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INSIDE

SPORTS INDIA BEAT JAPAN 3-0 TO TOP LEAGUE STAGE



Manipur volatile, HM monitoring state

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Amid escalating unrest in Manipur, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday cancelled all his rallies in poll-bound Maharashtra and returned to Delhi to hold a meeting to review the volatile situation. Irate mobs set fire to the residences of three more Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) legislators, one of whom is a senior Minister, and also the home of a Congress MLA in various districts of Imphal Valley, even as security forces foiled the attempt of agitators to storm the ancestral residence of Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh, officials said.

Later in the evening, the Home Minister held a meeting with senior security and intelligence officials, and reviewed the Manipur situation. Meanwhile, Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) chief Anish Dayal Singh reached Imphal on Sunday, to monitor and coordinate the security operations in the region. The fresh incidents of violent protests took place on Saturday night even as an indefinite curfew was clamped after people, agitated by the killing of three women and children each by militants in Jiribam district, attacked the residences of three state Ministers and six MLAs earlier on Saturday. Meanwhile, the Manipur Government has requested the Centre to review and withdraw AFSPA from areas falling under the jurisdiction of six police stations in the State. The Centre has reimposed the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958 in Manipur's six police station areas, including violence-hit Jiribam. Union Ministry of Home



Security personnel patrol in a sensitive area of Manipur. Search operations and area domination were conducted by security forces in the fringe and vulnerable areas of hill and valley districts of the state

Affairs had, on November 14, reimposed AFSPA in areas falling under Sekmai PS and Lamsang PS in Imphal West district, Lamlai in Imphal East, Moirang in Bishnupur, Leimakhong in Kangpokpi and Jiribam in Jiribam district. Enraged people torched the houses of PWD Minister Govindas Konthoujam at Ningthoukhong, Hiyanglam's BJP MLA Y Radheshyam at Langmeidong Bazar, Wangjing Tenha's BJP MLA Paonam Brojen in Thoubal district and Khundrakpam's Congress MLA Th Lokeshwar in Imphal East district, the officials said. The legislators and their family members were not at home when the angry mob stormed their residential compounds, vandalised properties and set the houses on fire, police said, adding the houses were

NPP withdraws support to BJP

PTI ■ SHILLONG/IMPHAL

The National People's Party (NPP) on Sunday withdrew support to the BJP-led government in violence-hit Manipur, claiming that the N Biren Singh dispensation has "completely failed to resolve the crisis and restore normalcy" in the Northeastern state. The NPP has 7 MLAs in the 60-member Manipur assembly. In the last few days, the situation in Manipur further deteriorated and many more innocent lives have been lost

partially burnt in the incidents. Fire services rushed to the spots and doused the blaze before the flames engulfed the

and people in the state are "going through immense suffering", the NPP claimed in a letter to BJP chief J P Nadda. "We strongly feel that the Manipur state government under the leadership of Shri Biren Singh has completely failed to resolve the crisis and restore normalcy. Keeping the current situation in mind, the National People's Party has decided to withdraw its support to the Biren Singh government in the state of Manipur, with immediate effect," the letter said.

houses. On Saturday night, protesters also advanced towards Biren Singh's ancestral residence at

Luwangsangbam in Imphal East but were stopped short of 100-200 metres by security forces. Security personnel, including Assam Rifles, BSF and state forces, fired several rounds of tear gas shells, rubber bullets to disperse the protesters and foiled the attempt to damage Singh's house, officials said. Later, protesters burnt tyres on the main road leading to Biren Singh's residence and piled iron roads to prevent vehicular movement. Protests continued till around 11 pm in Mantripukhri area, some 3-4 km from the CM's ancestral home. Many of the protesters had come in vehicles from other constituencies, and not from the Heingang Assembly seat, which the CM represented.

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Embarrassed by 'Sheesh Mahal', infighting Kailash Gahlot quits AAP

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

Arvind Kejriwal's Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) received a massive setback just months before the Delhi Assembly elections, as senior minister and veteran leader Kailash Gahlot, who had claimed to be Kejriwal's "Hanuman", on Sunday resigned from the primary membership of the party and the council of ministers, citing the 'sheesh mahal' controversy, and the party unnecessary fighting with the Centre for setting their own political agenda.

With this, four MLAs, including three ministers, have resigned from the AAP - Rajendra Pal Gautam joined the Congress in September, Patel Nagar and Chhattarpur MLAs Raaj Kumar Anand and Kartar Singh Tanwar joined the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) during the Lok Sabha polls. Gahlot is the third minister of the AAP led Delhi government who quitted in the past one-and-half years. In his resignation letter addressed to AAP's National Convener Arvind Kejriwal and Delhi Chief Minister Atishi, Gahlot also cited unfulfilled promises and recent controversies as reasons for stepping down. Gahlot has held key positions within the Delhi government, including the portfolios of Transport, Law, Information Technology, Administrative Reforms, and Women and Child Development. Gahlot pointed to the "grave challenges" facing the party Gahlot, a prominent figure in the party, also took a job at Kejriwal while flagging some



FILE PHOTO

"awkward" and "embarrassing" controversies like 'sheesh mahal', saying it makes everyone doubt if "we still believe in being the 'Aam Aadmi'". Gahlot's reference to the 'sheesh mahal' controversy comes against the backdrop of BJP leaders' charge that Kejriwal spent crores on lavish items and modern facilities at his former official residence at 6 Flagstaff Road. The BJP had dubbed Kejriwal's earlier residence as 'sheesh mahal'. Meanwhile, the AAP national convener refused to take a question on Gahlot's shock resignation at a press conference held at the party office hours after Gahlot's resignation and promptly turned the microphone towards MLA Durgesh Pathak, seated next to him. When pressed for his response, Kejriwal said with a smile, "You want an answer, right?" before Pathak began speaking. In fact, the former Chief Minister spoke soon after, criticised the BJP but did not mention Gahlot's exit.

Holding the BJP responsible, Pathak said Gahlot was being questioned and raided by Enforcement Directorate (ED) and Income Tax for months. "So he did not have a choice. But this makes it clear that BJP has lost the Delhi election. They have no issue, they are fighting on the basis of ED, Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and Income Tax and we are fighting on people's issues," he said.

Earlier, AAP's Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh said Gahlot's resignation is a part of BJP's "dirty politics". "It's a "dirty political conspiracy of the BJP and it wants to win the Delhi Assembly polls by misusing the ED and CBI", he charged. On the other hand, the BJP was quick to respond to Gahlot's announcement. Delhi BJP chief Virendra Sachdeva welcomed Gahlot's resignation, saying he took a brave step. "Gahlot stepped down raising the same issues for which the BJP was protesting and fighting against Kejriwal and AAP.

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Communal clashes in Murshidabad puja pandal

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

At least 50 people were injured and many houses were torched and shops vandalised after clashes broke out between members of two communities at Beldanga area of Murshidabad district in central Bengal, bordering Bangladesh. The injured include at least five women and many others from both the groups, sources said adding the entire area was tense though no new reports of clashes had come in till Sunday evening.

The incident took place late on Saturday night after members of one community resorted to stone-pelting as reports of alleged sacrilegious comments written on electrical light boards at a Kartik Puja pandal in ward number 10 became public. Kartik Puja is usually organised by women who want to become mothers.

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India successfully flight-tests long-range hypersonic missile



Flight trial of DRDO's long range hypersonic missile being successfully conducted at Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam Island, off-the-coast of Odisha

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

India has joined the elite league of nations after it successfully flight-tested a long-range hypersonic missile off the coast of Odisha. Russia and China are the two other countries having this capability. The missile can strike targets at a range of more than 1,500

kms while travelling five times more than the speed of sound and evade most air defence systems. Hailing the test conducted late Saturday night, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Sunday described it as a "stupendous" achievement and a "historic moment". The missile, developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), is designed to carry

various payloads for ranges greater than 1,500 km, an official readout said. "India has achieved a major milestone by successfully conducting flight trial of long range hypersonic missile from Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Island, off-the-coast of Odisha," Rajnath Singh said in a social media post. "This is a historic moment and this significant achievement has put our country in the group of select nations having capabilities of such critical and advanced military technologies," he said. Generally, the hypersonic missiles, capable of carrying conventional explosives or nuclear warheads, can fly in the range of five times the speed of sound (Mach 5 which is roughly 1,220 km) per hour at sea level. However, some advanced versions of hypersonic missiles can even fly at the speed of over 15 mach.

At present, Russia and China are way ahead in developing hypersonic missiles while the US is in the process of developing a range of such weapons under an ambitious programme. Several other countries, including France, Germany, Australia, Japan, Iran and Israel, are also pursuing projects to develop hypersonic-missile systems.

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GRAP Stage IV invoked in NCR

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

As a thick blanket of smog continued to engulf Delhi, the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) sub-committee has decided to implement Stage IV of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) for Delhi-National Capital Region, that will come into effect from Monday at 8 am, owing to 'severe' air quality conditions which include complete halting of construction and demolition activities that generate dust and a ban on truck entry.

Additionally, the government can choose to impose Odd-Even restrictions. The Commission issued the order as Delhi's Air Quality Index



(AQI) worsened, reaching 457 at 8 pm. Due to unfavourable weather conditions and dense fog, visibility reduced to less than 50 metres in some parts of the National Capital, leading to disruptions in flights at

Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA). The India Meteorological Department (IMD) issued an orange alert, warning of dense fog on Monday morning. The decision to impose GRAP

Stage IV was taken by the CAQM after meeting with all stakeholders on Sunday. According to the order, no trucks will be allowed into Delhi except for those carrying essential items or using clean fuel (LNG/CNG/BS-VI diesel/electric). Non-essential light commercial vehicles registered outside Delhi will also be prohibited, except for EVs and CNG and BS-VI diesel ones. Delhi-registered BS-IV or older diesel medium and heavy goods vehicles are banned, except for those in essential services, the Commission said in its order. The CAQM order will be applicable for the NCR.

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The usage of the medicine mentioned above is suggestive in nature and it is the choice of the treatment in the management of above-mentioned diseases. Avoid self-medication and always take the medicines under medical supervision.

Doctor's mother placed under 'digital arrest', duped of ₹18L

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In yet another case of digital arrest, the mother of a doctor from Sanjay Gandhi Postgraduate Institute of Medical Sciences (SGPGI) was allegedly duped of Rs 18 lakh after being confined to her home for seven days. The fraudsters also threatened to send the victim, a retired government teacher, and her family to jail. They exerted psychological pressure on her so much that she made several visits to a bank near her home and deposited the money into the bank account provided by the fraudsters. Her frequent visits to the bank raised suspicions in her son's mind, and he eventually questioned her after gaining her trust. It was only then that the crime came to light. The doctor filed a complaint, and the cyber police are investigating the case. Initial investigations revealed that the cybercriminals made

WhatsApp calls from different numbers, which had profile pictures of police officials and CBI agents. The thugs terrified the 69-year-old woman so much that she agreed to follow their instructions. She did not know how to carry out online transactions, and when she told the fraudsters this, they instructed her to visit the nearest bank in her area and transfer the money to the accounts they provided. Her son and daughter-in-law became suspicious of her activities. When they inquired, she confided in them and explained what had happened. This is when the issue of digital arrest came to public attention. On Friday, the doctor filed an FIR at the cyber police station. The retired teacher is originally from Panchkula, Haryana, and resides on the old campus of SGPGI. Her son and daughter-in-law are both doctors at SGPGI. The woman explained that she received a call on her mobile phone at 10 am on November

5. The caller introduced himself as a customer agent from the State Bank of India (SBI) and informed her that a credit card fraud had been committed in her name. Before she could respond, the caller said that they were transferring the call to the 'Mumbai crime branch police' and then disconnected. Shortly afterwards, a WhatsApp call came through, and the caller introduced himself as an officer from the Mumbai crime branch. The cybercriminals made calls using various numbers. The woman recalled that the caller asked for her Aadhaar number and account details, claiming that a money laundering case had been registered in her name, and her bank accounts needed to be investigated. "I am transferring the call to the CBI," the caller said. After a while, another WhatsApp call came from a new number, with the caller claiming to be an accused in a money laundering

case and threatening to imprison her entire family. "This scared me," the victim said. At the caller's request, she provided all the details of the money in her bank accounts. The fraudster told her he could help but only if she sent the money. He also warned her against sharing this with anyone. She explained that she did not know how to transfer money online. The caller instructed her to go to the nearest bank and deposit the money into the account he would provide. "The fraudsters kept demanding updates from me at every moment. They used to make video calls every hour. During these calls, they created a background with a police office/logo behind the caller, which frightened me even more. I would leave the house with an excuse to go to the bank. After returning, I would mostly stay in my room. Seeing me distressed, my son asked me many times what was wrong, but I avoided answering him," she said.

Student assaulted by classmate, friends following row over book

Lucknow (PNS):

A student, along with his aides, allegedly assaulted a classmate over a dispute regarding a book in Madaion, police said on Sunday. According to reports, the disagreement arose between two students over a book for SSC exams. The victim was lured to Saath Feeta Road under the pretext of retrieving the book but was instead attacked by his opponents. When the student tried to escape, the accused held him hostage and issued death threats. The victim has since filed a case at the Madaion police station. Srijan Mishra, a resident of Bharat Nagar on Sitapur Road, is a second-year BSc student at Shia College. He reported that a classmate, Saurabh Yadav, who also prepares for competitive exams, had borrowed a book from him. Srijan had been requesting the book's return for some time. On the day of the incident, he contacted Saurabh, asking him to return it. Saurabh allegedly refused and involved another friend, Aditya, in the conversation via a conference call. The discussion escalated into an argument, during which Saurabh asked Srijan to meet him at 60 Feeta Road to collect the book. When Srijan arrived, Saurabh, Aditya Mishra, and some unidentified friends were present. Upon Srijan's inquiry about the book, Saurabh became furious, and the argument intensified. Subsequently, Saurabh and his group attacked Srijan using belts and bracelets. Srijan managed to escape but was pursued by the accused, who surrounded and held him hostage. The attackers also beat him, leaving him seriously injured. Late on Saturday evening, Srijan and his family filed a complaint against the accused at the Madaion police station. Police have confirmed that Srijan underwent a medical examination and assured that appropriate action would be taken against the culprits.

Jhansi hosp fire: Rescued newborn dies of illness

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A newborn rescued from a fire that engulfed the children's ward of Jhansi medical college hospital, succumbed on Sunday. With this, 11 newborns who were admitted to the NICU at Maharani Laxmibai Medical College hospital have died. Ten of them died after the fire broke out in the ward on Friday night. One newborn who was shifted from NICU to PICU died during treatment for an illness. The boy did not sustain any burn injuries in the fire, Jhansi District Magistrate Avinash Kumar disclosed. The district magistrate said that at the time of the fire, there were 49 newborns in the SNCU and 39 babies were rescued. He said that another infant died on Sunday. Kumar claimed that all 10 children who died in the fire have been identified. Sources said that one child was still missing and efforts were on to find him. Meanwhile, all the 11 infants who died in the fire have been identified and the injured children are being treated in medical college and private hospitals. According to sources, a two-

member committee investigating the matter has found that the fire in the Jhansi medical college's neonatal ward was entirely accidental and not deliberate. There is no criminal conspiracy or negligence in the incident, due to which no FIR has been registered till now, the sources added, quoting the findings of the two-member panel. The committee, however, will not file the report as the government has already constituted a four-member panel to probe the incident. Fire broke out around 10:45 pm on Friday in the neonatal wards of Jhansi's Maharani Laxmibai Medical College hospital, one of the largest government hospitals in the state's Bundelkhand region. Sources said that the committee comprising Jhansi Divisional Commissioner Vipul Dubey and DIG Range Kalanidhi Nathani, which was earlier expected to file its report within 24 hours, found that the fire was caused by a short-circuit in the switchboard and it could not be brought under control as sprinklers were not installed in the neonatal ward. The doctors told the committee that water sprinklers are not

installed in the NICU ward due to the presence of newborns, sources said. At the time, six nurses and other staff and two doctors were present in the NICU ward. One of the nurses sustained burns on her legs while attempting to douse the fire. The fire from the switchboard rapidly started spreading towards the oxygen concentrator when a paramedical staff and two others went in with fire extinguishers. But by then, the fire was beyond control, sources said, pointing to the findings of the committee. Within minutes though, fire tenders reached the spot. A four-member panel, has also been formed under the chairmanship of Director General of Medical Education Kinjal Singh and it will look into how the short-circuit happened and if the machines in the ward were overloaded, in which case it would count as massive negligence. The four-member committee has been tasked with identifying the cause of the fire and determining whether any negligence was involved. It will also provide recommendations to prevent such incidents in the future. It is expected to submit its report within a week.

Cop accused of beating up vendor for refusing free milk

Lucknow (PNS): A constable was accused of beating up a milk vendor for not giving him milk for free in the Rahimabad police station area. The accused constable allegedly threatened to have him sent to jail on false charges as well. The victim, Vishal Yadav, stated in his complaint that he had reported the incident to police, but no action was taken. Vishal Yadav from Utredea village in Rahimabad said that the constable posted at the station had asked him to provide milk for free. When he refused, he was beaten and threatened. Vishal further alleged that his pleas were ignored even by senior police officers. A spokesman confirmed the allegations made by the youth and stated that the matter was under investigation. However, no FIR has been registered in this connection so far.

Woman tricked into handing over ornaments to fraudsters

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Fraudsters tricked a woman who had visited a hospital in the Thakurganj area for treatment of a kidney stone. They engaged her in conversation, stole her jewellery, and left her with a bundle of papers. The police are investigating the case. According to reports, the woman, identified as Rama (50) from Madaion, is undergoing treatment for a kidney stone at Bharat Hospital in Thakurganj. She had previously undergone surgery but was still experiencing abdominal pain. At around 3:30 pm on Sunday, she went to the hospital for a check-up. While there, she encountered two young men who asked her for directions to Charbagh. As they spoke with her, they persuaded her to

remove her earrings and mangalsutra, which they then wrapped in a cloth. They gave her the cloth back, claiming it contained her jewellery, along with a bundle of Rs-100 notes, and asked her to open it in the hospital bathroom. The fraudsters then fled the scene. When Rama opened the cloth, she found it was filled with gravel. The bundle contained a Rs-100 note on top, with paper cuttings underneath. Shocked, she immediately informed her family. CCTV footage from the hospital shows the two young men interacting with Rama. In the footage, they are seen speaking to her before handing her the bundle and leaving. Rama is then seen entering the hospital. The footage shows the youths pointing ahead before they walk away from the scene.

Meanwhile, unidentified miscreants withdrew over Rs 1 lakh using the bank details of a constable in Krishna Nagar. The victim, Akhilesh Kumar, a constable posted at Aminabad police station, hails from Deoria. On November 12, while he was shopping in Aminabad market, his mobile phone and purse fell from his pocket. The purse contained his debit card and other important documents. "When I realised this after some time, I immediately got my debit card blocked, but it took some time to block my SIM," he said. The accused created a new UPI account linked to his bank account number using his mobile phone and transferred Rs 5,000 and Rs 99,000 the following day. A case was registered in this regard and investigation is ongoing.

Yogi pays tributes to Singhal, Thackeray



Lucknow (PTI): Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Sunday paid tributes to the former International President of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad Ashok Singhal on his sixth death anniversary. He also paid tributes to Shiv Sena founder Balasaheb Thackeray on his 12th death anniversary. In a post on X in Hindi, the chief minister said, "Humble tributes to the main architect of Shri Ram Janmabhoomi movement, former International President of Vishwa Hindu Parishad, Shri Ashok Singhal ji on his death anniversary!" "His entire life dedicated to Sanatan Dharma, Hindu culture and national service is a guide for every Indian, every Sanatani," Adityanath said in his post. UP's Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya also paid respects to Singhal. "A humble tribute to the eloquent speaker, Hindu Hriday Samrat, the bearer of Indian culture, the main pillar of Shri Ram Janmabhoomi movement, the one who devoted his all for the protection of Sanatan and Hindutva, the able leader, the source of inspiration and guide

for all of us, the former President of Vishwa Hindu Parishad, ...Ashok Singhal ji on his death anniversary," Maurya said in a post on X in Hindi. "The Nation will always be grateful for your incomparable contribution in the protection and promotion of Sanatan culture and Indian religious traditions and values," he added. Ashok Singhal, who served as the international president of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad for a long time, was born on September 27, 1926 in Agra, Uttar Pradesh. He passed away on November 17, 2015 in Gurugram, Haryana. He was a prominent leader in the Ram temple movement. In another post, Yogi said, "On the death anniversary of the strong voice of nationalism, unique speaker, founder of Shiv Sena, respected Balasaheb Thackeray, I pay my heartfelt respects and humble tributes to him!" Thackeray was born on January 23, 1926 in Maharashtra's Pune. The Shiv Sena founder passed away on November 17, 2012 at his residence 'Matoshree' in Mumbai after prolonged illness.

Murder case: Court sentences woman, daughter to 10 years in prison in Ballia

PTI ■ BALLIA

A court in Ballia has sentenced a woman and her daughter to 10 years of imprisonment each for killing the latter's lover three years ago. District and Sessions Judge Amit Pal Singh passed the order on Saturday. Giving details of the incident, Joint Director In-charge, Prosecution Department, P N Swami told PTI that Nandlal of Nagpura village lodged a complaint at Chit Baragaon police station alleging that Chanda called his son Chandan (20) to her house in the early hours of May 17, 2021, and killed him with the handle of an axe along with her minor brother and mother Anita Devi. Chanda and Chandan were in a relationship with each other but her family did not approve of it, Swami said. Based on Nandlal's complaint, a case was registered under sections 304 (culpable homicide not amounting to murder) and 506 (criminal intimidation) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC). Later, police filed a charge sheet in court and Chanda's brother appeared before the Juvenile Justice Board, he said. On Saturday, District and Sessions Judge Amit Pal Singh held Chanda and Anita Devi guilty of murdering Chandan and sentenced them to 10 years of imprisonment each, Swami said. The court also imposed a fine of Rs 10,000 each on the two convicts, he said.

Police killed my father, says daughter of chain loot accused

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The only daughter of an accused in a chain-snatching case alleged that the police killed her father. Kamlesh Tiwari, who was accused of robbery, was injured in an encounter in the Jankipuram area on October 22 and died 13 days later on Friday morning during treatment. He was shot in his left leg during the encounter, and his condition worsened during treatment. He began vomiting blood and was taken to KGMU Trauma Centre, where he succumbed. Kamlesh's 7-year-old daughter reportedly told residents that the police had killed her father. Kamlesh's wife Rumi Tiwari has accused the police of misleading the public, claiming they told everyone that Kamlesh had died in jail. "But he didn't go to jail after

the encounter. He was admitted to the trauma centre on the first day and later sent to an orthopaedic doctor in Daliganj. Kamlesh used to scream in pain every day," she said. Rumi further stated that Kamlesh had undergone surgery on November 3, after which the doctor had advised him not to walk. She said there was a lump in his leg, and every day brought new health challenges. Despite this, he was not receiving adequate treatment, she alleged. On Tuesday, he developed a high fever and started vomiting blood. He was returned to the trauma centre, where he died at 7 am on Friday. She also alleged that the police forcibly conducted the last rites. "To prevent anyone from knowing about Kamlesh's death, the police had the post-

mortem conducted late in the evening. Arrangements had already been made at Gullala Ghat. Pressure was applied on us to conduct the last rites after dark. I refused, citing Hindu religious principles, but the police pressured us into performing the rituals," she claimed. Kamlesh's family now consists of his wife, his elderly mother Phoolmati Tiwari, and his 7-year-old daughter. His father passed away a year and a half ago. The child was seen lighting her father's funeral pyre. The deceased's wife said their daughter had repeatedly asked, "Why did the police kill my Papa?" Rumi explained that on October 22, her husband was having lunch at home when a police team arrived with his friend Ali Abbas. The police informed them that Kamlesh's name had come up in a robbery

investigation and that he was being taken for questioning. After the police left, the family went to the nearest police station but could not find any information. It was only on October 23 that they learned Kamlesh had been shot in the leg and was admitted to the trauma centre. The bullet wound became infected, and the doctors believe the infection led to his death. The bullet had passed through the bone, and despite being treated for 13 days at the trauma centre, the infection did not improve. His condition worsened, and he started vomiting blood. ADCP, North, Jitendra Dubey stated that Kamlesh died during treatment and his body was handed over to his family. On October 22, a joint team of Jankipuram and Crime Branch arrested Kamlesh Tiwari, a resident of

Daulatganj, Brahmin Tola, in Thakurganj, during an encounter near the CDRI at Bhitauli Crossing. During the police check, Kamlesh allegedly attempted to flee but slipped. His accomplice Ali Abbas managed to escape, while Kamlesh allegedly opened fire on the police. In the retaliatory firing, Kamlesh was shot in the left leg. According to the police, Kamlesh had robbed the gold chain of 62-year-old Shaillaba, mother of Vikas Kumar Singh, a resident of Jankipuram. The incident occurred while the elderly woman was out for a stroll with her granddaughter. The two accused, riding a scooter, allegedly committed the crime under the pretext of asking for directions. Kamlesh had a long criminal history and was considered a notorious gold chain snatcher by the police.

