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Violence erupts at Sambhal mosque survey, three dead



Police and security personnel stand guard amid protest by locals during a second survey of the Jama Masjid, claimed to be originally the site of an ancient Hindu temple, in Sambhal, Sunday, November 24, 2024. Police used tear gas and "minor force" in the face of stone pelting by locals on Sunday as tension escalated during the survey of the Mughal-era mosque PTI

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ LUCKNOW

Tensions flared into violence on Sunday as a court-mandated survey of the Mughal-era Jama Masjid triggered clashes between locals and police resulting in the deaths of three individuals. Over 40 people including policemen were reported injured in the violence. Eyewitnesses say that during a second survey of the mosque, a mob attacked police personnel with stones and set vehicles ablaze. The police responded with tear gas and a baton charge to control the situation. Over 20 police

officers and more than two dozen civilians were injured in the clashes, with reports of three deaths adding to the unrest. According to police, violence erupted when a crowd of nearly a thousand gathered outside the mosque to prevent a survey team, led by a court-appointed advocate commissioner, from entering. As tensions escalated, some individuals in the crowd reportedly began pelting stones at the police, leading to retaliation with tear gas. Amid the chaos, over ten vehicles were set ablaze. "Some miscreants in the crowd resorted to violence. The police used minor force

and tear gas to bring the situation under control. Those involved will be identified and strict action will be taken," said Krishna Kumar Vishnoi, superintendent of police. District Magistrate Rajendra Pesia confirmed that approximately ten individuals were detained. Videos circulating on social media show scenes of stone-pelting and vehicles engulfed in flames. "Three people identified as Naeem, Bilal and Nauman have been killed. Some policemen including the gunner of the superintendent of police have also been injured," Moradabad Divisional Commissioner

Aunjaneya Kumar Singh said. Despite the unrest, the survey, which commenced at 7:30 am, was completed as planned. Advocate Vishnu Shankar Jain, representing the petitioners, stated that the survey team conducted a detailed examination of the site, supported by videography and photography in compliance with court directives. The report is set to be submitted by November 29. The controversy stems from a court case filed by a Hindu group claiming that the Jama Masjid was originally the Harihar temple. Following a court directive, a commissioner was appointed to survey the site. Last Tuesday, the court-appointed team conducted an initial survey, including videography and photography, lasting about two hours. However, the second survey attempt on Sunday sparked violent protests. The court commissioner is expected to submit a detailed report to the court by November 29. Samajwadi Party (SP) chief Kishore Yadav criticised the Uttar Pradesh (UP) government and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), accusing them of deliberately orchestrating the violence. "The mosque was already surveyed earlier. Sending the team again, unprepared, was a deliberate attempt to provoke unrest and divert attention from pressing electoral issues," he alleged.

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All party meeting ahead of Winter session of the Parliament

Ranjan Dimri/The Pioneer

BJP win dampens Opposition plans

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Winter session of Parliament anticipated to begin on a stormy note on Monday at the backdrop of latest controversy around Adani Group with the Opposition ready to flex its muscles, is now likely to be dampened after BJP's morale booster Assembly results in Maharashtra, by-polls of Uttar Pradesh and last month's Harayana success to its kitty. The Opposition on Sunday asked the Centre to allow discussions in the Parliament on the US prosecutors' bribery charges against the Adani Group even as Union minister Kiren Rijju made it clear that the matters to be taken up in the two houses will be decided by their authorised committees with the consent of the respective chair. Following the customary all-party meeting on the eve of the Parliament's Winter Session commencing Monday, Rijju told reporters that the government has appealed to all the parties to ensure smooth conduct of

business in the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha. Forty-two leaders from 30 parties attended the meeting, which was chaired by senior BJP leader and Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh. The meeting was attended by BJP President JP Nadda, Congress leader Jairam Ramesh, DMK's Tiruchi Siva, Akali Dal's Harsimrat Kaur Badal and LJP (Ram Vilas) MP Arun Bharti, among others. The government has listed 16 bills for consideration in the Winter Session. The bills pending in the Lok Sabha include the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, which has been listed for consideration and passage after a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) of the two houses submits its report on it to the lower house. The panel is mandated to submit its report on the last day of the first week of the winter session. On the Congress party's demand to hold discussions on the Adani issue on priority, apart from a host of other matters, including the Manipur unrest, Rijju said the business advisory

committees of the two houses will take a call on the subjects of Parliamentary business with the consent of the Speaker of the Lok Sabha and the Chairperson of the Rajya Sabha. Raising the matter at the meeting, Congress' deputy leader in the Lok Sabha, Gaurav Gogoi, dubbed the Adani issue as a scam, saying the government should not reject or ignore their demand on any technicality as it concerns Indian institutions and investors. Billionaire industrialist Gautam Adani, whose conglomerate includes a host of companies covering power to ports sectors, has been charged by US prosecutors for allegedly being part of a scheme to pay USD 265 million (about Rs 2,200 crore) bribe to Indian officials in exchange of favourable terms for solar power contracts in four Indian states. Congress leader Pramod Tiwari also said the government should set aside other businesses to take up a discussion on the issue on priority.

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Accused in policeman murder killed in encounter

SAUMYA SHUKLA ■ NEW DELHI

A day after a Delhi Police Aconstable was killed while on duty, the main accused in the case was shot dead in an encounter by police personnel in south Delhi's Sangam Vihar area early Sunday morning. The encounter comes a day after Kiran Pal, 28-year-old constable in the Delhi Police, was stabbed to death by three people on Saturday while on night patrolling duty in southeast Delhi's Govindpuri area. Two of the three accused, Deepak Max (21) and Krish Gupta (18), were arrested later that day. According to a senior official of the Delhi Police's Special Cell, the third and the main accused in the murder of constable Kiranpal lost his life in an armed encounter with a joint team of local police and special cell. A senior police officer of special cell said that the third accused, Raghav, who stabbed Pal with a knife was hiding in Sangam Vihar. "Late evening on Saturday, information was received regarding the whereabouts of the prime suspect, identified as Raghav alias Rocky, a resident of D-Block, Sangam Vihar.

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Shinde, Fadnavis, Pawar in Delhi to discuss future



File photo: PTI

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

BJP on Sunday said leaders of the Bruing MahaYuti alliance and the BJP leadership will decide who will be the next chief minister of the state. Maharashtra BJP chief Chandrashekhar Bawankule said incumbent Chief Minister (CM) Eknath Shinde who belongs to the Shiv Sena (SS), Deputy (Dy) CM Devendra Fadnavis from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Dy CM Ajit Pawar from Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) will reach Delhi to discuss on the future shape of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government in the state where all sections of the society supported the BJP in the Assembly polls and

rejected the Congress. The focus has now shifted to BJP leader Fadnavis, the architect of his party's stunning victory as it bagged 132 of the 149 seats it contested in the state. Political circles are abuzz with reports that the state's second Brahmin to become the CM will don the post for the third time. BJP's national joint general secretary Shiv Prakash and Maharashtra unit head Chandrashekhar Bawankule met Devendra Fadnavis at his residence on Sunday. The tenure of the current state Assembly ends on Tuesday, which has also necessitated meetings among leaders of the ruling allies to finalise the name for the CM's post.

