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

LUCKNOW, SATURDAY NOVEMBER 23, 2024; PAGES 12 ₹3

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PUBLISHED FROM: DELHI | LUCKNOW | BHOPAL | BHUBANESWAR | RANCHI | RAIPUR | CHANDIGARH | DEHRADUN | HYDERABAD | VIJAYWADA

RESULT DAY: WINNER TAKES IT ALL

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA
NEW DELHI/MUMBAI/RANCHI

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



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

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

Congress remarks that voting trends suggest the Congress will get the maximum number of seats has not gone down well with alliance Shiv Sena (UBT), whose tall leader Sanjay Raut insisted the chief ministerial face will be decided by all alliance partners jointly once the MVA secures majority. The Raja Sabha MP said if the Congress high command has told State Congress chief Nana Patole that he will be the Chief Ministerial face then the national party's president Mallikarjun Kharge, and its top leaders Rahul Gandhi, Sonia Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra should announce the same. On the MahaYuti side, Shiv Sena MLA and party spokesperson Sanjay Shirsat said the Assembly elections were contested with Chief Minister Eknath Shinde as the face. "Voters have shown their preference for Shinde through voting. I think it is Shinde's right (to be the next CM) and we are confident that he will be the next CM," Shirsat said. However, BJP leader Pravin Darekar batted for Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis for the top post. "I think if anyone from the

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

Centre opposes ex-SC judges panel

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI

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



File photo: Ranjan Dimri/The Pioneer

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

Temperature falls, AQI rises

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

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

445. By the evening fog engulfed the National Capital, reducing visibility which led to disruption of road, rail and flight operations. This November, Delhi has already seen seven "severe" pollution days. Last year's winter experienced four similar episodes. An AQI of 400 or higher is classified as "severe" and poses significant health risks. The PM2.5 concentration is currently 68.1 times the World Health Organization annual PM2.5 guideline value. Continued on page 8

comprehensive approach to address the crisis. "A committee of experienced judges familiar with these issues could efficiently oversee the situation and hear individual grievances," said Singh. The proposal, however, was met with strong resistance from Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati, representing the Centre. Bhati asserted the Centre and the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) were taking adequate measures and that adding another oversight layer would be counterproductive. "We strongly oppose this suggestion. There is no need for an additional judicial committee as your lordships are already monitoring the situation. We are answering all concerns, correcting shortcomings, and making progress," said ASG Bhati while opposing the creation of "any more tier". The amicus clarified her suggestion was for a fact-finding committee, but Bhati countered the statement, saying the government was already working with the available data and frameworks to address the issue effectively. Continued on page 8



Canada dismisses report linking PM, Doval to criminal activities

PTI ■ OTTAWA

The Canadian government has dismissed a media report linking Prime Minister Narendra Modi, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and National Security Advisor Ajit Doval to criminal activities in Canada, including the alleged plot to kill Sikh separatist Hardeep Singh Nijjar, terming it as "speculative and inaccurate". The denial made by Nathalie G Drouin, National Security and Intelligence Advisor to Canadian Prime Minister, on Thursday came a day after India strongly trashed the report as "smear campaign". Quoting an unnamed senior national security official, "The Globe and Mail" newspaper on Tuesday reported that Canadian security agencies believe Prime Minister Modi knew about the killing of Nijjar and other violent plots. The official said Canadian and American intelligence tied the assassination operations to Home Affairs Minister Amit Shah. Also in the loop, the official said, was Doval and Jaishankar. Continued on page 8

Déjà vu for AAP, LG Saxena now praises CM Atishi

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

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



Delhi Lt. Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena, Chief Minister Atishi, Vice Chancellor of the Indira Gandhi Technical University for Women (IGDTUW), in New Delhi PTI

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

towards yourself, the second is your responsibility towards your parents and family while the third responsibility is towards the society and nation building." "The fourth responsibility is to prove yourself as women who have broken the glass ceiling of gender and stand on par with others in all fields," he said. Continued on page 8

RHYTHM OF LIFE



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

Ten Naxalites killed in Sukma

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
SUKMA

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

BGT: Team India fights back, after a flop show

PTI ■ PERTH

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



PHOTO: PTI

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

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

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

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



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Cars the main culprit

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

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

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

PICTALK



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

Global concerns over gender bias in politics



ARCHANA DATTA

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

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

While, another leading US daily attributed Harris's defeat to her greater emphasis on issues like 'abortion rights' and the 'protection of democracy', and for not paying adequate attention to the state of the economy or immigration, which many Americans viewed as the most pressing issues. Harris, on the other hand, in her concession speech urged her supporters to 'remain vigilant' and keep fighting for their values. Nevertheless, many non-profits working for reproductive freedom urged Democrats to 'developing a long-term plan to directly confront the sexism - both within their party and the nation - that hampered, both Harris and Hillary Clinton', the only women to win a major party's presidential nomination. In the US, women occupied 28 per cent of congressional seats in 2023, while Democrats had an edge over the Republicans, with 41 per cent of seats, and Republicans with only 15.4 per cent of members.