Single Table Clearance Day organised at LDA

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Single Table Clearance Day was organised by the Lucknow Development Authority on Sunday to enhance efficiency, streamline processes, and address pending files for the convenience of the public. The event was presided over by LDA Vice-Chairman Prathmesh Kumar. Originally scheduled for Saturday and to be chaired by Divisional Commissioner Roshan Jacob, the event was postponed at the last minute due to her urgent official commitments. It was then rescheduled for Sunday. All department heads and relevant staff were present in the auditorium for the event, which started at 10:30 am and concluded at 2:30 pm. The concept for the event was conceived by the VC to improve LDA's efficiency in public interest. The idea was later approved by the divisional commissioner. The VC mentioned that such

events would be held every alternate month to address pending files and improve the overall efficiency of the LDA. He further stated that as more pending matters are cleared, the effectiveness of the event will increase. In his address, the VC acknowledged that the LDA's efficiency had been at a low point, with the backlog of files growing significantly. He emphasised the need to streamline the process and stated that staff members would be trained to ensure better file management in the future. He also mentioned that the focus would be on expediting the transfer of properties, freehold registries, and layout plans in the public interest. The VC urged the concerned in-charges and their staff to submit the files related to these issues. A total of 132 files were in the VC's possession, and it is expected that the issues will be resolved by Monday evening.

Woman shot dead in broad daylight in Bareilly district

PTI ■ BAREILLY/MEERUT

A woman was shot dead in broad daylight allegedly by two bike-borne unidentified men in the Bareilly district, police said on Sunday. The victim was identified as Roopwati (45), a resident of Sanjay Nagar, they said. According to police, Roopwati was returning on Saturday night after closing her food cart, which she operated with her son. As she neared the Shreya Baraat house around midnight, the assailants, on a motorcycle, approached her and fired two bullets on her back. The woman collapsed on the road, and locals, who heard the gunshots, rushed to the scene and immediately informed the police. "We are looking into a possible family feud as the motive behind the murder. The body has been sent for post-mortem, and further probe is under-

way," Station House Officer (SHO) of Baradari police, Amit Pandey said. The police have begun checking the CCTV footage from the area and have also deployed a dog squad and forensic team to gather evidence. **ELDERLY WOMAN FOUND DEAD AT HOME** Meanwhile, an elderly woman was found dead at her home in Meerut district's Mansarovar Colony, police said on Sunday. The body was discovered after her neighbours noticed a foul smell coming from her house and informed her family. The woman was identified as Meena Sharma (81), police said. On Friday morning, Sharma's neighbours noticed a foul smell emanating from her house and looked inside through a window. They saw her lying on the floor. They informed Sharma's daughter-in-law

Deepti, who lives in Noida. Then Deepti called emergency helpline 112, police said. Circle Officer (CO) Abhishek Tiwari said Sharma died three days ago. The forensics team was called in and investigation revealed that Sharma had switched on a heater in her room and died after inhaling toxic gas, he said. On a request from Sharma's family, the body was handed over to them without conducting a post-mortem. Her last rites were conducted at the Surajkund crematorium, he said. Sharma is survived by her husband, Mitthan Lal, who had gone to his village in Muzaffarnagar at the time of the incident, and her younger son Manasvi, who lives in Canada. Deepti is the widow of Sharma's elder son Brigadier Manuvar Sharma, who died in 2017. She lives with her family in Noida.

Two men killed, one injured in drunken brawl in Pratapgarh

PNS ■ PRATAPGARH

Celebrations in a marriage ceremony took a bloody turn in Pratapgarh when some drunken baraatists clashed over an alleged chain-snatching attempt. The brawl left two guests, including one from Jalandhar in Punjab, dead and another critically injured. According to reports, Anita, daughter of Videshi Gautam of Chakodia village in Lalganj Kotwali area of Pratapgarh, was to be married to Manoj Kumar, son of Dukhri Gautam of Tina Girdhar Sahay in Lilapur. The baraat had come to Chakodia on Saturday evening. The baraatists left for the 'dwarchar' around 11 o'clock in the night, dancing and singing as they moved. Meanwhile, a dispute started among the inebriated baraatists during the dance. Some guests in the baraat accused a barati of trying to snatch the chain of a woman dancing with the guests from

the groom's side. The allegation led to a fierce fight between both sides. In the clash, the groom's relatives, 22-year-old Pawandeep of Deliyawan Musafirkhan, Sultanpur, 32-year-old Indrapreet Singh of Jalandhar, Punjab and 25-year-old Vishal were seriously injured. On getting information about the incident, the Lalganj Kotwali Inspector Neeraj Kumar Yadav reached the spot with a force at midnight and shifted the injured for treatment. Pawandeep was pronounced dead on reaching the district hospital while Indrapreet, who was referred to the medical college hospital in Pratapgarh succumbed before reaching the hospital. Vishal was still battling for his life in hospital. The police later took 15 baraatists to the police station for questioning. The wedding was stopped due to a fight among the baraatists. Later the marriage ceremonies were completed in

the presence of the police. On Sunday morning, Additional Superintendent of Police (West) Sanjay Rai reached the spot and gathered information about the incident and directed the police to take appropriate action. Inspector in-charge Neeraj Kumar Yadav said that the complaint had not been received yet and the matter was being investigated. He said strict action would be taken against the culprits. Meanwhile, in Mathura's Mahavan police station area, a milkman, Pankaj (26), was brutally murdered by slitting his throat with a sharp weapon late Saturday night. The police reached the spot after getting the information and sent the body for post-mortem. The police are busy scanning the CCTV cameras around the crime scene. A forensic team has also collected evidence from the crime scene. At present, the matter is being investigated.

Congress has inherited DNA of the British: Adityanath

PNS ■ KOLHAPUR/SATARA/PUNE

On the fourth day of his election campaign in Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath launched a scathing attack on Congress, its policies, and its allies. He accused Congress of inheriting the "DNA of the British" and having a history of betraying India. "Congress' cowardice and lust for power led to the partition of India in 1947, resulting in the deaths of lakhs of Hindus," Yogi said. He argued that if Congress' leadership had been decisive, India would neither have been divided nor Pakistan formed, and those inciting riots for Pakistan could have been dealt with firmly, as is done today. Paying homage to the great figures of Maharashtra, Yogi shared an anecdote from 2017 when he visited Agra after assuming office. He recalled being informed about a Mughal Museum intended to showcase symbols of Aurangzeb and Mughal rule. He questioned the relevance of the Mughals to India's heritage and directed that the museum be renamed after Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj to celebrate India's pride and legacy. Yogi emphasised the contrasting visions of political alliances, stating that the Mahayuti under

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership is a force of unity, while the so-called Maha Aghadi or "Maha Anaadi" alliance is working to divide people. Yogi accused Congress of consistently prioritising political gains over national interest, likening their divisive strategies to the British policy of divide and rule. Addressing a rally in Bhosari, Yogi Adityanath said, "Pakistan-backed terrorists can no longer challenge India's borders." He emphasised that New India responds decisively, crossing borders to eliminate threats. Highlighting Pakistan's dire situation, he remarked that the country, now reduced to begging, finds no one willing to help. Yogi expressed confidence in India's growing strength, envisioning a future where Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), Balochistan, and other regions of Pakistan would integrate into India. He also stated that stopping cow slaughter would be a priority under the Mahayuti alliance, something Congress has failed to address. Aiming at Congress leaders Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and party president Mallikarjun Kharge, Yogi recounted the tragedy of 1947 in Baravati, Kharge's village, where Razakars of the Nizam of Hyderabad

killed his mother, sister and aunt. He criticised Kharge for not speaking out against the perpetrators of such atrocities due to fear of his party's leadership. Yogi accused the Congress of appeasing the same extremist elements who continue to disrupt India by stone-pelting during Ganpati Mahotsav and Ramnavami processions or by encroaching on historical sites like Vishalgarh Fort. Yogi asserted that an attack on Sanatan Dharma is an attack on India's foundation and warned of the destructive consequences of such actions. Promising strict measures under a Mahayuti-led government, he vowed to remove encroachments at Vishalgarh Fort and ensure no one dares to disrupt religious processions. He assured that stone-pelters would face decisive action, referencing the 'UP model' of governance. Yogi concluded with a powerful message: "Batenge nahi toh katenge nahi, ek rahenge, toh safe rahenge." Yogi Adityanath emphasised the significance of the upcoming elections for both Maharashtra and India. He contrasted the two main alliances, highlighting the Mahayuti bloc led by Prime Minister Modi, which includes Bharatiya Janata Party, Shiv



UP Chief Minister during an election rally in Maharashtra on Sunday

Sena (Shinde faction), Nationalist Congress Party (Ajit Pawar faction), and RPI, united under the vision of Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat. In contrast, he criticised the Maha Aghadi alliance, accusing them of lacking policies, moral integrity and decision-making ability. According to Yogi, their true motto is Sabka Saath, Parivar Ka Vikas. He claimed Congress, Uddhav Thackeray and Sharad Pawar are more focused on outmanoeuvring each other, betraying not only their allies but also the Hindu community and the nation. Yogi pointed out the ideological departure of Uddhav Thackeray from his father, Balasaheb Thackeray. He praised Balasaheb for his principled politics and firm stance on Hindutva, asserting that he would never have allied with Congress. Uddhav, he claimed, abandoned these values, despite once promising to champion Hindutva and Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's ideals. Those inspired by Shivaji, Yogi remarked, should work to unite the country, not divide it. Highlighting progress under the BJP-led government, Yogi said, "Maharashtra once had the highest farmer suicide rate before 2014. Today, initiatives like the PM Kisan Samman Nidhi have brought signifi-

cant relief." He assured that the Mahayuti alliance would match these benefits at the state level. He accused the opposition of attempting to block such welfare schemes in court, alleging that they oppose efforts to provide jobs for youth, empower women through schemes like Ladli Behna Yojana, and ensure the prosperity of farmers. Yogi also announced that the Mahayuti government has allocated land for a grand Maharashtra Bhavan in Ayodhya to facilitate devotees visiting the Ram temple. Work on this project has already begun, showcasing the alliance's commitment to cultural and spiritual development, he added. Yogi Adityanath held three public meetings on Sunday. In the first rally, he sought votes for BJP candidate Amal Mahadik from Kolhapur South, Rajesh Kshirsagar (Shiv Sena faction) from Kolhapur North, and Chandraver Narke from Karver. His second rally was held in Karad North assembly constituency. BJP has given a ticket to Manoj Bhimrao Ghorpade from here. Yogi held his third rally in favour of Mahesh Kishanrao Landge, the candidate from Bhosari assembly constituency.

UP bypoll: BSP top guns missing from campaign trail

PTI ■ LUCKNOW

Amid the power-packed campaigning by various parties for the Uttar Pradesh bypolls, senior leaders of the BSP — which has fielded candidates on all nine seats — are conspicuous by their absence. Campaigning for the November 20 bypolls will end on Monday evening but Bahujan Samaj Party's (BSP) state unit president Vishwanath Pal is the lone party leader campaigning for party candidates. BSP chief Mayawati is yet to attend any public meeting or rally in favour of any candidate in any of these nine seats. Even Mayawati's nephew and senior office bearer Akash Anand and former Rajya Sabha MP Satish Chandra Mishra are yet to come out to create an atmosphere in favour of party candidates. Mishra, however, has asserted that his party is fighting very strongly in the bypolls. "The BSP is fighting very strongly in the bypolls being held on nine seats in Uttar Pradesh under the leadership of behen Mayawati ji. And I appeal to the people that if they join BSP, they will move forward and will also remain safe. If they stay away from BJP and SP, they will remain safe," he said on X on Friday. BSP's state unit president Vishwanath Pal on Sunday told PTI, "On the orders of behenji (Mayawati), I and the party's coordinator and district president are campaigning vigorously for the party candidates on all the nine seats where bypolls are being held." "With the message of behenji, we are going to all the bypoll-bound seats and are fully encouraging our workers. You will see that very good results will come in favour of BSP in these bye-elections, which will surprise other parties," Pal said. Asked about former Uttar Pradesh chief minister Mayawati and Anand's absence from public meetings and rallies, Pal said, "Behenji and Akash bhैया are busy in assembly elections of Jharkhand and Maharashtra. Apart from this, I have not received any order or instruction from the national leaders of my party." On the possibility of Mayawati or Anand taking part in rallies in the last two days of campaigning, Pal said, "So far, there is no information about any such programme of our national leaders regarding the bypolls in UP." The indifference of the big leaders seems to be affecting the morale of the party candidates. BSP candidate from Sisamau assembly constituency in Kanpur, Virendra Kumar told PTI, "The BSP's campaign is going well in Sisamau. Party workers are working with full dedication. We had

EVEN MAYAWATI'S NEPHEW AND SENIOR OFFICE BEARER AKASH ANAND AND FORMER RAJYA SABHA MP SATISH CHANDRA MISHRA ARE YET TO COME OUT TO CREATE AN ATMOSPHERE IN FAVOUR OF PARTY CANDIDATES

asked the party office for the program of party president behenji (Mayawati) and Akash bhैया. If either behenji or Akash bhैया had come to our Sisamau area, the campaign would have been made even better." Amit Verma, the BSP candidate from Ambedkar Nagar's Katehari assembly seat said, "Katehari is a stronghold of the BSP. It was behenji (Mayawati) who created this district. We had asked the party office for the programme of big leaders. But we did not get any reply. If behenji or any other leader had come for the election campaign, the enthusiasm of party workers would have doubled." Verma claimed the BSP is winning the bypolls of Katehari. "The workers are working hard day and night, he said, asserting "this will bring good results". In contrast, most political parties have put all their strength in campaigning for their candidates. From Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath to Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav, top leaders of most of the parties are coming out in the field and creating an atmosphere in favour of their candidates. The nine assembly seats going to polls are Katehari (Ambedkar Nagar), Karhal (Mainpuri), Meerapur (Muzaffarnagar), Ghaziabad, Majhawan (Mirzapur), Sisamau (Kanpur City), Khair (Aligarh), Phulpur (Prayagraj) and Kundarki (Moradabad). Eight of these seats fell vacant after their MLAs were elected as Lok Sabha MPs, while bypoll is being held on the Sisamau seat due to the disqualification of SP MLA Irfan Solanki, who was convicted in a criminal case. In the 2022 assembly polls, Sisamau, Katehari, Karhal and Kundarki were held by the SP, while the BJP had won Phulpur, Ghaziabad, Majhawan and Khair. The Meerapur seat was held by the RLD, which is now an ally of the BJP in the NDA. The Congress is not contesting the bypolls and supporting its INDIA bloc partner SP, while the BSP is contesting solo on all nine seats.

BJP showing 'party power' by moving police in Kundarki, alleges Akhilesh

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav, on Sunday, accused the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party of showing 'party power' by moving a contingent of policemen in the Kundarki assembly constituency in Moradabad district of Uttar Pradesh ahead of the November 20 bypolls. Yadav posted a video on X and said, "Don't make the mistake of considering this as war-level preparation on the China border; this is Kundarki in UP where assembly bye-election is being held." He alleged that elections are rigged in the BJP rule and the people of the state have lost faith in law and order. "That is why this parade of 'party power' is being done to win the trust of the people," he said in his post on X. "However, the media believes that this process is not about removing fear from the minds, but more about instilling fear in the minds, so that the ruling 'party' gets 'strength' in the elections and the people come out



to vote in minimum numbers," he added. Yadav further stated that people voting in minimum numbers would make it easier to commit 'electoral frauds'. However, the citizens would come out in large numbers to vote and remove the BJP from power, he asserted. He added, "In this regard, there is a request filled with a warning to the Election Commission to foil this conspiracy to reduce voting. This time the public will be deployed with their mobile cameras and will not rest until any person at any level who creates disturbance is taken to court and punished." "The public has accepted the slogan 'Matdaan Bhi, Saavdhaan Bhi' (vote and be cautious) and is ready to do anything to protect its vote. This time the BJP electoral scammers should wish luck for themselves," Yadav said. In Uttar Pradesh, nine assem-

blies seats are going to polls on November 20. They include Katehari (Ambedkar Nagar), Karhal (Mainpuri), Meerapur (Muzaffarnagar), Ghaziabad, Majhawan (Mirzapur), Sisamau (Kanpur Nagar), Khair (Aligarh), Phulpur (Prayagraj) and Kundarki (Moradabad). Eight of these seats fell vacant after their MLAs were elected to Lok Sabha while a bypoll is being held on the Sisamau seat due to the disqualification of Samajwadi Party MLA Irfan Solanki, who was convicted in a criminal case. In the 2022 assembly polls, Sisamau, Katehari, Karhal and Kundarki assembly seats were held by the Samajwadi Party, while the Bharatiya Janata Party won Phulpur, Ghaziabad, Majhawan and Khair seats. The Meerapur seat was held by Rashtriya Lok Dal, which is now an ally of the ruling National Democratic Alliance. Congress is not contesting the bypolls and is supporting its INDIA bloc partner Samajwadi Party, while the Bahujan Samaj Party is contesting solo on all nine seats.

'Batenge toh katenge' a call for unity: Maurya

Lucknow (PTI): A day after evading questions on Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's 'batenge toh katenge' slogan, his deputy Keshav Prasad Maurya on Sunday described it as a call for unity and asked why the opposition having a "stomach ache" over the slogan. The slogan, frequently used by Adityanath on the campaign trail, has united the opposition in its condemnation ahead of the November 20 bypolls, claiming that it has communal overtones. "The clear message of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and the slogans — 'If we stay

united, we will be safe, if we divide, we will be cut' — that emerged from their speeches is a symbol of the unity and determination for all workers. There are no differences of opinion in the BJP, nor there was, nor will there be," Maurya said in a post in Hindi on X. "This slogan comes straight from the hearts of party workers like me. The BJP's slogan is 'If we stay united, we will be safe,' he added. Taking potshots at the opposition parties, the deputy chief minister asked why was the Samajwadi Party, Congress and the Bahujan Samaj Party "having stomach aches due to this

unity?" "If the pain is unbearable, get it treated, take medicines," he added. A day earlier, Maurya had created flutters in the political circles of Uttar Pradesh by refusing to comment on Adityanath's "batenge toh katenge" slogan, saying questions about it should be directed to the chief minister. On Sunday, sharpened his attacks at the main opposition Samajwadi Party over its PDA (Pichda, Dalit, Alpsankhyak) pitch. "We have to respond to the fake 'PDA' abuses spread by the Samajwadi Party and its chief Akhilesh Yadav in the same way Lord Krishna replied to Shishupal. In 2024, the Cycle

(SP's poll symbol) has to be punctured by making the lotus bloom so that the polls deposits of SP candidates are forfeited." "The Samajwadi Party has to be turned into a 'samaaptvaadi' party by deepening the wounds of the crushing defeats it faced in 2014, 2017, 2019, and 2022 (elections)," he said in a post in Hindi on X. Bypolls to nine assembly seats — Katehari in Ambedkar Nagar, Karhal in Mainpuri, Meerapur in Muzaffarnagar, Ghaziabad, Majhawan in Mirzapur, Sisamau in Kanpur City, Khair in Aligarh, Phulpur in Prayagraj and Kundarki in Moradabad — will be held on November 20.

Karhal bypoll a battle of two sons-in-law

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The bypoll to Karhal assembly seat in the Yadav heartland of Mainpuri district has turned into a battle between two sons-in-law of two Yadav chieftains of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. Samajwadi Party candidate Tej Pratap Yadav is former MP and son-in-law of Lalu Prasad Yadav. Tej Pratap Yadav is married to Lalu Prasad's younger daughter Rajlakshmi. BJP candidate Anujesh Yadav is the son-in-law of late Mulayam Singh Yadav, founder of the Samajwadi Party. Anujesh Yadav is married to Sandhya alias Baby Yadav, daughter of Mulayam Singh Yadav's younger brother Abhayram Yadav and sister of MP Dharmendra Yadav. Anujesh is also the brother-in-law of former chief minister and SP president Akhilesh Yadav. The entire Yadav family is campaigning in Karhal for their respective candidates but most of them have sided with Tej Pratap. Mainpuri MP Dimple Yadav, wife of Akhilesh Yadav, is permanently camping in Mainpuri, campaigning with her family. Political observers say that not only Akhilesh Yadav but the reputation of the entire first family of the Samajwadi Party, is at stake in the Karhal by-election. Political experts say if SP's vote bank decreases in Karhal and BJP gains, then its big message will go to the entire country. This is the reason why, along with many ministers, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has also held public meetings here twice with an appeal for a change this time.

Though a Bahujan Samaj Party candidate too is in the fray, his presence appears to be of little consequence and he is perceived as "vote katwa". Among the 2.07 lakh electorate in the seat, Brahmins and Dalits together hold the lead with over one lakh votes each followed by Other Backward Classes and upper caste votes. Since the formation of the assembly constituency, except for the 2002 election, SP's dominance remained intact. In 2002, Sobran Singh Yadav became MLA on a BJP ticket. After this, he joined the SP and was elected MLA from here on the party ticket for three consecutive times later on. SP president Akhilesh Yadav decided to contest the 2022 UP assembly elections with Sobran Singh being one of his proposers. Akhilesh contested the election from Karhal and won by defeating BJP candidate, Union Minister SP Singh Baghel. After winning the Lok Sabha election from Kannauj in 2024, he resigned from Karhal. The contest for the Karhal seat, which has its own identity in politics, is even more interesting this time. SP candidate Tej Pratap Yadav and BJP candidate Anujesh Yadav are also close relatives. Anujesh Yadav's wife Sandhya Yadav is Tej Pratap Yadav's aunt. In such a situation, there is a relationship between nephew and uncle between them. But both are now saying that the party is above relationships. Before 2019, Anujesh Yadav was also in the SP. His wife Sandhya Yadav has also been Mainpuri district panchayat chairperson as SP member in 2015.

