibility at Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA) dropped to 400 metres down from 800

metres between 7 am to 9 am. Palam airport reported moderate fog with visibility of 300 metres from 07:00 am to 10 am. Airlines such as IndiGo have advised passengers of potential flight delays due to slower operations in the fog. Earlier in the morning, IndiGo urged passengers to keep a tab on their flight status as some flights might be delayed. "This morning, winter fog may impact flights to/from Amritsar, Varanasi & Delhi. Do keep a tab on your flight status before heading to the airport. Also, please allow

additional travel time as road traffic may move slower than usual due to low visibility. Thank you for your patience, and we wish you a smooth journey," IndiGo posted on X. The Delhi metro has announced that it will induct 20 extra trips (in addition to 40 already in place since GRAP-II was implemented) into service from Friday morning. "Thus, 60 extra trips will be performed by Delhi Metro on weekdays till GRAP-III remains in place," the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) stated.

# AFSPA returns to Manipur

From page 1

"We strongly condemn the violence on common people by armed miscreants. The violence which had renewed once again recently has left us devastated. The abduction of six members of a family is unfortunate. We met Governor (Lakshman Prasad Acharyya) in Assam who in front of us instructed officials to take actions against miscreants who are responsible for violence," she added. Normal life was affected in Manipur's Imphal Valley on Wednesday due to a total shutdown called by 13 civil rights organisations to protest

the alleged abduction of three women and three children by militants in Jiribam district. Police said purported photographs of the six missing militants in captivity of militants doing the rounds on social media could not be confirmed and the rescue operations were on to trace them. School and college students across the Imphal valley formed multiple human chains outside their respective educational institutions to protest against the alleged abduction of three women and three children by armed tribal militants in Jiribam district. Holding black flags and wearing black badges, the

students raised slogans demanding immediate safe release of the six and called for action by the central and state governments. Organised by COCOMI Students Front, an organisation of the Meitei community, they carried placards with "Today is children's day, release the innocent children" and "Release our friends" written on them. More than 200 people have been killed and thousands rendered homeless in ethnic violence between Imphal Valley-based Meiteis and adjoining hills-based Kuki-Zo groups since May last year.

# Delhi Police detains 1,224

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Police in a 24-hour long 'Operation Kawach 6.0' detained 1,224 people, allegedly involved in activities of possessing illegal firearms, thefts, banned drugs and illegal liquor across the city. All the units of the Delhi Police launched a 24-hour operation, which started from 5 pm on November 12 till 5 pm on November 13. A total of 150 police teams were constituted.



# Will have orderly, peaceful transition of power, says White House after Trump-Biden meeting

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

The United States will see an orderly and peaceful transition of power, the White House said following a two-hour long meeting between President-elect Donald Trump and outgoing President Joe Biden on Wednesday.

"Today, President Biden met with President-elect Trump for approximately two hours in the Oval Office. White House Chief of Staff Jeff Zients and incoming Chief of Staff Susie Wiles joined the meeting. It was substantive meeting and exchange of views,"

White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre told reporters here.

"They discussed important national security and domestic policy issues facing the nation and the world. President Biden also raised important items on Congress's to-do list for the lame-duck session, including funding the government and providing the disaster supplemental funding the president requested," she said.

"Finally, the president reiterated what he said to the president-elect the day after the election and to the American people in the Rose Garden

just last week: We will have an orderly transition and a peaceful transition of power," Jean-Pierre said.

US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan told reporters that transitions are uniquely consequential moments in geopolitics. "They're a time when competitors and adversaries can see possibly opportunity, because you have this change in government here," he said.

Responding to a question, Jean-Pierre said the Biden administration wants to move forward. "We respect the will of the people. There was an election, as you know, last week, and the

American people spoke. And so, the president is going to make sure that he puts the American people first. He's going to make sure that we move forward in this process and this transition process in a way that is respectful to the American people and to lead by example," the White House press secretary said.

"I think the president has shown that in the past week of that leadership. So, that's what you're going to hear. That's what we're going to continue to do in the 68 days that we have left in this administration," she added.



Elon Musk listens as President-elect Donald Trump attends a meeting with House Republicans in Washington. AP/PTI

# Biden and Xi to meet in Peru on Nov 16, to discuss bilateral ties

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Outgoing US President Joe Biden will meet his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping in Peru on Saturday on the sidelines of an international summit, during which the two leaders expect to review the bilateral relations, the White House said Wednesday.

"We expect the president will use the opportunity to take stock of efforts to responsibly manage competition over the last four years, how the two countries have advanced areas of shared interest, and, even amidst deep differences and intense competition, have worked to do so," a senior administration official said.

The two leaders are scheduled to meet on November 16 at Lima, the capital of Peru, on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Summit. The meeting would come just over two months before Donald Trump's return to the White House.

This will be their third in-person meeting since Biden entered office. They previously met in Bali, in 2022, on the margins of the G20, and at Woodside, California in 2023, on the margins of APEC.

The two presidents have known each other for more than a decade, dating back to when

they were both vice presidents, and have spent many hours in meetings together. "We expect this will be their last meeting as presidents," said the official.

Throughout his time in office, Biden has emphasised the importance of responsibly managing one of the world's most consequential relationships.

"From the very beginning of this administration, four years ago, President Biden made it clear the United States would advance and protect our interests at home and abroad. And the framework of this administration's China policy — invest, align, and compete — has remained constant over the last four years," said the official.

Biden has prioritised investments and sources of US strength at home, strengthened alliances abroad, and taken several measures to protect US technology and national security, the official said.

"At the same time, the president has demonstrated that our two countries can and must manage our differences and prevent competition from veering into conflict or confrontation by maintaining open lines of communication and advancing cooperation in areas of shared interest," the official added.

During the Saturday meeting with Xi, Biden will want to take

stock of the progress the two countries have made in a number of areas since the Woodside Summit last year. Such cooperation can be an important stabilising force in the relationship, the official said.

"For example, over the last year, the two sides have resumed military-to-military communications at all levels. At the senior level, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Brown, Secretary of Defense Austin, and the INDOPACOM commander have met or had telephone calls with their PRC counterparts over the last year," said the official.

Noting that the US and China also restarted the Defense Policy Coordination Talks in January, 2024 and have carried out agreed-upon defense engagements since, to include the Military Maritime Consultative Agreement, MMCA, the official said these discussions are important to avoid misunderstanding and miscalculation.

"For the first time this year, I should add as well, both sides now-notify their respective ICBM launches. Biden has made clear and will continue to emphasize the importance of maintaining military-to-military communications at all times and especially during

times of heightened tension," said the official.

In addition to discussing issues related to AI and climate change, President Biden will warn that cyber pre-positioning on civilian critical infrastructure and engaging in reckless attacks against critical networks of the US are "unacceptable," the official said, adding that such actions could destabilise the current bilateral relationship and lead to an even broader de-risking away from PRC (People's Republic of China) technology.

"I expect the President will also underscore the importance of maintaining peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait and express his concerns that the PRC's increased military activities around Taiwan are destabilising and eroding the status quo," the official said.

Biden is also likely to express concern over Chinese actions in the South China Sea, including China coast guard actions against lawful maritime operations by other South China Sea claimant countries. "And of course, the President will also underscore his longstanding concern with the PRC's unfair trade policies and non-market economic practices, which have over time created an unlevel playing field for American workers," said the official.

# Russian defence official visits China's premier military showcase in sign of unity

AP ■ ZHUHAI (CHINA)

A top Russian defence official has attended China's premier military showcase in a show of unity between the countries as Russia continues its invasion of Ukraine.

Sergei Shoigu, secretary of the Russian Federation Security Council, was in the southern city of Zhuhai to view Chinese and Russian aircraft and other military hardware on Thursday. They included Chinese J22 and J35A stealth fighters that China says are rivals to the latest US jets in the same class.