Women are 32.7 per cent of all state legislators, 48 per cent of Democrats and 20 per cent of Republicans. Democratic women are at or above parity with Democratic men in 26 state legislatures. While Republican women fall short of parity with Republican men in all states, holding one-third or less of Republican seats in 47 state legislatures. Studies commented that prevailing beliefs and attitudes



about gender roles in the parties control political representation, and more traditional perceptions among conservatives persist that 'women's success is at the expense of men' (Centre for American Women and Politics at Rutgers University). However, it is not the USA alone that didn't ever elect a woman in the highest political office, but, several most socially and economically advanced countries like Sweden, despite having a good record of women's representation in most institutions, 47.5 per cent in Parliament and 54.5 per cent in the council of ministers, has never had a woman as a Prime Minister. Countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia have only closed 15 per cent of a hypothetical 100 per cent gender gap in political empowerment (WEF). While India, the largest democracy, has a scant presence of women (13.62 per cent) in the current Lok Sabha.

Last year a law was passed, reserving one-third of seats in Lok Sabha and State Assemblies for women, but, its implementation stands postponed till the process of delimitation of constituencies is over. India did have a woman Prime Minister and two women Presidents. But, deep structural and systemic difficulties (Raje, 2019), created women's poor representation, resulting in 'a democratic deficit' in



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

governance and decision-making (Rahman and Rao, 2004). India ensured women's participation in the rural-urban local bodies since the early 90s, yet, several surveys found that a majority of women elected representatives reported 'gender-based discrimination', and in many places, their male relatives, especially husbands, played 'proxy' roles. While explaining reasons for this uneven power equation in politics, studies (Fox and Lawless, 2004) explicated that there is a 'gender gap in ambition', as many eligible women with the required professional and economic credentials as political candidates, often feel 'less encouraged to run for executive offices and tend to believe that they are less qualified for such offices than men'.

Evidence also suggests that women's political careers are often influenced by 'family and relational considerations', and if they face higher costs for their career achievements, they shy away from pursuing such objectives. At the same time, other researchers pointed out voters' bias and discrimination which matter quantitatively in women's electoral prospects. Even political party leaders, act as gate-keepers, if they are aware of voters' bias against women, and are inclined to promote male candidates, rather than female contenders, as a votes-maximising strategy

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

(The author is former Director General Doordarshan, All India Radio; views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

US COURT INDICTS ADANI

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

Dorai Ramani Suresh | Ghaziabad

MONEY DOMINATES ELECTIONS

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

Manipur needs solutions



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

the government's actions have been restricted to empty rhetoric, imposing an internet ban and issuing vague promises of dialogues. The Centre's move to bring warring communities to the negotiating table has not inspired confidence.

What is really baffling is that Prime Minister Modi has not bothered to visit the state. And surprisingly, the BJP has repudiated the trust in Biren Singh, conveniently ignoring his lapses and the growing clamour for his removal. He must be shown the door without any further delay. Confidence-building measures with affected groups should be carried out as ethnic identities have played a great role in the socio-economic life of Manipur.

Bal Govind | Noida

RAFAEL NADAL RETIRES FROM TENNIS

Madam — Rafael Nadal, a self-made glorious jewel of the tennis field, needs no introduction for his glittering career of winning 22 Grand Slams, 2 Olympic Gold medals, ATP Masters, and several French Open championships. He shares the Trinity of Tennis Gems with Roger Federer and Novak Djokovic.

Despite being in his 38th, Nadal always makes sure to be the tennis new learner, full of zeal with utmost calmness and maturity like an experienced player. In the milieu of tennis stars throwing tantrums and breaking racquets, Nadal never ever hurt the sport that pays him. Despite he had paid adieu to this sport, he will always shine in this sport's history for his incredible accolades and invincible spirit for continuing his sport for more than two decades. He is and will always remain a true inspiration for all the budding tennis aficionados across the world.

Kirti Wadhawan | Kanpur

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

Manipur in turmoil: Unraveling the roots of violence

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

Manipur, one of the seven northeastern states of India, holds strategic importance due to its geographical location. It shares borders with Nagaland to the north, Mizoram to the south, Assam to the east, and Myanmar to the west. Often referred to as the gateway to Southeast Asia, this state is home to diverse ethnic communities, including the Meiteis (approximately 53 per cent), Nagas (around 24 per cent) and Kuki-Chin-Zomi tribes (about 16 per cent). However, Manipur has recently experienced its worst violence in over a decade. More than a year of unrest has left over 226 people dead, more than 1,500 injured, and displaced over 60,000 residents. Understanding the root causes of this conflict requires examining several interconnected issues.

(a) Demand for Scheduled Tribe (ST) Status

The spark for the current violence was a Manipur High Court directive urging the state government to consider granting the Meitei community Scheduled Tribe (ST) status. This decision was met with strong opposition from



the Kuki community, culminating in protests and clashes.

Understanding the ST Status Debate:

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

The Meiteis fear that an increasing number of hill residents settling in the valley threatens their identity and culture. ST status for Meiteis would limit land purchases in the valley, potentially safeguarding their heritage.