Roadways porter service to enhance devotee experience

PNS ■ PRAYAGRAJ

The Yogi Adityanath government in Uttar Pradesh is leaving no stone unturned for ensuring a smooth and memorable experience for the millions of devotees and tourists expected to attend the Maha Kumbh in Prayagraj in 2025. As part of its efforts to make the event grand and well-organised, the Road Transport department is preparing roadways porters to assist visitors arriving by bus. The administration estimates that over 41 crore devotees and tourists will gather in Prayagraj for this monumental religious event. A significant number of these visitors are expected to arrive by roadways buses. To ensure their journey is as smooth as possible, the Transport department is focusing on providing efficient porter services at bus stations, helping

passengers with luggage and ensuring a hassle-free arrival. This initiative is part of a series of preparations being carried out to make Maha Kumbh 2025 a well-coordinated gathering, reflecting the Yogi government's commitment to ensuring the comfort and convenience of all attendees. UP Roadways Regional Manager in Prayagraj, MK Trivedi, explained that the first point of contact for passengers at the roadways bus station will be the porters. To ensure a smooth experience, the porters will receive special training. They will not only help with luggage but also provide basic information about transportation options and routes to the Maha Kumbh. The goal is to make sure that when passengers arrive at the Prayagraj roadways bus stand, they find porters ready to assist them, just like railway platform staff. These porters will

work in two shifts of eight hours each. They have been provided with uniforms, which include blue pants and shirts, instead of the red ones worn by railway porters. Additionally, a brass badge with their identification number will be attached to their sleeve. To ensure quality service, the roadways has carefully checked the porters' backgrounds, including verifying their identity with Aadhaar cards and criminal records. The first batch of 16 porters is being trained at the Civil Lines roadways bus stand. **E-INTERLOCKING AT PRAYAGRAJ JUNCTION** In a major step towards ensuring seamless train operations during the Maha Kumbh 2025, the North Central Railway has installed a new electronic interlocking system at Prayagraj Junction and Prayagraj

Rambagh rail line. The electronic interlocking system, developed by Kyosan, is a crucial part of the Prayagraj Junction-Prayagraj Rambagh rail line doubling project. It will enable the Prayagraj Railway Division to operate approximately 992 trains during Maha Kumbh, providing 825 routes for improved flexibility and efficiency in train movement. With this state-of-the-art system in place, uninterrupted and streamlined train operations will be ensured, accommodating the influx of millions of devotees expected to attend the divine gathering.

According to Prayagraj Railway Division's Senior Public Relations Officer Amit Malviya, this advanced system will make multi-directional train movement smoother and more efficient. It will also boost the station's capacity for handling additional trains in the future. **GANGA PRAHARIS** To preserve the sanctity of the Sangam, 500 dedicated Ganga Praharis are working round-the-clock to ensure the cleanliness and purity of Ganga and Yamuna rivers. These Ganga

Praharis will serve as vigilant custodians of river cleanliness. The Ganga Praharis stationed at each ghat are resolute in their commitment. Working in teams of 15-20 at each ghat and operating in shifts during the Maha Kumbh, they are not only cleaning the rivers and ghats but also educating pilgrims on the importance of preserving river sanctity. The specially trained Ganga Praharis are dedicated to ensuring the cleanliness of rivers and ghats while conserving aquatic life, in collaboration with the Wildlife Institute. They conduct round-the-clock cleanliness drives, using nets to remove waste from the rivers and ghats. They also educate devotees to maintain cleanliness by refraining from throwing waste or flower garlands into the rivers. If garbage is discarded, it is promptly retrieved using Turan nets and other tools.



UPPSC protest: Case against four Telegram channels

PTI ■ PRAYAGRAJ

A case has been registered against four Telegram channels for allegedly spreading misleading information to incite students and disturb law and order during the protest outside the Uttar Pradesh Public Service Commission (UPPSC) here, police said on Sunday.

The Telegram channels against whom the FIR has been registered are PCM Abhyas, General Studies Edushala, Make IAS, and PCS Manthan, they said. The FIR was registered under Section 318 (4) (cheating) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) and under the IT Act at

Civil Lines police station on Thursday on a complaint lodged by Krishna Murari Chaurasia, in charge of UPPSC police outpost, police said. According to the FIR, misleading information was uploaded and circulated by various Telegram channels to incite students so that law and order could be disturbed. Screenshots of the said channels have been attached with the complaint as evidence. The students began their protest outside the UPPSC office on November 11 against its decision to conduct the preliminary examinations for Provincial Civil Services (PCS), Review Officer (RO)

and Assistant Review Officer (ARO) on two separate days and demanded that they be held on the same day. On Thursday, the fourth day of the protest, the UPPSC postponed the RO-ARO exam and announced that it would hold the PCS exam in the old pattern in a single day. The commission also announced that it would form a committee on RO-ARO exam to ensure its transparency and fairness. On Friday, the students called off their protest and the UPPSC announced that the PCS Preliminary Exam-2024 would be held in two shifts on December 22.

Cleanliness drive at Ganga ghats

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

A cleanliness drive was launched at various Ganga ghats on Sunday to remove the garbage thrown there during Garhith Purnima bathing and Dev Deepawali festival. The city team of Namami Ganga Ganga Vichar Manch conducted a cleanliness drive at Rajghat. Being right next to Namoh Ghat, a large number of bathers and tourists had arrived here. As a result, a lot of garbage was seen scattered on the ghats. The team did voluntary work at Rajghat under the leadership of Shivam Agrahari, district coordinator of Namami

sent. Meanwhile, after Dev Deepawali, the activists of Namami Ganga took up the task of cleanliness with the help of Vedpaathi (Sanskrit) students of Maharishi Yogi Ved Vigyan Vidyapeeth to collect the religious remains scattered on the banks of Ganga. Puja wastes, polythene, clothes,

Namami Ganga (Kashi) and Nagar Nigam's Swachhata Brand Ambassador Rajesh Shukla, the public also took a pledge along with the Vedpaathi students. A pledge that we will not stop, we will continue the cleanliness campaign. Shukla said that Ganga is the pulse of India's national life. "We perform all the rituals from birth to death on the banks of Ganga. Ganga is our faith as well as the means of livelihood for crores of people. On Dev Deepawali, we gathered a lot of happiness on the banks of Ganga but we also left behind many kinds of garbage there," he said, adding that it is a request to the people that Ganga is ours, the ghats of Ganga are ours, hence the responsibility of their cleanliness is also ours. Prominent among others present were Maharishi Yogi Ved Vigyan Vidyapeeth's student Ashutosh Pandey, Harshit Tiwari, Krishna Dubey, Rajveer Tiwari, Shubham Shukla, Alok Pandey, Vineet Choubey, Sonal Pathak, Aryan Pandey and Sagar Shukla.



Namami Ganga activists and others launching cleanliness drive near Manikarnika Ghat in Varanasi on Sunday

Ganga Ganga Vichar Manch. After hours of hard work, a huge amount of garbage was collected and sent for disposal. Sanitary inspector of Nagar Nigam Aparna Bajpai, Tipu Sultan, Jai Vishwakarma of Namami Ganga, Sapna Verma, Sonu Vishwakarma, Siddhant Vishwakarma, Akhilesh and sanitation workers were pre-

dupattas and religious pictures etching on the banks of Ganga from Sankatha to Manikarnika ghats, including Scindia Ghat were collected and handed over to the employees of the Nagar Nigam. During the campaign, people were appealed to maintain cleanliness. In coordination with regional coordinator of

MoU to foster greater collaboration in academic research



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed by Prof. Vinay Kumar Pathak, Rector of Istanbul University, and Prof. Gous Mashkoor Khan, Vice-Chancellor of Chhatrapati Sahu Ji Maharaj University (CSJMU) and President, Association of Indian Universities, New Delhi, marking a significant milestone in academic cooperation between the two prestigious universities. The signing ceremony took place at the Rector's office at Istanbul University, Turkey. Dr. Pankaj Mittal, Secretary General, Association of Indian Universities, and Professor Aarti Srivastava, Head of the Department of Higher and Professional Education at the National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration, New Delhi, were also present. The MoU aims to foster greater collaboration in academic research, student and faculty exchanges and joint educational programmes. This partnership is expected to enhance the educational experiences and research opportunities for students and faculty members of both universities.

and their respective countries. Prof. Zulfikar expressed his optimism about the future of this partnership, stating, "This MoU signifies a new era of academic collaboration between our institutions. We look forward to a fruitful partnership that will benefit our students and faculty." Prof. VK Pathak said, "We are excited about the opportunities this MoU will bring, and we are committed to making this collaboration a success."

The event concluded with the exchange of mementos and a commitment to furthering the goals of this agreement in the coming years.

FELICITATION: Felicitation of the universities featured in QS Asia ranking 2025 was organised by the Governor Secretariat, Raj Bhawan on Saturday. Governor Anandiben Patel distributed the certificate to QS rank holder state universities in the presence of Dr. Ashwin Fernandes, Regional Director, QS ranking, South Asia. She talked about the improved quality of education and learning in the state by highlighting the best resources management and the points and measures to be covered in coming years to achieve global rankings. She also highlighted the importance of national and international rankings in students' career and nation building. From CSJM University, Kanpur, Vice-Chancellor Prof. Vinay Kumar Pathak, Dr. Sandeep Singh, Dr. Brishthi Mitra and Dr. Rakesh Kumar Sharma received the certificate along with the students. The students of the CSJM University spoke about the achievement the university received in recent years and expressed their expectations from the university and government. They told how AI was playing the vital role on teaching learning process and students were integrating various AI tools in their research. They talked about the importance of fellowship during PhD programme as well as the funding opportunities for research students.

Seminar on role of media in Indian democracy

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

A national seminar was organised at CSJMU on "The role of media in Indian democracy" on National Press Day on Saturday. On the occasion State Information Commissioner Padum Narayan Dwivedi was the keynote speaker and former Joint Director Doordarshan Raghvesh Pandey was the special guest. Keynote speaker Dwivedi said, "today media is the fourth pillar of democracy. Its impartiality, transparency and responsibility are necessary for the development of society. It is not only a medium to deliver news, but it also works to give direction and alert the society". Emphasising the need to deeply understand the responsibilities, challenges and power of the media, he said, "in today's time we are forgetting the ethical values of our journalism. Somewhere we are looking at our values and our journalism only as a profession".

Pro-Vice-Chancellor Professor Sudhir Kumar Awasthi said, "this day reminds us of the importance of freedom and responsibility of the press. A strong and independent press is not only the foundation of democracy, but also a medium to make the society aware, informed and empowered". Special guest Raghvesh Pandey talked about the changing role of media in the digital age. He said, "journalism started as a mission but in the present times journalism has become a profession. Journalism means to convey the words of the society to the people but at present journalism has also changed with time". Registrar Dr. Anil Kumar Yadav, Dr. Jitendra Dabral and Dr. YP Singh also spoke on the occasion. The vote of thanks was proposed by Dr. Omshankar Gupta. Dr. Yogendra Kumar Pandey, Dr. Om Shankar Gupta, Prem Kishore Shukla, Sagar Kanaujia, technical director Pranjal Sachan and a large number of students were present on the occasion.

BLW locomotive models steal the show at IITF

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The locomotive models from Banaras Locomotive Works (BLW) stole the show at Indian International Trade Fair (IITF)-2024 on Sunday. The Ministry of Railways is proudly showcasing its progressive vision and achievements at the IITF being held from November 14 to 27 at Pragati Maidan, New Delhi. This year's theme, 'Viksit

Railways' global stature and technical excellence, drawing immense interest from visitors. According to the Public Relations Officer (PRO) Rajesh Kumar, the exterior of the Railway Pavilion showcases a stunning replica of the proposed Sabarmati Station of the National High-Speed Rail Corridor. Among the major attractions



PRO Rajesh Singh telling a group of students about Banaras Locomotive Works' loco model at IITF-2024 in New Delhi.

Bharat @2047', highlights India's ambition to become a self-reliant and prosperous nation by 2047.

Chairman and CEO, Railway Board, Satish Kumar, inaugurated the impressive Railway Pavilion, which embodies the theme: "Futuristic Indian Railways". The pavilion illustrates Indian Railways' incredible journey and technological advancements through a range of unique exhibits.

The pavilion features eye-catching models of WAP-7 passenger electric locomotives and export locomotives manufactured by BLW. These models reflect Indian

are models of the iconic Anji Bridge and Pamban Bridge, as well as India's first semi-high-speed train, Vande Bharat Express. "The pavilion offers something for everyone. Interactive screens display mesmerising videos showcasing the scenic beauty along Indian Railways' routes. For children, an engaging quiz provides a fun way to learn about Indian Railways' innovations and achievements", he said, adding that the Railway Pavilion is not just educational and entertaining but also a testament to the unwavering commitment of Indian Railways to the nation's progress.

Erection of U-girders for elevated section begins

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

The erection of U-girders for the elevated section (Agricultural University - Barra-8) of Corridor-2 (CSA - Barra-8) under the Kanpur Metro Rail Project officially began on Saturday. The first U-girder was successfully erected in the morning on Pillars no. 13 and 14 near Company Bagh Chauraha. A total of 184 U-girders will be erected in this section over the coming months. U-girder, approximately 28 metres long and weighing 160 metric tonnes, was carefully positioned with the oversight of senior Kanpur Metro officials and the contracting agency.



The erection of U-girders for the elevated section under the Kanpur Metro Rail Project began on Saturday.

The girders used in the elevated infrastructure of the Kanpur Metro are pre-cast. This means they are first prepared in a casting yard and then transported to the designated location along the corridor where they are placed using a crane. The process of positioning these pre-cast structures at their designated locations is known as "erection".

U-girders are integral to the construction of the metro viaduct, which forms the base of the metro track. The elevated infrastructure of Kanpur Metro involves first erecting a pier cap on each pier, followed by the installation of a girder—whether U-girder, I-girder, or Double T-girder—on top of the Pier Cap. Congratulating the team of metro engineers on this achievement, UPMRC Managing Director Sushil Kumar said, "Along with the completion of the balance section of Corridor-1, civil construction work on Corridor-2 of the Kanpur Metro is progressing rapidly. Engineers at Uttar Pradesh Metro are working tirelessly to ensure that the project moves forward at an optimal pace and meets international standards. Soon, a trial run will be conducted from Motijheel to Kanpur Central,

with full commercial services expected to begin by January 2025. This will significantly enhance the city's public transport system and provide easier, more convenient travel for commuters. The UPMRC team is carrying out the construction work in a highly organised manner, with the same commitment and dedication that was demonstrated during the development of the Kanpur and Agra Metro priority sections."

NEW OPD: Apart from many medical facilities available in the city, Medanta Lucknow has also started its Cardiothoracic and Vascular Surgery (CTVS) outpatient department (OPD) in Kanpur, marking a significant expansion of heart care services in the region. The new OPD will provide city residents with easy access to world-class cardiac treatment, enhancing local healthcare services. The unit was inaugurated by Prof. Gauranga Majumdar, a

renowned cardiothoracic and cardiovascular surgeon and head of Medanta's CTVS department in Lucknow. "Our goal is to make advanced heart care accessible to the people of Kanpur without the need for long-distance travel. This new OPD ensures that patients of all ages can receive expert consultations and treatments locally," said Prof. Majumdar. The Kanpur OPD will conduct regular consultations at the Kanpur Cardiology Centre, near I.L.R. Metro Station on the third Saturday of each month from 12 pm to 3 pm where Prof. Majumdar will see all patients having heart-lung ailments and advise treatment and assist patients in exploring treatment options. The new OPD in Kanpur is part of Medanta's ongoing effort to bring expert medical services closer to communities across Uttar Pradesh, complementing existing services in Gorakhpur, Allahabad and Varanasi.

KBA office-bearers administered oath



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Administrative Judge Abdul Moim administered oath to new office-bearers of the Kanpur Bar Association (KBA) at the Collectorate Lawns on Saturday. Speaking on the occasion, he said, "Bar and Bench are like two wheels of a bicycle and complementary to each other. Coordination between these two wheels is necessary as in the absence of one, a bicycle cannot be used". He also stressed on regular studies by young lawyers to shine in their profession. By making a library in their mobile phone or laptop, they should preserve the High Court and Supreme Court judgements in them, he

added. Administrative Judge Anish Kumar said young lawyers should always respect their seniors. Judge Pradip Kumar Singh and member of Bar Council Prashant Singh also addressed the gathering. In his concluding address, President Indivar Bajpai said the coordination between the Bar and Bench is possible only with their assistance. General secretary Amit Singh conducted the proceedings while the former general secretary Aditya Singh presented the progress report of his regime. Other office-bearers who took oath on the occasion were Amit Singh, Vijay Shanker Rawat, Shiv Pratap Singh Chauhan, Virendra Kumar Pasi, Gaurang

Trivedi, Akash Tewari, Pankaj Dixit, Hari Shanker Yadav, Anshu Ahmad Khan, Rakesh Kumar Shukla, Neeraj Nigam, Vishwanath Gupta, Suman Tewari, Rinki, Amit Kumar Gupta, Kanak Kishore Mishra, Kuldeep Tewari, Anurag Singh and Vatsal Singh.

INTERACTION PROGRAMME: The Students-Parents Interaction programme was held at Jwala Devi Vidya Mandir PG College under the guidance of the Principal Prof. Geeta Asthana on Sunday. The programme commenced with the lighting of the lamp. The chief guest was UP Higher Education Minister, Yogendra Upadhyaya. The other dignitaries present were Finance Minister Suresh K Khanna, MP Ramesh Awasthi, MLA Surendra Maithani, Himanshu Pradhan (Secretary, Managing Committee), Rohit Tomar (Joint Secretary) and Dr. Gargi Singh, Principal, JDMV Inter College. In his speech Yogendra Upadhyaya said he felt delighted to be here. The programme ended with the national anthem.

Sports competition inaugurated

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Under the joint aegis of Divisional Sports Association and Manoranjan Sansthan (Entertainment Institute), Varanasi North Eastern Railway (NER), the Inter-Departmental Annual Sports Competition-2024 'Unnayan' was inaugurated with the inauguration of cricket competition at NER Mini Stadium, Lahartara on Sunday from 9.30 am. The T20 cricket competition was inaugurated by Additional Divisional Railway Manager (Infrastructure) Roshan Lal Yadav by playing cricket, introducing the players and conducting the toss of the Railway Protection Force (RPF) and Mechanical team. This year the competition is entering its tenth year and it has started with coloured clothes and white ball. After the inter-departmental cricket competition in the first phase of the annual sports festival organised every year, volleyball and badminton competitions will also be organised in the second phase. On the occasion, Senior Divisional Safety Officer and

Divisional Sports Officer Balendra Pal, Chief Medical Superintendent Dr. RJ Choudhury, Divisional Commercial Manager Ramesh Pandey, Assistant Safety



Commissioner S Tatiyal, Assistant Safety Officer Abhishek Rai along with senior players and sports lovers were present. The NER Inter-Departmental Annual Sports Competition 2024 started with a cricket competition. The inaugural match was played between RPF and Mechanical Department. RPF won the toss and batted first and scored 144 runs for 7 wickets in the stipulated 20 overs. From RPF, Javed scored 34 runs with the help of

four fours and a six in 27 balls, Avinash Rai scored 40 runs with the help of three fours and a six in 29 balls and Ram Bahadur Yadav scored 14 runs in 11 balls. From Mechanical Department, Vineet Ranjan took two wickets for 28 runs in four overs. Vishal Singh, Mukesh, Prashant and Rishabh got one wicket each. Chasing the target of 145 runs, the entire team of Mechanical Department was all out after scoring 120 runs in 18 overs. RPF won the match by 24 runs and got full 2 points. Deepak Srivastava from Mechanical side did brilliant batting and scored 60 runs with the help of eight fours and two sixes in 44 balls. Nitish contributed 22 runs with the help of four fours in 22 balls and Sujit contributed 13 runs. Satish Chandra from RPF side took three wickets by giving 11 runs in two overs. Javed took two wickets and Santosh took one wicket each. Satish Chandra of RPF, who took three wickets by giving 11 runs in two overs, was given the 'Man of the Match' award by Senior Divisional Safety Officer and Divisional Sports Officer (NER Varanasi) Balendra Pal.

ARM: 50 electric buses being operated in Varanasi city

Varanasi (PNS): The state government is taking other measures along with planting 36.80 crore saplings to save the environment from pollution. Electric buses operating in Varanasi are saving the environment and money along with making the journey of passengers pleasant. By operating electric buses in place of diesel vehicles, not only 3,000 litres of diesel is saved per day but carbon emissions are also being controlled. This has a direct impact on the health of the environment. The country's foreign exchange is also being saved due to this initiative of the Yogi government. Along with development, the state government is giving full emphasis on environmental protection to avoid global warming. ARM AK Singh of Varanasi City Transport Services Limited informed that 50 electric buses are being operated in Varanasi city. This is saving 3,000 litres of diesel per day.

Along with saving diesel, the health of the environment is also improving due to reduction in carbon emissions by 7,500 kilograms per day (2.50 KGM per litre per day) which is proving to be very helpful in environmental protection. He informed that the cost of diesel for operating diesel buses was around Rs 80 lakh to 82 lakh in a month, whereas the cost of electricity for operating electric buses is only around 12 to 14 lakh rupees in a month. By operating e-buses in place of diesel buses, there is a saving of around Rs 68 to 70 lakh in a month. The running of electric buses in place of diesel buses in the city is also helping in environmental protection, which is helping in protecting from the dangers of global warming. About 28 people can sit in an AC e-bus. The buses are equipped with CCTV cameras and GPS system, as well as a panic button for the safety of women.

BHU V-C visits WBSC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The Banaras Hindu University (BHU) is committed to fostering a holistic environment for its students and has taken a significant step towards addressing the mental health related issues of students, including promoting positive mental health, resilience and well-being through its Well-being Service Cell (WBSC). Vice-Chancellor Prof. SK Jain interacting with counsellors and fellows at WBSC at BHU in Varanasi

Education. The primary objective of the visit was to discuss strategies to further strengthen the WBSC and ensure comprehensive and effective mental health support for all BHU students. In his address, the V-C stated that the impact of the work being done must be measured over a fixed period of time, periodically. He stated that changes in thought need planning and such changes takes time to show results, one may face many issues but we should keep on doing good work until and unless it is accomplished. Recently, at the first-ever National Wellbeing Conclave (NWC) 2024 held at IIT Hyderabad by the Ministry of Education, BHU's efforts have been lauded for its student-centric focus and approach on student's mental health and well-being.

Mumbai police makes new arrest in Baba Siddique murder case

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ MUMBAI

The Mumbai Crime Branch on Sunday arrested a Gujarat resident from Akola in Maharashtra in connection with the Baba Siddique murder case, taking the number of people held in the sensational assassination to 25, an official said.



Salmanbhai Iqbalbhai Vohra, a resident of Petlad in Gujarat's Anand district, was held from Balapur in Akola, some 565 kilometres from Mumbai, with the help of the police there, the Crime Branch official said.

The 66-year-old NCP leader was gunned down on October 12 near his MLA son Zeeshan Siddique's office in Bandra East's Nirmal Nagar area. "Vohra had opened a bank account in May this year and had provided financial support to Nareshkumar Singh, brother of arrested accused Gurmil Singh, Rupesh Mohol and Harishkumar. He has also helped others connected to the crime," the official said. Gurmil Singh from Haryana and Uttar Pradesh resident Dharmaraj Kashyap were held from the spot immediately after the murder. The police recently got a major breakthrough in the case when it arrested alleged main shooter Shivkumar Gautam from Bahrachi in Uttar Pradesh. Gautam, who was on the run since October 12, was held while trying to flee to Nepal, as per police.

PM praises 'The Sabarmati Report' movie

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ MUMBAI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday praised the film 'The Sabarmati Report', saying the "truth is coming out." "Well said. It is good that this truth is coming out, and that too in a way common people can see it. A fake narrative can persist only for a limited period of time. Eventually, the facts will always come out!" the prime minister said in a social media post.

He made these assertions while replying to an social media user who had tagged him with a video of the trailer of the film, which released on Friday. "The Sabarmati Report' is based on the burning of S-6 coach of Sabarmati Express near Godhra station of Gujarat on February 27, 2002, in which 59 Hindu devotees returning from Ayodhya were burnt to death. The incident triggered riots in Gujarat that year. Dheeraj Sarna has directed 'The Sabarmati Report', produced by Shobha Kapoor, Ekta R Kapoor, Amul V Mohan and Anshul Mohan. The film features Vikrant Massey, Raashii Khanna and Ridhi Dogra. This is not the first time when Prime Minister Narendra Modi has praised a film. In 2022, he praised Vivek Agnihotri's 'The Kashmir Files'.