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Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren hands over his resignation to Governor Santosh Gangwar as he stakes claim to form the new government, at Raj Bhawan, in Ranchi PTI

Soren to take oath as CM on November 28

PRANAV PRATYSH ■ RANCHI

Leader of the INDIA block's legislature party Lin Jharkhand, Hemant Soren, met Governor Santosh Gangwar at the Raj Bhawan in Ranchi on Sunday, November 24 and staked his claim to form a new government in the state. Accompanied by an eight-member delegation, the incumbent chief minister submitted a letter of support from 56 MLAs to the Governor. Accepting Soren's claim, the Governor invited him to form the government and asked him to continue as acting chief minister (CM) until a new arrangement is made. Speaking to media persons after the meeting, Soren announced that the INDIA Alliance has initiated the process of forming a new government. "Today, we submitted our resignation for the current government to the Governor and proposed forming the next one. We will now focus on the next steps," he stated.

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PTI ■ PERTH

The King and The Prince

Virat Kohli brought all his technical expertise into play while dealing with vagaries of variable bounce during his 30th hundred after heir apparent Yashasvi Jaiswal's classy 161 put India in sight of a remarkable Test victory against a nervous and fumbling Australia here on Sunday. The Indians dominated the third day to first set an improbable 534-run target for the hosts before reducing them to 12/3 at close of play. Once Kohli reached an unprecedented seventh Test century Down Under, Indian skipper Jasprit Bumrah declared at 487 for 6 with five overs to go flat out. The skipper then immediately disposed off debutant Nathan McSweeney (0) and Marnus Labuschagne (3), both of whom got balls that kept perilously low. The nervousness was palpable when rival captain Pat




Cummins walked in as the night-watchman and the decision proved to be a not so wise one. The match would be memorable for many reasons and one of them would be the exhibition of top quality batsmanship by the 'King and



'Prince' of current India batting but in contrasting conditions and different match situations. Jaiswal built a fascinating structure with care and Kohli (100 not out, 143 balls) polished it and put a beautiful coat of paint while throwing caution to the wind while

reaching the landmark. The 22-year-old Jaiswal, on Sunday, emerged as the unofficial flag-bearer of Indian batting for the next decade and a half during his 297-ball stay at the wicket, giving a glimpse of his ever-improving technique and composed temperament. But it was veteran Kohli, who showed how to play on a wicket that consistently misbehaved during his second hundred at the Perth Stadium and 30th overall, which incidentally took him past Sir Don Bradman's 29 Test tons. There were deliveries that simply didn't bounce. One from Mitchell Starc was upper cut for six over backward point while the shot of the day was an on drive off Cummins. When Nathan Lyon started turning the ball square, he either got a big stride forward or brought the sweep shot, which he doesn't play often, out of his closet. His hundred, in fact, came off a sweep.

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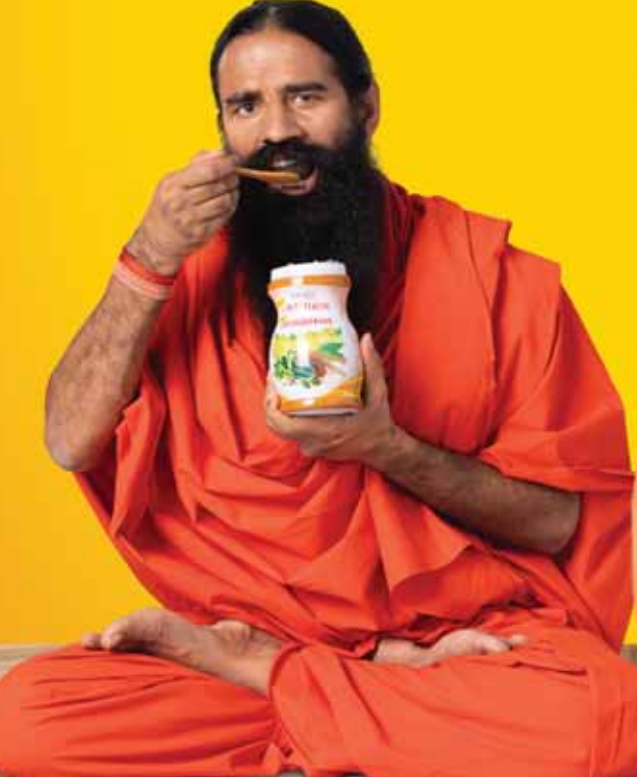

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Fast-food stall owner, mother assaulted over payment row

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A fast-food stall owner and her mother were allegedly attacked by a group of car-borne accused over payment dispute near the Trauma Centre intersection in the PGI area late on Saturday night. The drunk accused beat the victims with sticks and kicks before allegedly attempting to run them over with their car. Eyewitnesses captured the incident on video, showing the son, who runs a fast-food stall in the area, being assaulted after a dispute over a failed online payment. The attackers fled the scene before the police arrived. The victims, Satyendra and his mother Savita Rawat, were admitted to the Apex Trauma Centre-2 at SGPGL, where Satyendra remains in critical condition. Savita, originally from Shivgarh

in Rae Bareilly district and a resident of Babu Kheda for the past two months, recounted the ordeal. "They were drunk, and when I tried to protect my son, they attacked me as well," Savita said. According to Satyendra's police complaint, five men arrived at his fast-food stall in a white car (EcoSport) at around 10:45 pm. After eating, they claimed to have paid via QR code but failed to show proof of the transaction. When questioned, they became aggressive, leading to a violent altercation. "They first argued and then started beating me. My mother rushed to my rescue, but they attacked her too, hitting her with sticks and threatening to kill us if we reported the incident. They also damaged my car and ran their car over it before fleeing," Satyendra alleged.

Despite the attack lasting nearly half an hour, no help arrived, even though the PGI police station is just 1.5 kilometres away. Inspector, PGI police station, Ravi Shankar Tripathi confirmed that a case has been registered and a search for the suspects is underway. The accused, identified as Amit Pathak and Ram Tripathi from Khadra, were reportedly driving a car still registered under the previous owner, a woman. "The investigation has revealed that both parties were involved in a physical altercation," Tripathi stated, adding, "We are confident of apprehending the suspects soon."

YOUTH DIES AS BUS HITS MOTORCYCLE

A speeding roadways bus ran over two bike riders in Sarojini Nagar on Saturday morning. One of the youths

died at the scene, while the other sustained injuries. Both were on their way to work when the accident occurred. The incident took place in Darogakheda, Sarojini Nagar. Suryapal (20) died instantly, while his friend Atul Yadav was injured. Suryapal, a resident of Asoha in Unnao, worked as a labourer in Transport Nagar. Police rushed both victims to the hospital, where doctors pronounced Suryapal dead, while Atul received first aid and was later discharged. Inspector, Sarojini Nagar, Rajdev Ram Prajapati confirmed that the post-mortem had been completed, and the body of Suryapal was handed over to his family. A case has been filed against the roadways driver, who fled the scene after the accident.