On the other hand, the Kukis argue that Meiteis already dominate key sectors such as governance, education, and the economy. Granting them ST status, they claim, would exacerbate the marginalisation of hill tribes.

(b) Narco-Terrorism

Manipur's proximity to the Golden Triangle and Golden Crescent has made it a hotspot for drug trafficking. Illegal poppy cultivation in the region is reportedly controlled by powerful drug lords, whose operations are threatened by government crackdowns. These drug lords, facing intensified enforcement efforts, have allegedly fueled violence by supplying arms and ammunition to militant groups, further destabilising the region.

Act. Encroachments by hill tribes and illegal immigrants for farming and settlements have led to significant deforestation. Recent government-led eviction drives have targeted these encroachments, prompting accusations of anti-tribal bias and deepening tensions between the valley and hill communities.

Voices from the Hill Tribes

Many people from the Kuki-Chin-Zomi communities claim to oppose violence, emphasising their peaceful protests against the High Court's order. They argue that militant groups responsible for the initial clashes do not represent their community. A Way Forward for Peace over half of the insurgencies in northeastern India are concentrated in Manipur, making its stability crucial. Fostering dialogue among all stakeholders, addressing grievances equitably, and ensuring inclusive development are essential steps toward lasting peace in the region.

(The writer is Independent Research Scholar; views are personal)



YOGESH CHAUHAN



FIRST COLUMN

G20: COPING WITH NEW REALITIES

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



KUMARDEEP BANARJEE

The recently concluded G20 summit in Brazil, could well serve as an early preview in what could be the realignment of global forces in the next year and beyond with the new incoming President of the USA. First, some major optics moments, such as the family picture for G20 leaders, which didn't have US President (of course some others were missing too). Second, winding down of several commitments from the Delhi declaration to just passing mention regarding the situation in Ukraine and climate finance. Third, the entire G20 summit is being riddled with speculation on whether the multilateral platform would survive a Trump presidency, and if so, with what effectiveness. The view in Washington DC is similar, especially in the government circles. Every government official, some of whom may have served under Trump's first presidency, is well aware of his working ways. The incoming administration has an additional extra non government supervisor, the world's richest person Elon Musk, who has his own unique style of functioning. Many in DC, understand that their managers have one foot out of the door, and things would change, at least for the next four years post the inauguration on January 20. Trump's foreign policy outlook, if the past presidency is any reference, is likely to be transactional. Trump can parallel have public shouting matches and back door negotiations with friends and foes. He has already talked about ensuring long lasting peace in Ukraine, at a time, when under President Biden's patronage, US missiles are landing in Russian territory. Similarly, the proposal to impose higher tariffs on Chinese products, may sound sweet to



many, but knowing the sharp businessman Trump is, he may well cut a sweet deal with President Xi Jinping, which could potentially be of benefit to both nations. On India, Trump has called it out to be the tariff king and likely to make a case for imposing tariffs in reciprocal approach, for sectors where he thinks, US exports are getting impacted. India's chief economic advisor has already sounded out a cautionary note on incoming Trump presidency. He has been quoted as saying that with Trump administration's views on trade and tariffs, plus a slowing global economy, India may have to look beyond exports as the primary drivers of growth. India has taken several steps such as providing incentives for manufacturing in various sectors, but except for mobile phones, the growth has been slow. It would not be hard to assume that the sluggish offtake for India for manufacturing in sectors it has recently provided incentives, may well be on the slow lane for some years. What can however, change the game would be the transactional style Mr Trump has, which is well known not just to senior India ministers and bureaucrats but the PM Modi himself (who is known to share a warm relationship with Trump).

Coming back to G20, while Delhi declarations had significant paragraphs on India promoted "not an era of war for Ukraine, the Rio De Janeiro declaration just mentioned, " Specifically concerning the war in Ukraine, while recalling our discussions in New Delhi, we highlight the human suffering and negative added impacts of the war with regard to global food and energy security, supply chains, macro-financial stability, inflation and growth." Clearly the world leaders didn't want to come out with any peace formulas, in face of President Trump assuming office next year. Similarly, the paragraph on West Asia focused on humanitarian aid, instead of taking either party's side. It read " While expressing our deep concern about the catastrophic humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip and the escalation in Lebanon, we emphasize the urgent need to expand the flow of humanitarian assistance and to reinforce the protection of civilians and demand the lifting of all barriers to the provision of humanitarian assistance at scale."