Shoigu, a former defence minister, appeared to be on a mission to reaffirm ties between the countries as Russia's invasion of Ukraine has largely stalemated and Moscow has turned to North Korean soldiers to boost its troop numbers. China is not known to have directly provided military support to Russia, but has sold it dual-use technologies that could boost its ability to attack Ukrainian targets. China is also a major customer of Russian oil and gas amid international sanctions blocking Russia's access to global financial markets,

# Trump's picks for top foreign policy posts reassure allies, worry China

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

President-elect Donald Trump is famously unconventional, but he made conventional picks for his top foreign policy positions. That could be reassuring to American allies, while China and Iran have reasons to be wary. Trump on Wednesday announced his choice of Sen. Marco Rubio for secretary of state. Two days earlier, he picked Rep. Mike Waltz for national security adviser.

Both men share Trump's hardline stance on China and Iran. They have shown themselves willing to adapt their foreign-policy positions to echo aspects of Trump's more isolationist "America First" approach — a requirement for anyone serving under a president who demands absolute loyalty.

But both are fairly mainstream conservatives with foreign policy experience who have previously differed with Trump on Russia, NATO and other issues. They've also been open to working with Democrats — a point underscored when Sen. Mark Warner, the Democratic chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, said Rubio would be a "strong voice for American interests" abroad.

Rubio and Waltz stand in contrast to some other national security selections. Trump named Pete Hegseth, a Fox

News host untested on the global stage, as defence secretary. He picked a congresswoman with little foreign policy experience, Rep. Elise Stefanik, as ambassador to the United Nations. His choice for ambassador to Israel, former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee, rejects the two-state solution to the conflict with Palestinians. And US allies may be relieved that Rubio was selected over Richard Grenell for secretary of state. Grenell is an ardent and combative Trump advocate and former diplomat and intelligence official, with a reputation for favouring autocratic strongmen abroad.

Rubio, a 14-year veteran of the Senate, is a senior member of the Senate Intelligence Committee and Foreign Relations Committee. His roots as the son of Cuban immigrants who worked as a bartender and a hotel maid after coming to the United States helped shape his tough positions on the leftist governments of Cuba and Venezuela. While Trump has alarmed US allies in Europe with his criticism of the NATO military alliance and praise of Russian President Vladimir Putin, whose war on Ukraine has galvanized European fears of Russian expansionism, Rubio was instrumental in the Senate in securing the US position in NATO. He and Democratic

Sen. Tim Kaine spearheaded legislation to bar any president from pulling the US out of NATO without Senate approval or an act of Congress.

But Rubio, like Waltz in the House, has altered his public statements and legislative votes to more closely align with Trump's criticism of the Biden administration's backing of Ukraine as it battles invading Russian forces.

After early votes and supportive statements for Ukraine after Russia's 2022 attack, Rubio and Waltz more recently voted against additional military aid to Ukraine. Rubio, like Trump, has increasingly stressed the need to end the war.

That's in contrast to Ukraine supporters in both parties who say the US must support Ukraine's fight so it gets the best possible terms in any eventual cease-fire.

"I don't think he (Trump) puts people in positions that are going to disagree with him. He wants people to be loyal, and I don't think he's looking for people that are going to challenge his beliefs," said Kelly Grieco, a senior fellow at the Stimson Center, a Washington-based research institute. "So I think this is actually quite revealing, probably, of what the direction of US policy will be, that it will be really hawkish on China in particular. And I think also on Iran."

# Bluesky adds 1 million users since US polls

AP ■ LOS ANGELES

Social media site Bluesky has gained 1 million new users in the week since the US election, as some X users look for an alternative platform to post their thoughts and engage with others online.

Bluesky said on Wednesday that its total users surged to 15 million, up from roughly 13 million at the end of October. Championed by former Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey, Bluesky was an invitation-only space until it opened to the public in February. That invite-only period gave the site time to build out moderation tools and other features.

The platform resembles Elon Musk's X, with a "discover" feed as well as a chronological feed for accounts that users follow. Users can send direct messages and pin posts, as well as find "starter packs" that provide a curated list of people and custom feeds to follow.

The post-election uptick in users isn't the first time that Bluesky has benefitted from people leaving X. Bluesky gained 2.6 million users in the week after X was banned in Brazil in August — 85 per cent of them from Brazil, the company said. About 500,000 new users signed up in the span of one day last month, when X signaled that blocked accounts would be able to see a user's public posts.

Despite Bluesky's growth, X asked last week that it had "dominated the global conversation on the US election" and had set new records. The platform saw a 15.5 per cent jump in new-user signups on Election Day, X said, with a record 942 million posts worldwide. Representatives for Bluesky and for X did not respond to requests for comment.

Bluesky has referenced its competitive relationship to X through tongue-in-cheek comments, including an Election Day post on X referencing Musk watching voting results come in with President-elect Donald Trump.



Firefighters try to extinguish a fire as smoke rises from a destroyed building that was hit in an Israeli airstrike in Dahiyeh in the southern suburb of Beirut, Lebanon, on Thursday. AP/PTI

# Lanka votes for new parliament

PTI ■ COLOMBO

Sri Lanka on Thursday voted to select a new parliament, a first major test for the ruling National People's Power (NPP) party led by President Anura Kumara Dissanayake.

The snap parliamentary polls are the first after the 2022 economic crisis.

Dissanayake said he would be happy to finish short of an absolute majority of 150 seats in the 225-member Parliament.

Polls monitoring groups said the voter turnout was lower than the high 79 per cent recorded at the presidential election held in September.

The election commission said it anticipated an overall turnout of 65 per cent in the polling concluded in a largely peaceful manner across the country.

While the counting of postal ballots began soon after voting concluded at 4 pm local time, counting of votes cast on Thursday was set to begin immediately after all ballot boxes were received at the counting centres, and the first

results were expected after midnight, the election officials said. Ruling NPP is expected to win the contest by gaining a simple majority of 113 seats in the 225 member assembly, according to poll observers.

Having failed to secure 50 per cent of the vote at the September 21 presidential election, Dissanayake is pleading for a stronger parliament with well over a simple majority of 113 seats to enable him to implement his anti-corruption accountability reformist programme.

After casting his vote in Colombo, Dissanayake told reporters he was expecting a mandate for a very strong parliament.

Stating that he would be happy to finish short of an absolute majority of 150 seats, Dissanayake said, "A strong parliament is sufficient for us. Because the bills that we bring are laws that are favorable for the common people."

"If we are introducing laws that benefit people, we can secure a vote that exceeds two thirds,"

Asked about the Tamil minority dominated north, Dissanayake said the Tamils have high hopes from his government.

"A key point in the change is when there will be a government that is accepted by people in the north and south, in the east and west."

Voting that started at 7 am local time took place at over 13,314 polling stations across the country.

Over 17 million voters from the island's 21 million population were eligible to vote for the new 225-member Parliament for a five-year term.

Nearly 90,000 security personnel from the police and the military were deployed to provide security at the election venues.

Police spokesperson said that except for the arrest of three individuals involved in illegal election campaigning activities, no acts of violence were reported and the election remained peaceful overall, local media reported.

This was the first parliamentary election since Sri Lanka plunged

into an economic crisis when the island nation declared sovereign default in mid-April of 2022, its first since gaining independence from Britain in 1948. Almost civil-war-like conditions and months of public protests led to the fleeing of the then president Gotabaya Rajapaksa.

Since assuming office, Dissanayake has stayed on course with his predecessor Ranil Wickremesinghe's International Monetary Fund (IMF) bailout programme.

The country is still in the process of recovering from its worst economic crisis in history as the Dissanayake government faces the challenge of meeting the IMF targets on revenue in the third review of the USD 2.9 billion programme.

The western province district of Gampaha elects the highest number of Members of Parliament — 19 with the capital district of Colombo from the same province electing 18 MPs while the eastern province district of Trincomalee elects the lowest number — just 4 MPs.

# B'desh top official seeks removal of words 'secularism' & 'socialism' from Constitution

PTI ■ DHAKA

Bangladesh's top legal official has proposed to remove the words "secularism" and "socialism" from the Constitution apart from a provision prescribing capital punishment for regime change through extra-constitutional means.