25-foot iron rod recovered from Pilibhit-Bareilly railway track

PTI ■ PILIBHIT

An FIR has been registered against unknown persons after the police along with railway staff recovered a 25-foot long iron rod from the Pilibhit-Bareilly railway track under the Jehanabad police station area, officials said on Sunday. Circle Officer (City) Deepak Chaturvedi told reporters that at 9:20 pm on November 22, an iron rod of about 12 mm diameter measuring 25 feet was found on the railway track near Lalouri Kheda, forcing train No. 05312 between Pilibhit and Bareilly to stop there for about four minutes after its engine hit the object. Teams from police, Government Railway Police (GRP) and Railway Protection Force (RPF) visited the spot to probe the matter, Chaturvedi said. Netra Pal Singh, a senior section engineer in the Railways, said the iron rod was placed on

the track near the railway crossing between Jehanabad and Shahi railway stations. Singh also described the act as a "deliberate conspiracy" to harm the train and its passengers. According to the police, the iron rod was taken from an underpass being demolished by the Railways near the Jehanabad crossing, about 2 km from the tracks where it was found. The police suspect that it may have been placed on the track to cut it as it was quite long. Considering the seriousness of the matter, a complaint has been lodged with the police against unknown persons, he added. The police are scanning the CCTV footage from the nearby areas to find any clue. Following the incident, officials have appealed to the people to remain alert about suspicious activities near railway tracks. A spate of similar incidents have been reported from Uttar Pradesh in recent times, which

have become a cause for worry for the authorities. On October 6, a passenger train was briefly halted after the loco pilot saw a pile of soil dumped on the tracks near the Raghuraj Singh railway station in Raebareilly. On October 2, a fire extinguisher belonging to the Railways was spotted on the tracks by the loco pilot of a goods train who applied brakes on time near the Ambiyapur railway station in Kanpur Dehat district. An empty gas cylinder was spotted on the tracks on September 22 by a goods train loco pilot, who applied emergency brakes and stopped the train near Prempur railway station in Kanpur. A similar incident was reported on September 8 when an attempt was made to derail the Kalindi Express heading towards Bhiwani from Prayagraj by placing an LPG cylinder on the tracks.

Deendayal Upadhyaya's statue vandalised

PTI ■ ETAH

A statue of former Jan Sangh President Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya installed at a roundabout in the Kotwali Nagar area here was vandalised, police said on Sunday. According to CCTV camera footage, a woman, who appeared to be mentally ill, broke the glass encasing the bust Saturday night. Enraged at the incident, members of the Brahmin community staged a protest on Sunday, demanding the vandal be booked under the National Security Act. Etah Senior Superintendent of Police Shyam Narayan Singh told journalists that the act was committed by a woman who appeared to be mentally ill. She would be caught and sent to Agra for treatment, he added.

Sub-inspector found hanging

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A sub-inspector posted in the Lucknow High Court security unit was found dead on Saturday. The deceased, identified as Than Singh Chauhan (58), was discovered hanging from a ceiling fan at his home in Triveninagar (III) after his family returned from a wedding in Ayodhya. Chauhan, originally from Etah, had been promoted two years ago and was previously posted at Asiwani police station in Unnao before his recent attachment to Lucknow High Court security. His son Vikas recounted the events: "We returned from Ayodhya around 7 am and repeatedly called out to him, but the door remained locked. Hearing the commotion, my sister-in-law came down from the second floor and found him hanging in the verandah on the ground floor." The family rushed him to a hospital, where doctors declared him dead. Police conducted a post-mortem and later handed over the body to the family. Chauhan, who had remarried after the death of his first wife, is survived by his second wife Rekha, four sons, and two daughters. The reason behind the suspected suicide remains unclear. "The family has not levelled any accusations so far. Further

action will be based on their complaint, if any," a police official stated.

MAN FOUND DEAD UNDER MYSTERIOUS CONDITIONS

A 35-year-old man was found dead under mysterious circumstances at his home in the Rahimabad police station area on Sunday. Police initially disputed claims of murder and stated that the victim, identified as Sheebu, died due to injuries sustained in a brawl with his brother and mother the previous night. The family informed the police after finding Sheebu soaked in blood. Upon receiving information that a man had allegedly beaten his brother to death, a police team arrived at the scene and took the body for a post-mortem examination. After speaking with the family, the police learned that Sheebu had returned home intoxicated on the previous night. Around 9 pm, he got into a heated argument with his mother, sister, and wife. Sheebu's younger brother Sahil, intervened, and the argument escalated. During the confrontation, Sheebu reportedly fell and struck his head on a piece of wood. Later, both brothers went to sleep, and on Sunday morning, Sheebu was found dead in his bed. Rahimabad police station in-charge Anubhav Singh con-

firmed that Sheebu suffered a severe head injury, and the family did not seek medical help, keeping him at home throughout the night despite significant bleeding. It was only in the morning that they discovered he had passed away. "Investigations are ongoing. The family has not yet filed a formal complaint, and Sheebu's wife Rukhsana has not made any accusations. We are continuing to question the deceased's brother, Sahil," the police said.

TEENAGE GIRL, MAN FOUND DEAD

Meanwhile, a 15-year-old girl and a man were found dead in a vacant house in a village here on Sunday, police said. The police suspect that they were having an affair and died by consuming poison, they said. Bodies of Sunny Pal (23) and Varsha, a class 10 student, were found in a vacant house in Nagla Khaiband village, they said. They had been missing since Friday, police said. Sunny's body was found outside the room and Varsha's body was found inside. A bottle of poison was found in the girl's bag, they said. The villagers told the police that Sunny and Varsha were having an affair. But Varsha's family had fixed her marriage and some of the wedding rituals were done on November 19, they added.

Car falls into river from partially constructed bridge, 3 dead

Bareilly (PTI): Three people died when their car fell into the Ramganga river from a partially constructed bridge here on Sunday, police said, adding that they suspect the driver was misled by its navigation system into taking the unsafe route. The accident occurred around 10 am on the Khalpur-Dataganj road when the victims were travelling from Bareilly to Dataganj in the Badaun district, they said. "Earlier this year, floods had caused the front portion of the bridge to collapse into the river, but this change had not been updated in the system," Circle Officer Ashutosh Shivam said. The driver was using a navigation system and did not realise that the bridge was unsafe, driving the car off the damaged section, the police said. There were no safety barriers or warning signs on the approach to the damaged bridge, leading to the fatal accident, Shivam said. Upon receiving information, police teams from Faridpur, Bareilly and Dataganj police station rushed to the spot. They recovered the vehicle and the bodies from the river, Shivam added. The circle officer said that bodies had been sent for post-mortem.

Three arrested for murder of shop owner

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Three individuals were arrested in connection with the murder of a shop owner, Arjun Lodhi (28), in the Bakshi Ka Talab police station area. The murder stemmed from a dispute after Arjun allegedly refused to return a mobile phone that had been mortgaged with him by the suspects for Rs 1,500. On the evening of November 21, the BKT police station received a call from Pritam Singh via Dial 112, reporting that a man named Arjun Singh from Deori Rukhara village had been murdered and his body dumped near the village on the banks of a drain. The police and surveillance teams from BKT arrived at the scene and sent the body for a post-mortem examination. On November 22, the victim's brother, Parshuram, filed a complaint, suspecting that the murder was committed by Maya Ram, Govind, and Monu, all from the same village. Based on this complaint, an FIR was registered, and an investiga-

tion was initiated. On November 23, the inspector in charge and his team were stationed at the Indorabag turn when they received information about the whereabouts of the suspects. The trio was reportedly waiting for a ride at a petrol pump on Sitapur highway. The police immediately surrounded the suspects and arrested them. When the suspects were frisked and asked for their names and addresses, they identified themselves as Govind, Monu, and Mayaram, all from Deori Rukhara village, under the jurisdiction of the BKT police station. The police recovered a mobile phone from Mayaram. Upon questioning, Mayaram explained that the mobile, which had been mortgaged with the complainant, Pritam Singh, was now in his possession. When asked how he came to have it, Mayaram confessed that he and his accomplices had murdered Arjun and taken the phone from his pocket after the crime. The trio was formally charged, and the police are gathering further evidence against them.