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

Hope floats for Sri Lanka in Dissanayake



NILANTHA LANGAMUWA

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



SOURYABRATA MOHAPATRA

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

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

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



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

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

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

example. Yet, with US emissions having only fallen 5 per cent since 1990-compared to the EU's 35 per cent reduction-the country's role as a climate leader is increasingly tenuous under Trump's leadership. Despite federal opposition, analysts believe that state governments, corporations, and financial markets will continue advancing climate action, albeit at a potentially slower pace. Over the past decade, bipartisan support for renewable energy has increased, driven by job creation and energy independence rather than environmental motives alone. With or without federal backing, the economic engine for clean energy remains robust, with new manufacturing plants and energy storage facilities rapid-

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

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

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

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark equity indices rebounded sharply on Friday, with the Sensex climbing 2.54 per cent to reclaim the 79,000 level, driven by across-the-board rally and value buying at lower levels. Strong buying by domestic institutional investors and a firm trend in the US markets also helped the indices, traders said. The BSE benchmark Sensex jumped 1,961.32 points or 2.54 per cent to settle at 79,117.11. During the day, it surged 2,062.4 points or 2.67 per cent to 79,218.19. The NSE Nifty soared 557.35 points or 2.39 per cent to 23,907.25. All the 30 Sensex firms ended in the green. Hectic buying in blue chip counters like Reliance



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

higher, bouncing back from the previous day's sharp fall after billionaire industrialist Gautam Adani was charged in the US for alleged bribery and fraud. Ambuja Cements surged 3.50 per cent, ACC jumped 3.17 per cent, Adani Enterprises climbed 2.16 per cent, Adani

Ports (2.05 per cent), Adani Total Gas (1.18 per cent) and NDTV (0.65 per cent) on the BSE. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 5,320.68 crore on Thursday, while Domestic Institutional Investors (DIIs) bought shares worth Rs 4,200.16 crore, according to exchange data. In Asian markets, Seoul and Tokyo settled in the positive territory while Shanghai and Hong Kong ended lower. European markets were trading lower. The US markets ended higher on Thursday. Global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 0.19 per cent to USD 74.37 a barrel. On Thursday, the BSE benchmark tanked 422.59 points or 0.54 per cent to settle at 77,155.79 points. The Nifty slumped 168.60 points or 0.72 per cent to 23,349.90.

Govt notifies telecom cyber security rules, to access traffic data



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

NTPC Green Energy IPO fully subscribed on third day



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

Cooperative renaissance opens new doors to development and prosperity



DR. MEENESH SHAH

India which is producing 231 million tonnes of milk annually is the largest milk producer in the world, contributing approximately one-fourth of global production. Through cooperatives, millions of small and marginal farmers have been united, creating a network of over 1.7 lakh dairy cooperative societies in the country and establishing massive plants with a processing capacity of 100 million liters of milk per day. This historic success is the result of seven decades of relentless hard work and efforts by cooperative institutions across the country. In India, dairy is not limited to milk production; it serves as a livelihood source for over 80 million families, empowers women, provides nutrition and financial security, and acts as a key driver of inclusive rural development. The establishment of a separate and dedicated Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry, and Dairying in 2019, followed by the formation of the Ministry of Cooperation in 2021, reflects the Government of India's faith in the cooperative model and its potential to bring prosperity to the nation. This has advanced the vision of "Sehkar Se Samridhi" strengthening the cooperative movement in the country. Within a short span of three years, the ministry has initiated several significant measures for the holistic and inclusive development of the entire cooperative sector. Dairy Cooperatives in India have over 8 lakh cooperative societies operating across 29 different sectors, serving nearly 29 crore members. Among these, agriculture-related cooperatives, such as Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS), dairy, and fisheries cooperatives, play a crucial role in providing rural communities with access to markets, credit, and technical services. These cooperatives facilitate the procurement of inputs and the marketing of products, ensuring that farmers get fair prices in the marketplace. Today, India's dairy cooperative network comprises 23 state-level marketing federations and apex organizations, 268 district milk unions, and over 1.44 lakh active village-level societies with approximately 1.72 crore members. This network collects around 660 lakh kilograms of milk daily and sells 440 lakh liters of milk per day. In dairy cooperatives, nearly 70% of the workforce in the

dairy sector is comprised of women. These cooperatives provide women with unique opportunities for social and economic empowerment. They inspire women to build self-confidence, morale, and develop leadership skills. Today, women account for about 35% of the total membership of dairy cooperatives, with over 61 million women being active members. Additionally, around 48,000 women-specific dairy cooperatives are operational across the country. Similarly, Milk Producer Organizations (MPOs) also offer women opportunities for active participation. The cooperative dairy sector in India is evolving from "women's participation" to a dairy industry led by "women's leadership." The primary goal is to strengthen the cooperative movement and take it to the grassroots level in order to realize Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's vision of "Sehkar Se Samridhi". Under the leadership of Union Home and Cooperation Minister Shri Amit Shah, the Ministry of Cooperation has set the objective of establishing new PACS (Primary Agricultural Credit Societies), dairy, and fisheries cooperatives in panchayats and villages where they currently do not exist. Additionally, the existing PACS, dairy, and fisheries cooperatives will be further empowered with the support of NABARD (National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development), NDDB (National Dairy Development Board), and NFDB (National Fisheries Development Board). To revive cooperatives, it was essential to transform grassroots-level cooperatives into prosperous business entities. It is crucial that all panchayats/villages come under the coverage of a capable PACS/dairy/fisheries cooperative. This will enable millions of small and marginal farmer members to gain equal benefits from regional development and help in achieving rural prosperity. There are approximately 2.7