In his statement in the High Court during a hearing on a writ petition filed by a group of citizens, Attorney General Mohammad Asazzaman on Wednesday sought to remove "secularism" and "socialism" as two of the four principles of the Constitution alongside the designation of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman as the Father of the Nation.

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was the undisputed leader of Bangladesh but the Awami League politicised him in the party's interest, he said, referring to the founding leader of Bangladesh who is popularly

known as Bangabandhu.

The writ petition challenged the validity of the Constitution's 15th amendment made by the now-outdated Awami League regime of deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina in 2011 while a two-judge High Court bench issued a rule asking the interim government to come up with its stance on the matter.

"As a whole, we do not want that (HC) rule to be scrapped," the attorney general said, clarifying the government's stance on the writ petition while talking to newsmen at his office.

Several people, mostly lawyers, emerged as interveners in the writ petition, some supporting the plea and some opposing it.

The 15th amendment was passed in parliament with the strength of a brute majority of the Awami League, restoring, inserting and scrapping several provisions in the Constitution.

The amendments included the

restoration of secularism as a state principle, the scrapping of the caretaker government system for election oversight, assuming state power through extra-constitutional means and the designating of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman as the Father of the Nation. In his concluding arguments, Asaduzzaman told the court that the interim government wanted to declare the 15th amendment to the Constitution largely unconstitutional, retaining only select provisions.

He particularly demanded the restoration of the caretaker government system and the provision of the referendum in the Constitution.

The Awami League regime was toppled on August 5 in the face of a mass upsurge originating from a quota reform campaign by the Anti-Discrimination Students Movement. Three days later Nobel laureate Muhammad assumed office as the chief adviser

of the interim government.

The attorney general criticised Article 7A inserted under the 15th amendment that criminalises any attempt to repeal, suspend, or subvert the Constitution through force or unconstitutional means, calling such acts as sedition, which are punishable with the death penalty.

He argued that this restriction limits democratic change and disregards the recent mass uprising that deposed the Awami League government and demanded the restoration of the caretaker government system.

"The (provisions of the 15th) amendment betrays the sacrifices of martyrs like Abu Sayed and Mugdho," said Asaduzzaman, referring to two students who were shot dead during the July-August mass protests.

Asaduzzaman was appointed as the attorney general days after the ouster of the past regime and the resignation of his predecessor.

# Man kills self with blasts outside Brazil's SC

AP ■ SAO PAULO

A man who failed in an attempt to break into Brazil's Supreme Court killed himself in explosions outside the building Wednesday that forced justices and staff to evacuate, authorities said.

The two strong blasts were heard about 7.30 pm after the day's session finished and all the justices and staff left the building safely, Brazil's Supreme Court said in a statement.

Local firefighters confirmed one man died at the scene in the capital Brasilia, but did not identify him.

Celina Leao, the lieutenant governor of Brazil's federal district, said the suspect had earlier detonated explosives in a car in a Congress parking lot, which did not cause injuries.

"His first action was to explode

the car. Then he approached the Supreme Court and tried to get in the building. He failed and then there were the other explosions," Leao said in a news conference.

Local media reported that the car that exploded belonged to a member of Brazil's Liberal Party, the same of former President Jair Bolsonaro. Leao said only investigations will determine whether the owner of the car is the same man who died in the blasts.

Leao recommended that Congress be closed Thursday to avoid new risks. Brazil's Senate headed her call and the lower house will be shut until noon, speaker Arthur Lira said.

"It could have been a lone wolf, like others we've seen around the world," Leao said in a news conference. "We are considering it as a suicide because

there was only one victim. But investigations will show if that was indeed the case."

Leao added only forensics will be able to identify the body, which remained outside the Supreme Court for three hours after the blasts.

The blasts outside the Supreme Court took place about 20 seconds apart in Brasilia's Three Powers Plaza, where Brazil's main government buildings, including the Supreme Court, Congress and presidential palace, are located.

President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva was not in the neighbouring presidential palace at the time, spokesman Jose Christipiano said.

Police blocked all access to the area and the presidential security bureau was conducting a sweep of the grounds around the presidential palace.



# Reliance, Disney complete media assets merger to form ₹ 70,352 Crore

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Reliance Industries has completed the merger of its media assets with the India business of global media house Walt Disney to form a new joint venture worth Rs 70,352 crore. The JV, in which Reliance Industries has invested Rs 11,500 crore (USD 1.4 billion) for its growth, will be headed by Nita Ambani as its Chairperson, according to a joint statement. "The transaction values the JV at Rs 70,352 crore (USD 8.5 billion) on a post-money basis, excluding synergies," it said. At the closing of the transactions, the said JV is



controlled by RIL. Reliance Industries holds a 16.34 per cent stake in the JV, while its step-down unit Viacom18 holds 46.82 per cent

and Disney the rest 36.84 per cent. "Nita M. Ambani will be the Chairperson of the JV, with Mr. Uday Shankar as Vice

Chairperson providing strategic guidance to the JV," it said. Viacom 18 Media and The Walt Disney Company has already received necessary

approvals required from authorities such as CCI, NCLT for the merger of the media and JioCinema businesses of media and JioCinema businesses of Viacom18 into Star India. The JV will be one of the largest media & entertainment companies in India with pro forma combined revenue of approximately Rs 26,000 crore (USD 3.1 billion) for the fiscal year ended in March 2024. The JV operates over 100 TV channels and produces more than 30,000 hours of TV entertainment content annually. The JioCinema and Hotstar digital platforms have an aggregate subscription base of over 50 million. The JV

holds a portfolio of sports rights across cricket, football and other sports. Commenting on the development RIL Chairman & Managing Director Mukesh Ambani said: "With the formation of this JV, the Indian media and entertainment industry is entering a transformational era. Our deep creative expertise and relationship with Disney, along with our unmatched understanding of the Indian consumer will ensure unparalleled content choices at affordable prices for Indian viewers. I am very excited about the JV's future and wish it all the success," he said.

## Rupee falls four paise, close at all-time low of 84.43 against US Dollar



PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee traded in a tight range and fell four paise to close at an all-time low of 84.43 (provisional) against the US dollar on Thursday, weighed down by unabated foreign fund outflows and strong dollar demand from investors. Forex traders said the downward pressure on the USD/INR pair is largely driven by persistent inflation and significant foreign outflows. At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 84.40 against the US dollar. During the session, the local currency touched a high of 84.39 and a low of 84.43. It finally settled at its fresh all-time low of 84.43 (provisional) against the greenback, 4 paise lower than its previous close. On Wednesday, the rupee moved in a narrow range and settled flat at 84.39 against the US dollar. "The US dollar index has hit a fresh cycle high of 106.76 as it approaches the stiff resistance at 107.50," said Praveen Singh - Associate VP, Fundamental Currencies and Commodities, Sharekhan by BNP Paribas. "There was no respite on the US inflation front as the data released yesterday showed that

the US core consumer price index increased 0.3 per cent for a third month. It was up 3.3 per cent on a year-on-year basis," Singh said. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading higher by 0.30 per cent at 106.80. Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, rose 0.03 per cent to USD 72.30 per barrel in futures trade. Forex traders said the USD-INR pair may rise to Rs 85 level in near-term, though the intervention by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) may slow the pace. On the global front, China's recent 1.4 trillion yuan stimulus, coupled with expectations of more fiscal support, has strengthened Chinese markets and added downward pressure on Indian assets, traders said. Moreover, India's inflation surge is putting additional pressure on the currency. Wholesale price inflation rose to a 4-month high of 2.36 per cent in October as prices of food items, especially vegetables, and manufactured goods turned dearer, according to government data released on Thursday. Retail inflation breached the RBI's upper tolerance level, soaring to a 14-month high of 6.21 per cent in October mainly on account of rising food prices. In the domestic equity market, the 30-share BSE Sensex fell 110.64 points, or 0.14 per cent, to close at 77,580.31 points, while Nifty fell 26.35 points, or 0.11 per cent, to settle at 23,532.70 points.