Minister's company accountant duped of ₹2.08 cr; 5 held

PTI ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Police on Sunday arrested five members of a gang who cheated an accountant of a company owned by Uttar Pradesh Minister Nand Gopal Gupta of Rs 2.08 crore and recovered 14 Android/iPhone phones, 10 ATM cards and 10 SIM cards from their possession, an official said. Divyanshu of Bihar's Patna, Pulkit Dwivedi of Mau, Sanjeev Kumar, Surjeet Singh and Vijay Kumar (all residents of Bareilly) were arrested, said Cyber Police Station SHO Rajiv Kumar Tiwari. He said that on November 13, a message came on WhatsApp of Ritesh Srivastava, an accountant of the minister's company Icavo Agro Daily Private Limited. Abhishek Gupta's (minister's son) profile photo was on that number. The message said that this is a new number and necessary information was sought for the proposed necessary meeting, he added. Assuming that it was the instructions of the company's director Abhishek Gupta, Ritesh

shared the company's account information on that number. After which, while talking about finalizing a business deal, he was asked to immediately send Rs 68 lakh to the client, for which the account details were sent. After this, while mentioning the deal, he was asked to send Rs 65 lakh and Rs 75 lakh respectively to two different accounts. Following the instructions of the director, this amount was sent. In the evening, when the director (Abhishek Gupta) was talked to in this regard, it was found that he did not send any such message. Then the cyber fraud came to light, the SHO said. Tiwari said that during interrogation, the gang members said that they are connected to cyber thugs sitting in foreign countries through Telegram. They use the account in various types of cyber fraud and invest money in crypto currency. To avoid arrest and keep their identity confidential, they use techniques like VPN and IP bounce, he added. On the complaint of Srivastava, a case was registered on November 14 in the Cyber Police Station against unidentified individuals.

CLASSIFIEDS

सूचना

सूचित हो कि मैं QUDSIYA KHANAM W/o IZHARUL HAQ, मेरा प्लॉट 1/79, विराजखण्ड, गोमतीनगर लखनऊ का मूल आवंटनपत्र खो गया है। किसी अन्य के द्वारा इसका उपयोग अवैध होगा। किसी को मिले तो संपर्क करें-9721998088.

NOTICE

I have changed my name from Ajad hasan to Azad Hassan Sayyad, Azad Hassan Sayyad S/o Ashfaq Hasan Sayyad R/o Daulatpur, Kasar kara, Kaushambi

NOTICE

I have changed my name from Sirajuddin to Niyajuddeen, Niyajuddeen S/o Qamaruddin R/o 220, Nurudi Nagar, Unnao

NOTICE

I NAHID SHAIKH SHOEIB D/O SHAIKH SHOEIB R/O H.No.1/2 Fahimabad K.D.A Colony, Kanpur Nagar, have changed my name NAHID GAUSIA to NAHID SHAIKH SHOEIB for all future purposes.

NOTICE

Varsha Vishwakarma D/o Ex-Sgt.No.-737563 late Anil Kumar Vishwakarma R/o- Plot No.AN-371 New Azad Nagar Satbari Road, Kidwai Nagar, Kanpur have changed my name from Varsha to Varsha Vishwakarma (proposed adopted New name) vide this affidavit dated 22.11.2024 Verified at Court compound Kanpur Nagar

Curtains on Koshala Lit Fest



PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Koshala Literature Festival concluded on Sunday with a day filled with stories, cultural insights, and enriching conversations. There were engaging discussions, panels on history and philosophy, and a Sufti music performance. Former governor of RBI Duvvuri Subbarao shared reflections from his journey in public service during a discussion on his latest book. Subbarao credited his formative years at Sainik School for instilling discipline and a sense of pride in small acts, like singing the national anthem with precision. He spoke about the challenges he faced during his five years at the RBI, particularly during the global financial crisis. He also credited his wife's encouragement for inspiring him to document his experiences, hoping his book would benefit future policymakers. Reflecting on his time in the IAS, Subbarao emphasised the unique, hands-on learning it offered, whether in dealing with Naxalite issues in Andhra Pradesh or understanding grassroots realities. He noted parallels between his mechanical engineering background and his administrative problem-solving. Historian Devika Rangachari led an intriguing discussion on the Mauryan dynasty, shedding light on the lives of Chandragupta, Bindusara, and Ashoka. She examined Chandragupta's rise to power, mentored by Chanakya, and his clever exploits to overthrow the Nanda dynasty. Rangachari highlighted his diplomatic encounters with Alexander the Great and his strategic alliances, which solidified his rule. She also delved into Bindusara's reign,

emphasising his role in maintaining and expanding the empire. Rangachari brought attention to Bindusara's diplomatic ties with distant lands like Egypt and Syria and his complex relationship with his son, Ashoka. The dramatic birth story of Bindusara and his reluctance to accept Ashoka as his successor added layers to the dynasty's narrative. Ashoka, the most celebrated Mauryan ruler, was praised for his transformative reign, marked by his embrace of Buddhism and the inscriptions that immortalised his legacy. Rangachari explored how Ashoka's visual and textual legacy continues to resonate in global historical memory, revealing the rich and complex history of the Mauryas. Historian and author Rana Safvi engaged the audience with a conversation about the legacy of Bahadur Shah Zafar, the last Mughal emperor, whose life symbolises the twilight of the Mughal Empire and its cultural flourishing. Safvi's research for 'A Firestorm in Paradise' painted Zafar as a deeply human and complex figure, known for his poetry, Sufism, and patronage of the arts. Renowned filmmaker Muzaffar Ali captivated the audience with a session titled 'Farasnama: The Art of Muzaffar Ali', where he shared his inspiration behind his iconic works, particularly his fascination with horses. Ali spoke about the universal language of horses, viewing them as symbols of peace, beauty, and love. He explained how their primal strength and raw emotion transcend cultural and linguistic barriers. By incorporating horses into his art, Ali aims to evoke a deep emotional connection, allowing viewers to engage with the timeless spirit of these magnificent creatures.

Man loses ₹76 lakh in fraudulent investment scheme

Lucknow (PNS): A man was allegedly defrauded of Rs 76 lakh under the guise of an investment opportunity in a business venture. The victim, Trish Pal Singh, had initially met the alleged fraudsters to buy property, but they lured him into investing in a 'mega return investment plan', promising huge profits. Over time, they extorted money from him in several instalments. The police have registered a case and investigation is ongoing. Trish Pal Singh, a resident of Faridabad in Haryana, filed a complaint at the Mahanagar police station. He stated that in September 2019, he had contacted his friend Akhilesh Tiwari to inquire about buying property. Tiwari introduced him to Manish Srivastava, a resident of Vinay Khand in Gomti Nagar, who showed him several properties. However, Trish did not select any of them. Manish befriended Trish over time and gained his trust. He later introduced him to his business partner Sameer Kesari. Both men claimed to be involved in a profitable business and suggested that Trish invest in the mega plan instead of buying property. They assured him that the returns would be much higher. Convinced by their promises, Trish invested approximately Rs 77 lakh over a period of two years. Manish took around Rs 25.2 lakh by March 2022, while Sameer Kesari took Rs 52.75 lakh by June 2022. When Trish began requesting his money back, both played dilly-dallying tactics first and then gave him a fake document detailing the investment plan, which included the amount he had invested and a supposed maturity date. After the maturity date passed, Trish began pressing for his money. However, the accused continued to stall, and when Trish investigated, he discovered that all the paperwork was fake. It was revealed that the accused had used Trish's money to invest in cryptocurrency, which is banned in India. They had misled him into believing that the investments were legitimate. Matters worsened when Trish received threats from unknown individuals, who threatened to kill and harm him for pressing them about the fraud. On the basis of Trish's complaint, the police have registered a case, and an investigation is underway. Inspector Saif from Gomti Nagar police station confirmed that the investigation is ongoing as per the court's orders.