lakh gram panchayats (GPs) in the country. Around 1.6 lakh gram panchayats do not have a PACS (Primary Agricultural Credit Society), and nearly 2 lakh gram panchayats lack a dairy cooperative society. In this regard, in February 2023, the Union Cabinet approved the establishment of 2 lakh PACS, dairy, and fisheries cooperatives over the next five years. To ensure timely implementation and monitoring of the plan, the Home and Cooperation Minister launched a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) guide. According to the plan, NABARD will establish approximately 70,000 new multi-purpose PACS (M-PACS), NDDB will form and strengthen around 1,03,000 dairy cooperative societies (DCS), and the National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB) will establish approximately 11,500 fisheries cooperative societies (FCS). Additionally, state governments will set up around 25,000 new M-PACS, dairy, and fisheries cooperatives. In the last six decades, through the collaborative efforts of NDDB and the state and central governments, approximately 1.44 lakh active dairy cooperatives have been established across the country. Now, under the "White Revolution 2.0" initiative, there is a plan to form 1.03 lakh new multi-purpose dairy cooperative societies (M-DCS) and empower existing ones over the next five years. This will be a significant achievement and will take milk production and distribution in the country to new heights. Multi-purpose PACS (M-PACS) are emerging as commercial hubs. By adopting new model bylaws, these societies are now conducting over 25 different business activities, including dairy. Three national-level multi-state cooperatives have been established to link grassroots-level cooperatives to national and international value chains: 1. National Cooperative Organics Limited (NCOL) 2. Bhartiya Beej Sahakari Samiti Limited (BBSSL) 3. National Cooperative Export Limited (NCEL). These initiatives represent a revolutionary step in the history of India's cooperative movement. They aim to connect local cooperatives with broader markets, enhance their capabilities, and open new avenues for growth. By focusing on organic products, quality seeds, and exports, these cooperatives are positioned to bring cooperative enterprises into the global spotlight, benefiting

farmers and rural communities across the country. The National Cooperative Organics Limited (NCOL) aims to realize the potential of organic products and create a healthy agricultural ecosystem. Bhartiya Beej Sahakari Samiti Limited (BBSSL) promotes the production, processing, and distribution of high-quality seeds. Meanwhile, National Cooperative Export Limited (NCEL) works to enhance cooperative trade and promote Indian products globally. NDDB is the main promoter of NCOL. The establishment of NCOL aligns with the government's "Whole of the Government Approach," which involves collaboration with relevant ministries, departments, and agencies. NCOL operates as a comprehensive organization for the collection, procurement, certification, testing, branding, processing, storage, and marketing of organic products. Similarly, to improve crop yields and develop a system for the conservation and promotion of indigenous natural seeds, BBSSL has been established to produce, procure, and distribute quality seeds under a single brand through the network of cooperatives. BBSSL will help increase the production of quality seeds in India through cooperatives. To create a global identity for domestic cooperative products, NCEL has been established as an umbrella organization to facilitate exports for the entire cooperative sector of the country. This committee will promote cooperative efforts in agriculture, horticulture, dairy, poultry, livestock, fisheries, sugar, spices, organic products, fertilizers, and more. Cooperative institutions have built a strong infrastructure in the country. By better coordination and utilization of these resources, the collective impact can be further enhanced. To increase the income of member farmers, cooperatives will need to adopt new strategies. These include the use of advanced and modern technologies, improving operational efficiencies, diversifying income sources, and promoting partnerships. By implementing these initiatives, cooperatives can explore new possibilities and strengthen their role in the economy. (The author is the Chairman, NDDB, NCOL and NCFDI; Views are personal)

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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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



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

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

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

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

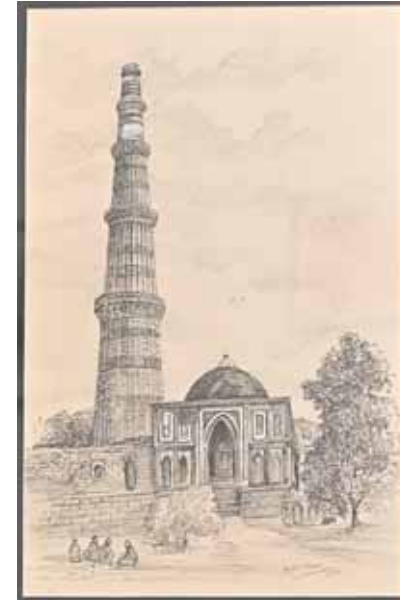
the anti-bribery compliance policy through misrepresentation to investors in an offshore bond. "In our view, this could further raise questions regarding the management and governance of various Adani group entities. The indictment is independent of, but follows, a short seller report that led to investigation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

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



THE HEART OF THE CITY ON CANVAS

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



PHOTOS: PANKAJ KUMAR

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



SHOWCASING NORTHEASTERN CRAFT

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

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

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

opportunities. Hand-woven textiles, intricate bamboo crafts, and beautifully carved wooden items are just a few examples of the region's craft traditions. These artisans not only preserve ancient techniques but also innovate, ensuring their crafts remain relevant in the global marketplace. The festival thus supports the preservation of cultural heritage while simultaneously encouraging economic growth and sustainability in the region.