## Gold slide continues, tanks Rs 700 to Rs 77,050 per 10 grams



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Gold prices saw yet another steep fall on Thursday, with the precious metal declining Rs 700 to Rs 77,050 per 10 grams in the national capital amid subdued demand trend in the global markets, according to the All India Sarafa Association. The precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity closed at Rs 77,750 per 10 grams in the previous session, a day after falling marginally by Rs 50 on Wednesday. Silver also plummeted Rs 2,310 to Rs 90,190 per kg against the previous close of Rs 92,500 per kg. Extending the losses for the fourth straight session, the price of gold of 99.5 per cent purity fell Rs 700 to Rs 76,650 per 10 grams. It had ended at Rs 77,350 per 10 grams on Wednesday. In futures trade on the MCX, gold contracts for December delivery plunged Rs 804 or 1.08 per cent to trade at Rs 73,678 per 10 grams. During the day, the precious metal declined Rs 1,182 or 1.59 per cent to Rs 73,300 per 10 grams. "Gold's weakness persisted with price falling near Rs 73,500 in MCX as the dollar climbed. The US CPI data, which came in higher at 2.6 per cent compared to the expected 2.4 per cent, fuelled the dollar's strength. "While the Fed has been continuing with rate cuts as inflation approached its 2 per cent target, the CPI data raised concerns that further cuts may be paused," Jateen Trivedi, VP Research Analyst - Commodity and Currency, LKP Securities, said. This development added pressure on gold prices, which reacted negatively to the stronger dollar and the potential shift in Fed policy, Trivedi added. Silver contracts for December delivery plummeted Rs 2,067, or 2.32 per cent, to Rs 87,130 per kg. Globally, Comex gold futures fell USD 29.10 per ounce, or 1.13 per cent, to hit a two-month low of USD 2,557.40 per ounce. "Gold extended its fall during Thursday's European session, hitting its lowest level since September 19. "The US Dollar's (USD) post-election rally persisted, reaching a fresh year-high which continues to put pressure on gold prices," Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst of Commodities at HDFC Securities, said. The US Dollar buying remains unabated by traders in the wake of optimism over the expected expansionary policies by US President-elect Donald Trump. This, in turn, is seen as a key factor dragging the commodity lower for the fifth successive day, traders said.

## Indian economy sailing smoothly amid global headwinds: Reserve Bank Governor

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Reserve Bank Governor Shaktikanta Das on Thursday said the Indian economy has been sailing "smoothly" amid the global headwinds. Speaking at an event organised by CNBC-TV18 here, Das declined to comment on a suggestion by Union Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal for a rate cut, maintaining that the rate-setting panel will take an appropriate call on it at its next meeting in December. In comments made days after headline inflation shot up

beyond the 6 per cent tolerance band of RBI for October, Das said inflation is "expected to moderate despite periodic humps". The Governor said the domestic economy has sailed very well through the prolonged period of turbulence in the recent past exhibiting resilience, but added that there are a slew of headwinds prevailing in the global economy right now like rising bond yields, commodity prices showing a divergence and a contradiction of financial markets showing resilience despite rising geopolitical risks. "The Indian

economy is sailing smoothly, powered by buffers like strong macroeconomic fundamentals, a stable financial system and a resilient external sector," said the bureaucrat-turned-central banker, who will be completing six years at the helm at RBI soon. With the rupee hitting new lows, Das said India's external sector has exhibited "strength and stability" in the recent period as seen in the current account deficit remaining at a manageable level, merchandise exports starting to grow, and service exports growth being strong.

He reminded that the country has the fourth largest forex reserves in the world. The forex reserves, which stood at USD 682 billion as of October 31, are sufficient to cover the entire external debt and a year's import payments, he added. The Governor also made it clear that the RBI does not target a rate for the rupee, and the fore interventions are for ensuring orderly movement and curbing volatility in the currency. "If the Indian rupee has remained relatively stable despite severe external shocks, including the largest and the

steepest tightening by the US Fed in 2022 and 2023, it speaks volumes about the sea change in our macro fundamentals from the days of the taper tantrum," Das said. On the issue of regulation, he said the RBI will be issuing a draft of the Expected Credit Loss (ECL) framework and the final guidelines will come out post public comments. Without giving a timeline for the introduction of the draft guidelines, Das said the RBI had issued a discussion paper on the subject in 2023 and also constituted a working group to study the comments received on it.

## Global oil market to calm on more oil production: Petroleum Minister

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India, the world's third largest oil consuming and importing nation, is hoping that more oil production coming from the western countries like the US and Canada will calm the markets and bring stability in prices, Petroleum Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said Thursday. Speaking at CII's 12th PSE Summit here, Puri said countries in the western hemisphere are adding more production which may influence oil producers cartel OPEC+ to also raise output to earn more while the era of fossil fuel lasts. Volatile oil prices upset economies reliant on imports for meeting their needs as they not just have to spend extra on buying the fuel but also import inflation that impacts purchasing powers of their people. "Today more

production is coming on the global market from the Western Hemisphere. Brazil, Guyana, Canada and the US are adding more production... With more and more oil coming, one expects as a result that the market situation will calm," he said. This would also at some stage lead to producers who have cut back oil production, to produce more to earn more revenue, he said. The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and allies led by Russia, together known as OPEC+, have since late 2022 made a series of deep output cuts to jack up prices and match demand. OPEC+ members are currently cutting output by a total of 5.86 million barrels per day (bpd), or about 5.7 per cent of global demand. Later talking to reporters, he said the OPEC+ is actively

reviewing their decision on production cuts and may decide on the issue in a month or two. Irrespective of that consuming countries are not likely to face any shortfall as more and more oil is coming on to the market, he said, adding that Brazil is adding 300,000-400,000 bpd of production to their output of 3.3 million bpd. Besides, the US may add another 1 million bpd while Canada and Guyana would also increase output. "There is more oil available. What we need is stability and predictability so that in the period ahead countries can base their decisions on lines which are predictable. Fluctuations, prices going up and down, that creates uncertainty in the market that is not good for healthy economic decision making," he said. "I think we are on a healthy wicket now."

## SECI issues showcause notices to Reliance Power, its arm over fake bank guarantees

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Renewable energy agency SECI has sent a showcause notice to Reliance Power, asking why a criminal action should not be taken against the company and its arm for submitting fake bank guarantees. Last week, Solar Energy Corporation of India barred Reliance Power and its arm Reliance NU BESS from participating in its tenders for submission of fake documents in its bids. Meanwhile, in a filing to exchanges, Reliance Power said that it has been "a victim of fraud, forgery and cheating conspiracy". "A criminal complaint in this regard has already been lodged with Economic Offence Wing of Delhi



Police against the third party on October 16, 2024, basis on which First Information Report (FIR) has been registered on November 11, 2024. The matter is under investigation and due process of law will follow," Reliance Power said. In a notice dated November 13, SECI said on account of submission of fake endorsement of a foreign Bank Guarantee (BG) as part of its bid submission, it was discovered that the said BG submitted by Reliance

NU BESS Ltd. (known as Maharashtra Energy Generation Ltd. At the time of bid submission), was also fake. "The repeated submission of a fake Bank Guarantee (BG) along with its counterfeit endorsement has been deemed a deliberate act by the Bidder, intended to vitiate the tendering process and to secure the project capacity through fraudulent means," SECI said in the notice. "SECI has issued showcause notices to the entities, namely Reliance Power Ltd. And Reliance NU BESS Ltd, seeking explanation as to why SECI should not initiate criminal proceedings against them, in view of the fraudulent and forged actions," the notice stated. According to the notice,

Reliance NU BESS had submitted a BG purportedly issued by the FirstRand Bank, through its branch supposed to be located in Manila City, Manila, the Philippines. Upon detailed investigation, it was confirmed by the Indian branch of the above Bank, that there does not exist any such branch of the bank in the Philippines, leading SECI to conclude that the BG submitted was a fake document. On November 6, SECI had announced debarring Reliance Power and Reliance NU BESS from participating in SECI tenders for three years for submitting "fake documents". Reliance Power shares dropped 1.53 per cent to settle at Rs 36 on BSE on Thursday.