LDA resolves 106 pending property cases with new clearance system

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The property department of Lucknow Development Authority announced the resolution of 106 pending files that had remained unsorted for the past two months. LDA Vice-Chairman Prathmesh Kumar, who credited the dedicated staff for completing the task on the first day of the new Single Table Clearance System, introduced on Sunday. Currently, around 5,000 files remain pending. The new system was launched last month to address the

backlog of property-related files in response to public grievances. Citizens had raised concerns about the slow pace of file clearance, urging faster processing. The VC took these complaints seriously and initiated steps to ensure no further delays in resolving the pending files. He stated that the system, initially focused on the property department, would eventually be extended to other departments in order to streamline operations and restore public confidence, which had eroded over time. On Sunday morning, over

200 files were brought in for review. Each file was carefully scrutinised, with 106 disputed files sorted out on the spot. The remaining files were sent back for verification and correction. Individuals whose files require further verification have been notified and asked to visit the office to resolve any discrepancies and prevent future disputes. The Single Table Clearance System will operate regularly from 10 am to 2 pm. Those with property-related issues can visit the office during these hours to seek assistance.

CITYBRIEFS

CONFERENCE

The Association of Physicians of India (API), Lucknow Branch, hosted a conference, aimed at benefiting physician members and postgraduate medical students from the city and surrounding cities, on Sunday. Over 350 physicians from Lucknow, Kanpur, Rae Bareilly and nearby areas participated in the event. The conference featured lectures by renowned experts on current health issues and workshops on ambulatory BP monitoring, oxygen therapy, continuous glucose monitoring, and automated external defibrillator, led by distinguished speakers. Notable presentations included discussions on hypoglycemia, adult vaccination, resistant hypertension, and blood cancer treatment.

FOUNDATION DAY FIESTA

The department of Zoology at the University of Lucknow celebrated its 'Foundation Day Fiesta'. The event offered a blend of entertainment, competition, and camaraderie. Both students and faculty members participated in the event, which



included a variety of fun games. Additionally, sports competitions added to the excitement. Food and ice cream stalls enhanced the festive atmosphere. Head of the department Prof M Serajuddin praised the students for their hard work and enthusiasm.

Vineet Maxwell David and Dr Ansh Sharma, assistant professors in the department of English and MEL. The event was choreographed by the Black Monarchs. The programme showcased a collection of handloom sarees from various states, including Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Kashmir, Odisha, Kerala, West Bengal, Bihar, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Karnataka, and Assam. The sarees were donned by students from various university departments. A musical performance, 'Rubaroo 2.0', and other musical acts were met with cheers from the audience.

'Sambhal violence bid to divert attention from poll malpractice'

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav, on Sunday, alleged that the violence in Sambhal district over the survey of a mosque was orchestrated by the Bharatiya Janata Party, the government and the administration "to divert attention from electoral malpractice".

He also alleged "electronic booth capturing" during the just-concluded bypolls in nine assembly constituencies of Uttar Pradesh and said there would be clarity if the Election Commission can get a forensic examination of the electronic voting machines (EVMs) done. Yadav made the allegations a day after the UP bypoll results in which his party managed to win only two seats while BJP and its ally Rashtriya Lok Dal bagged the other seven seats, including the Muslim-dominated Kundarki.

"A serious incident occurred in Sambhal. A survey team was deliberately sent in the morning to disrupt discussions about the elections. The intention was to create chaos so that no debate on election issues could take place," Yadav claimed.

He claimed that several people were injured and three persons were killed in the violence in Sambhal on Sunday. He also sought to know why a new survey was conducted again, and "that too in the morning and without preparation", when a survey was already done.

"I don't want to go into the legal or procedural aspects, but the other side was not even heard. This was intentionally done to provoke emotions and avoid discussions on election rigging," Yadav said.

"What happened in Sambhal was orchestrated by the BJP, the government and the administration to divert attention from



electoral malpractices," he alleged.

Asserting that in democracy, true victory comes from the people, not the system, Yadav said, "The new democracy created by the BJP ensures that people cannot vote while the system dominates."

He added that whenever an impartial investigation takes place, and the truth comes out through booth recordings and CCTV footage, it will be evident that "voters did not cast their votes and someone else became the voter inside the booth".

Yadav claimed that on the polling day, the police and the administration removed the Samajwadi Party's almost all booth agents and many supporters who wanted to vote.

"If voters were prevented from voting, then who cast the votes? If Samajwadi Party votes didn't reach those booths and our candidate didn't get support, then who voted there? This is a serious issue," he said.

"Additionally, there were two types of slips - one with a red mark and another regular slip. We raised this issue on the voting day itself, stating that the administration had created such arrangements, leading to

discrimination," Yadav alleged. The Samajwadi Party's candidate for the Kundarki assembly bypoll, Haji Rizwan, too has alleged that his supporters were prevented from voting, BJP's Ramveer Singh won the bypoll in the Kundarki by a margin of over 1.45 lakh votes.

Yadav noted that the victory achieved through "deceit" is merely an "illusion" and weighs most heavily on those "orchestrating" the drama of triumph. "This entire charade has been staged by the BJP. Such a victory morally weakens the victors, killing their conscience," he said.

Yadav said the BJP's fear of losing became evident the day they removed "PDA (Pichhda, Dalit, Alpsankhyak) employees and officials from election duty to replace them with their own people, ensuring there would be no witnesses to their malpractice".

"Knowing their intentions, we opposed the BJP's actions. But when the government and administration themselves become oppressors, who can stop the desecration of democracy?" the SP chief posed. "This dishonesty is not new. Rigging elections has been their standard practice and we

all witnessed the results on camera. Even an MLA had to face humiliation," Yadav alleged. He demanded that the poll panel verify its records to see if the registered voters made it to the booths.

"Forensic examination of EVMs could reveal voting patterns, including instances where the same button was pressed multiple times with the same fingerprint. Reports also suggest that people who were out of the area were pre-identified and their votes were cast on their behalf. This is the new-age electronic booth capturing," Yadav claimed.

He asserted that had Pichhda, Dalit, Alpsankhyak employees and officials not been replaced, the "BJP would have struggled to win even a single seat".

Yadav also claimed that the bypoll to Milkipur assembly seat in Ayodhya was postponed because "the government could not ensure manipulations there".

He stressed that a nation moves towards a democratic revolution when it loses all hope for justice. "People, enraged by inflation, unemployment, exploitation and electoral fraud can only endure so much," he said.

"The BJP has snatched jobs, dignity, harmony and brotherhood from the people," Yadav said and accused the ruling party of destroying the Constitution and reservations. "Their hunger for power has already made them sick, and now they will lose sleep as well," he said.