Nadda repeats PM claims on Bangladeshis, infiltration in Jharkhand



PTI ■ RANCHI

J.P. Nadda, president of the BJP, on Sunday attacked the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM)-led coalition government in Jharkhand, accusing it of sheltering Bangladeshi infiltrators in madrasas in the state and ensuring Aadhaar, voter ID card, gas connection, ration card and land for them. Nadda also hit out at Congress leader Rahul Gandhi saying he wants to become champion of OBCs, but questioned how many OBC members were in Rajiv Gandhi Foundation and National Advisory Committee. "I have received an intelligence report just now. It says that Bangladeshi infiltrators are given shelter in madrasas here. Their Aadhaar, voter ID, gas connection and ration card are facilitated and then the Hemant Soren government ensures land for them.

"Hemant Soren looted jal-jungle-jameen of Jharkhand, infiltration is rampant here. Infiltrators are marrying tribal women and grabbing their land. We will bring a legislation to ensure that their offspring is debarred from land. Only PM Modi-led BJP government can check infiltration," Nadda said while addressing a poll rally at Gomia in Bokaro district. He also termed the entire JMM-RJD-Congress as a kunba (family) of corrupt leaders and added that INDIA bloc leaders were either in jail or on bail. "Hemant Soren, who is out on bail, will again go to prison. He has indulged in Rs 5,000-crore mining scam, Rs 236-crore land scam, and several other scams," Nadda alleged. "The Hemant Soren government followed divide and rule policy and created unrest among people. Now it is time for their exit. We will be forming the government here," Nadda said.

He alleged that the Hemant Soren government betrayed people, looted state and promoted dynastic politics. "I say this with pride that there are 27 OBC ministers in PM Modi's cabinet," he said. PM Modi-led NDA government is bringing OBCs, tribals and SCs to the mainstream, he claimed. "The BJP-led government at the Centre spent Rs 19 lakh crore to augment infrastructure and will spend Rs 10 lakh crore more on it," he added. Nadda also said that under the Modi regime, agriculture budget increased by five times and India became the third-largest automobile manufacturer, second-largest steel maker, third-biggest market for toys and produces the world's most affordable drugs. He said five medical colleges were being set up in Jharkhand and PM Modi had allocated Rs 250 crore each for them.

Rahul urges PM to visit Manipur

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, on Saturday termed the recent string of violent clashes and continuing bloodshed in Manipur "deeply disturbing", as he urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to visit the state and work towards restoring peace in the region. A day after the bodies of three out of six missing persons were fished out of a river in

Manipur, protesters on Saturday attacked the residences of three state ministers and six MLAs, prompting the government to clamp prohibitory orders in five districts for an indefinite period besides suspending internet services in parts of the state. In a post on X, Rahul Gandhi said the recent string of violent clashes and continuing bloodshed in Manipur is deeply disturbing. "After more than a year of

division and suffering, it was the hope of every Indian that the Central and state governments would make every effort at reconciliation and found a solution," the former Congress chief said. "I urge the PM once again to visit Manipur and work towards restoring peace and healing in the region," Gandhi said. In Imphal, angry protesters ransacked the houses of three legislators, including that of Chief Minister N Biren Singh's son-

in-law, and set their properties on fire even as the security forces fired tear gas shells to disperse the agitators. The Congress has been attacking the prime minister for not visiting Manipur, besides slamming the Centre for its handling of the situation in the ethnic strife-torn northeastern state. The violence between Meitei and Kuki communities in Manipur has claimed more than 200 lives since May last year.

BJP claims cleanhit on 40 per cent commission barb

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ BENGALURU

The BJP in Karnataka on Sunday claimed that the Lokayukta probe has cleared the party's previous government from 40 per cent commission charges, and that the allegations levelled by the Congress against it as completely false. The BJP leaders said that it is proved that the 40 per cent commission allegation was part of the Congress' "tool kit". During the 2023 Assembly polls, the then opposition Congress had used the Karnataka State Contractors' Association's allegations of 40 per cent commission charge as a major weapon to corner the then BJP government, which is said to be one among the factors that led to the saffron party's debacle in the election.

Three women drown to death in Mangalore

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Three young women, all in their early 20s, drowned on Sunday morning in the swimming pool of a beach resort in Someshwara Uchula near Mangalore where they were staying. The youngsters, Nishita (21), Parvathi (20) and Keerthana (21), all hailing from Mysuru, were playing in the swimming pool of the resort when tragedy struck leading to the mishap.

According to persons close to the Wa Beach Resort, where the incident occurred, one of the youngsters drowned in the water, and when another tried to rescue her, she too drowned, leading the third woman to enter the water. This incident reportedly occurred within a matter of minutes. The resort staff discovered the incident and raised the alarm. Visuals from the CCTV installed in the

resort recorded the incident showing the young women struggling in the water. A team led by Ullal police inspector HN Balakrishna has visited the scene and is conducting an investigation. Though the resort and police authorities claim that it was a mishap caused by the negligence, there are instances like young women getting killed in mysterious circumstances in Kerala and Karnataka.

In November 2021, Anjana Shajan (first runner-up in Miss Kerala championship) and Ansi Kabber, a model, were killed in the wee hours of the day when the car they were travelling crashed against a two wheeler. Though the police had taken into custody the owner of the star hotel where the ladies had their dinner and entertainment, nothing has been heard since then.

Bhramo Samaj, RK Mission clash over property in Shimla, seven injured



PTI ■ SHIMLA

Seven people, including three police personnel were injured following a dispute between two Hindu groups here -- the Himalayan Brahma Samaj and the Ramakrishna Mission Ashram -- in the heart of the state capital, police said on Sunday. The premises of the Ramakrishna Mission Ashram, located within the Brahma Samaj property near the Vidhan Sabha was also damaged in the conflict, they said. The clash occurred after over a 100 people, including elderly women associated with the Himalayan Brahma Samaj, peacefully entered the ashram premises on Saturday evening to perform prayers, Sanjeev Kumar Gandhi Shimla superintendent of police (SP) said. The group wished to continue their prayers into the night, but the members of the Ramakrishna Mission Ashram, who are in possession of the premises, objected, citing that they wished to close the ashram for the night, Gandhi said. Anticipating a possible takeover attempt, as there is an ongoing dispute over the ownership of the property reported worth crores, the ashram authorities called the police and administration for

assistance, said ashram office bearers. According to the SP, it was a sensitive issue as it involved religious sentiments, hence police and administration were present at the spot, to mediate and resolve the matter. However, when the Himalayan Brahma Samaj followers completed their prayers and agreed to leave on the condition that they will be allowed to perform prayers on Sunday, people gathered by the Ramakrishna Mission started pelting stones injuring seven people including three police personals, the SP said. Two FIRs have been registered against seven people including Sheetal Vyas, her husband ABVP leader Nitin Vyas, under sections 132 (assault against public servant discharging their duty), 121 (causing hurt to public servant), 221 (obstruction), 191 (unlawful assembly), 194 (2) (public fight disturbing peace) and 196 (2) (offence at place of worship) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, the police said. Swami Tanmahimanand, secretary of the Ramakrishna Mission Ashram, alleged that the property was handed over to the ashram by the Brahma Samaj for religious purposes and that the mission has been residing there since 2014.

Tanmahimanand said on Saturday, their gardener, who also looks after the ashram premises, and some union leaders held a conference in Kali Bari temple. Thereafter, they entered the ashram as devotees and performed puja, heard pravachan and when at 8:30 pm they wished to close the ashram, members of the Himalayan Brahma Samaj raised slogans of 'Jai Brahma, this is our temple and you have occupied it' and refused to vacate, he said. "Everyone has the right to perform puja but no one has the right to take possession of the ashram and our demand is that the people of Himalayan Brahma Samaj should vacate the temple (ashram)", he added. Swami Ram Rupanand, co-secretary of the ashram said that an attempt was made to forcefully take possession of the temple and alleged that the administration and police remained a mute spectator to the incident. He also demanded a CBI inquiry into the incident. Trustee, Himalayan Brahma Samaj, Shimla MR Sagroli said that a two-day Brahma Samaj conference was held in Shimla and their members from across the country wanted to visit the temple (ashram) and they should be allowed to access.

Delhi court grants exemption to Vikash Yadav from appearance

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

A Delhi court has granted exemption from personal appearance to Vikash Yadav, accused of attempting to kill alleged Khalistani terrorist Gurbatwant Singh Pannun in the USA, in a case of kidnapping and extortion lodged against him after he claimed threat to life. Special Judge Sumit Dass granted the exemption to Yadav for November 16 on an application moved by his lawyer, claiming that his personal details have been made public, putting his life at risk. The judge directed him to appear before the court on February 3, the next date of hearing. Yadav was arrested by the Special Cell of Delhi Police in December last year following a complaint by a Delhi-based businessman, accusing him of



extorting and kidnapping. A charge sheet was filed in March and Yadav was granted bail in April. Yadav, said to be a former RAW official, was named by the US in connection with the failed assassination attempt on Pannun.

published all over the world, exposing the applicant to serious threat to his life from nefarious elements". "The applicant is being hounded by continuous surveillance by inimical elements who are trying to trace the applicant at all possible places leaving no option for the applicant but to ensure his safety in confines. Threat to the life of the applicant is clear, present, grave, imminent and potential and physical appearance of applicant before the court is likely to lend an opportunity to annihilate the applicant," the application claimed. It claimed that even to appear through video conference was "extremely unsafe" as Yadav's location might be detected by use of electronic technology. The applicant is keen to earn his innocence through trial and is represented by his counsel, it claimed.

NGT asks UP to maintain Adi Ganga Gomti

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has directed authorities in Uttar Pradesh to take expeditious steps to tap untapped drains, besides taking all possible measures to maintain the riverine ecology of the Adi Ganga Gomti river in Jaunpur district. The green body was hearing a matter regarding the drying up of the river and its chemical pollution, which has caused the death of a large number of fish. In an order dated November eight, a bench of NGT Chairperson Justice Prakash Shrivastava noted that a joint team of the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), Uttar Pradesh Pollution Control Board (UPPCB) and district authorities had inspected the river and submitted a report.

India's decarbonisation policies will impact global greenhouse gas emissions

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

A report by Climate Action Tracker 2020 has said that India's policy and programmes for decarbonising its cities will have a significant impact on global greenhouse gas emissions. Decarbonising the Indian Transport Sector Pathways and Policies, India's transport sector is responsible for 13.5 per cent of the country's energy-related CO2 emissions, with road transport accounting for 90 per cent of the sector's final energy consumption. While transport emissions have been steadily increasing

in the backdrop of growing demand for Internal Combustion Engine, policy interventions, investments and initiatives by central and state governments is playing a pivotal role in enabling and expanding green public and private mobility in urban areas. These large-scale public initiatives to decarbonise cities and transport are supported by public, private and development sectors. Home to the world's largest population, India's action will significantly impact global emissions, especially around transport. The Indo-Gangetic Plain (IGP), encompassing Uttar

Pradesh, Bihar, and Jharkhand, remains one of India's most polluted and climate-vulnerable regions. Decarbonising urban mobility here is crucial for addressing the dual crises of air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. In this context, the Climate Agenda will be hosting first Regional Convention on Clean and Inclusive Urban Transport Systems that will focus on fostering equity and inclusivity in sustainable mobility solutions. It aims to spotlight the challenges faced by marginalized groups, such as women, children, and the elderly, while promoting their

active participation in shaping urban transport systems that cater to their needs. "The convention seeks to align with and support existing government initiatives like the Smart Cities Mission and FAME. By identifying unique regional challenges such as inadequate infrastructure and informal transit systems, the event aims to offer actionable solutions tailored to these states. With a focus on electrifying public transport fleets, the convention will present a roadmap to accelerate adoption and set the foundation for future

collaborations, ensuring that the region contributes significantly to India's climate goals while fostering sustainable urban growth" said Ekta Shekhar, Founding Director, The Climate Agenda. The convention will also be an opportunity to launch first-of-its kind collaborative platform with aim for knowledge-sharing, demand generation and joint action in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Jharkhand in promoting the electrification of public transport, fostering collaboration across sectors, and supporting a transition to cleaner, more sustainable urban mobility solutions.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Left turn ho!

Anura Kumara Disanayake's election triumph could prove to be a turning point for Sri Lanka's politics and South Asia

Sri Lanka has done it again. After electing Anura Kumara Disanayake as President his left-leaning party has secured a majority in the parliament, which gives Anura a complete control over Sri Lanka. What is more startling is that his party has decimated the Tamil parties in the northern Sri Lanka, which was the stronghold of Tamil parties. This is indeed a stunning political shift. Anura Kumara Disanayake, leader of Sri Lanka's National People's Power (NPP), has achieved a resounding victory in the country's parliamentary elections, winning 123 out of 225 seats in Sri Lanka's Parliament. This outcome, which comes barely two months after Disanayake's election as President on September 21, marks a pivotal moment in the nation's political landscape and could have significant ramifications not only for Sri Lanka but also for the wider South Asian region. Disanayake's rise to prominence is both unexpected and historic. His party, despite winning only 42 per cent of the presidential vote, has managed to galvanise a broad cross-section of Sri Lankan society, particularly in regions where other political forces have traditionally held sway. His victory represents a rejection of the traditional political elites that have long governed the island since its independence in 1948, and it signifies the growing appeal of his platform advocating for economic revival and social justice. Notably, the NPP's win in the Jaffna district—a historically Tamil-majority area in the northern part of Sri Lanka—has surprised political pundits. For decades, Tamil ethnic parties have dominated this region, a legacy of the civil war (1983-2009) that left a deep divide between the Tamil minority and the Sinhalese-majority government.



This victory in Jaffna is symbolic of a new approach to ethnic relations in Sri Lanka. Traditionally, the Tamil population has been wary of Sinhalese-majority leaders, given the traumatic history of the civil conflict, where over 100,000 lives were lost according to conservative UN estimates. Disanayake's success in these areas suggests that many Tamils are willing to embrace a new kind of leadership, one that offers economic promise and a path forward, beyond ethnic divisions. Disanayake's victory carries significant implications for the future of Sri Lanka. First and foremost, his strong mandate gives him the political capital needed to implement his economic revival agenda, which is urgently needed as Sri Lanka grapples with economic instability and growing debt. Disanayake has long advocated for Marxist economic policies, including land reforms, wealth redistribution and greater state control over key industries. If successful, his administration could lead to a reshaping of Sri Lanka's economy, potentially benefiting marginalised communities, including Tamils and other ethnic minorities. Disanayake's popularity, especially among younger voters and ethnic minorities, suggests a growing demand for alternative political solutions. But can he live up to people's expectations, bring about radical changes and maintain ethnic harmony? That is the big question only time can tell!

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PICTALK



Labourers thresh paddy at a field on the outskirts of Amritsar

The smog capital of India

As Delhi battles a toxic mix of seasonal stubble burning and local pollution sources, its residents are exposed to severe and potentially life-threatening health risks



RAJDEEP PATHAK

The National Capital Territory of Delhi, which is home to nearly 30 million people, has been grappling with dangerously high pollution levels for over two weeks. On Wednesday, November 13, 2024, the air quality index (AQI) across Delhi remained in the 'very poor' category, marking the 15th consecutive day when residents faced increased health risks from the polluted air. According to official data (the Air Quality Early Warning System for Delhi, managed by the Central Government), this situation will likely persist for at least six days. In parallel, the city is also experiencing an unusually warm spell that defies typical seasonal trends, adding complexity to an already challenging situation for residents. This grim forecast highlights the role of unfavourable meteorological conditions that limit the dispersal of pollutants, essentially trapping them close to the ground. The AQI measures levels of harmful pollutants in the air, with a higher value indicating a greater concentration of pollutants. While an AQI between 300 and 400 is considered "very poor," levels above 400 are classified as "severe," meaning the pollution is severe enough to affect even healthy individuals. The IMD has reported that the typical winter season may not arrive in Delhi as quickly as expected, thereby disrupting long-established weather patterns that typically bring cooler, less polluted air to the region.



There are many contributors to this game, the primary being: vehicle emissions, industrial activities, construction dust, and the neighbouring states of Punjab and Haryana which engage in the seasonal burning of crop residue. The primary pollutant in Delhi's air, according to IQAir—a global air quality monitoring agency based in Switzerland—is PM2.5, a fine particulate matter that can penetrate deeply into the lungs. Earlier this month, parts of Delhi recorded Air Quality Index (AQI) levels as high as 1,133, placing them in the "hazardous" category. Prolonged exposure to such elevated PM2.5 levels poses serious health risks, including respiratory infections, asthma attacks and even heightened mortality rates among vulnerable populations. Warmer-than-normal temperatures hinder the ability of pollutants to disperse, as colder temperatures usually facilitate the movement of these particles away from the urban air layer. The combination of stagnant weather conditions, pollution, and warm temperatures has created a perfect whirlpool of the smog's persistence over Delhi, making it more difficult for the city to "breathe" as it would in cooler conditions. Health experts believe that exposure to high levels of pollution can lead to short-term



THE DENSE FOG MIXED WITH THICK SMOG HAS CREATED A NEAR-TOTAL OBSCURITY, AS CITIZENS FOUND THEMSELVES ENVELOPED IN A HAZARDOUS BLEND OF POLLUTANTS AND MOISTURE RESULTING IN KEEPING DAYTIME TEMPERATURES LOWER THAN EXPECTED

effects like coughing, throat irritation and chest tightness. In the long term, the risks increase substantially, with studies linking air pollution exposure to chronic respiratory diseases, lung cancer, heart disease, and even impacts on cognitive functions. Air pollution is a severe health crisis in India, causing between 1.2 million and 1.8 million premature deaths each year. The 7 million annual deaths from air pollution worldwide exceed those from COVID-19, as well as combined fatalities from war, homicide, car and plane accidents. Clean air is essential for human health, yet scientific studies continue to reveal new health risks linked to air pollution, including respiratory diseases, heart issues, stroke, and lung cancer, as well as emerging links to premature births, diabetes, and brain damage. Poor air quality can also worsen outcomes for COVID-19 by increasing vulnerability to respiratory illnesses. Dr David R Boyd, Institute for Resources, Environment and Sustainability, University of British Columbia, CA, Associate Professor in law, policy and Sustainability in his paper "The Human Rights to Breathe Clean Air" published in The National Library of Medicine (2019) necessitates the urgency for treating air pollution as a human rights issue and that "Air pollution on

today's scale, clearly violates the rights to life and health, the rights of the child and the right to live in a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment" and that there is an urgent need to voice that the legal support of a human rights issue, since Dr David says that "The human rights perspective changes everything—because governments have clear, legally enforceable obligations to respect, protect, and fulfil human rights. As Delhi battles yet another season of toxic air, the health and wellbeing of millions are at stake. The situation demands urgent and coordinated action from the government, industry, and residents (read citizens). Sustainable improvement requires systemic changes to reduce pollution at its source. While the road to a cleaner, healthier Delhi may be long, there is hope in ongoing technological and policy developments aimed at reducing pollution. As more people become aware of the critical importance of air quality, public support for environmental initiatives will continue to grow, fostering a collective movement toward cleaner air and a better quality of life for all Delhiites and others who visit to see the grandeur of the Capital City. When... It's in our hands! (The writer is Programme Executive, Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Smriti; views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

INFANT LIVES LOST

Madam — The shocking fire accident in the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) of Maharani Laxmibai Medical College in Jhansi, Uttar Pradesh, in which at least 10 newborn babies died due to burns and suffocation and some still struggling for their lives, is really heart-wrenching. Just a few months back, a devastating fire in a newborn care unit of a children's hospital in Delhi had claimed the precious lives of infants. Lack of preparedness, readiness to tackle fire accidents, be it due to short circuit or any other sort and lack of awareness on what to do in case of such incidents make us victims to infernos. The death of these little innocent infants poses a big question: when are we really going to learn our lessons? Be it hospitals or hotels, movie halls or malls, people may not have the slightest bit of idea about the escape routes, layouts and other possible ways of escape in case of an inferno. Staff of the concerned establishments should be prepared to rescue or at least guide the guests to safety. Intensive care units and baby care units should definitely have safety arrangements so that such fire accidents can be prevented. Buildings should have a common way to exit that anyone, irrespective of age and gender, should be able to identify and escape immediately. Buildings should have proper fire and electricity safety devices and these must be checked occasionally. Staff, especially in sensitive places like hospitals, schools, and hotels, should take part in mock drills and be ever ready in case of emergency. Schools and colleges should include fire disaster management lessons in their physical education curriculum so that we can groom citizens who can face such emergencies boldly, wisely, and bravely and even help the weak and those who are very young.

M Pradyu | Kannur

BULLDOZER RULE ENDS

Madam — The spirit of the verdict should sensitise all the concerned. Bulldozing the structures of those who are branded as

Secure online transactions



The rapid growth of digital payments, from banking to shopping, has made everything done online nowadays; it has opened doors for scammers as they continue to evolve their methods to con people in newer ways. Cybercriminals are

employing new tricks to defraud individuals, like fake UPI transaction images, net banking fraud through emails, etc. And from common citizens to government officials, no one is untouched by these scammers.

There are various things that we must do if we fall prey to such scammers, like contacting authorised customer care centers, reporting incidents immediately to the National Cyber Crime Helpline, documenting everything, keeping strong passwords, and staying informed through social media, etc. A strong and rigorous awareness campaign has to be started by the government of India so that these scammers do not have a free run & individuals are safe.

Bal Govind | Noida

criminals and those of communally ostracised is an act that proclaims the rule of a dictator and the death of democracy. The rule of law is thrown in bins and the individual's whims and fancies of the persons at the helm of power prevail only in a totalitarian state.

The salient feature of the verdict is the part that recommends payment of compensation to the victims. The bureaucratic section should stick to the statutory provisions and should not dance to the tunes of those in power, as persons in power may come and go but laws prevail forever. Also, those who permit illegal constructions in the water areas should be penalised by making them compensate the victims when such structures are razed. But the crux of the issue is the corruption and avaricious attitude of the political bigwigs to enjoy a monopoly in enjoying asset accumulation by demolishing dissents and oppositions. The real solution to such issues could emerge only from a people's movement against corruption.

A G Rajmohan | Anantapur

DELHI POLLUTION CRISIS

Madam — The Delhi Chief Minister Atishi has directed all educational institutions, particularly the primary schools, to shift to online classes while going to the very high risk of AQI in the state. The Delhi civic authorities started implementing methods like sprinkling water with dust suppressants on roads, as well as mechanised sweeping that would help settle dust, which also came into effect. There is a ban on non-essential constructions in the world's most polluted capital. The air quality has worsened to the level that the image of the Taj Mahal appears to be a kind of ghost at the moment. The manmade calamity by worsening air conditions and the cleaning up of the image by the Delhi government's AAP has become like a war for them, which is symbolic of the party's election symbol, the 'Broom', to rebuild their unclean image nearing the elections along with other major issues.