## India-US trade relations continue to grow irrespective of change in regime



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's trade relations with the US will continue to grow irrespective of the change in regime in America, a top government official said on Thursday. According to the commerce ministry data, India's exports to the US jumped to USD 39.2 billion in October against USD 21.46 billion in October 2015. During 2001-23, at a Compounded Annual Growth Rate (CAGR), India's exports to America rose by 10.48 per cent. In this period, the US imports from the world have grown by 4.76 per cent. "Our (India-US) integration is growing and we are getting bi-partisan support. Whatever is the regime (in the US), we are finding that our economic integration

with the US is increasing over the period of time and that is a good thing for us and I trust that it will continue (to grow)," Commerce Secretary Sunil Barthwal told reporters here. He added that the two economies have strongly integrated with each other through various agreements, including the IPEF (Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity) and other bilateral mechanisms. "We are able to have a sustained growth in terms of exports and imports," he said. The data is showing not only the resiliency but also better integration with the US value chains and "this is very positive factor which is across all presidencies," he added. When asked whether India would ask for the proposed mini-trade deal which was discussed during the first Trump administration, the secretary said that presently the President-elect is building his team and once that team is in place, there will be policy pronouncements from them and based on that "we will be also taking a call". The US is the largest trading partner of India in 2023-24.

India's exports stood at USD 77.51 billion, while imports aggregated at USD 42.2 billion in the last fiscal. During April-October this fiscal, the country's exports to America rose by 6.31 per cent to USD 47.24 billion, while imports grew by 2.46 per cent to USD 26 billion. Additional Secretary in the Department of Commerce Rajesh Agrawal said that in the services area also, India's exports and imports have registered healthy growth with the US. Trade experts have stated that Indian exporters may face high customs duties for goods like automobiles, textiles and pharmaceuticals if the new US administration decides to pursue the 'America First' agenda, opined trade experts. Experts have said that Trump could also tighten H-1B visa rules, impacting costs and growth for Indian IT firms. Over 80 per cent of India's IT export earnings come from the US. The US is India's largest trading partner, accounting for over USD 190 billion of annual trade. Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) Founder Ajay Srivastava has said that Trump may extend tariffs beyond China to include

India and other countries. Trump had earlier called India a "large tariff abuser" and in October 2020 labelled India as the 'tariff king'. These remarks suggest that Trump's second term could bring tougher trade negotiations, he has said. International trade expert Biswajit Dhar said that Trump would increase tariffs in various sectors as he has to follow his call for MAGA (Make America Great Again). Between FY 2020 and FY 2024, India's merchandise exports to America rose by 46 per cent from USD 53.1 billion to USD 77.5 billion. Imports from the US also grew to USD 42.2 billion last fiscal from USD 35.8 billion in 2019-20. On the other hand, trade in services expanded 30.3 per cent from USD 54.1 billion in 2018 to an estimated USD 70.5 billion in 2024. India is also a key destination for American businesses such as professional, scientific, and technical services, manufacturing, and IT. Washington is the third largest investor. India received USD 66.7 billion of FDI inflow between April 2000 and June 2024.

## Goa Pavilion inaugurated at 43rd India International Trade Fair

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PANAJI

Goa Pavillion at the much-awaited 43rd India International Trade Fair, an initiative of India Trade Promotion Organisation (A Government of India Enterprise), based on the theme "Vikasat Bharat @2047" a mega event was inaugurated by Shri Dipak Bandekar, Director of Information and Publicity today. Assistant Information Officer, DIP, Shri Shanto Naik; Information Assistant, Shri Siddhesh Samant; Administrative Officer, IPB, Shri Sadashiv Pandit; Manager, Goa Tourism Development Corporation, Shri Sahadev Gaonkar; Deputy Manager, Goa Waste Management Corporation, Shri Rohan Ghadi; Engineer, Shri Krupesh Dessai; Project Scientist, Goa State Council for Science and Technology, Shri Deepak Parab; Mentor, Department of Science and Technology, Shri Shivraj Naik; Project Assistant, Goa State Biodiversity Board, Shri Rupesh Velip and Shri Arvind Naik were amongst those present on the occasion. A brochure titled Atmanirbhar Bharat Swayampurna Goa was also released at the hands of Shri Bandekar on the occasion. IITF is the largest integrated trade fair which has a wide

spectrum of Business, Social, Cultural and Educational Dimensions that are weaved together where visitors and exhibitors, media persons, marketing professional, social activists, NGOs etc. visit to source their needs and objectives. Government Organisations use this platform to spread awareness about their programmes and policies among the public. The fair is set up on a space admeasuring 203 Sq. mts. earmarked by ITPO in Hall No. 3 (New Hall) designed in line with this year theme with emphasis on projecting rich Goan Cuisine with courteous hospitality of Goan people and Goa's developmental achievements through Audio Visuals, Small Hoardings and Photographic display. A lively celebration of Goa's rich cultural legacy will take place during IITF 2024 in the Goa Pavilion. The pavilion, which aims to provide visitors with an immersive experience, showcases Goa's cultural heritage and local handicrafts. Alongside a variety of indigenous handicrafts, the Goa Pavilion is pleased to present the rich legacy of Kaavi Art for the first time at the IITF 2024. Inspired by architectural elements and temple walls, this distinctive art form is renowned for its elaborate red and white murals, which celebrate Goa's coastal culture.

## DAEWOO India appoints CM Singh as Jt MD

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

DAEWOO India has appointed veteran industry leader C. M. Singh as Joint Managing Director, marking a significant step in the company's entry into the consumer durables market. With over three decades of experience in electronics, Singh brings strategic insight and proven leadership that is expected to accelerate DAEWOO India's growth. Singh's career spans notable roles, including COO at Videocon. His expertise in market expansion and operations is anticipated to support DAEWOO's expansion, particularly into India's Tier II and Tier III markets. "We are thrilled to welcome C.M. Singh, whose market expertise will be key as we enter consumer durables," said H S Bhatia, MD of DAEWOO India. Singh expressed enthusiasm about joining the team, highlighting DAEWOO's innovative technologies and potential in India. Through this the company wants reinforce its commitment to bringing advanced, high-quality products to Indian households, renewing its presence in the competitive consumer durables sector.





## THE MYSTICAL WORLD OF THEYYAM

In a world that often favours the new, 'Theyyam: Indian Folk Ritual Theatre - An Insider's Vision' by KK Gopalakrishnan remains a symbol of the resilience of India's folk traditions. The author takes us on a journey through history, explaining how this centuries-old ritual has survived and flourished despite the pressures of modernisation and outside influences, says **SAKSHI PRIYA**

In the dance of Theyyam, the gods do not watch; they come to life through the performer, bridging the human and the divine. This powerful insight into *Theyyam* offers a glimpse into the essence of the ritual, where the lines between the spiritual and the earthly are beautifully blurred. In *Theyyam: Indian Folk Ritual Theatre - An Insider's Vision*, K.K. Gopalakrishnan guides us through this captivating tradition, revealing its deep-rooted significance and the vibrant performances that bring the divine to the stage.

*Theyyam: Indian Folk Ritual Theatre* is an extraordinary exploration of one of India's most vibrant and spiritually rich traditions. This insightful book takes readers deep into the heart of *Theyyam*, a ritualistic folk theatre from the northern regions of Kerala. *Theyyam* is not just a performance; it is a sacred and living art form that combines the sacred with the theatrical, where performers embody gods, spirits, and heroes, giving voice to centuries of social, religious and cultural narratives. Through his book, the author offers both a scholarly analysis and an intimate visual journey into the world of *Theyyam*.