Yadav stated that he takes pity on BJP's members, but people told him that these people do not deserve it. "If the BJP thinks these results will dishearten the PDA, they are mistaken. Injustice and oppression don't break people, they unite them," the SP chief said.

Opp leaders blame BJP for Sambhal incident

PNS/PTI ■ LUCKNOW

Opposition parties in Uttar Pradesh blamed the Bharatiya Janata Party for the violence in Sambhal, alleging the survey team was sent to the mosque by the party to nurture its "politics of hatred". The BJP, in turn, alleged that the INDIA bloc had been trying to create unrest since the Lok Sabha polls. It said that those who do not agree with judicial orders should take legal recourse.

"Nobody has any right to break the law. If a court has passed an order, it will be implemented. The judicial process is available for those who want the order amended," party spokesperson Nalin Kohli said.

Another BJP spokesperson Ajay Alok blamed what he called the "ghamandia

alliance" (an alliance full of arrogance), a term BJP leaders have often used for the INDIA bloc, for the violence.

UP Congress chief Ajay Rai said the incidents of violence were increasing day by day in the state under the Yogi Adityanath government.

"When the chief minister of the state himself gives statements like 'batenge toh katenge', then how can there be an atmosphere of peace in the state? This is a completely planned incident," Rai said in a statement. The UP unit of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) called the Sambhal violence a planned conspiracy. Its secretary Heeralal Yadav questioned the hurry behind the survey of the mosque in contention.

He accused the BJP of fomenting unrest in the state "in the name of temple and mosque"

and appealed to the public to maintain peace.

The CPI (Marxist-Leninist) also attacked the BJP, blaming it for the Sunday violence in which three people were killed. CPI (ML) state secretary Sudhakar Yadav said BJP, emboldened by its recent wins, was fuelling polarisation of communities and wanted to throw the state into the fire of communalism.

The CPI (ML) leader said that after Ayodhya, only Kashi and Mathura were not on the agenda of Sangh-BJP. He said it had become the daily work of the saffron brigade to polarize people and damage communal harmony to save power. This negative politics should be effectively stopped, he added. Tearing the fabric of peace, and polarising communities was all in a good day's work for the "saffron brigade", he alleged.

Aam Aadmi Party MP and UP in-charge Sanjay Singh flayed the BJP government for the violence in Sambhal and said hatred, violence and riots have become the identity of UP in the BJP ruling.

He said the investigation of the violence in Sambhal should be done under the supervision of the high court. Singh alleged that BJP had ruined UP. Sanjay Singh demanded a fair and independent investigation into the entire case under the supervision of the high court, so that strict action can be taken against the culprits and the victims' families get justice. Three people were killed and scores of others, including around 20 security personnel, were injured as protesters opposing a court-ordered survey of a Mughal-era mosque here clashed with police on Sunday.

Yogi to youth: Embrace science, tech to navigate this dynamic era

PNS ■ GORAKHPUR

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, on Sunday, urged the youth to embrace science and technology to be able to navigate this dynamic era effectively. He emphasised the need to harmonise knowledge and virtue with an awareness of the rapid advancements in science and technology, cautioning that failure to adapt could result in significant challenges and hardships.

Addressing a special session on the closing day of the three-day 70th National Convention of Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad at Deendayal Upadhyay Gorakhpur University campus, Chief Minister Yogi said that no country in the world matched India's zeal for knowledge, referring to the motto of Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad - Gyan, Sheel, Ekta (knowledge, modesty, unity).

On this occasion, the chief minister honoured Dipesh Nair, co-founder of Training and Educational Centre for Hearing Impaired (TEACH), Thane, Mumbai, with Professor Yashwantrao Kelkar Yuva Puraskar. "The Gita states, 'na hi gyanen sadrisham pavitram ivedyate', meaning there is no greater purifier in this world than knowledge. In India, the tradition of honouring sages who have been carriers of wisdom has always been deeply respected," he remarked. Chief Minister Yogi, while motivating students, urged them to keep abreast of the times, adapting to the technological advancements as the flow of time waits for none. Reflecting on the opposition to computerisation in the 1990s, the chief minister pointed out that while it was once resisted, today we live in an era dominated by e-offices and smartphones. Technologies like electricity, telephones, television,



airplanes, microwaves, the internet, GPS, and social media have all advanced and are part of our daily lives, he added.

The chief minister said that the right-minded youth with the willingness to serve society and the nation can use technology to strengthen both. He, however, cautioned the youth against becoming a victim of demonic mentality. The chief minister emphasised that technology becomes a tool for public and national welfare in the hands of the virtuous. However, he added that in the hands of negative people, it becomes a weapon to spread terror and unleash destructive forces.

Chief Minister Yogi, while urging the importance of understanding the pace of time and preparing accordingly, reflected on how, since the dawn of creation, knowledgeable forces have acted with caution. He pointed out that figures like Dadhichi sacrificed greatly for the greater good, but today is not the time for such sacrifices; rather, it is the time to harness the power of technology.

He emphasised that if people learn to use new technologies properly, it can create new opportunities and work for many. However, he stressed the need for a moral framework to guide these technological advancements.

Chief Minister Yogi also emphasised the importance of ensuring that technology is used for the protection of humanity and is in the right hands. Citing the example of atomic power, he explained that when used properly, it can provide clean, affordable energy, but its misuse can lead to devastating destruction through atomic bombs. Chief Minister Yogi said that in today's fast-moving era, the biggest challenge was for humans to remain human. "For this, one has to be knowledgeable and virtuous," he said and added, "To achieve this, one must be both knowledgeable and virtuous. The Vedic principle of 'sab saath chale, sab saath badhe' must be embraced. By prioritising 'rashttradharma is supreme', we can pave the

way for the welfare of humanity," he said. While imparting the mantra of national duty to the youth, the chief minister also outlined the way to overcome the obstacles in its path. He emphasised that the challenges facing national duty can only be met through unity. He declared that student power is national power, and the youth are not the citizens of tomorrow, but of today. The chief minister affirmed that only by following the path of national duty can we achieve the goal of a developed, self-reliant, and self-sufficient India by the centenary year of independence. To realise this vision, he urged collective effort in alignment with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's goals.

Yogi highlighted the transformative impact of youth energy, adding that India is the most fortunate country in the world when it comes to youthful vigor. As the youngest nation globally, with 56 per cent of its population being youth, this energy is shaping a new direction for the country, he added.

SP should not dream of power till 2047: Maurya

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Taking a dig at the Samajwadi Party, Uttar Pradesh's Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya said on Sunday that the SP was not expected to come to power in the state till 2047.

Maurya made this observation following the dismal performance of the Samajwadi Party. SP chief Akhilesh Yadav has alleged "electronic rigging" and equated the election with corruption. The Bharatiya Janata Party won six of the nine assembly seats where bypolls were held while its ally Rashtriya Lok Dal won one. The Samajwadi Party won the remaining two seats.

Referring to the Samajwadi Party's PDA (Pichhda, Dalit, Alpsankhyak) formula, Maurya, said in a post on X, "The SP's fake PDA (Parivar Development Agency) collapsed in the by-elections. Those who claimed (victory) in nine seats are now unable to tell the count."

He accused the opposition party of "misleading" the Backwards and Dalits by allying with the Bahujan Samaj Party in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls and the Congress in 2024.

"But the public rejected the SP outright," the senior BJP leader said. "Forget about 2027, wait till 2047 Akhilesh ji. Even then there is no hope of SP coming to power," he added.