A P Thiruvadi | Chennai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

Let us be comfortable with silence to discover inner self



ASHA IYER KUMAR

Silence is empowering, it not only gives peace but also strength and clarity. It invites us to reconnect with our inner calm, a solitude we often shun

I am writing this column from the quiet environs of an Alpine valley in Germany. The winter has set in, turning the skies grey and the air bleary. This small town in Bavaria withdraws into its living rooms as early as 4.30 pm when darkness falls and then there is only silence all around, made palpable by the dwindling traffic and people on the streets. For someone who is used to the non-stop noise of metropolitan Dubai, this silence is new and comforting. The downtime it offers is not everyone's cup of tea though, for silence can be disconcerting to many. Its virtues are disregarded and it is taken as a sign of lethargy and dispiritedness, an absence of inspiration and the ultimate sign of an introverted personality. In a world teeming with sounds, silence has become something of an endangered species. It is the quietude that we collectively fear as if the absence of words leaves us exposed, untethered, and somehow incomplete. When conversations taper off,



there's often an instinctual drive to fill the void, a compulsion to keep the hum of interaction alive lest silence brings its "awkwardness" into the room. But I often wonder, is silence something to be avoided? Or is it, in fact, a sanctuary we have lost touch with, one that could lead us back to ourselves? I think of the times I have seen people—close friends, even strangers—grapple with the discomfort of a pause, reaching for words as if they were life preservers in a sea of quiet. We are, it seems, constantly seeking refuge in noise, hoping it will drown out whatever solitude and reflection might stir in us if given the chance. Silence is perceived as

emptiness, a fearful space, rather than a fertile ground for connection and self-discovery. We are conditioned to believe that engagement is strength and that silence, somehow, signals inadequacy. To be quiet in conversation is almost seen as a failing; we are regarded as "shy" or "distant." Yet, silence has its richness, a subtle power that invites us into the fullness of presence, something words cannot always offer. In silence, we are called to listen, not only to others but also to our inner voice and perhaps that's where the unease begins. The quiet holds a mirror up to us, revealing what lies within when the outside world fades to a hush. Silence invites us to reconnect with an inner calm, a solitude we often shun. Instead of fearing what might emerge in the absence of chatter, we might learn to find comfort in simply being—without the compulsion to fill every moment with talk. In this way, silence is not a void; it is an invitation to pause, to settle our racing minds and to let the

dust of daily life drift gently to the ground. Consider, too, the depth that silence brings to relationships. When we share a moment of quiet with someone, we are not erasing the connection; we are deepening it. It is in these pauses that we see each other most clearly, unfiltered by words, and held by the simple act of shared presence. Yet, our tendency to fear silence as awkward makes us miss the power of these moments—times when we could breathe alongside one another, unburdened by the need to perform or impress. It is time we learn to embrace silence not as an absence but as a presence—a steady, gentle force that grounds us when words have exhausted their role. For in those quiet spaces, we can find not just peace, but a reservoir of strength and clarity, one that restores rather than depletes, and brings solace to our weary souls. (The author is a columnist and children's writing coach based in Dubai; views are personal)



FIRST COLUMN

SERVANT LEADERSHIP

Servant leadership redefines leadership, emphasising the leader's role as a servant to their team



SAKSHI SETHI

In an increasingly complex and interconnected world, the traditional top-down leadership model is often insufficient for addressing the challenges organisations and communities face. The concept of servant leadership approach which, prioritises service to others over self-interest, has emerged as a vital alternative for fostering trust, collaboration and sustainable success.

Servant leadership is grounded in a set of key principles such as empathy, awareness, commitment to growth, stewardship that distinguish it from traditional, top-down leadership models. Trust in leadership across industries is at an all-time low, exacerbated by scandals, corporate greed and exploitative practices. By putting people first, servant leaders create a foundation of reliability and authenticity that restores faith in leadership.

Nowadays modern employees seek more than just a paycheck. They want meaningful work, supportive environments and leaders who genuinely care about their growth and wellbeing. Servant leadership aligns with these expectations by fostering empowerment, empathy and commitment to growth. This approach helps organisations attract and retain top talent in competitive job markets. Servant Leadership has proven effective in various contexts, from corporate settings to community organisations. Companies like Southwest Airlines and Starbucks have integrated servant leadership into their management philosophies, resulting in loyal employees and strong customer relationships. In education, servant leadership fosters supportive environments where teachers and students thrive. Similarly, nonprofit organisations benefit from servant leaders who prioritise the needs of the communities they serve.



It is often believed that, in times of crisis, such as economic downturns or global pandemics, organisations with servant leaders are more likely to thrive as these leaders provide stability and reassurance to their teams; prioritise people over profits during tough times and even empower employees to adapt and innovate. In an era where businesses are held accountable for their societal and environmental impact, servant leadership helps organisations fulfill their social responsibilities. By focusing on stewardship and community building, servant leaders ensure that their organisations contribute positively to society.

While servant leadership offers numerous benefits, it is not without its challenges. Its emphasis on service, empathy and community-building can sometimes create complexities, especially in environments that demand rapid decision-making or highly competitive strategies. Undeniably, this approach is a compassionate and effective approach in many scenarios but is not a one-size-fits-all solution. To succeed, it must be carefully balanced with the demands of the organisation and tailored to the specific context in which it is applied. By placing the wellbeing and development of others at the forefront, servant leaders foster trust, collaboration and sustainable success. In an era where ethical leadership is more important than ever, adopting the principles of servant leadership can lead to profound, lasting impact not just within organisations, but in society as a whole. By serving first, leaders ultimately inspire and empower others to achieve their fullest potential.

In essence, servant leadership is about flipping the traditional power dynamic. Instead of a command-and-control approach, servant leaders focus on collaboration, ethical behaviour and the empowerment of others to create more effective and meaningful outcomes. In a world that increasingly demands empathy, collaboration and accountability, servant leadership is more than a philosophy it is a necessity.

(The writer is an educator; views expressed are personal)

Supreme Court strikes down 'bulldozer injustice'



K S TOMAR

By reinforcing legal safeguards, the Apex Court seeks to restore public trust in the justice system and ensure that no citizen is denied their constitutional rights

A historic Supreme Court verdict against "bulldozer justice" promises broad legal, social, and administrative impacts, addressing concerns around the unchecked, high-handed demolition of properties linked to criminal accusations. Such actions have often violated the fundamental tenets of the Indian Constitution. This ruling holds direct implications for BJP-ruled states like Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Haryana, Assam and the Delhi Municipal Corporation, which have been accused of misusing administrative powers to punish marginalised sections of society without due legal process.

The concept of "bulldozer justice" was notably invented by Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister, Yogi Adityanath, earning him the nickname "Bulldozer Baba" among supporters. The Court's verdict marks a setback to the UP government, though CM may not express regret for actions nullified by the ruling, which had previously jeopardised the constitutional guarantees afforded to all Indian citizens.

Social Implications Protection of Marginalised Communities: The ruling acknowledges that bulldozer justice has disproportionately impacted marginalised groups. By mandating due process, the Court aims to prevent biased or retaliatory actions against vulnerable communities, promoting equal treatment under the law.

Public Trust in the Rule of Law: By condemning bulldozer justice, the Supreme Court seeks to rebuild public confidence in lawful governance, fostering trust that the state will not bypass legal safeguards to punish alleged offenders.

Awareness and Advocacy: This judgment may empower civil rights groups to challenge arbitrary demolitions, advocating for the rights of those affected by unilateral property destruction. Administrative and Policy Impact.

Reduced Arbitrary Actions: Administrative bodies may now face restrictions against immediate demolition practices that bypass judicial processes, holding them accountable to legal frameworks designed to protect against arbitrary punishment. This could encourage a fairer and more equitable application of laws.

Policy Revisions at the State Level: States that have regularly employed demolitions as a form of "bulldozer justice" may need to revisit their policies, ensuring alignment with constitutional rights to property and due process. This could result in tighter guidelines and even statutory changes.

Limit on Executive Power: The Court's disapproval of unilateral demolition reinforces the separation of powers, signaling that executive decisions must strictly adhere to legal boundaries.

Legal and Judicial Consequences Strengthened Due Process: The ruling reaffirms that demolitions must respect due process, requiring legal scrutiny rather than administrative discretion. This will likely lead to the implementation of judicial approval for demolition orders, protecting citizens' rights against arbitrary state actions.

Increased Judicial Oversight: The ruling could result in heightened court involvement in cases where demolitions serve as punitive responses to alleged crimes, particularly in cases involving minority or marginalised groups.

Pressure for National Guidelines: The Supreme Court suggested nationwide stan-



ADMINISTRATIVE BODIES MAY NOW FACE RESTRICTIONS AGAINST IMMEDIATE DEMOLITION PRACTICES THAT BYPASS JUDICIAL PROCESSES, HOLDING THEM ACCOUNTABLE TO LEGAL FRAMEWORKS DESIGNED TO PROTECT AGAINST ARBITRARY PUNISHMENT

dards for property demolitions related to criminal cases, which could formalise rules for state authorities to follow, reducing current ambiguities.

Supreme Court Guidelines on Demolitions Justices BR Gavai and KV Viswanathan made impactful assertions, noting that demolitions based solely on accusations violate fundamental rights. The Court emphasised the presumption of innocence and mandated a 15-day notice period, allowing tenants or owners time to challenge demolition orders or make necessary arrangements. This highlights the right to shelter under Article 21 of the Indian Constitution.

The Court warned that contempt proceedings could follow violations of these guidelines and responsible officials may face compensation liabilities for restitution. This ruling stemmed from controversial demolitions in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh, alongside a Jamiat-Ulama-i-Hind petition challenging demolitions in Delhi's Jahangirpuri in 2022. Data show that state laws on demolitions were often violated in Uttar Pradesh, a state pioneering "bulldozer justice."

The Uttar Pradesh Urban Planning and Development Act, 1973, requires a minimum 15-day notice before unauthorised structures can be removed, with a right to appeal. However, the 2022 demolitions, where structures were razed without due process, led to the Jamiat-Ulama-i-Hind's petition to the Supreme Court.

In another significant instance, former Chief Justice Chandrachud, before his retirement on November 9, and Justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra directed the Uttar Pradesh government

to pay Rs 25 lakh as compensation to a man whose home was demolished in 2019 for a road-widening project.

The Court expressed concern over state actions that could potentially use demolitions as selective reprisals, noting that citizens' voices must not be stifled by the threat of losing their homes. In Rajasthan, demolition laws under Section 245 of the Rajasthan Municipalities Act, 2009, require prior written notice detailing the grounds for eviction.

Following communal tensions in Udaipur, authorities issued a quick notice before demolishing a house on alleged forest land encroachment, contravening local law requirements for a reasonable response period. Section 91 of the Rajasthan Forest Act, 1953, restricts eviction orders to be issued only by a Tehsildar.

The Madhya Pradesh Municipalities Act, 1961, stipulates that any unauthorised building alteration or construction may be removed, but only after notice. However, this was ignored when a labourer's home was demolished immediately after his son's arrest, raising rights violation concerns.

Under the Delhi Municipal Corporation Act, 1957, the commissioner can remove illegal structures but must give reasonable opportunity for owners to dispute the action.

The Jahangirpuri incident in 2022 highlighted the need for due process, intensifying scrutiny on such practices. In Haryana, demolitions are governed by Section 261 of the Haryana Municipal Corporation Act, 1994, which mandates a notice period with an opportunity to contest. However, after communal violence in Nuh

in 2023, authorities demolished over 440 structures, mostly affecting Muslim households. Although similar to Delhi's DMC Act, Haryana's compliance period is notably shorter—only three days, leaving owners little time for appeals.

Strengthening Accountability: The Supreme Court's new guidelines aim to check arbitrary demolitions and uphold legal protections, particularly for vulnerable tenants. These regulations emphasise that adequate notice, transparency, and due process must be integral to any demolition order. While state laws vary, adherence to these guidelines will be essential in ensuring that demolitions respect both legal and constitutional rights, strengthening administrative accountability.

A Fundamental Shift in the Justice System: The Supreme Court of India's recent ruling against "bulldozer justice" was a response to cases where properties of individuals accused of crimes, especially those involving communal violence, were demolished without legal due process.

The Court underscored that demolitions must be legally justified and cannot bypass established procedures. It criticised this practice for disproportionately impacting marginalised communities, violating human rights, and eroding public trust. In essence, this ruling reaffirms the constitutional right to due process, expected to curb the trend of using demolitions as extrajudicial punitive measures. The ruling marks a shift toward a justice system grounded in fairness, procedure, and accountability.

(The author is a political analyst and strategic affairs columnist; views are personal)

Tackling the epidemic of diabetes and hypertension: Urgent action needed

Lack of awareness and limited early screening make these two lifestyle diseases rampant

Diabetes and hypertension are two interconnected yet distinct chronic diseases that collectively strain public health. Both conditions share underlying risk factors, such as unhealthy diets, physical inactivity and high stress levels. They also frequently co-occur, accelerating the onset of severe complications and amplifying each other's impact.

Diabetes and hypertension significantly increase the risk for cardiovascular diseases, chronic kidney disease, stroke, and eye disorders, forming a "double-edged sword" for health. In particular, hypertension, when combined with diabetes, can increase the likelihood of heart disease and stroke. Management of these conditions in India is challeng-



PANKAJ BHARDWAJ

ing due to lack of awareness, inadequate early screening and inaction, particularly in rural and resource-poor areas. More than half a billion people are living with diabetes globally. This is only expected to more than double in the next 30 years, in almost every country, according to a Lancet study. When it comes to hypertension, over a billion people—

1 in every 4 men and 1 in 5 women—are living with this condition, which ranks as one of the leading causes of premature death worldwide. In addition to this, WHO states that more than 50 per cent of people with diabetes and about 46 per cent of adults living with hypertension don't even know about their condition.

It is safe to argue that lack of awareness is the biggest problem here. Both conditions have become the largest, silent, dual epidemics currently challenging India. The Cost of Inaction: Tertiary treatment for complications from advanced diabetes and hypertension—such as heart disease, kidney failure, or stroke—is exponentially more costly than primary health interventions. In 2024, reports from different

Insurance companies showed that the cost of a kidney transplant in public sector hospitals in India generally goes up to 6 lakhs.

This estimate is significantly lower than in private hospitals, which can go up to INR 15 lakhs or more, due to higher administrative and facility fees. Similarly, cardiac surgery can range anywhere between Rs 1 lakh and Rs 15 lakhs. In contrast, medication for diabetes and hypertension cost potentially up to only Rs 10,000 yearly, which is otherwise completely free of cost if obtained from a Government hospital.

Thus, investing in primary care interventions is far more cost-effective and sustainable than managing advanced complications. Reducing the



Burden: Encouraging people to take ownership of their health and get regular check-ups could prevent costly treatments.

One person's decision to monitor their blood pressure or blood sugar levels could save thousands in healthcare costs—covering medication, hospital beds and medical staff—funds that could otherwise be allocated to proactive community health services.

This alone could lead to a decrease in the incidence of severe complications, ultimately saving lives and reducing the overall societal cost.

A Path Forward: Our country needs to work on three fronts parallelly: first, increasing awareness campaigns, second, enhancing access to screenings and third, ensuring widespread support for affordable primary care.

Educating communities, especially in rural areas, about the importance of early detection can create a more health-conscious society that seeks intervention before these conditions spiral.

At the same time, the government's initiatives, such as the National Programme for Prevention and Control of Cancer, Diabetes,

Cardiovascular Diseases and Stroke (NPCDCS), need robust on-the-ground implementation to reach every corner of the country. The National Programme for Prevention and Control of Cancer, Diabetes, Cardiovascular Diseases, and Stroke (NPCDCS) was launched in 2010 by the Government of India, as a game changer.

It aims to reduce the burden of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) through early diagnosis, management, and health promotion. The programme focuses on four major NCDs—cancer, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, and stroke—due to their high prevalence and impact on public health. It equips our communities to battle hypertension and dia-

betes through accessible screenings and preventive care. By catching issues early and promoting lifestyle change, we're not just treating diseases—we're transforming health outcomes and reclaiming years of productive life across India.

Conclusion: Addressing diabetes and hypertension isn't just a medical issue; it's a societal one. India's battle against these diseases demands the willingness of individuals to seek preventive care, awareness of the risks, and action by both govt and citizens to implement and utilise early detection programs. Only then can we mitigate these silent but pervasive epidemics and prevent a looming healthcare crisis.

(The author is a public health expert; views are personal)

India accords high-priority to strategic partnership with Nigeria: PM Modi

PTI ■ ABUJA

India accords high priority to its strategic partnership with Nigeria and it will work towards boosting ties in a range of areas, including defence, energy and trade, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said during his talks with Nigerian President Bola Ahmed Tinubu on Sunday. In his televised opening remarks at the meeting, Modi identified terrorism, separatism, piracy and drug trafficking as major challenges and said the two countries will continue to work together to deal with them. Modi arrived in Abuja early Sunday on the first trip to the country by an Indian prime minister after a gap of 17 years.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi being received by the Nigerian delegates upon his arrival at the airport, in Abuja, Nigeria, Sunday, Nov. 17, 2024. Modi on Sunday arrived in Nigeria on the first leg of his three-nation visit at the invitation of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu. PTI

"We give high priority to our strategic partnership with Nigeria...I am confident that a new chapter in our ties will begin following our talks," the PM said. He also described the around 60,000-strong Indian expatriate community as a key pillar of India-Nigeria relations and thanked Tinubu for ensuring their welfare. The PM also announced that India is sending 20 tonnes of relief supplies for Nigerian people hit by last month's floods. He also referred to the African Union becoming a permanent member of the G20 at the India-hosted summit of the grouping last year and

described it as a significant outcome. Before the delegation-level talks, PM Modi and Tinubu held a one-on-one meeting at the Presidential Villa. The PM was also accorded a ceremonial welcome. Both sides are likely to ink a number of agreements following the delegation-level talks. PM Modi is in Nigeria as part of a three-nation tour. From Abuja, he will travel to Brazil to attend the G20 summit. His last destination will be Guyana. The India-Nigeria ties were elevated to the status of a "strategic

partnership' during then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's visit to the African nation in October 2007. Nigeria has been a close partner of India for over six decades. New Delhi established its diplomatic House in Lagos in November 1958, two years before Nigeria became independent in 1960. The presence of a large Indian expatriate community of about 60,000, the largest in West Africa, adds value to the importance of the long-standing relationship between the two countries.

There are more than 200 Indian companies who have invested about USD 27 billion in all important manufacturing sectors and these companies are the second largest employers after the federal government, according to Indian officials. India has emerged as a development partner of Nigeria on two fronts, by offering developmental assistance through concessional loans (USD 100 million) and by offering capacity-building training programmes.

Modi Govt playing politics of discrimination, depriving Maharashtra youth of jobs: Priyanka

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi-Vadra on Sunday charged that the Modi government was practising 'politics of discrimination' in matters relating to the development works during its rule for more than ten years now. Addressing an election rally in the axal-infested Gadchiroli district in Vidarbha region, Priyanka said that the Modi-led dispensation at the Centre had deprived youth in Maharashtra of jobs by diverting mega industrial projects to Gujarat.

"The Modi government has been unfair to the jobless youth in Maharashtra. Owing to diversion of big-ticket projects to Gujarat, Maharashtra is facing huge job losses. As a result, unemployment has shot up hugely in the state. As many as 2.50 lakh government posts remain vacant," Priyanka said.

Linking the suicides by youth in Maharashtra to lack of job opportunities, Priyanka said: "Maximum number of suicides by the youth are taking place in Maharashtra. This is because of the ruling BJP's failure to address the issue of unemployment". Averring that the Modi government was discriminatory in its approach towards Maharashtra, Priyanka said: "India's first PM Jawaharlal Nehru set up many big educational institutions, factories, ports, dams, hospitals across

all states considering the overall interests of the country. The Congress governments in the past never practised favouritism or shown discrimination in matters of development". Slamming Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other BJP leaders for their slogan "ek hain to safe hain" (if we are united, we are safe), Priyanka said: "In this country, the only one who is truly safe is Adani. The entire country knows that Adani is the only one who has access to the government coffers, while ordinary citizens are finding it difficult to make both ends meet".

Accusing the Modi government of gifting away airports, ports and some of the major companies to Adani, Priyanka said: "The government should be focused on creating jobs for people across the country, not allocating national assets to one individual". The Congress leader charged that there was a lack of accountability in governance in the country. "During the Congress rule, our leaders used to be accountable to the people. However, under the BJP, this accountability is gone. Ministers, chief ministers, and the prime minister have become unanswerable to the people. When you demand accountability from them, the ruling political leaders divert attention from real issues and focus on polarising the society," Priyanka said.

J and K LG chairs security meet with DGP, Chief Secretary

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Ahead of activating the Border Winter management strategy across Jammu region aimed at foiling fresh infiltration bids from across the border, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha Sunday chaired a high-level security review meeting with the Director General of Jammu and Kashmir police and Chief Secretary Atal Dullo. Interestingly, Omar Abdullah again remained conspicuous in



Sinha chaired a high-level security review meeting at the Jammu Convention centre, first after the shifting of the move offices in Jammu. his absence. Sinha chaired a high-level security review meeting at the Jammu Convention centre, first after the shifting of the move offices in Jammu.

Communal clashes in Murshidabad...

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"We have detained a number of persons for committing mischief after some people engaged in clashes leading to injuries and some loss of properties," district Superintendent of Police Surya Pratap Yadav said. Senior officers had rushed to the area with large posse of police rapid action forces, said State DGP Rajiv Kumar while another senior official said that internet facilities had been shut in the area "though no prohibitory orders have yet been issued considering the festivities." Some of the injured had been admitted at the Berhampore Medical College and Hospital, sources said. The incident took place at a time when Bengal Opposition Leader Suwendu Adhikari alleged in Mumbai how Bengal had become a gateway of Rohingyas. "They are entering India through Bengal as the State Government is not giving land to the BSP for fencing," he said. Usually a peaceful area, parts of Murshidabad had witnessed communal tensions in May this year when two groups clashed at Rejinagar near Beldanga during the Ram Navami festival leading Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee to blame a local monk from Bharat Sevashram Sangha a renowned socio-religious charitable organisation functioning from Kolkata for the riots. Naming a particular monk she said he was "behind the riots in

Rejinagar. If he intends to do politics, he should do it with a BJP symbol. He has said Trinamool agents will not be allowed to sit in the booth." Around the general elections an alleged provocative comment made by a local Trinamool Congress MLA Humayun Kabir threatening the BJP with dire consequences if they would not stop creating trouble too contributed oil to fire. Reminding the sordid fact that the Muslims constitute two-third of the population of Murshidabad district Kabir had said that he had the capacity of disposing of the entire BJP in Bhagirathi River in a matter of two hours. As per 2011 census Murshidabad Muslims constitute about 66.8 percent of the total population whereas Hindus amount to about 33 percent. Recently an FIR was lodged against Bollywood star-turned-BJP leader Mithun Chakraborty after he warned, in a party meeting, that those who threatened to throw Hindus in Bhagirathi River better watch out. "We will take down four fruits from their trees if they pluck one fruit from ours," he warned. Meanwhile, Adhir Chowdhury former Congress MP from Berhampore which is the headquarters of Murshidabad appealed to all to maintain peace and harmony. Praising the administration for taking timely steps he said his party would cooperate with the police to restore peace in the area.

BJP holds first official meet of Election Management Committee, Election Manifesto Committee

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi BJP on Sunday held the first official meetings of the Election Management Committee and the Election Manifesto Committee, formed by the party recently ahead of state assembly polls slated to be held early next year. Additionally, the party also announced an 11-member 'Pradesh Aarop Patra' committee, led by Leader of Opposition in Delhi assembly Vijender Gupta, against the ruling party ahead of the state assembly polls slated to be held early next year. In a letter, the announcement stated, "On the instructions of Delhi BJP President Virendra Sachdeva

for the Delhi assembly elections 2025, the committee formed for making a chargesheet against the failures of the Delhi government has been announced." The list is headed by Gupta and includes the name of former South Delhi MP Ramesh Bidhuri, National Secretary of the party Manjinder Singh Sirsa, former Delhi MLA R.P.Singh, Former Mayor Aarti Mehra, Leader of Opposition in Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) Raja Iqbal Singh, Delhi BJP Vice President Kapil Mishra, Delhi BJP Secretary Harish Khurana, Delhi BJP's Mahila Morcha President Richa Pandey Mishra and senior party leader Gulshan Virmani and Sunita Kangda.

Embarrassed by 'Sheesh Mahal', infighting...

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His resignation proves that even the AAP leaders do not consider Kejriwal as an honest politician," Sachdeva said. Party leader Kapil Mishra welcomed the resignation and said that Gahlot's remarks in the letter to Kejriwal raise serious questions about the AAP and Delhi government. Gahlot's resignation has been accepted by CM Atishi. His exit comes weeks after party Rajiya Sabha MP Swati Maliwal turned rebel, although she remains an MP from the party. The senior AAP leader's resignation comes at a time when the party is gearing up for the Delhi Assembly polls slated to be held in February next year. After Kejriwal stepped down, Gahlot was among the key contenders for the CM's post.