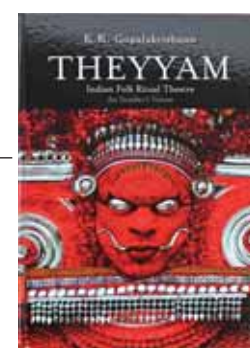
*Theyyam*, which translates to "god's form," is a fusion of dance, drama, music and ritual and has been a central part of Kerala's spiritual and cultural life for centuries. The book captures the essence of this tradition, from the rituals performed by humble labourers to the spiritual elevation of these individuals who take on divine personas. *Gopalakrishnan's* perspective as an insider, with his extensive experience and deep connection to the tradition, provides a rare and valuable lens into *Theyyam's* intricate and multifaceted nature. As *Gopalakrishnan* eloquently puts it, "At a time when the entire world, ignoring contextual relevance, is lavishly vocal on political correctness, here is an ancient art form called *Theyyam* that places the subaltern community in God's shoes." It is this transformative aspect of the art form that makes *Theyyam* such a powerful symbol of social rebellion and spiritual empowerment.

One of the most captivating aspects of *Theyyam* is the way in which the book intertwines detailed descriptions of the rituals with stunning, full-colour photographs. These images allow the reader to experience the vivid colours, intricate costumes, elaborate headgear, and the striking body paint that define

*Theyyam* performances. The photographs help to bring to life the dazzling transformation of the performers into supernatural beings, who, in the course of the ritual, take on divine attributes.

The central theme of *Theyyam*, as presented by *Gopalakrishnan*, is the juxtaposition of the sacred and the social. At its core, *Theyyam* serves as a spiritual act, honouring various deities, ancestors and natural forces such as animals and spirits. The performance is an offering of devotion and the powerful figures created in the ritual allow the worshippers to interact directly with the gods. Interestingly, despite the predominantly male performance tradition, the majority of the deities honoured in *Theyyam* are female figures, revered as Mother Goddesses. This gender aspect adds another layer of richness to the tradition, reflecting the reverence for feminine power in Kerala's religious and social landscape.

The ritual of *Theyyam* has a unique social dimension, which *Gopalakrishnan* is careful to highlight. In a striking reversal of traditional power dynamics, the humble performers, often daily-wage labourers, become gods and goddesses during the ritual. This transformation challenges social hierarchies and elevates the performers above the very people they serve. *Gopalakrishnan* reflects on this dynamic, noting that, for a moment, even the wealthy landowners and patrons bow before the performers as they embody divine figures. This inversion of power allows the performers to address social injustice and in some cases, the *Theyyam* may directly criticise those who financially support the ritual. *Gopalakrishnan*



**ABOUT THE BOOK**  
Book: THEYYAM - Indian Folk Ritual Theatre  
by KK GOPALAKRISHNAN  
Publication: Niyogi Books  
Price: ₹6000.00  
Pages: 352

captures this paradox and the way it highlights the intersection of religion, art and social critique. The author's intimate knowledge of the *Theyyam* tradition is evident not just in his writing, but in the depth of the research and the perspective he brings to his subject. He outlines the origins of *Theyyam* and its evolution, acknowledging the challenges it has faced over the years, from the influence of colonial rule to the more modern pressures of contemporary life. He traces how *Theyyam*, as a practice deeply linked to local communities and their traditions, has been able to persist despite these external challenges. This persistence is rooted in the unbroken spiritual and cultural connections that the art form maintains with the past, even as it adapts to present circumstances.

The Author also delves into the community structure surrounding *Theyyam*. While the performance itself is central, the social context of the tradition is crucial to understanding its full significance. The book provides detailed insights into the various communities that perform *Theyyam*, including the Vannans and Malayans, who are the main performers. These communities play a critical role in preserving the tradition, and *Gopalakrishnan* offers a nuanced examination of their place in Kerala's social fabric. He explores the significance of lineage, clan and caste in *Theyyam* performances, highlighting how these factors influence the performance and how social boundaries are both reinforced and challenged within the context of the ritual.

The book is not just a documentary of a particular art form but also a reflection on the role of art in shaping and critiquing society. Through this lens, *Gopalakrishnan* invites the reader to consider the deeper meanings behind *Theyyam's* rituals, from its role in spiritual devotion to its capacity to question societal norms and power structures. It is a book that encourages reflection on the role of performance in both personal and collective transformation.

For anyone interested in Indian folk traditions, spirituality, or cultural history, *Theyyam: Indian Folk Ritual Theatre - An Insider's Vision* is an enlightening read. It provides a window into the world of *Theyyam* with all its colours, sounds and meaning. This book is not just a study, it's an invitation to witness a tradition that, despite the odds, continues to be a source of strength, expression and divine connection for the people of Kerala. *Gopalakrishnan's* work ensures that readers come away with a deep appreciation for *Theyyam*, its performers and the community spirit that keeps it alive.

*Theyyam: Indian Folk Ritual Theatre - An Insider's Vision* is a compelling and richly detailed exploration of one of India's most distinctive and awe-inspiring artistic traditions. Through *Gopalakrishnan's* work, readers are not only given access to the visual spectacle of *Theyyam* but are also invited to engage with its spiritual, social and historical dimensions. This book serves as both a scholarly resource and a visual celebration of *Theyyam*, shedding light on an art form that continues to thrive in the heart of Kerala's cultural identity.

November  
Reads!

By Aleph Book Company



**Middle Class India: Driving Change in the 21st Century**

By MANISHA PANDE (PRICE: ₹899, PAGES: 360)

Middle Class India delves into the rise, evolution, and complexities of India's middle class, projected to comprise 60% of the population by 2047. Author Manisha Pande offers a detailed study of how this group has developed since colonial times, significantly shaped by the 1991 economic liberalisation. The book explores the influence of the middle class on education, politics, family life, and consumer habits, while highlighting its ambitions and growing consumerism. Pande also discusses recent challenges, including communal tensions and the financial strains post-pandemic, examining how these factors might be impacting the middle class's trajectory. Insightful and meticulously researched, the book provides a nuanced analysis of the middle class's role in driving economic growth, social cohesion, and the future of India.

**How the Cobra Got His Spectacles**

By STEPHEN ALTER (Price: ₹250, Pages: 32)

In *How the Cobra Got His Spectacles*, acclaimed wildlife writer Stephen Alter presents a delightful tale of a young naga (cobra) and an elderly hermit who live peacefully by a river. When a mischievous monkey steals the hermit's spectacles, the naga embarks on a quest to recover them. Guided only by his forked tongue, the naga encounters various woodland creatures, learning about the different ways animals experience the world. Elegantly illustrated, this book is a perfect read for young wildlife enthusiasts, offering a captivating exploration of friendship, nature, and the wonders of the animal kingdom.

## From Curious Girl to Royal Heroine

Royal-ish, by Amrita Gandhi, is a whimsical kingdom quest with a dash of royal mischief, writes **ABHI SINGHAL**

Amrita Gandhi's charming fusion of contemporary royal charm and youthful adventure in *Royal-ish: Lily's Adventures in Bagradoo* offers a novel take on the children's adventure genre.

Giving its readers a reason to not keep the novel down, *Royal-ish - Lily's Adventures in Bagradoo* is a fun story about Lily Ray. Lily Ray is a seventh-grade vlogger, a lover of gumboots, and a girl who vlogs nature and is enthusiastic about the same.

A very young girl's passion is unleashed in *Amrita Gandhi's* novel *Royal-ish: Lily's Adventures in Bagradoo* when she learns of her link to the *Bagradoo* royal dynasty through a DNA test she conducted in her mother's lab with her scientist mother.

The story is a fun, light, and gentle one to begin with and catches the attention of the readers.

The story leaps when Lily writes to the *King Khair* of *Bagradoo* spitting the fact that she might be connected to his royal family.

The book gets boring between the sections which feels unnecessary to the story but the most interesting parts and the ones that are awaited in each chapter are the parts of Lily's dialogues where she is vlogging. These parts are fun and anticipated parts of the book.

The exciting part of the book starts from the start when Lily enters the *Bagradoo* palace and unexpected things start to happen with her. The book is a kid's book and is described with scenes in the best way possible. The scenes of Lily struggling for the perfect outfit at the *Bagradoo* events to

her being friends with *Princess Pashmina* and DJ have a quirky side to them. The scenes of friendship between the DJ and Lily have a cute side to them.