One of the unique aspects of the festival is its celebration of *Northeastern* cuisine. With a rich culinary tradition that varies from state to state, the food stalls at the event offer a wide variety of flavours. From *Assam's* spicy curries to *Nagaland's* smoked meats, from the *sweet treats of Sikkim* to the *rice-based dishes of Manipur*, the food at the festival is a reflection of the region's diversity. It is not just about taste but also about the stories each dish tells, stories of family traditions, local ingredients and ancestral knowledge passed down through generations. Sharing a meal at the festival becomes an act of cultural exchange, connecting people to the heart of the *Northeast*.

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



PHOTOS: PANKAJ KUMAR

India's national identity can be celebrated. It brings people from all over the country together, providing a space where they can engage with the region's diversity openly. By doing so, it reminds everyone that the *Northeast* is not a remote part of India, but an integral piece of the nation's cultural, social, and economic fabric. In addition to celebrating culture, the *North East Festival* contributes to the region's development. It provides a platform for business-to-business (B2B) interactions, opening opportunities for collaboration and investment in areas such as tourism, technology, and regional products. The festival creates opportunities for growth by connecting entrepreneurs, local businesses, and potential investors, helping build a stronger economy

in the *Northeast* and ensuring that its people have access to the resources they need to thrive.

The festival also takes time to recognise the achievements of individuals from the *Northeast*, honouring those who have excelled in sports, education, arts, and entertainment. By highlighting their success, the festival inspires younger generations to dream big and strive for greatness. These role models show that the *Northeast* is a hub of talent and innovation, contributing to India's progress across various fields.

Lastly, sustainability is a key focus of the *North East Festival*. In a world increasingly concerned with environmental issues, the festival sets an example by promoting eco-friendly practices. From using sustainable materials for decorations to highlighting local, organic produce, the festival ensures that its celebrations are not only about fun and enjoyment but also responsible and conscious of the environment.

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

Celebrating the Richness of Indian Culture Through Art

BY TEAM VIVA

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

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

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

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



PHOTOS: PANKAJ KUMAR

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

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

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

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

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

IPL 2025 Schedule: BCCI shares schedule for next three seasons

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Next year's Indian Premier League will be held from March 14 to May 25, the BCCI has told the IPL franchises while also setting aside similar widows for the event's 2026 and 2027 editions in an uncharacteristically elaborate plan. The BCCI has also decided to include injury-prone England pacer Jofra Archer, Indian-born American pacer Saurabh Netravalkar and uncapped Mumbai-wicketkeeper-batter Hardik Tamore in the two-day mega players' auction to be held in Jeddah from Sunday. In its communication to the franchises, the Board has stated that the dates for the next three seasons are being shared at once to "assist the franchises in planning for the players' auction." The 2026 edition of the tournament will start on March 15 and the grand finale



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

matches in the IPL to ensure that it runs for 10 and half weeks and looking at the windows set aside, it looks imminent that the league's game count will increase. Archer did not feature in the IPL this year and his run in the 2023 edition was cut short by an elbow injury. Netravalkar was one of the breakout stars of the T20 World Cup in the USA earlier this year with impressive performances that were crucial to his side advancing to the Super 8s. The former India Under-19 player, who also turned up for Mumbai in Ranji Trophy, migrated to the USA to pursue computer engineering and is currently employed with Oracle. His omission from the pruned auction list at the expense of another India-turned-US player Unmukt Chand had raised eyebrows as the latter was not a part of the American team in the T20 World Cup.



Jannik Sinner leads Italy back to the Davis Cup semifinals

AP ■ MALAGA

No. 1-ranked Jannik Sinner won matches in singles and doubles to lead defending champion Italy to a 2-1 comeback victory over Argentina, earning a return trip to the Davis Cup semifinals. "I'm here trying to do the best I can in the singles," Sinner said on Thursday. "If they put me on the court in doubles, I'll also try my best." On Saturday, Italy will face Australia in a rematch of last year's final, but this time it will only be for a chance to play for the championship. Australia eliminated the U.S. 2-1 earlier Thursday to reach the final four at the team competition for the third consecutive year. The other semifinal, to be contested Friday, is the Netherlands against Germany. The Dutch got past Rafael Nadal and Spain in the quarterfinals earlier in the week, sending the 22-time Grand Slam champion into retirement. Italy fell behind 1-0 in the quarterfinals when Argentina's Francisco Cerúndolo defeated Lorenzo Musetti 6-4, 6-1 on an indoor hard court at the Palacio de Deportes Jose Maria Martina Carpena in southern Spain. But then in stepped Sinner, whose season already includes two Grand Slam trophies — at the Australian Open and U.S. Open — plus the title at the ATP Finals last weekend in Turin, Italy. First he overwhelmed Sebastián Báez 6-2, 6-1. Then Sinner teamed with 2021 Wimbledon runner-up Matteo Berrettini in the deciding doubles match to win 6-4, 7-5 against Andres Molteni and Maximo Gonzalez. "He carried me today," Sinner said about Berrettini. After arriving late to Malaga from Turin, Sinner did not get a