However, Kejriwal picked Atishi for the top job. Insiders say Kejriwal and his team was not happy with Gahlot for his close proximity with Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena who nominated him to unfurl Tricolour at Chhatrasal stadium on Independence Day this year. Besides, on several occasions, the Delhi Cabinet took decisions without informing him. In his resignation, Gahlot said, "Another painful point has been the fact that instead of fighting for people's rights we have increasingly only been fighting for our own political agenda. This has severely crippled our ability to even deliver basic services to the people of Delhi. It is now obvious that real progress for Delhi cannot happen if the Delhi Government spends majority of its time fighting

with the Centre". Listing out the challenges that the party faces, Gahlot said: "I want to share with you that today the Aam Aadmi Party faces grave challenges. Challenges from within, to the very values that brought us together to AAP. Political ambitions have overtaken our commitment towards people, leaving many promises unfulfilled. Take for example the Yamuna, which we had promised to transform into a clean river, but never got around to doing it. Now the Yamuna River is perhaps even more polluted than ever before," the letter read. Gahlot made it clear that his decision to step away from the party was motivated by his continued desire to serve the people of Delhi, but he felt that his commitment to the AAP's vision could no longer be reconciled with the party's

current direction. "I had started my political journey with the commitment to serve the people of Delhi and I want to continue doing that. Which is why, I find myself left with no option but to step away from AAP," Gahlot concluded. In March, Gahlot was summoned by the ED in the Delhi excise policy case. However, this was before all AAP leaders and the accused in the case were granted bail. In 2018, several locations linked to Gahlot and his family members were raided by the Income Tax Department, alleging tax evasion worth several crores. Gahlot joined the AAP before the 2015 Assembly elections and won the Najafgarh seat by a thin margin of 1,550 votes. He would go on to win the seat again in 2020 by over 6,000 vote

Manipur volatile, HM...

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On Sunday morning, the situation remained calm but tense in all five districts of Imphal Valley, where an indefinite curfew has been imposed and internet services suspended following violent protests after the discovery of the bodies of six persons, three women and children each, allegedly abducted and killed by militants in Jiribam. Piles of burnt debris remained on the roads of state capital Imphal, a day after the violent protests. Security forces have intensified patrolling in parts of Imphal and increased deployment at many of the residences of legislators which were attacked on Saturday as well as all major roads leading to the Capital town. On Saturday, agitators ransacked the houses of three legislators, including that of Biren Singh's son-in-law RK Imo, who is also a BJP MLA, and set their properties on fire

while security forces fired tear gas shells to disperse protesters in different parts of Imphal, police said. Among the ministers whose residences were stormed by the protesters are Sapam Ranjan, L Susindro Singh and Y Khemchand, an official said. Curfew was imposed for an indefinite period in Imphal East and West, Bishnupur, Thoubal and Kakching districts of Imphal Valley "due to developing law and order situation," he said. The state administration suspended internet services temporarily in seven districts in the wake of protesters storming the residences of state ministers and MLAs, another official said. Besides Imo, agitators also vandalised the properties of BJP legislator Sapam Kunjakesore and MLA Joykishan Singh. They also gheared the houses of JD(U) MLA of Wangkhei seat, T Arun, and BJP legislator Karam Shyam of Langthabal.

India successfully flight-tests long-range hypersonic missile

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The Defence Ministry said the missile was tracked by various range systems, deployed in multiple domains. "The flight data obtained from down range ship stations confirmed the successful terminal manoeuvres and impact with high degree of accuracy," it said in the readout. This missile has been indigenously developed by the laboratories of the Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Missile complex, Hyderabad along with various other DRDO laboratories and industry partners. Hypersonic missiles are weapons capable of travelling at speeds five times the speed of sound. Their range typically varies between 6,125 km/h (Mach 5) and

about 24,140 km/h (Mach 20). These speeds make them incredibly difficult to detect and intercept. There are two primary types of hypersonic missiles--Hypersonic Glide Vehicles (HGVs) and Hypersonic Cruise Missiles. HGVs are launched like ballistic missiles using a rocket booster. After reaching a certain altitude, the HGV separates from the booster and glides toward its target, manoeuvring in flight to avoid interception. Hypersonic Cruise Missiles use scramjet engines to sustain hypersonic speeds throughout their flight, flying at lower altitudes and also possessing manoeuvrability. The development of hypersonic missiles is a significant achievement for

India, as it presents several challenges, including extreme heat generation, precise control and guidance systems, detection and tracking difficulties, and the need for effective interception systems. Hypersonic missiles have the potential to revolutionise warfare due to their speed, manoeuvrability, and range. They could significantly reduce response times and make traditional missile defence systems less effective. These missiles are typically launched using rockets. For glide vehicles, the rocket boosts the missile to a high altitude. Once at the desired altitude, the missile accelerates to hypersonic speeds. For cruise missiles, this is achieved using scramjet engines, which compress incoming air

before mixing it with fuel to create combustion at supersonic speeds. Unlike traditional ballistic missiles, hypersonic missiles can manoeuvre during flight. This makes their trajectory unpredictable and complicates interception efforts. Glide vehicles, for instance, use aerodynamic lift to glide toward their targets, while cruise missiles use their engines to maintain speed and direction. The high speed and manoeuvrability of hypersonic missiles allow them to strike targets with precision. They can carry conventional or nuclear warheads, making them versatile for different types of missions. The flight-trial was carried out in the presence of senior scientists of DRDO and

officers of the armed forces. Chief of DRDO Samir V Kamat congratulated the team of DRDO which has actively contributed to this successful mission. On November 12, DRDO conducted the maiden flight-test of Long Range Land Attack Cruise Missile (LRLACM) from the Integrated Test Range (ITR) in Chandipur off the coast of Odisha from a mobile articulated launcher. During this test, all sub-systems performed as per expectation and met the primary mission objectives. The missile performance was monitored by several range sensors like Radar, Electro Optical Tracking System and telemetry deployed by ITR at different locations to ensure complete coverage of the flight path.

The missile demonstrated its capability to perform various manoeuvres while flying at various altitudes and speeds. The missile is also equipped with advanced avionics and software to ensure better and reliable performance, the release said. The flight-test of the hypersonic missile comes at a time when India is focusing on bolstering its combat capabilities against the backdrop of China's aggressive military muscle-flexing. In the last few years, India has been focusing on the development of next-generation weapon systems, such as drones, hypersonic missiles and equipment with the application of artificial intelligence. The DRDO has already developed a range of missiles, including "Prithvi", "Akash" and "Agni".

GRAP stage IV invoked in NCR

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All construction activities, including highways, roads, flyovers, power lines, pipelines and other public projects, have been suspended. The CAQM suggested online classes for the students of Classes six to nine, and Class 11. It also recommended that offices in the NCR work at 50 per cent capacity, with the rest working from home. Work-from-home options may be introduced for central government employees, CAQM said. The Central government may take appropriate decisions on permitting work from home for employees in their offices. State governments could also

decide to close colleges, limit non-essential commercial activities and implement odd-even vehicle rules, it said. The CAQM also advised children, elderly citizens and those with respiratory cardiovascular or other chronic diseases to avoid outdoor activities and stay indoors as much as possible. The Delhi government had already imposed GRAP Stage III restrictions on November 14 to curb pollution with junior school classes going online. Inter-state buses, besides EVs/CNG/BS-VI, private BS-III petrol and BS-IV diesel vehicles have been banned in the Capital. Dense fog engulfed the capital city in the evening, reducing

the visibility. Palam airport recorded lowest visibility 500 m during 0830 to 0900 hours IST which improved thereafter becoming 600m at 0930 hours IST and it became 900m at 1230 IST. Safdarjung airport recorded lowest visibility 300m during 0700 hours to 0900 IST which improved thereafter becoming 400m at 0930 hours IST and it became 600m at 1230 IST. According to reports, 250 flights were delayed while three were cancelled, according to Flightradar. Over 30 trains coming to New Delhi and Anand Vihar Railway stations have been delayed given the smog conditions. According to officials, the trains are

running late by two to nine hours. The Supreme Court is scheduled to hear on Monday, a plea seeking enforcement of measures to curb air pollution in the National Capital. As per the cause list of November 18 uploaded on the Supreme Court website, a bench of Justices Abhay S Oka and Augustine George Masih is slated to hear the plea. Indian Biogas Association has suggested enforcement of the odd-even rule for four wheelers in Delhi NCR to check air pollution and encourage people to shift to electric vehicles or those based on compressed biogas (CBG) or natural gas. The Delhi Transport Department has impounded

2,234 overage vehicles between October 1 and November 15 as part of an ongoing drive. According to official data, the seized vehicles include 260 diesel four-wheelers that are over 10 years old, alongside 1,156 petrol two-wheelers and 818 petrol three and four-wheelers, all older than 15 years. Bahadurgarh in Haryana topped the list most polluted cities in India with an AQI of 445, followed by Delhi 441 as compared to 417 on Saturday. Bawana recorded the highest reading at 471, followed by Ashok Vihar and Jahangirpuri, both at 466. Mundka and Wazirpur also reported AQI levels of 463, indicating widespread

pollution across the city. The dense haze, caused by a mix of local pollution and the seasonal crop burning in neighbouring states, choked the city's skies, triggering widespread concerns over Delhi's ongoing battle with air pollution. Meanwhile, the Delhi airport took to its official handle to inform the flyers that low-visibility procedures are currently underway. "Low-visibility procedures are in progress at the Delhi airport. All flight operations are presently normal. Passengers are to contact the airline concerned for updated information," posted the handle on X. Of the 35 monitoring stations, most reported 'severe' air

quality - Indira Gandhi International Airport (445), ITO (411), Anand Vihar (457), and Siri Fort (405), among others. The AQI level remained above 400 in most areas of Delhi, including Ashok Vihar (466), Aya Nagar (426), Dr Karni Singh Shooting Range (415), Dwarka Sector 8 (445), Dilshad Garden (448), Major Dhyani Chand Stadium (419), Mandir Marg (434), Najafgarh (402), Narela (444), Nehru Nagar (442), North Campus DU (427), NSIT Dwarka (410), Okhla Phase 2 (409), Patparganj (439), Punjabi Bagh (442), Pusa (407), RK Puram (434), Rohini (449), Shadipur (457), Sonia Vihar (440), Vivek Vihar (454), and Wazirpur

(463). According to the Centre's Decision Support System for Air Quality Management, vehicular emissions contributed approximately 15.8 per cent to Delhi's pollution on Sunday. The system also reported that stubble burning was the main contributor to the capital's air pollution on Saturday, accounting for 25 per cent of the total pollution. Noida and Gurugram recorded AQI levels of 308 and 307, respectively. Ghaziabad reached an AQI of 372, pointing to slight improvement from the prevailing conditions. Faridabad registered the lowest among the listed cities, with an AQI of 260.

Russia launches fiercest attack on Ukraine's infrastructure

AP ■ KYIV

Russia on Sunday launched a massive drone and missile attack on Ukraine, described by officials as the largest over the past months, targeting energy infrastructure and killing civilians. The attack came as fears are mounting about Moscow's intentions to devastate Ukraine's power generation capacity ahead of the cold winter. President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said that Russia had launched a total of 120 missiles and 90 drones in a large-scale attack across Ukraine. Various types of drones were deployed, he said, including Iranian-made Shaheds as well as cruise, ballistic and aircraft-launched ballistic missiles. Ukrainian defences shot down 140 air targets, Zelenskyy said in a statement on the Telegram messaging app.

"The enemy's target was our energy infrastructure throughout Ukraine. Unfortunately, there is damage to objects from hits and falling debris. In Mykolaiv, as a result of a drone attack, two people were killed and six others were injured, including two children," Zelenskyy said. Two others were killed in the Odesa region, where the attack damaged energy infrastructure and disrupted power and water supplies, said local Gov. Oleh Kiper. The combined drone and missile attack was the most powerful in three months, according to the head of Kyiv's City Military Administration Serhii Popko. Russian strikes have hammered Ukraine's power infrastructure since Moscow's all-out invasion of its neighbour in February 2022, prompting repeated emergency power shutdowns and nationwide rolling blackouts. Ukrainian officials have routinely urged

Western allies to bolster the country's air defences to counter assaults and allow for repairs. Explosions were heard across Ukraine on Sunday, including in capital Kyiv, the key southern port of Odesa, as well as the country's west and central regions, according to local reports. The operational command of Poland's armed forces wrote on X that Polish and allied aircraft, including fighter jets, have been mobilised in Polish airspace because of the "massive" Russian attack on neighbouring Ukraine. The steps were aimed to provide safety in Poland's border areas, it said. One person was injured after the roof of a five-story residential building caught fire in Kyiv's historic centre, according to Popko. A thermal repeated emergency power shutdowns and nationwide rolling blackouts. Ukrainian officials have routinely urged



In this photo provided by the Ukrainian Emergency Service, emergency services personnel remove part of a Russian missile that hit an apartment house during massive missile attack in Kyiv, Ukraine, Sunday. AP/PTI

Latest typhoon lashes Philippines

Manila (Philippines) (AP): A powerful typhoon wrecked houses, caused towering tidal surges and forced hundreds of thousands of people to flee to emergency shelters as it cut across the northern Philippines on Sunday in the sixth major storm to hit the country in less than a month. Typhoon Man-yi slammed into the eastern island province of Catanduanes on Saturday night with sustained winds of up to 195 kilometers (125 miles) per hour and gusts of up to 240 kph (149 mph). The country's weather agency warned of a "potentially catastrophic and life-threatening situation" in provinces along its path. There were no immediate reports of casualties from the typhoon, which was forecast to blow northwestward on Sunday across northern Luzon, the archipelago's most populous region. The capital region of metropolitan Manila would likely be spared from a direct hit but was placed, along with outlying regions, under storm alerts and warned of dangerous coastal storm surges. "The rain was minimal, but the wind was very strong and had

this eerie howling sound," Roberto Monterola, a disaster-mitigation officer in Catanduanes, told The Associated Press by telephone. "Along a main boulevard here, the tidal surges went up to more than 7 meters (23 feet) near the seaside houses. It looked really scary." The entire province of Catanduanes had no power after the typhoon knocked down trees and electricity posts, and disaster-response teams were checking how many more houses were damaged in addition to those impacted by previous storms, he said. "We need tin roofs and other construction materials, aside from food. Villagers tell us here that they still haven't gotten up from the past storm and were pinned down again by this typhoon," Monterola said. Nearly half of the island province's 80,000 people were sheltering in evacuation centers. Catanduanes officials were so concerned as the typhoon approached that they threatened vulnerable villagers with arrest if they did not follow orders to evacuate to safer grounds. More than 750,000

people took refuge in emergency shelters, including churches and a shopping mall, due to Man-yi and two previous storms mostly in the northern Philippines, Assistant Secretary Cesar Idio of the Official of Civil Defense and other provincial officials said. The rare number of back-to-back storms and typhoons that lashed Luzon in just three weeks left more than 160 people dead, affected 9 million people and caused such extensive damage to residential communities, infrastructure and farmlands that the Philippines may have to import more rice, a staple food for most Filipinos. In an emergency meeting as Man-yi approached, President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. asked his Cabinet and provincial officials to brace for "the worst-case scenario." At least 26 domestic airports and two international airports were briefly shut and inter-island ferry and cargo services were suspended due to rough seas, stranding thousands of passengers and commuters, according to the Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines and the coast guard.

Lanka's new Cabinet to be sworn in today

Colombo (PTI): Sri Lanka's new Cabinet will be sworn in on Monday in the presence of President Anura Kumara Dissanayake, his media office said on Sunday. National People's Power led by Dissanayake swept the parliamentary elections held on Thursday by winning a two-thirds majority. It also dominated the Jaffna electoral district - the heartland of the nation's Tamil minority. "The swearing-in of the new Cabinet of the government will take place tomorrow (18) at 10:00 am at the Presidential Secretariat, in the presence of President @anuradisanyake, President's Media Division, posted on X. The 10th Parliament is set to convene for its first session on November 21. According to Article 46 of the Constitution, the total number of Cabinet ministers is limited to 30. The number of deputy ministers shall not, in the aggregate, exceed 40. The NPP has been advocating

a smaller government to reduce costs for the public. Since the NPP won the presidential election in September, the government functioned with just 3 ministers, including the President. The NPP's victory in the parliamentary election has created many firsts and records. It received 61.56 per cent of the total votes counted. The previous best was 60.33 per cent by former president Mahinda Rajapaksa's party in the 2010 election. The NPP won the highest number of polling divisions, 152 out of 168, the previous best was Rajapaksa's 136. It also won the highest number of districts 21 out of 22, the previous best was 19 by Rajapaksa in 2010. It has the highest number of 159 parliamentary seats over Rajapaksa's 145 in 2020. Under the proportional representation system of elections, they became the first party to cross the 150 mark to gain a two-thirds absolute majority.

Senegal votes in election that will decide if prez can carry out reforms he promised

Dakar (Senegal) (AP): Polls opened in Senegal on Sunday for a parliamentary election that is set to determine if the country's newly elected president can carry out ambitious reforms. More than 7 million registered voters in the West African country are choosing 165 lawmakers in the national assembly, where the party of President Bassirou Diomaye Faye currently does not hold a majority. Faye, who was elected in March on an anti-establishment platform, says that has blocked him from executing the reforms he pledged during his campaign, including fighting corruption, reviewing fishing permits for foreign companies and securing a bigger share from the country's natural resources for the population. In September, he dissolved the opposition-led parliament, paving the way for a snap legislative election. His party is facing the Takku Wallu opposition platform led by former President Macky Sall, alongside 39 other registered parties

and coalitions. Polls will close at 6 p.m. (1800 GMT). The first provisional results are expected to be known by Monday morning, but the final count will only be published later during the week. Faye's political party, PASTEF, needs at least 83 seats in order to gain a majority in the assembly. Analysts say it has a high chance of securing that, given its popularity and Faye's margin of victory in the March presidential election. Faye, 44, was elected with 54 per cent in the first round, becoming Africa's youngest elected leader, less than two weeks after he was released from prison. His rise has reflected widespread frustration among Senegal's youth with the country's direction - a common sentiment across Africa, which has the world's youngest population and a number of leaders accused of clinging to power for decades. Over 60 per cent of Senegalese are under 25 and 90 per cent work in informal jobs. Senegal has been hit by skyrocketing

inflation in recent years, making it difficult for them to get by. The country is also a major source of irregular migration to Europe, with thousands leaving every year on rickety, artisanal fishing boats in search of economic opportunities. The campaign for the legislative election was marked by sporadic clashes between supporters of different parties. The headquarters of an opposition party were set on fire in the capital, Dakar, and clashes have erupted between supporters in central Senegal in recent weeks, the interior ministry said Monday. On Tuesday, Ousmane Sonko, the country's prime minister who helped catapult Faye to victory, denounced attacks against supporters of PASTEF in Dakar and other cities. "May each patriot they have attacked and injured be proportionally avenged. We will exercise our legitimate right to respond," he wrote on X, before back-peddaling and asking his supporters to remain peaceful in a speech later that day.



Miss Denmark Victoria Kjalr Theilvig waves after winning the 73rd Miss Universe Beauty Pageant in Mexico City, on Saturday. AP/PTI

Sudha Murty praises son-in-law Rishi Sunak's 'good Indian cultural values'

London (PTI): Well-known author and Rajya Sabha MP Sudha Murty has spoken of her pride in son-in-law Rishi Sunak, a British citizen with "good Indian cultural values" imbibed from his parents' upbringing in the UK. Murty joined Sunak and her daughter Akshata Murty as the guest of honour at Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan's annual Diwali gala in London on Saturday evening. The parents of the British Indian former prime minister, Usha and Yashvir Sunak, were also in the audience as Bhavan UK students showcased a variety of Indian classical music and dance forms. "I always believe when you are abroad, your parents must do two things: one is good education, which gives you wings in return and you can fly anywhere and settle; the second is great culture, your origin which is Indian origin or roots which you can get at Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan along with your

parents," said Murty, delivering her keynote address. "I want to congratulate Ushaji, my sambandhi and a good friend of mine, who gave her son Rishi Sunak, former prime minister, a great route to identify with the culture, making him a proud British citizen as well as [having] good Indian cultural values," she said. The philanthropist went on to appeal to the British Indian community to enable the work of Bhavan UK's cultural activities, "mentally, physically and financially." "You must send your children here to understand Indian culture because when you grow old you go towards your roots... that gap is addressed by Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, so you have to help them in every way to survive," said the staunch supporter of the cultural centre over the years. Indian High Commissioner to the UK, Vikram Doraiswami, reflected upon Murty's writings which inspire readers to

be true to themselves because our "origin story matters" as he went on to trace the pan-Indian message of Diwali. "The Krishna story is relevant to Diwali in the south, just as the 'Ramayana' story and the return of Lord Ram to Ayodhya from Lanka is connected to the Diwali story of the north and the story of Kali Puja is connected with the story of Diwali in the east," he said. "Diwali connects up with the Sikh tradition, with the Jain and Buddhist traditions too. It tells us that light also means there is no such thing as a single certainty because in the light you recognise the diversity of the human condition, the diversity of everything we live with. So, in a world in which we spend our time fighting about certainties, it is a really good idea to look at Diwali as an opportunity to consider how so many things look differently in the light." Subhanu Saxena, chairman of

The Bhavan UK, and Executive Director Dr M.N. Nandakumara opened the event with Vedic chants as they highlighted the cultural centre's many achievements over the years as a centre of excellence in Indian arts, music, dance, Yoga and languages, offering over 120 subjects across 23 different subject areas. Rishi Sunak and Akshata Murty presented mementoes to the team behind the centre's many activities since the 1970s. Its students and teachers showcased their Kuchipudi, Kathak and Bharatanatyam skills at the annual Diwali celebration as they appealed for donations from the British Indian community to enhance their summer school and scholarship offerings. "The Bhavan UK is a great organisation promoting Indian culture and deserves our full support," said NRI industrialist Lord Swraj Paul, one of the many supporters of the centre.

Pak religious body faces backlash over anti-VPN decree

Islamabad (PTI): Pakistan's leading constitutional religious body came under severe criticism after it issued an edict terming the use of Virtual Private Networks (VPNs) to access blocked content on the internet as 'un-Islamic'. The unprecedented pro-claimant by the Council of Islamic Ideology (CII), which advises parliament on aligning legislation with Islamic teachings, enraged digital rights activists as well as some religious scholars. According to the Dawn newspaper, the CII chief Raghib Naemi said that using VPNs to access "immoral or illegal content" was against Sharia. In a social media statement on Saturday, Maulana Tariq Jameel, a prominent religious scholar, said if watching adult content or blasphemous material was an issue then mobile phones should be declared un-Islamic before labelling VPNs as such. Senator Allama Nasir Abbas, the chief of Shia organisation Majlis Wahdat Muslimen (MWM), said the country was being ruled by an "incompetent and corrupt elite" who were not even the true representatives of the people. "They make laws in such a way and are using decrees ... as per their whims," Senator Abbas added. Wahaj Siraj, the CEO of telecom company Nayatel, said technology has always been neutral and only its use or misuse made it 'Halal or Haram'. The issue of VPNs came to light after the Interior Ministry asked the Pakistan Telecom Authority, the electronic media watchdog, to take action against their illegal use as they were being used for terrorism. Nighat Dad, the executive director of the Digital Rights Foundation, said the action to block VPNs was "contradictory" to the rights of privacy granted in the Constitution.