The fiction is beautifully put on paper with the introduction of *Al the Pal*, a daily robotic diary of Lily.

The robotic diary accompanies Lily everywhere giving her answers to all the questions she needs. *Al the Pal* is a quirky addition to the novel *Royal-ish - Lily's Adventures in Bagradoo*.

Having illustrations somewhere between the chapters *Amrita Gandhi's* book keeps the reader gripped giving them imagination from the illustrations.

The book does its best to explain Lily as a simple, happy, curious, and ambitious kid. The reactions of Lily in situations, her reactions to entering the palace and exploring is somewhat that keeps the reader connected to the book. Being invited as the seventh grader to a palace, for her ambition and her love for nature is how the book opens.

The book gives an amazing and humorous angle to the scenes, including the one when Lily's backpack falls and the toilet roll expands open in the palace and the scene where Lily is asked to dress *Princess Pashmina*. Some hilarious scenes give you a



**ABOUT THE BOOK**

Book: Royal-ish : Lily's Adventures in Bagradoo by Amrita Gandhi

Publication: HARPERCOLLINS CHILDREN'S BOOKS

Pages: 168  
Price: ₹299.00

reason to continue reading. The elements like the island's sea wonders, 'the ponypups', the walking crocodiles, and the blue illuminated pinecones keep the readers surprised and smiling while reading the book.

Among *Royal-ish's* appealing features is its creative world-building. *Gandhi* meticulously created *Bagradoo*, depicting a unique realm that blends aspects of conventional royalty with a whimsical, fun touch.

Lily's encounters with the kingdom's residents, each with a unique personality, are full of humour and insightful life lessons that both kids and adults can relate to.

Overall the book, *Royal-ish: Lily's Adventures in Bagradoo* is a delightful, enjoyable trip that provides a blend of amusement and education.

Though its deft storytelling and subtle cultural references can enthrall readers of all ages, it is ideal for young readers. Anyone wishing to immerse themselves in a realm of royal fantasy featuring a brave young heroine should read this book.



# India thrash Thailand 13-0 in women's ACT hockey

PTI ■ RAJGIR (BIHAR)

Young striker Deepika slammed five goals as defending champions India thrashed minnows Thailand 13-0 to virtually assure a semifinal berth at the women's Asian Champions Trophy hockey tournament here on Thursday.

It was a completely one-sided match as the Indians found the net at will, with Thailand failing to take a single shot at the opposition goal.

Deepika (3rd, 19th, 43rd, 45th, 45th minutes) found the net five times, while Preeti Dubey (9th, 40th), Lalremsiami (12, 56th) and Manisha Chauhan (55th, 58th) scored a brace each. Beauty Dung Dung (30th) and Navneet Kaur (53rd) were the other goal getters for India who registered their third consecutive win in the round-robin league stage.

India had earlier defeated Malaysia 4-0 before eking

out a close 3-2 win over South Korea.

The Indians will next play Olympic silver medallists China on Saturday.

India are now in the second spot in the standings with nine points, the same as China who, however, are on the top on the basis of a better goal difference. China have a goal difference of +21 as against +18 of India.

The top four teams out of six at the end of round-robin league stage will qualify for the semifinals.

It was complete domination from India from start to finish as they continuously toyed with the Thai defence, which looked clueless against the home team's relentless attacks.

The Indians also improved on the penalty corner front, converting five out of 12 PCs they secured in the match.

It took India just three minutes to take the lead through a fine field goal by Deepika. She beautifully controlled a defence spitting



pass from Neha and to find the back of the net positioned herself perfectly with a reverse hit. Minutes later, Manisha Chauhan got a free shot inside the circle but she couldn't connect the ball

properly.

In the ninth minute, Preeti doubled India's lead, tapping in Sangita Kumari's pass from close range.

Three minutes later, Lalremsiami scored from a rebound after skipper Salima Tete's initial try was saved by Thai goalkeeper Siraya Yimkrajang.

India continued to mount raids and secured their first penalty corner in the 17th minute but the Thai custodian made a triple save.

In the 19th minute, Deepika scored her second goal of the day, again with a fine shot from the top of the circle.

The Indians then wasted three penalty corners before scoring from the next set piece just at the stroke of half-time through Beauty, who found the net from a goal-mouth melee as the hosts went into the breather with a comfortable 5-0 lead.

An unmarked Preeti beat the onrushing Thai goalie neatly and found the net in

the 40th minute for her second goal of the match.

Minutes later, Deepika converted a penalty corner with a flick to the top right corner of Thai goal.

Within a span of two minutes, Deepika scored two more goals -- one from field play and the next from penalty corner -- to hand India a comprehensive 9-0 lead at the end of the third quarter.

After resumption, Navneet scored with a reverse hit after receiving a pass from Sushila Delvi.

Five minutes from the final hooter, Manisha converted India's 10th penalty corner before Lalremsiami deflected in Udit's slap shot from another set piece in the next minute.

Manisha registered her name again in the scoresheet two minutes from full time from field play. In other matches of the day, Malaysia beat Korea 2-1 while China continued their unbeaten run by defeating Japan by the same margin.

## Surya gave me chance to bat at No. three after I asked, had to repay faith: Tilak Varma

PTI ■ CENTURION

Tilak Varma did not want to become a source of chagrin for his skipper Suryakumar Yadav after requesting him for the number three slot in the batting order in the third T20I against South Africa. And he didn't.

Varma had batted at number four in Durban and Gqeberha, scoring 33 and 20.

Surya, who himself batted at number three, after giving it a thought, obliged his young teammate.

"In Gqeberha, he (Tilak) came to my room and said, 'Give me the opportunity to bat at No. 3. Let me express myself,'" said Surya.

Now it was for Varma to make the most of the opportunity and responded with a match-winning century.

After reaching his 51-ball-century, second fifty coming in just 19 balls, Varma pointed towards the dug-out and blew a flying kiss to acknowledge his captain.

"It was for 'SKY', our skipper because he gave me a chance to bat at number three," Varma told reporters after India's 11-run win on Wednesday night.

"I love batting at number three, but in last two matches, I played at number four. Last night he came to my room



and said that 'You will bat No. 3' and he said it's a good opportunity. Go and express yourself.

"I told him, 'You have given me an opportunity, I will show you on the ground,'" said the second youngest Indian centurion in T20 Internationals. His innings of 107 off 56 balls had seven sixes apart from eight fours including a straight and a flicked six off opposition's fastest bowler and his former Mumbai Indians teammate Gerald Coetzee.

Varma added 107 runs with another

youngster Abhishek Sharma, who scored a half-century after a string of failures.

"The team backed us even when we flopped. They told us to play the brand of cricket Indian team is known for and the skipper and the management (interim head coach VVS Laxman) said, 'Bindaas khelna Agar wicket gire tab bhi (Play freely even if you lose a wicket).'"

The stylish Hyderabad batter spoke about missing out on international

tours of Zimbabwe and Sri Lanka due to finger injury but said he always knew that he would score when his time comes.

"During the last IPL game, I had a finger dislocation and was ruled out for two months. Then during nets post recovery, I sustained another fracture. So I missed two back-to-back series -- Zimbabwe and Sri Lanka.

"I was feeling bad that I missed out on two series and good opportunities. But I had to remain patient, focus on the process and keep working hard. I knew my time would come and when right time comes, I will score runs."

The team management chose to persist with Varma when the chips were down and the youngster is reaping rewards for that.

"I was waiting for this opportunity and unfortunately in the last match it didn't happen but captain and management also supported a lot, and the results I am getting now is because of their complete backing."

He is a handy off-spinner and feels that he has worked hard on his bowling as he wants to be seen as an all-rounder.

"The ball is really coming out well and I have worked hard on my bowling. I want to contribute as an all-rounder."



## Mendis and Fernando tons earn Sri Lanka comfortable win over New Zealand in first ODI

AP ■ DAMBULLA (SRI LANKA)

Kusal Mendis and Avishka Fernando smashed centuries against a new-look New Zealand as Sri Lanka cruised to a 45-run win under the DLS method in a rain-hit first ODI.