SP chief Akhilesh Yadav had claimed during the by-election campaign that his party would win all the nine assembly seats and the BJP would be wiped out from Uttar Pradesh in 2027.

About the SP's victory in Karhal and Sisamau assembly constituencies, Maurya claimed that these strongholds of the SP will also fall and the 'lotus' of the BJP's good governance will bloom there. "Lotus is the election symbol of the BJP. "We will repeat 2017 in 2027, and once again write a new chapter with the target of crossing 300. If we are together, we are safe! Under the leadership of Narendra Modi, the country is safe, development is also safe," he said.

BSP won't contest any bypoll till EC takes strict measures: Maya

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

After the debacle in the bypolls to nine assembly seats in Uttar Pradesh, Bahujan Samaj Party chief Mayawati, on Sunday, announced that her party would never contest any bypolls in the future until the Election Commission takes strict measures and ensures fair elections.

The BSP had not contested the Uttar Pradesh by-elections for the last about 14 years but had recently decided to field candidates in the bypolls.

Mayawati said, "Our party will not contest any by-election in the country now." Not only this, Mayawati also raised questions about misuse of power, casting of fake votes and electronic vot-

ing machines (EVMs). Mayawati made this announcement during a press conference here on Sunday morning.

Mayawati said, "There is a common discussion among the people about the voting that took place this time in the by-elections held on nine assembly seats in Uttar Pradesh and the results that came on Saturday. Earlier fake votes were cast by misusing power to win elections through ballot papers. Now this work is being done through EVMs, which is a matter of great sadness and concern for democracy. Along with the Lok Sabha and state assembly elections in the country, especially in by-elections, this work is now being done quite openly. We have also seen all this in the recent by-

elections in Uttar Pradesh. "A lot of voices are being raised about this in the general elections of the Maharashtra state assembly," she said and added, "This is also a big alarm bell for our country and democracy. In such a situation, our party has decided that until the Election Commission of the country takes some strict steps to stop the casting of fake votes, the BSP will not contest any by-election in the country." Mayawati, however, said that in the Lok Sabha and state assembly elections and the local body elections in the country, her party would contest with full preparation and strength. It may be mentioned that BSP had contested the by-elections in UP after 14 years, but failed to get even its traditional votes.

Govt says Uttar Pradesh leads in women empowerment

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh is achieving remarkable milestones in women empowerment. Through a mission-mode implementation of Central schemes, the state has launched impactful initiatives to uplift women in rural and urban areas and make them self-reliant.

Among these initiatives, the Lakhpati Didi Yojana stands out as a transformative programme. Focused on economic empowerment, the scheme enables women to achieve financial independence and significantly improve their quality of life.

Making the above claims here on Sunday evening, an official spokesman of the government claimed that under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ambitious Lakhpati Didi programme, the Uttar Pradesh government, led by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, aims to make 28.92 lakh women self-help group (SHG) members 'Lakhpatis' (earning over Rs 1 lakh annually) within the next three years. So far, the income records of 13.28 lakh SHG members have been updated in the livelihood register, with over 1.37 lakh women already achieving the milestone of becoming 'Lakhpatis'. Women are being connected

to at least two or more income sources through coordination with various departments like agriculture, dairy development, silk production and fisheries under the Lakhpati Didi scheme.

The Yogi government is also boosting women's income by providing subsidies for initiatives such as custom hiring centres, farm machinery banks, poly houses/net houses, silk production and fisheries.

To support the programme, 4,274 community resource persons have been trained and appointed. These trained individuals offer continuous guidance and help women explore new livelihood opportunities, ensuring sustainable growth and financial independence. The Yogi Adityanath government in Uttar Pradesh has made special efforts to empower women through financial inclusion. Under the Pradhan Mantri SVANidhi Scheme, over two lakh women in the state have benefited. Additionally, 2,510 fair price shops have been allocated to women self-help groups, boosting their income and providing stable economic support to their families.

To ensure social security for women, 32.71 lakh beneficiaries have been covered under the Nirashrit Mahila Pension Scheme, while 60 lakh moth-

ers have received support through the Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana. These schemes are proving effective in improving women's health, education and economic security.

The Uttar Pradesh State Rural Livelihood Mission has further connected over 95 lakh women through 8,54,266 SHGs. By leveraging village organisations and cluster-level federations, the programme is fostering collective empowerment among rural women, enabling them to achieve greater self-reliance and financial stability.

Moreover, under the Mukhyamantri Kanya Sumangala Yojana, 19.34 lakh beneficiaries have received assistance, which is not only empowering women but also fostering a positive attitude towards girls in society. Through the effective implementation of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's schemes, and under Chief Minister Yogi's leadership, there has been a revolutionary transformation in the economic and social lives of women in the state. Uttar Pradesh is emerging as a model for women empowerment. These initiatives, in the years ahead, will not only make women self-reliant but will also propel the state towards new levels of prosperity and progress.

PARAKH Rashtriya Sarvekshan on Dec 4

Lucknow (PNS): To enhance education quality and drive policy reforms, the Yogi Adityanath government, in collaboration with the Union Education Ministry and NCERT, will conduct the PARAKH Rashtriya Sarvekshan 2024 on December 4. The survey will cover 9,715 selected schools across Uttar Pradesh, including government institutions, aided private schools, madrasas, and other board-affiliated schools.

This initiative aims to evaluate educational standards and students' academic performance, marking a pivotal step in understanding and improving the state's education system. This survey will assess students' academic achievements at the primary, upper primary and secondary levels. The achievements of students in classes 3, 6, and 9 will be evaluated as part of the survey, which will take place in sampled schools. Different subjects have been designated as the basis for evaluation for classes 3, 6, and 9. For Classes 3 and 6, the focus will be on language, mathematics and environmental studies, while for class 9, the key subjects will include language, mathematics, social science and science. Responsibilities have been assigned to district-level coordinators, DIET principals and district school inspectors regarding the PARAKH Rashtriya Sarvekshan 2024. The district-level coordinator is tasked with overseeing the implementation and monitoring of the survey.

PM Modi praises ploggers for Ganga ghat cleaning efforts

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Under the guidance of the Yogi Adityanath government, the Kanpur Ploggers Group has been diligently cleaning the Ganga Ghats of Kanpur for 183 consecutive weeks, barring the COVID-19 period. This inspiring initiative caught the attention of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who highlighted Kanpur and Lucknow in the 116th episode of his radio programme, 'Mann Ki Baat'. Praising the youth involved in the campaign, Prime Minister Modi called their efforts a remarkable example of dedication.

He noted that a unique initiative is underway in Kanpur, where morning walkers contribute to cleanliness by collecting plastic and other waste from the Ganga ghat banks. The group, known as the Kanpur Ploggers Group, was founded by a group of youth committed to making a difference in their community. In addition to waste collection, members of the group also protect the plants along the ghats by using tree guards made from collected garbage. The group's efforts are aligned with the cleanliness initiatives under the Yogi Adityanath government, with municipal corporations across

MANN KI BAAT

the state actively participating in similar campaigns. In Kanpur, the Ploggers Group has also signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the municipal corporation to further support these environmental efforts.

Dr Sanjeevani Sharma, a dentist by profession, is the founder and president of the Kanpur Ploggers Group. The group began its cleanliness drive on March 6, 2021, and has since been cleaning the Ganga ghats every Sunday for 183 weeks.