Gold pocket watch from Titanic rescue sells for record price

London (AP): A gold pocket watch given to the ship captain who rescued 700 survivors from the Titanic sold at auction for nearly \$2 million, setting a record for memorabilia from the ship wreck. The 18-carat Tiffany & Co. watch was given by three women survivors to Capt. Arthur Rostron for diverting his passenger ship, the RMS Carpathia, to save them and others after the Titanic struck an iceberg and sank in the north Atlantic on its maiden voyage in 1912. Auctioneers Henry Aldridge and Son, who sold the watch to a private collector in the United States on Saturday for 1.56 million British pounds, said it's

the most paid for a piece of Titanic memorabilia. The price includes taxes and fees paid by the buyer. The watch was given to Rostron by the widow of John Jacob Astor, the richest man to die in the disaster, and the widows of two other wealthy businessmen who went down with the ship. Astor's pocket watch, which was on his body when it was recovered seven days after the ship sank, had previously set the record for the highest price paid for a Titanic keepsake, fetching nearly \$1.5 million (1.17 million pounds) from the same auction house in April. Auctioneer Andrew Aldridge said the fact that Titanic mem-

orabilia has set two records this year demonstrates the enduring fascination with the story and the value of the dwindling supply and high demand for ship artifacts. "Every man, woman and child had a story to tell, and those stories are told over a century later through the memorabilia," he said. Rostron was hailed a hero for his actions the night the Titanic sank and his crew was recognized for their bravery. The Carpathia was sailing from New York to the Mediterranean Sea when a radio operator heard a distress call from the Titanic in the early hours of April 15, 1912 and woke Rostron in his cabin. He turned

his boat around and headed at full steam toward the doomed vessel, navigating through icebergs to get there. By the time the Carpathia arrived, the Titanic had sunk and 1,500 people perished. But the crew located 20 lifeboats and rescued more than 700 passengers and took them back to New York. Rostron was awarded the U.S. Congressional Gold Medal by President William Howard Taft and was later knighted by King George V. Madeleine Astor, who had been helped into a lifeboat by her husband, presented the watch to Rostron at a luncheon at her mansion on Fifth Avenue in New York.

Japanese troops will train with US, Aus forces as concerns over China grow

Canberra (AP): Japan will send troops for joint training with US Marines and Australian forces in northern Australia, the three defence ministers said on Sunday as they expressed concern about a spate of confrontations with China's increasingly assertive military. Australia's Acting Prime Minister Richard Marles hosted US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin and Japanese Defence Minister Nakatani Gen for talks in Darwin. The ministers announced trilateral amphibious training between Australia, Japan and the US Marine rotational force in northern Australia from 2025, beginning with Exercise Talisman Sabre. Australia will also join

Exercise Orient Shield in Japan for the first time next year. A joint statement reiterated "serious concern" about destabilising actions in the East and South China seas including "dangerous conduct" by the Chinese military against Philippine and other vessels from the region. China claims the South China Sea almost in its entirety. The ministers also urged the importance of peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait. China claims self-ruled Taiwan as its own territory and has stepped up military harassment with frequent drills around the island. Marles, who is also Australia's defense minister, said follow-

ing talks with his Japanese counterpart in September that both nations looked to ways to build greater familiarity between their forces. One of the "obvious opportunities" was for Japan to participate in activities during the US Marine rotation in Australia, he said Sunday. "Having a more forward-leaning opportunity for greater training with Japan and the US together is a really fantastic opportunity," he said. Asked if the increased military cooperation would anger Beijing, Marles said the decision was about building "the best relationships possible with like-minded countries, with our friends and with our allies".

Municipal corporations need to impose adequate user charges to provide better facilities: RBI report

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Municipal corporations need to impose adequate user charges for essential services like water supply and sanitation, to boost non-tax revenues and provide quality public services, according to a Reserve Bank of India (RBI) report.

The 'Report on Municipal Finances' delves into the fiscal position of 232 municipal corporations (MCs) from 2019-20 to 2023-24 (Budget Estimates), with a focus on the theme 'Own Sources of Revenue Generation in Municipal Corporations: Opportunities and Challenges'.

"MCs can significantly enhance them (non-tax revenues) by applying appropriate and adequate fees and user charges for essential services such as water supply, sanitation, and waste management while also ensuring seamless availability of high-quality public services," it said.

These measures, combined with more transparent and accountable governance practices, can contribute to bolstering the financial health of MCs, setting off a



virtuous cycle of better services for the public, stronger revenues and a continuous upgrade of the urban infrastructure, it said. The major non-tax revenue sources include user charges, trade licensing fees, layout/building approval fees, development charges, betterment charges, sale and hire charges, market fees, slaughterhouse fees, parking fees, birth and death registration fees. Sources of tax revenue, include property tax, vacant land tax, water benefit tax, advertisement tax, sewerage benefit tax, tax on animals, and taxes on carriages and carts.

"Non-tax sources are particularly important in the context of constraints on tax revenues. MCs in India earn 66.5 per cent of non-tax revenue from fees and user charges," the report said. It noted that fees and user charges represent important sources of revenue for all civic bodies, particularly in Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Gujarat, and Tripura, where their share in own-source revenue outweighs that of property taxes. This, the report said can be attributed to various factors, including a high degree of urbanisation, tourist destinations and the subsequent expansion in

supplies of essential municipal services such as water supply, waste management and transportation.

The report further said own sources of revenues (tax revenue, non-tax revenue, and other receipts) afford municipalities increased financial autonomy, stability, and enhanced capacity to strategise and execute urban development initiatives more efficiently and effectively. Municipal corporations need to augment their own revenue sources for greater operational and financial flexibility. "By optimising property and water taxes, increasing non-tax revenues, and adopting transparent governance practices, urban local bodies can improve their finances," it said. Leveraging technologies such as Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping and digital payment systems can enhance property tax collections, it said. Periodic revisions in water and drainage taxes, and fees and user charges, coupled with use of technology for plugging leakages, can also help improve their revenue collections, it added.

Enforce odd-even rule to encourage people to shift to natural gas or EV: IBA

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Indian Biogas Association has suggested enforcement of the odd-even rule for four wheelers in Delhi NCR to check air pollution and encourage people to shift to electric vehicles or those based on compressed biogas (CBG) or natural gas.

Under the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) 4 (with air quality index of over 450) measures, odd/even rule for four wheelers is imposed. The Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) has already imposed GRAP 3 measures with the air quality remaining in the "severe" category.

Taking with PTI in an interaction, Indian Biogas Association (IBA) Chairman Gaurav Kedia said, "We recommend implementing the Odd-Even Rule for Petrol and Diesel Vehicles in the coming months so that a good impact can be seen for the air pollution levels in Delhi, and subsidy on EVs and CNG/CBG vehicles, as this will compel the citizens to shift to greener fuel alternatives. The air pollution situation in Delhi NCR worsens every winter, with the seasonal air quality index consistently remaining above the 300 mark. Delhi due to its the severely polluted AQI has received worldwide attention



as one of the most polluted cities on earth. Crop residue burning, particularly of paddy straw, in neighbouring states is a major contributor to this scenario, but that's just a small piece of the bigger puzzle. Kedia suggested that the government must focus on incentive schemes such as reduced charges on electricity bills, PNG connections, and LPG cylinders for houses that effectively segregate organic waste.

It would yield a double dividend: cleaner energy generation from green and leafy biomass collected for biogas plants and a significant reduction in landfill loads, he said. The upcoming budget must provide substantial amount to fulfill target of segregating and processing at least 85 per cent of Delhi's waste in the next five years, he stated. Organic waste remains one of the prime unmanaged pollution sources in Delhi,

filling up landfills. These overflowing sites continue to burn, emitting toxic fumes and significant amounts of methane gas, a potent greenhouse gas. Delhi in 2023-2024 generated about 11,342 tons of waste per day. As per the 2024 annual report on implementation of SWM (solid waste management) rules, 2016, 33.5 per cent of generated MSW (municipal solid waste) goes to landfill but an estimate by the association depicts the number to be around 35 per cent.

Of all the municipal solid wastes produced, around 40-60 per cent is organic in nature. It represents an untapped resource for generating clean energy through biogas production. Kedia stated that there is a sense of urgency that no organic waste finds its way to the landfill sites and rather should be diverted into energy-generating biomethanation plants.

CNG retailers want price hike, government wants to see cost

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

City gas companies like Indraprastha Gas Ltd and Adani Total Gas Ltd are mulling an increase in CNG prices after supplies of cheaper input gas was cut for the second time in a month, but the government officials say the retailers must give a cost breakup to justify the hike.

The government, with effect from November 16, cut supplies of low-priced natural gas coming from old fields to city gas retailers by up to 20 per cent.

This reduction came on the back of a 21 per cent reduction on October 16. City gas retailers IGL, which retails CNG in national capital and adjoining cities, Mahanagar Gas Ltd that does the same in Mumbai, and Adani Total Gas Ltd which operates in Gujarat and elsewhere, in regulatory filings flagged profitability concerns due to supply cut and hinted at price hike.

Officials in the ministry of petroleum and natural gas however are unimpressed as they feel the retailers operate on "hefty" margins and can easily absorb the additional cost they may have to incur on replacing the lost volumes with slightly higher priced gas from new wells or imported LNG.

"Take for instance IGL. It posted a net profit of Rs 1,748 crore on revenue of close to Rs 16,000 crore in the fiscal year ending March 31, 2024. That is a margin of 11 per cent. MGL had a profit of about Rs 1,300 crore on a revenue of Rs 7,000 crore. Which retailer earns that kind of margin?" a senior official asked.

Officials said the government is not against companies earning profits but if they want low-priced input (gas from old fields) then they should also declare the cost breakup of the final product (CNG).

"There cannot be a situation where you insist on getting low cost input but will not reveal the buildup to the final product price," another official said.

"The profitability numbers show they have been operating at huge margins. Indian Oil Corporation, which is also a retailer, had its best ever profit of Rs 39,617 crore on a revenue of Rs 8.71 lakh crore, implying a margin of 4.5 per cent."

Natural gas pumped from below the ground and from under the seabed from sites ranging from the Arabian Sea to Bay of Bengal within India is the raw material that is turned into CNG for sale to automobiles and piped cooking gas to households.

Production from legacy fields, called APM gas and whose price is regulated by the government to feed city gas retailers, has been falling by up to 5 per cent annually due to the natural decline that has set in. This has led to supply cuts to city gas retailers, officials said. While the input gas for piped cooking gas that households get is protected, the government has cut supply of raw material for CNG.

Gas from legacy fields used to meet 90 per cent of the demand for CNG in May 2023 and has progressively fallen.

Coal India arm NCL plans to relocate township having 600 MT of mineable coal underneath



PTI ■ SINGRAULI

Coal India arm NCL is planning a huge rehabilitation (R&R) project and is working on relocating the residents from the township in Madhya Pradesh's Singrauli, which has 600 million tonnes of mineable coal underneath, company's CMD B Sairam said.

Talking to reporters here, Sairam said Morwa township in Singrauli, Madhya Pradesh, is spread across 927 hectares. The project, which is quite huge, will have its own share of challenges as it will involve relocation of the entire Morwa township of Northern Coalfields Ltd (NCL). "The good thing is that in this acquisition, the people are ready to relocate. So half of the problem is solved because the first resistance comes from the people only," the chairman and managing director (CMD) said. Once people are ready, the only thing to decide is the rates of the compensation and the R&R benefits, he said. For the last six months, NCL has been regularly negotiating with the people on rehabilitation and

resettlement. "Based on the combination of past disbursements, the mandatory provisions and the call taken by the people residing in these areas and what is being given by the private commercial coal blocks coming up in the region, we have been able to reach a consensus and all the parameters of compensation and R&R are firmed up," he explained. The CMD said the relocation of the township has to take place as one of its coal mines - - Jayant block - is moving closer to this township and within another two years it will reach 500 metres of the residential area, which would

hinder the mining operations. The district administration is helping NCL on this and details of the first phase of R&R needs to be chalked out, he said, adding, "From May, we will start handing out its first compensation cheque." The tenancy land of 572.5 hectares is to be vacated in the first phase, the CMD said. According to the sources, the company is still working out the finer details of the plan that includes the financial implication. The Morwa township R&R project will be huge and is likely to entail an estimated expenditure of more than Rs 20,000 crore. The project will affect 30,000

families and will involve the relocation of 22,000 houses, structures. The total area for which the relocation being planned is 927 hectares, including 205.8 hectares of forest land, 572.5 hectares of tenancy/private land, and 149.3 hectares of government land. The company is planning to ramp up the capacity of Jayant coal mine from 30 million tonnes per annum (MTPA) to 35 MTPA by 2026-27. The company is expecting a big jump in capex target in the coming fiscal year, the CMD said, adding that a chunk of its over Rs 4,000 crore capex will be spent on land compensation.

NCL's capex for the current fiscal year will be in the range of Rs 2,500-2,600 crore. The PSU company produced 136.2 million tonnes of coal in 2023-24. The miniratna company under the Ministry of Coal is targeting production of 139 MT coal in the current fiscal year. The company accounts for 14 per cent of the total coal produced in the country, contributing to 10 per cent of the country's total electricity generation. The Singrauli-headquartered company operates through its 10 mechanised opencast mines across Singrauli and Sonbhadra districts of MP and UP, respectively.

Officials said the government is not against companies earning profits but if they want low-priced input (gas from old fields) then they should also declare the cost breakup of the final product (CNG). "There cannot be a situation where you insist on getting low cost input but will not reveal the buildup to the final product price," another official said. "The profitability numbers show they have been operating at huge margins. Indian Oil Corporation, which is also a retailer, had its best ever profit of Rs 39,617 crore on a revenue of Rs 8.71 lakh crore, implying a margin of 4.5 per cent."

Hyundai Motor India bets on CNG vehicles, sees accelerated demand

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Hyundai Motor India Ltd is betting big on CNG fuel option with sales of models equipped with the technology witnessing increasing demand across rural and urban markets in the country, according to a top company official.

The company, which currently offers CNG option in its three models - Grand i10 NIOS, AURA and EXTER - has seen an increase in contribution of the CNG models to its domestic sales to 11.4 per cent in FY24 from 9.1 per cent in FY22.

So far in the April-October period this fiscal, the contribution of CNG models to the company's domestic sales has risen to 12.8 per cent.

Its overall vehicle sales across different fuel options stood at 3.54 lakh units in the domestic market during the period.

"At present, India already has more than 7,000 CNG stations and aim is to have



approximately 17,500 CNG stations by 2030 which will further fuel the CNG demand," HMIT Whole-time Director and COO Tarun Garg said on the reasons behind the company's bullishness on CNG models. With a view to increase CNG vehicle sales, HMIT introduced the 'Hy-CNG Duo' - with a dual-cylinder system offering ample boot space and higher fuel efficiency - in its EXTER and Grand i10 NIOS models. "The introduction of Hy-CNG Duo is aimed to meet customer demands of providing ample space with high mileage and safety. This has helped us achieve the highest ever CNG penetration of 14.9 per cent

in October 2024. "Company-fitted CNG system with three years warranty assures maximum assurance for customers," he added. The 'Hy-CNG Duo' is also equipped with an integrated ECU for faster and seamless shifting between petrol and CNG fuel options. In October this year, HMIT had clocked 8,261 units of CNG models in domestic sales with CNG penetration in its compact car Grandi10 NIOS at 17.4 per cent, 39.7 per cent for mini SUV EXTER and 90.6 per cent for compact sedan AURA. HMIT said it has also witnessed the penetration of CNG models grow from 8.8 per cent in FY22 to 10.7 per

cent in FY24 in the urban markets, and from 7.1 per cent in FY22 to 12.0 per cent in FY24 in rural markets. As of October this fiscal, HMIT's urban penetration of CNG models stood at 12.3 per cent while it was at 14.6 per cent in the rural market. The company's top three cities for CNG vehicle sales in the January to October period of 2024 were Pune, New Delhi and Ahmedabad, while in terms of states it was Maharashtra, Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh.

HMIT is joining rivals Maruti Suzuki India and Tata Motors which have also focussed on enhancing sales of their CNG models. In fact, Maruti Suzuki India has set a target of selling 6 lakh CNG vehicles in FY25, up from 4.89 lakh units in FY24. Tata Motors' passenger vehicles segment has also witnessed increasing penetration of CNG vehicles in its overall portfolio in the first half of the fiscal to 21 per cent, up from 16 per cent in FY24.

Retail tomato prices drop 22.4 per cent on improved supplies: Government

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Retail tomato prices declined 22.4 per cent month-on-month on improved supplies across the country, the Consumer Affairs Ministry said on Sunday. The all-India average retail price of tomatoes stood at Rs 52.35 per kg on November 14, down from Rs 67.50 per kg on October 14, according to an official statement.

During the same period, modal wholesale prices at Delhi's Azadpur mandi witnessed a sharper decline of nearly 50 per cent to Rs 2,969 per quintal from Rs 5,883 per quintal, driven by increased arrivals. Similar price corrections were reported from key markets like Pimpalgaon (Maharashtra), Madanapalle (Andhra Pradesh), and Kolar (Karnataka), the ministry said. "Though arrivals have



subsidised at major tomato centres in Madanapalle and Kolar, prices have eased due to seasonal supplies from Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat filling supply gaps nationwide," it added. Favourable weather conditions have supported both crop growth and smooth supply chain movement from fields to consumers, the statement noted. The country's tomato production is projected to increase 4 per cent to 213.20 lakh tonne in 2023-24. While tomatoes are grown year-round, production varies

seasonally across regions. The ministry said adverse weather and logistics disruptions significantly impact prices due to the crop's high susceptibility and perishable nature. The price surge during October 2024 was attributed to excessive and prolonged rains in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. October and November are the main sowing periods in major producing states. Regular market availability is maintained due to the crop's short cultivation duration and multiple harvests, the ministry added.

Reliance Group establishes RGCC as part of its VISION 2030



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Reliance Group on Monday has launched the "Reliance Group Corporate Centre" (RGCC) as a part of its VISION 2030: Growth Strategy. The RGCC will serve as a strategic hub, providing guidance to the Group's companies as they pursue new opportunities and technological advancements.

The core team of RGCC will include leaders of the group Sateesh Seth, Punit Garg, and K. Raja Gopal, who will collectively bring management expertise. Both Sateesh Seth and Punit Garg have dedicated more than two decades to the group, serving in various leadership positions. The establishment of RGCC aims to harness the in-house expertise of these seasoned leaders to support the Group's forward-looking growth initiatives and cultivate a new generation of leadership for future projects. The RGCC will play a pivotal role in mentoring and developing emerging leaders, blending experience with

fresh talent to propel the group towards sustained growth.

A Reliance Group spokesperson said, "We are thrilled to introduce RGCC, a team of seasoned professionals with broad spectrum expertise. This strategic move aims to steer the Group's future growth by tapping into the vast experience of these leaders, will help navigate industry challenges and capitalize on new opportunities, drive innovation, and deliver exceptional value to our customers and stakeholders. We believe RGCC will be instrumental in shaping the next phase of our Group's success."

Dubai-based siblings to transfer jiohotstar.com domain to Reliance free of cost

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Dubai-based siblings Jainam and Jivika, the owners of jiohotstar.com domain, have decided to transfer it to Reliance "free of cost", resting speculations on social media platforms. The story of the internet domain name, which grabbed a lot of attention on social media platforms in the recent past, ended with "seva and kindness", according to the duo. The unique website ID was said to have been initially registered by a Delhi-based app developer last year amid speculation about the potential merger of Reliance Jio and Disney Hotstar. Last month, the developer came up with the demand for funding his higher studies at the Cambridge



University in return of the domain's ownership transfer, days after Reliance Jio and The Walt Disney formally announced the merger of their media businesses. Later, the Dubai-based siblings purchased jiohotstar.com domain from its registered owner. According to industry observers, the domain was sold to Dubai-based siblings after Reliance declined his offer.

The siblings now shared an update, saying the Reliance IP Legal team approached them and the duo has decided to pass the ownership to them (Reliance), hoping that it would be "useful for them." "Reliance IP legal team has approached us, and we will be transferring this domain to them, free of cost," they said in a message on the website. "There have been some rumours online suggesting that there is a payment or deal involved, but we want to make it clear, this is not true," the message said. Moreover, the duo in his video also clarified there is "no pressure from anyone" and denied of having a "deal of any kind." "This is purely a transfer of the domain from our side

because we believe it could be useful for them. Whether or not they choose to use it is up to them," the message added. PTI reached out to Reliance for its comment on the development but did not receive any response. In their previous message, the siblings said they had received numerous offers, including some genuine ones offering significant amounts. However, they had said that the domain was not for sale.

While announcing the "journey with jiohotstar.com is coming to an end", the duo said they are waiting for a draft from the Reliance legal team for the transfer. "The Reliance IP legal team has contacted us. We have told them that the domain transfer will only

happen after the agreement is signed. They have asked us to visit Mumbai to sign the agreement," they said, expecting the agreement to be signed soon.

"As soon as this happens, we will transfer the domain and this website will come to an end," the message said.

Reliance had last week announced completion of the merger of its media assets with the India business of global media giant The Walt Disney, forming a joint venture worth around Rs 70,352 crore (USD 8.5 billion). The JV will be one of the largest media and entertainment companies in India with a combined revenue of approximately Rs 26,000 crore and will be led by Nita Ambani as its chairperson.



Param Amrit offers luxurious Ayurvedic skin care products for holistic beauty and wellness, writes ABHI SINGHAL

REDEFINING SKINCARE NATURALLY

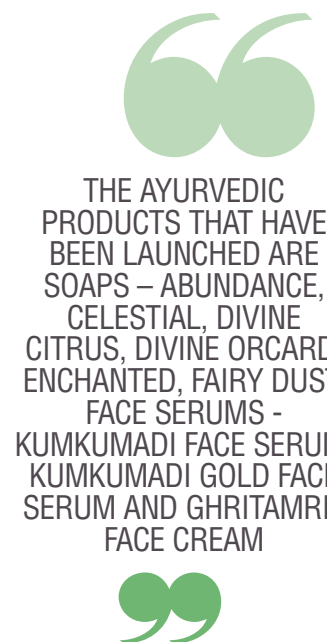
Skincare has been the talk of the town from quite a time now. From using normal soaps and moisturisers, to now being choosy due to thousands of brands typically using chemicals it's difficult to rely on the ones which are healthy for the skin. Some brands live up to the mark but the others are religiously rejected by the people.

From the days Ayurvedic products have come into the business, the trust of the people have been retained. *Param Amrit*, a luxurious skincare brand launched at the *Constitution Club of India* by *Nutan Kher* recently promises you the same.

Param Amrit is a luxurious skincare brand to revive the ancient wisdom of Ayurveda by integrating the transformative power of *Mantra Aushadhi*. Each product of *Param Amrit* is handcrafted and is a testament to holistic well-being, connecting mind, body, and soul. By merging ancient rituals with modern wellness aspirations, *Param Amrit* offers a range of Ayurvedic products that go beyond surface-level beauty, promoting spiritual and emotional rejuvenation.

The Ayurvedic products that have been launched are Soaps - *Abundance*, *Celestial*, *Divine Citrus*, *Divine Orcaard*, *Enchanted*, *Fairy Dust*; Face Serums - *Kumkumadi Face Serum*, *Kumkumadi Gold Face Serum* and *Ghritamrit face cream*.