Mendis smashed a career-best 143 off 128 balls and Fernando made 100 off 115 in Sri Lanka's imposing total of 324-5 in 49.2 overs before rain came and reduced New Zealand's target to 221 off 27 overs.

Will Young and Tim Robinson, one of the three New Zealand debutants, combined in an 88-run opening stand but Sri Lanka derailed the Black Caps' chase through its spinners and restricted the reply to a total of 175-9.

Slow bowlers Maheesh Theekshana (2-32), captain Charith Asalanka (2-15), and Jeffrey Vandersay (1-40), in place of injured Wanindu Hasaranga, all left their mark before left-arm fast bowler Dilshan Madushanka grabbed 3-39 to give Sri Lanka a 1-0 lead in the three-match series.

Earlier, Mendis and Fernando combined in a 206-run second-wicket stand after debutant Nathan Smith took a well judged running catch at

mid-on.

Mendis, who smashed Bracewell for two sixes and a boundary in his last over, tried to accelerate further in the death overs but sliced a regulation catch to extra cover in Duffy's return spell. Mendis struck 17 fours and two sixes in a dominant display of strokeplay after struggling in the drawn T20 series against the Black Caps last week at the same venue.

New Zealand's top-order slipped against the spinners despite Young (48) and Robinson (35) combining in a decent start of 88 off 80 balls.

The visitors lost five wickets for 22 runs -- going from 88-0 to 110-5 -- after Maheesh Theekshana removed both openers in one over.

Theekshana had Robinson stumped by Mendis at the second attempt and then went through the defenses of Young with a straight delivery. Asalanka picked up two wickets in successive overs with Theekshana grabbing a stunning catch at short mid-wicket to dismiss Mark Chapman as Sri Lanka deflated Black Caps' run-chase.

Pallekele will host the remaining two matches of the series on Sunday and Tuesday.

third man to dismiss Pathum Nissanka (12) in Jacob Duffy's second over after Asalanka won the toss and elected to bat.

Duffy could not hold onto a sharp low return catch from Mendis when the batter was on 11 in the only chance the pair gave before raising Sri Lanka's highest second-wicket stand in a one-day international against New Zealand. The double-century stand bettered the previous Sri Lanka record of 170 between Sanath Jayasuriya and Hashan Tillakaratne during the 2003 World Cup.

Both batters were solid against pace and spin as New Zealand's slow bowlers couldn't extract much turn from the wicket. Mitchell Santner returned 0-53 in his 10 overs while Ish Sodhi (1-62) and Michael Bracewell (1-73) were also expensive as both batters swept the spinners with ease.

Mendis raised his fourth ODI hundred in the 37th over off 102 balls and Fernando struck his first ODI century after three years in the next over. Fernando, who hit nine fours and two sixes, got dismissed soon after completing his fourth ODI hundred when he couldn't get enough elevation against Sodhi and was caught

## McSweeney doesn't need to copy Warner, he has his own game: Khawaja

PTI ■ PERTH

Veteran Australian opener Usman Khawaja backed his new opening partner Nathan McSweeney, urging him to play his own game against India in Perth rather than trying to ape David Warner, who was a "special player" in his own right.

Approaching his 38th birthday, Khawaja, a veteran of 73 Tests with nearly five and half thousand runs and 15 tons, also believed that needing to score runs at a quick clip is nothing but an urban myth, and advised McSweeney to just "repeat the process" which has worked for him till date.

"I don't know where this myth started that you needed someone to score really fast. As an opener you're trying to score runs and you've got five



days to do it. We didn't have one Test match go for five days, last year. Opening is as much about scoring runs and just being able to absorb that time," Khawaja was quoted as saying by news.Com.Au.

Talking about Warner, Khawaja said that not

everyone is as gifted as his former opening partner, who could switch gears at ease in the traditional format.

"Davey (Warner) was special. He could score runs while absorbing. He could sometimes score 100 of 100 balls but he didn't

do it every time. Sometimes it took him 170, 180 balls to get that 100.

"He was consistent, he was out there, he was setting a platform for guys later to come in and score runs. Those two are both very important things," Khawaja said.

Khawaja is confident that besides scoring runs at a fair clip, McSweeney also has the ability to bat time.

"I think Nathan does that really well. He can score runs, but he can also bat time. They're really important facets to have in Test cricket if you want to set games up."

Khawaja warned McSweeney that there were "no guarantees in cricket" but said that the 25-year-old batter didn't "have to do anything different" in the

Test arena.

"You just try to repeat the process. The only thing that really changes is that you have a few more people watching. Not many people watch Shield cricket."

Khawaja seems confident that McSweeney can handle the demands of an extremely high-skilled format like Tests.

"You always go through ups and downs in cricket, but when you look at Nathan, you look at his demeanour, you look at the way he plays, you feel that over a longer period of time that, yes, this guy will be able to handle the scrutiny of Test cricket and the pressure of Test cricket."

"Even though there are no guarantees, I'm sure the selectors have made a calculated decision with him," Khawaja concluded.

## Focus on Rinku's form and batting position as India aim series win

PTI ■ JOHANNESBURG

Rinku Singh's batting slot and circumspect approach must be a cause of concern for the India team going into the deciding fourth T20I against South Africa as the side aims for another bilateral series victory here Friday.

Centuries by Sanju Samson and Tilak Varma on either side of an inept batting performance has kept India's nose ahead in the series and team would want a more collective batting effort to clinch it 3-1.

The Wanderers 'Bull Ring' has always been a happy hunting ground for India, where they won the 2007 T20 World Cup

final against Pakistan.

Even during the previous T20I series a year back, skipper Suryakumar Yadav's last international hundred till date came at this very stadium and that too in a winning cause.

The Indian captain, who enjoys a staggering victory percentage of 81.25, having come up trumps in 13 out of the 16 matches, would like to do one better compared to the last series in the Rainbow Nation which had ended in a 1-1 draw with one game being washed out.

Curious case of Rinku Singh Rinku, one of the finest exponents of T20 cricket has suddenly gone off the boil in

the past few months, reasons of which aren't exactly clear and it wouldn't be lost on the skipper and interim head coach VVS Laxman.

On the face of it, it seems that his batting position and use as a floater at number six and seven isn't helping the Aligarh man's cause.

The next T20 World Cup in India is still some distance away in 2026 and Surya, as a skipper, has enough time to dissect and put things back on track for the man, who is too precious to be lost due to lack of clarity.

In the current series, Rinku came in at number six in two games and number seven in another and has managed just



28 runs. The scores 11, 9 and 8 shouldn't be taken in isolation looking at

game. Being seen strictly as a specialist "finisher" Rinku, on

an average, would get to face 10 balls in an innings. The strategy would have been devised to help the India team but of late it has eroded some of southpaw's confidence as he seems to be caught between attacking and playing second fiddle.

Most of Rinku's better efforts have come when he has batted at number five but in a lineup where Sanju Samson is settling as an opener and Tilak Varma has staked claim as a No. 3, it might be difficult for Rinku to be promoted ahead of Hardik Pandya.

It is an issue that team think-tank would do better to solve at earliest.

Team Combination

India have used 12 out of their 15 players in the first three games and it would be interesting to see if one among the two uncapped pacers Yash Dayal or Vysakh Vijaykumar gets a debut cap in case the pitch warrants an extra specialist speedster.

For Samson, he would like to forget that he is turning into Marco Jansen's 'bunny' after back-to-back failures.

In the final game, it wouldn't be a bad option for skipper Surya to check on Ramandeep Singh's steady medium pace as he can be an asset with multiple skills, including ability to field at all positions save keeping.

Squads:

India: Suryakumar Yadav (c), Abhishek Sharma, Sanju Samson (WK), Rinku Singh, Tilak Varma, Jitesh Sharma (WK), Hardik Pandya, Axar Patel, Chamandeep Singh, Varun Chakaravarty, Ravi Bishnoi, Arshdeep Singh, Vijaykumar Vysakh, Avesh Khan, Yash Dayal.

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

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