chance to practice on the Davis Cup competition court before taking on Báez and stretching his streak to 22 sets won in a row. "In three minutes, he was perfectly comfortable on court," Italy captain Filippo Volandri said. "He's a special one." Volandri swapped out his original doubles team, Simone Bolelli and Andrea Vavassori, for Sinner and Berrettini, and the change paid dividends. Australia, the Davis Cup runner-up the last two years, advanced when Matt Ebden and Jordan Thompson beat the surprise, last-minute American pairing of Ben Shelton and Tommy Paul 6-4, 6-4 in that quarterfinal's deciding doubles match. The Shelton-Paul substitution for Paris Olympics silver medalists Austin Krajicek and Rajeev Ram was announced about 15 minutes before the doubles match began. Ebden and John Peers beat Krajicek and Ram in the Summer Games final in August. The Australians broke once in each set of the doubles. In the second, they stole one of Shelton's service games on the fourth break opportunity when Ebden's overhead smash made it 5-4. Thompson then served out the victory, closing it with a service winner before chest-bumping Ebden. The 21st-ranked Shelton made his Davis Cup debut earlier Thursday in singles against 77th-ranked Thanasi Kokkinakis, who emerged from a tight-as-can-be tiebreaker by saving four match points and eventually converting his seventh to win 6-1, 4-6, 7-6 (14). No. 4 Taylor Fritz, the U.S. Open runner-up, then pulled the Americans even with a far more straightforward victory over No. 9 Alex de Minaur, 6-3, 6-4.



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

PTI ■ PERTH

Cricket Australia has planned a series of initiatives to mark the 10th anniversary of the tragic death of Phillip Hughes including a tribute before the start of the second Test between India and Australia at the Adelaide Oval scheduled from December 6-10. CA will also honour the late Australian cricketer during the upcoming three Sheffield Shield games, as players will wear black armbands and flags will fly at half-mast. A promising left-hander who played 26 Tests, Hughes lost his life just days before his 26th birthday in 2014 after being struck by a bouncer during a domestic match. Representing South Australia, Hughes was hit on an unprotected area below his left ear while attempting a hook shot against Sean Abbott at the SCG. Despite wearing a helmet, the impact proved fatal. "We understand this will be a time of reflection for the many people who knew and admired Phillip Hughes," Cricket Australia (CA) CEO Nick Hockley said on Friday. "We wanted to ensure that the Hughes family, particularly, were

comfortable with any commemorations and that we celebrate Phillip's life and incredible achievements appropriately," he added. The home association, which has produced a special documentary on him, will broadcast it ahead of the second Test, as part of a two-week commemoration programme. A moment's silence will also be observed before play on day four of all matches. Batting on 63, Hughes collapsed before receiving mouth-to-mouth resuscitation and was subsequently taken to St Vincent's Hospital, Sydney, where he underwent surgery and was placed in an induced coma. Hughes, however, could not recover from the blow and died on November 27. The left-hander was viewed as one of the promising Australian cricketers as the team went through a transitional phase. In the Australia-India Adelaide Test that followed his death a decade ago, the southpaw was named as the home team's 13th player with 63 (the score he was batting at in his last match) seconds of applause observed ahead of the game.

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

AP ■ LONDON

Arsenal, Manchester City and Bayern Munich all advanced to the Women's Champions League quarterfinals with two games to spare. Late substitute Lina Hurtig scored the winner in Arsenal's 1-0 victory over Juventus in London on Thursday. Khadija Shaw scored twice for City in a 2-1 win at Swedish club Hammarby. City stayed perfect in Group D with four victories and reached the last eight for the first time since 2021. Bayern Munich was held 1-1 at Vålerenga in Norway and still earned a quarterfinal berth after Juventus' loss. Arsenal, Bayern and City join Chelsea, Lyon and Real Madrid in the quarterfinals. Two-time defending champion Barcelona routed Austrian champion St. Pölten 4-1. The Catalan club trails City by three points in their group and is in a strong position to advance. Bayern tops Group C with 10 points, Arsenal has nine followed by Juventus (3) and Vålerenga (1). Back to winning Man City responded to its first



loss of the season, 2-0 at Chelsea in the Women's Super League on Saturday. Still without injured star Vivianne Miedema, Shaw took charge, proving her scoring instincts after half an hour. The forward scored from inside the penalty area with a deflected shot that flew over goalkeeper Anna Tamminen to frustrate more than 20,000 noisy fans at the Stockholm arena in the Swedish capital. Ellen Wangerheim equalized soon after the interval from close range to rejuvenate the crowd but Shaw struck again to restore the lead just minutes later. This time, she delivered a powerful right-footed finish

from the edge of the area. Bayern and Harder contained Bayern dominated possession but could not translate it into goals until the 75th minute. It had to rely on substitute Jovana Damjanovic, who gave the visitors a late lead after connecting on a pass from Giulia Gwinn. The Norwegians, who have retained their domestic title, equalized in the 88th on Elise Thorsnes' header following a corner. Pernille Harder, who found the back of the net five times for Bayern in the previous three games, could not do it again on Thursday and was substituted. Hurtig's night

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

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Fresh from winning the bronze medal in the Sultan of Johor Cup, PR Sreejesh-coached Indian colts on Friday departed for Muscat to defend the Junior Asia Cup title. India, who defeated arch-rivals Pakistan 2-1 to lift the title last year for a record fourth time, will open their campaign against Thailand on November 27 in their Pool A fixture. They will next face Japan on November 28 and Chinese Taipei on November 30.