Talking to *Nutan Kher*, Founder of *Param Amrit* about the many Ayurvedic brands, people in the majority still going for brands that use chemicals and how does she think that *Param Amrit* can bring a change to people's choices? She said, "We believe the shift towards natural, Ayurveda-based products requires more than just awareness—it calls for trust-building, education, and tangible results. That is why despite the growing awareness around Ayurveda, many consumers continue to lean toward brands that use chemicals, driven by aggressive marketing and instant results. However, *Param Amrit* is dedicated to educating consumers about the holistic, restorative benefits of Ayurvedic ingredients and the importance of understanding what they're putting on their skin. We stand out by focusing not just on the purity of its ingredients but also on the



THE AYURVEDIC PRODUCTS THAT HAVE BEEN LAUNCHED ARE SOAPS - ABUNDANCE, CELESTIAL, DIVINE CITRUS, DIVINE ORCAARD, ENCHANTED, FAIRY DUST; FACE SERUMS - KUMKUMADI FACE SERUM, KUMKUMADI GOLD FACE SERUM AND GHRITAMRIT FACE CREAM

wisdom of Ayurveda in a modern context. We believe that the authenticity and purity of Ayurvedic products like ours can pave the way for a more meaningful and conscious approach to skincare and self-care. In contrast to conventional skincare, which often uses chemicals for quick, surface-level results, Ayurveda prioritises understanding each individual's skin type, body constitution, and specific needs. Our goal is to help consumers make informed choices, empowering them to experience skincare that works in harmony with their natural biology. Our formulations, rooted in ancient wisdom, are developed using ethically sourced, high-quality herbs, and botanical extracts, blended with modern safety standards. By embracing this combination of ancient science and modern rigour, our brand shows that Ayurvedic skincare is not just an alternative but a reliable and effective choice for today's consumers.

Moreover, we use high-quality, traditionally revered Ayurvedic ingredients in combination with modern testing to ensure efficacy, safety, and visible results.

We at *Param Amrit* offer the best of both worlds: effective skincare rooted in nature and Ayurveda, without the potential downsides of synthetic chemicals. Our products demonstrate how true wellness is a gradual journey that prioritises long-term health over quick fixes, we aim to shift consumer preferences. We are confident that once people experience the authentic, holistic benefits of our prioritised products, they will make more conscious, healthier choices for themselves and their families. Our mission is to make Ayurvedic skincare a primary choice for holistic beauty and wellness, shifting consumer perceptions to recognise the true, sustainable benefits of nature-based solutions."

On asking that does she (*Nutan Kher*) thinks that Ayurvedic products can lead the way, she explained, "Absolutely. The launch of *Param Amrit* will set a new standard in the skincare industry with more Ayurvedic products. This shift is timely and necessary as consumers are becoming increasingly conscious of what they put on their skin and the impact these choices have on their overall well-being. Ayurveda offers a comprehensive, time-tested approach to skincare that aligns perfectly with these values, emphasising balance, sustainability, and nurturing from within thus, reviving the age-old



YOGA FOR STRESS RELIEF

BY JYOTI SINGH

In today's fast-paced world, stress is a constant companion for many, affecting both physical and mental well-being in New Delhi, offers yoga as a powerful remedy for stress relief. Yoga isn't just exercise; it's a way to reconnect with oneself, find calm amid chaos, and build resilience against daily stressors.

Understanding *Yoga's Role in Stress Relief* Yoga is unique in its ability to address stress at multiple levels - physically, mentally, and emotionally. Yoga isn't merely about flexibility or strength; it's about achieving balance. Practicing yoga lowers cortisol levels, the primary stress hormone, helping practitioners experience a natural sense of calm and well-being. In addition to the physical benefits, yoga cultivates mindfulness and deep breathing, both essential tools for managing stress.

By focusing on breathing and bodily awareness, yoga trains the mind to stay grounded in the present moment, reducing anxiety and worry. This mindfulness aspect of yoga empowers individuals to manage stress more effectively, turning challenges into manageable experiences. Yoga can be a sanctuary - a place to find peace within yourself, no matter the external circumstances.

Effective Yoga Practices for Managing Stress

The combination of physical poses, breathing exercises, and relaxation techniques tailored to relieve stress is recommended. Here are some practices especially effective:

PRANAYAMA (BREATHING TECHNIQUES)

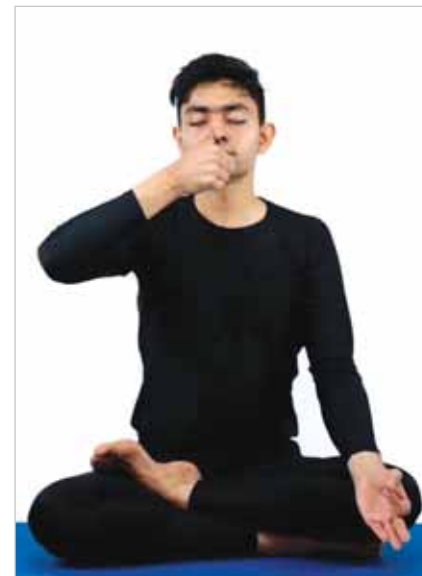
Pranayama, or controlled breathing, is one of the most effective tools for stress relief. Techniques like *Anulom Vilom* (Alternate Nostril Breathing) and *Bhramari* (Bee Breath) are ideal for calming the mind. *Anulom Vilom*, for example, involves breathing through alternate nostrils, which balances energy flow and reduces stress. *Bhramari*, on the other hand, involves creating a humming sound while exhaling, promoting a sense of tranquility and relieving mental tension.

BALASANA (CHILD'S POSE)

This restorative posture allows practitioners to rest and reset. By folding forward with arms extended or resting by the sides, the *Child's Pose* provides a gentle stretch for the back while calming the mind. It's an effective way to release built-up tension and focus on breathing, encouraging relaxation.

SUKHASANA WITH FORWARD BEND

Cross-legged with a forward fold stretches the spine and relaxes the nervous system. This position is simple yet effective for grounding



oneself and encouraging introspection, making it a valuable addition to a stress-relieving yoga routine.

SHAVASANA (CORPSE POSE)

Shavasana is the ultimate relaxation pose, allowing the body to rest and the mind to find calm. Practiced at the end of a session, it involves lying flat on one's back with the body relaxed and eyes closed. It is recommended that you do deep breathing during *Shavasana*, as it allows the nervous system to reset, enhancing relaxation and reducing stress levels.

The Science Behind Yoga & Stress Reduction

Studies confirm that yoga activates the parasympathetic nervous system, also known as the "rest and digest" mode, which is the body's natural counter to stress. Regular practice enhances this calming response, improving long-term stress management. Yoga builds resilience - it helps you create inner strength so that stress doesn't control you. Yoga is not only a coping mechanism but a preventive measure that enables individuals to handle life's challenges with greater ease.

Practicing Safely

For beginners, starting slowly and consulting an instructor to ensure poses are performed correctly. Practicing under guidance, especially when new to yoga, can enhance the benefits and minimize any discomfort. Sessions are tailored to meet individual needs, with a focus on safe and effective stress-relief practices.

Yoga offers a sanctuary from the pressures of daily life, helping individuals find inner peace and resilience. Anyone can incorporate these practices into their lives and experience the transformative effects of yoga for stress relief.

The author is the Founder and CEO of Sparsh Yog.



FIBRE-PACKED ALMONDS

The Australian almonds are your key to a healthier gut microbiome, writes KAVITA DEVGAN

Regardless of whether you're a professional athlete or simply interested in health and fitness, it's easy to integrate almonds into your routine. In fact, a regular 30-gram handful of *Australian almonds* contribute to heart health.

THE GUT BENEFITS OF ALMONDS

Interest in gut health has increased exponentially over recent years. Understanding what drives a healthy gut is still in its infancy, but current knowledge suggests a healthy gut is dependent on an abundant and diverse gut microbiota. Lower gut microbiota diversity is associated with a range of disorders and disease states, including cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes and inflammatory bowel disease. The nutrients that we get from food, in particular fibre, *phytochemicals* (particularly flavonoids and polyphenols) and unsaturated fatty acids, can positively impact the gut microbiota. Almonds contain a unique nutrient package that includes all three, but what exactly is the evidence base for nuts and gut health?

Key insights you need to know:

- Gut health, and specifically microbiota balance and diversity, can influence overall health.
- Almonds are one of the few foods to



contain a unique package of fibre, phytochemicals and unsaturated fat, that can all positively affect the gut microbiota composition.

- There is established evidence that eating at least 1 large handful (>42g) of almonds daily has a positive effect on gut microbiota-both increasing beneficial bacteria

and decreasing potentially pathogenic types.

- Evidence suggests that long-term nut consumption may also decrease the risk of colorectal (and colon) cancer recurrence and death, and this link may be more apparent in women than men. Almonds contain the highest content of fibre, and one of

the highest amounts of phytochemicals, of all nuts.

About the research

A literature review investigating the relationship between nuts, specifically almonds, and gut health was conducted by *Nutrition Research Australia* (NRAUS). A review of the literature

was undertaken via the PUBMED database. Study types were limited to randomised controlled trials (RCTs), cohort studies and *systematic literature reviews* (SLR). Targeted searches were also conducted in *Google Scholar* using key terms.

Research findings in a snapshot: THE GUT MICROBIOTA

A 2020 SLR and meta-analysis of nine RCTs found strong evidence that both *almonds* (5 studies) and *walnuts* (3 studies) can improve the gut microbiota. There was an absence of evidence for other nut types (8). Almonds had a dual effect, increasing the abundance of healthy short chain fatty acids producing bacteria, and decreasing potentially pathogenic bacteria.

In one study, even greater effects were found in children, where 42.5g and 85g of almonds per day over 3 weeks had a more pronounced effect on gut microbiota in four-year-old children compared with their parents.

Is the level of processing important?

Research has shown that whole and chopped almonds have a greater positive impact on the gut microbiota than almonds in butter form. This may be because approximately 50% of the fibre

content of almonds is found in the almond skin.

How are Almonds linked to GUT HEALTH?

Nuts are one of the few foods that provide a nutrient package of fibre, phytochemicals (flavonoids, flavanones and polyphenols) and unsaturated fatty acids, which may explain their strong beneficial effects on bacterial abundance and microbiota composition. Fibre is well known to provide important fuel for colonic bacteria, and phytochemicals act like prebiotics, positively influencing the maintenance of healthy and diverse microbiota. Unsaturated fatty acids have been shown to have antimicrobial properties and also benefit gut microbiota composition.

Amounts and frequency

- One large handful (42g) of almonds or walnuts per day over 3-12 weeks had positive effects on the gut microbiota.
- Two or more handfuls (57g) of nuts per week were associated with a lower incidence of colorectal cancer recurrence and death.

The author is the Simone nutrition program ambassador of Australian Almonds.

India beat Japan 3-0 to top league stage

PTI ■ RAJGIR (BIHAR)

Defending champions India stormed into the semifinals of the Women's Asian Champions Trophy with an unbeaten record, defeating Japan 3-0 here on Sunday. Continuing her stellar form, star striker Deepika netted a quickfire brace from penalty corners in the final quarter to seal the victory, following vice-captain Navneet Kaur's opener in the 37th minute. With this win, India topped the league stage with maximum 15 points from five matches, ahead of Olympic silver medallists China (12 points). India will take on fourth-placed Japan in the semifinal on Tuesday, while China will play third-placed Malaysia in the other last-four game. Deepika, the tournament's leading scorer, now boasts 10 goals, including four field goals, five penalty corners, and one penalty stroke, underscoring her dominance. In the day's other matches, Malaysia beat Thailand 2-0, while China defeated South Korea by an identical margin. The Indians secured their



first scoring chance in the form of back-to-back penalty corners in the eighth minute but Deepika's flick from the second effort was brilliantly saved by Japanese goalkeeper Yu Kudo. India earned another penalty corner in the 13th minute but yet again wasted the chance. The Indians continued to dominate and secured their fourth penalty corner in the 25th minute but once again Kudo rose to the occasion and made three brilliant

saves to deny the hosts. A minute after the change of ends, Kudo again came to Japan's rescue to deny Deepika. India eventually broke the deadlock in the 37th minute through Navneet's brilliant reverse hit to the second post. Deepika's brilliance The Indians continued their domination and earned three back-to-back penalty corners in the 47th minute and star dragflicker Deepika finally found the back of the net with a powerful low dragflick to open her account. A minute later, the Indians secured another set piece and this time too Deepika struck again with a powerful flick into the top right corner, effectively sealing the match. Credit must also go to the Indian defence, led brilliantly by Udita and Sushila Chanu, as they didn't let the Japanese take a single shot at the Indian goal. Skipper Salima Tete, Neha and Sharmila Devi too were brilliant in the midfield, creating numerous chances for the forwardline with their runs and neat dribbling skills.



Swiatek leads Poland comeback over Czechs to set up BJK Cup semi against Paolini's Italy

AP ■ MALAGA (SPAIN)

Iga Swiatek won in singles and doubles to lead Poland's 2-1 comeback against the Czech Republic in the Billie Jean King Cup. Poland will meet Italy in the semifinals after Jasmine Paolini likewise won her singles and doubles matches to lead Italy back for a 2-1 win over Japan. Marie Bouzkova beat Magdalena Frech 6-1, 4-6, 6-4 to give the Czech Republic a 1-0 lead on the indoor hard court in Malaga's Palacio del Deportes. The second-ranked Swiatek leveled the score after she held on for a 7-6 (7), 4-6, 7-5 win over Linda Noskova. The five-time Grand Slam winner then went back on the court after a short break to help Katarzyna Kawa beat Katerina Siniakova, the world's top-ranked doubles player, and Bouzkova 6-2, 6-4. "Let's enjoy this one. For sure it was an exhausting day and some really tough matches, but I am really happy we won that last one," Swiatek said. She added that she hadn't played doubles in three years and praised Kawa's well-placed passing shots in the doubles lane as key to victory. Swiatek showed no sign that she was worn down by the back-to-back matches that combined for 3 hours, 50

minutes of playing time. The Polish pair converted all four break chances and hit more winners, 29-18, than the Czechs. Poland is seeking its first title. The Czech Republic is an 11-time champion, second only to the United States' 18 titles. ITALY EYES SHOT AT CONSECUTIVE FINALS The fourth-ranked Paolini, a finalist at Wimbledon and the French Open, defeated Moyuka Uchijima 6-3, 6-4 to level the tie 1-1. She then helped Sara Errani beat Shuko Aoyama and Eri Hozumi 6-3, 6-4 to seal the quarterfinal win. Japan took the early lead when Ena Shibahara defeated Elisabetta Cocciaretto 3-6, 6-4, 6-4. Uchijima stole Paolini's first service game. But that was only a blip in an otherwise dominant showing by the Italian. Paolini broke Uchijima four times and hit 17 forehand winners to secure the straight-set victory. In doubles, the Italians broke the Japanese four times and made just 14 unforced errors to 23 by their rivals. "Japan is a tough cookie, as you say in English," Italy captain Tathiana Garbin said. "They played with a lot of courage so it was fun to watch this kind of level. My players, they played unbelievable doubles, so we made it."

West Indies chase down 219 to beat England by five wickets in 4th T20



AP ■ GROS ISLET (ST. LUCIA)

Shai Hope and Evin Lewis made half centuries in a rapid 136-run opening stand as the West Indies completed a record run chase to beat England by five wickets in the fourth Twenty20 international. Hope made 54 from 24 balls and Lewis made 68 from 31 balls, with seven sixes and four fours, in a partnership which lasted only 9.1 overs but enabled the West Indies to reach a winning target of 219 on Saturday. The West Indies' confident start was shaken when Lewis, Hope and Nicholas Pooran fell to consecutive balls in the 10th over. But captain Roston Chase put the innings back on track with 38 from 23 balls and Sherfane Rutherford competed the chase with successive sixes and an over to spare. There were 32 sixes in the match, 16 from each team. "We had to assess the

conditions. That's one thing we struggled with in the first three games in the power play," Hope said. "We've been losing some early wickets so the main thing was to try and understand what was the best remedy, to understand the conditions and come out of the power play on top." England already had won the five-match series after winning the first three matches by eight wickets, seven wickets and three wickets respectively. Every match in the series and in the previous three-match one-day series has been won by the team winning the toss. After being sent in, Phil Salt and Jacob Bethell who both have deep roots in the Caribbean made swift half centuries as England made 218-5 to equal the highest first innings total at the Darren Sammy Stadium. Bethell who was born and raised in Barbados made an unbeaten 62 from 32 balls

while Salt who was born in Wales but raised in Barbados made 55 from 35 balls at the top of the order. Will Jacks (25), Jos Buttler (38) and Sam Curran (24) also contributed to England's innings of 218-5. The West Indies made a speedy start in pursuit of that total. Hope reached his half century from 23 balls, the West Indies were 69-0 after the power play and their hundred came up in only 7.3 overs. Lewis was more watchful than Hope at first but when he began to hit out it was with enormous power. He reached his half century from 26 balls and the longest of his sixes traveled 105 meters. The century partnership between Hope and Lewis came from only 45 balls and they had looked impregnable until Lewis played an awkward shot to a ball from Rehan Ahmed which he skewed to Dan Mousley. Hope was run out next ball for the second time in consecutive matches and Pooran was bowled first ball as the West Indies slumped to 136-3. Powell restored some of the early momentum with his 38 before falling lbw to John Turner in his T20 debut. The West Indies needed 21 from the last three overs with five wickets in hand, then 15 from two. After edging towards the target in singles, Rutherford finally found the middle and blasted consecutive sixes from Mousley to clinch the win.

McGrath urges Australia to 'go hard' on emotional Kohli

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Pace legend Glenn McGrath feels Australia have the "ammunition" to target an "emotional" Virat Kohli, who will be under pressure if he gets off to a poor start at the five-match Test series for the Border-Gavaskar Trophy, starting in Perth from November 22. India have won the last four Test series against Australia, including two Down Under. However, they head into the much-anticipated five-Test assignment on the back of a 0-3 series whitewash at the hands of New Zealand at home. "Without a doubt, especially after coming off a 3-0 loss



against New Zealand, you've got plenty of ammunition to back yourself up," Fox Cricket quoted McGrath as saying on 'CODE Sports'. "So put the pressure on them and see if they're up for it," he added. Kohli, who has been India's batting mainstay for over a

decade, has struggled with form in Test cricket recently. In the six matches he's played this year, he has averaged just a mere 22.72. With the injured Shubman Gill out of contention from the first Test and skipper Rohit Sharma's participation also in doubt, Kohli will feel the pressure of leading the batting line up. However, the 36-year-old has a penchant of eking out his best in Australia. Kohli has an impressive average of 54.08 in the four Australia tours he has been a part of. And McGrath warned that targeting Kohli aggressively could also hit him, especially if he manages to keep his emotions in check.

Need to be proactive against Ashwin, and not allow him to settle: Smith

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Australian batting talisman Steve Smith wants to adopt a proactive approach against Ravichandran Ashwin in the upcoming Border-Gavaskar Trophy to avoid his struggles against the Indian spinner during the 2020-21 series. Ashwin had nicked off Smith thrice during that rubber, and later in 2023 the Indian off-spinner dismissed the Aussie twice as he could only make 22 runs against his old foe. "I don't like getting out to off-spin in Australia. But he's also a very good bowler and he came in with some decent plans. There were a couple of occasions where he got on top of me," Smith told the Sydney Morning Herald. "But then I got on top of him at the SCG when I was a bit more proactive (Smith made 131 and 81 at Sydney). So, that's key for me. Just be proactive against him and not let him settle and bowl the way



he wants to," he added. Ashwin's Test bowling average stands at a modest 42.15 in Australia compared to his home average of 21.57. Smith hoped to land the first blow on the 38-year-old to gain an early upper hand in the five-match series, beginning at Perth from November 22.

The Tamil Nadu man recently said that he had worked out Smith after some initial struggles against him. "I think I've kind of figured out what he does or how he bats, I've had an edge over him. I've had the wood over him," Ashwin had told Channel Seven. But Smith did not read too much into it.

"Ashwin and I have had some good battles over the years. When you have five matches, if someone gets on top of another player, they could have 10 innings against them. "So, you're facing those mental challenges each game, and if it goes one way early, they will feel under pressure against that player. There's nowhere to hide in five games like there are in a two-game series," said the New South Wales man. The 35-year-old, who is 315 shy of 10,000 Test runs, will bat at his favoured No. 4 slot against India after opening the innings for four Tests earlier this year. It was not a successful experiment and Smith hoped to hit the ground running early from a position where he made runs at an average in excess of 60. It always makes your summer better when you start well. It gives you a lot of confidence. It's about not overthinking things. It's playing each ball as it comes and keeping it simple."

US Open runner-up Fritz back in another big final and faces Sinner again for ATP Finals crown

AP ■ TURIN (ITALY)

Taylor Fritz is starting to make reaching big finals a habit. He feels like he belongs among the very best players in tennis, too. The American followed his runner-up finish at the U.S. Open by beating Alexander Zverev 6-3, 3-6, 7-6 (3) on Saturday to play for the trophy at the ATP Finals. "I have believed that I belong, that I'm one of the best players," Fritz said. "It's not results-based. It's more I can feel how I'm playing. This week is huge." In Sunday's final, Fritz will face top-ranked Jannik Sinner — the player he lost to in the U.S. Open final. Sinner also beat Fritz in straight sets in the group stage this week. Sinner advanced with a rapid 6-1, 6-2 win over Casper Ruud. Fritz became the first American finalist since James Blake lost the 2006 final to Roger Federer. The last American to win the elite

eight-man event was Pete Sampras, who beat Andre Agassi in 1999. "I trust my game and I trust my level and I don't feel nearly as uncomfortable in these situations anymore because I've been playing the top guys at big events a lot lately," Fritz said. "I'm getting more comfortable in the moment. I'm really, really confident in my game." Fritz upbeat after loss to Sinner-Fritz came away encouraged from his 6-4, 6-4 loss to Sinner on Tuesday. "I felt much more comfortable from the baseline. ... I had chances to break him in both sets," Fritz said. "He had an equal amount of chances, and he took his. He played the big points better than I did. It didn't feel anywhere near as one-sided as the Open." Sinner noted that Fritz "played a great match." "The difference was just a few

points. Tomorrow will be very similar. ... But finals are always different than group matches." Fritz trying to match Gauff-Fritz wins the trophy, it will mark an American sweep of the season-ending events after Coco Gauff won the WTA Finals last week. Fritz's run in New York made him the first American man to reach a Grand Slam singles final in 15 years. He's playing at the ATP Finals for the second time. On debut two years ago, he beat Rafael Nadal in his opener and made it to the semifinals, losing to Novak Djokovic. "It's awesome to come back and already go a step further," Fritz said. "I'm all about always trying to do better than the year before." At the start of the week, Fritz told The Associated Press his "career has always been a very steady progression and just improving a little bit each year." Fritz has Zverev's numberIt was



Fritz's fourth consecutive victory over Zverev, who replaced Carlos Alcaraz at No. 2 in the rankings this week. "He's an uncomfortable player for me," Zverev said. "It's no secret." Fritz also beat Zverev at

Wimbledon and the U.S. Open, plus the Laver Cup. Fritz will finish year at career high Fritz was already assured of finishing the year in the top five for the first time and he'll rise to a career-high No. 4 on Monday.

Zverev has seen Fritz's improvement up close — especially on one key stroke: "His forehand used to break down quite a lot. ... I feel like the ratio is a lot more towards winners now." It was a matchup of big servers between the 6-foot-5 (1.96-meter) Fritz and the 6-foot-6 (1.98-meter) Zverev, and when Fritz broke Zverev for 4-2 in the first set, it marked the first time that Zverev lost a service game in four matches in Turin. Eventually, though, the match turned into a physical duel from the baseline. Fritz rallied from 0-40 and held his serve for 3-2 in the third after a nine-minute game full of long rallies — winning one such exchange that lasted 30 strokes. Fritz was then under pressure one service game after another but somehow managed to keep holding. Fritz got ahead early in the tiebreaker and finished Zverev off

with an audacious inside-out forehand winner on his first match point. Fritz finished with 15 aces to Zverev's 10 in a match that last 2 hours, 20 minutes. "I felt like statistically and shot-wise, my level maybe was even higher than his until the important moments. That's where I kind of blew it," Zverev said. "This one will hurt more than the other few." Doping case hangs over Sinner-Sinner is playing at home for the first time since it was announced before his U.S. Open title that he tested positive in two separate drug tests this year. A decision to clear Sinner of wrongdoing was appealed by the World Anti-Doping Agency in September and a final ruling in the case is expected next year. Last year, Sinner lost the final to Djokovic, who withdrew injured this year.

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