Their last group stage match is against Korea on December 1. India need a top-two finish to secure a semifinal berth. Malaysia, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Oman, and China constitute Pool B. Confident of a positive start, captain Amir Ali said they have prepared well and are determined to reach the final. "We have been preparing rigorously and are ready to face the challenges ahead," Ali stated in a Hockey India release. "We all understand the



importance of this tournament and the opportunity to showcase our skills on the big stage. Our focus is on giving our best from the very first match and

securing a strong position to make it to the final." Vice-captain Rohit said the whole team is motivated ahead of the campaign. "The energy in the camp is fantastic, and there is a strong sense of unity among the players. Our recent performance at the Sultan of Johor Cup has given us confidence, and we're focused on building on that momentum. "We are determined to work hard, stay disciplined, and perform to our full potential in every match," Rohit said. "We are all feeling very

motivated and eager to start our campaign at the Men's Junior Asia Cup. The energy in the camp is fantastic, and there is a strong sense of unity among the players. India have so far won the title in 2004, 2008 and 2015, making them the most successful side in the tournament. For legendary Indian goalkeeper Sreejesh, this will be his second assignment as the coach. He began his stint with a bronze medal victory at the Sultan of Johor Cup, beating New Zealand 2-2 (3-2) in a thrilling shootout.

I thought it was just a regulation wicket: Starc

PTI ■ PERTH

Australia's senior pacer Mitchell Starc on Friday played down the chatter around India batter KL Rahul's contentious caught behind dismissal on the first day of the opening Test here, saying it was a "regulation wicket". Rahul's dismissal kicked up a controversy with former players from both the countries questioning the third umpire's decision to overturn the on-field official's not out call. After on-field umpire Richard Kettleborough ruled in Rahul's favour following Australia's appeal, the home team used

DRS to challenge the decision. Third umpire Richard Illingworth, however, overturned the call despite not having the benefit of a split-screen view which would have given him a clearer picture of whether the Starc delivery actually grazed the bat or the snicket responded to a hit on the pads. "It got overturned obviously, but I thought it was regulation, the sound it made, the timing of it, I thought it was just a regulation wicket," Starc said at a press conference. Starc (2/14), who bagged the opening wicket of the series when he removed Yashasvi

Jaiswal, will resume on six not out alongside wicketkeeper Alex Carey, who is unbeaten on 19, on Saturday, with Australia at 67/7 after India made 150 in their first innings. A staggering 17 wickets fell on the opening day, a record on Australian soil, but the leading pacer believed batting is going to get easier in the second innings and they just need to survive the new Kookaburra ball. "I think there was a fair bit of good bowling today. Obviously there was enough in the wicket and it probably felt like it was a hardball wicket," Starc said. "When the ball started to get a

little bit softer towards the back end of that Indian innings, it probably didn't do as much. (There was) still enough there, but it didn't do as much as the brand new hardball. "So I guess that's something for teams to take in the second innings. "If you can get through the testing period, it does get slightly easier. That being said, the outfield is quite slow, so that probably made runs a bit hard to come by. That's probably the slowest outfield we've seen over in the west for a long time." While Starc gave the first breakthrough, his pace-bowling

colleague Josh Hazlewood proved to be more successful on the day, returning with excellent figures of 4/29 in 13 overs before the peerless Jasprit Bumrah (4/17 in 10 overs) yet again displayed his extraordinary skills. Starc is also not of the view that batting conditions were becoming harder across Australia. "How many ways can you skin a cat? Bowlers are allowed to bowl good balls," he said. "When there's a lot of runs, it's like, 'Oh, the bowlers bowled badly. When there's wickets, the wickets are tough.' (But) you are allowed to bowl good balls and

maybe credit should go to both teams and bowlers. "Sure, there's plenty in the wicket when you put it in the right area and it was hard work for batting, but as I said, you're allowed to bowl good balls and there were plenty of those today." At stumps, Australia trailed by 83 runs thanks to the incredible comeback by the Bumrah-led Indian team, something that seemed improbable after they were all out for an under-par score and weeks after their unprecedented 0-3 drubbing to New Zealand at home. Starc said he was not surprised by India's comeback.

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

SSA-19016/4/2024-Media-SSA/V823907/2024

Mission Director, Samagra Shiksha Axom, Kahilipara, Guwahati-19, Assam invites bids through e-tendering process for supply of band instrument under Samagra Shiksha Axom. To participate in this tender process through e-procurement document, bidder should have valid Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) and have to register in the portal <https://assamtenders.gov.in> by themselves. Interested bidder may download the document schedules containing the tender details, terms and conditions, from the website and submit their tender on-line at <https://assamtenders.gov.in>

 Sd/- Mission Director, Samagra Shiksha Axom Kahilipara, Guwahati-19

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