The campaign was only paused during the COVID-19 pandemic. To involve the public, a WhatsApp group with 850 members was created, along with the use of other social media platforms. Members receive messages about the location and timing of the next cleanup, and 40 to 200 people gather each time to contribute. Dr Sharma believes that those who pick up others' waste are unlikely to litter themselves, and this philosophy drives their mission. The group's secretary, Pooja Srivastava, and vice-president, Abhishek Purwar, shared that

participants range from a 65-year-old senior citizen to a 7-year-old child. The oldest volunteer, advocate Anoop Dwivedi, and young Viraj, work together to keep the ghats clean.

This movement has grown to include local representatives, administrators, municipal corporations, and people of all ages and backgrounds. Together, they are making a significant impact on keeping the Ganga ghats clean and fostering a sense of responsibility towards the environment.

The efforts of the Kanpur Ploggers Group have received appreciation from all quarters. Founder Dr Sanjeevani Sharma shared that Prime Minister Narendra Modi inspired her through a post on his 'X' account in 2021. In his post, the prime minister shared how he combined his morning walk with plogging during a visit to a beach in Kerala, picking up waste while jogging. Motivated by this, Dr Sharma thought, "Why can't I do the same?" This led to the formation of the Kanpur Ploggers Group, which has since actively engaged the public through social media.

Shankaracharya praises Shinde for thumping win

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI



Jyotishpeethadhiswar Shankaracharya Swami Avimuktेश्वरानानदा Saraswati, who often been critical of the policies of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), praised Eknath Shinde for thumping win of his alliance in Maharashtra assembly elections. Addressing a press conference at Srividya Math (Kedar Ghat) here on Sunday, the Shankaracharya said the majority of Hindus supported Shinde and his allies because some time ago when he reached Maharashtra during Gomata Rashtramata Pratishtha Andolan, the then CM Shinde had promised him for protection of cows in the state. The said movement passed through all the 36 states/union territories (UTs). When asked who should be the Maharashtra CM as the BJP, being the biggest party is backing the candidature of Devendra Fadnis, the Shankaracharya said that though it is a matter of the political parties involved

in the victorious MahaYuti alliance to decide who will be the CM but still being an impartial observer, we wish that Eknath Sambhaji Rao Shinde should continue as the CM because this historic victory has been achieved by the MahaYuti under Shinde's leadership and the trust of the majority of the people of the country is reflected in him. He said that during the yatra, we had told the people that as per the Hindu shastras, one who gives permission for cow slaughter, supports the sin. "It is a matter of great happiness that the cow-worshipping Hindu people of Maharashtra understood the sins and virtues of voting and made the cow-worshipping Eknath

Shinde victorious with a huge number of votes", he added. Earlier, the local BJP MLA Neelkanth Tiwari distributed 2.5 quintal sweets on victory in party in Maharashtra assembly and UP by-polls. Greeting the party, Tiwari said that there is a lot of enthusiasm among the workers on the landslide victory in Maharashtra and win in UP by-elections. "This victory is the report card of the BJP government. In this report card, the public has given full marks and given a landslide victory. People have now become aware. No kind of temptation or slogan can mislead them. The public has approved the policies of Modi-Yogi", he added.

Cyclothon competition flagged off

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Cyclothon competition was organised on Sunday morning under Kashi Sansad Khel Pratiyogita-2024 (Kashi MP Sports Competition-2024). District Magistrate S Rajalingam and Additional Commissioner of Police (ACP) S Chinnappa flagged off the Cyclothon competition. This competition organised for the age group above 18 years started from Saranath Museum and it passed through Ring Road, Harhua crossing, Tarana, Atulanand School crossing, and Panchkoshi Road and ended at UP College.

Epilepsy treatment camp held

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

A free epilepsy treatment camp was organised in the premises of Aghor Peeth Shri Sarveshwari Group Sanshan Devasthanam, Avdhoot Bhagwan Ram Kusht Seva Ashram, located at Parao here on Sunday. In the camp, the ashram's Vaidya Ranjit Kumar gave Ayurvedic and Fakiri medicines to a total of 200 patients suffering from epilepsy, including seven adult children, before sunrise and others after sunrise. Along with this, Vaidya also gave advices to the patients regarding staying away from intoxication, abstinence and proper diet. The head Vaidya of Avdhoot Bhagwan Ram Kusht Seva Ashram Baikunth Nath Pandey also gave Ayurvedic medicine related suggestions to the patients as per need. The organisation made arrangements for the stay and food of the patients and their companions free of cost. Some local patients also reached the ashram in the early hours of Sunday and received medicines. Apart from various districts of Uttar Pradesh, people suffering from epilepsy from various states of the country such as Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Punjab, Maharashtra, West Bengal, Delhi and Assam had come to take medicines.

UP Police taking steps to ensure pleasant experience for devotees

PTI/PNS ■ PRAYAGRAJ

MAHA KUMBH

A strict vegetarian diet, alcohol abstinence and behavioural training are among the steps the Uttar Pradesh Police is taking to ensure its personnel act as 'servants of faith' and create a pleasant experience for the devotees gathering in this holy city for the Maha Kumbh. The Maha Kumbh will commence on January 13 on the occasion of Poush Purnima and conclude on February 26 on Mahashivratri. Senior Superintendent of Police (Kumbh) Rajesh Dwivedi emphasised that the primary focus of the police, alongside maintaining security, would be to foster a welcoming environment for the pilgrims. He said, "Our aim is to ensure that the devotees have a pleasant experience and the police behave with warmth — not just as enforcers of the law but as servants of faith." Police personnel to be deployed for the Maha Kumbh are undergoing behaviour-focused training at a designated facility within the mela area. External trainers are also being invited to impart lessons in etiquette and public service. So far, 1,500 police personnel have completed the training. By the time the mela commences, 40,000 personnel will have completed the exercise. Atul Kumar Singh, the training programme in-charge, said 700 police personnel were receiving training at a time, following a 21-day module. The duration will gradually come down to 14 days as the mela draws closer, he added. Personnel such as Satish Kumar Yadav, a head constable from Mathura who will be deployed during the mela, expressed appreciation for the training. "I have learned the importance of courteous behaviour and how to assist the devotees during times of distress. The

training also covered topics such as cybercrime prevention," he said. The force is also receiving expert instruction from the National Police Academy. Personnel trained there are now preparing trainers who, in turn, are equipping the larger police contingent for their role at the mela. In addition to behavioural training, the police are also being instructed to maintain the Maha Kumbh's sanctity. District police chief Dwivedi reaffirmed the Maha Kumbh's strict policies regarding food and drink and said non-vegetarian food or alcohol would not be permitted in the mela ground. "The food in the police mess is entirely vegetarian and we have instructed all personnel to act in a manner that respects the devotees' faith," he said. New technologies will also be deployed at the Maha Kumbh this time. An AI chatbot — Kumbh Sahayak — is being developed to assist the devotees with information in more than 10 languages via the Bhashini app. This initiative is designed to bridge language barriers and provide instant support to the vast number of devotees. The police will also deploy bilingual personnel and translators to assist non-Hindi speaking devotees. Mounted police on 160-170 horses will assist in crowd control, ensuring safety while maintaining a harmonious atmosphere. With cybercrime on the rise, the personnel were also briefed by domain expert Pawan Kumar. Security measures, including the use of cutting-edge technologies, are being incorporated to ensure both safety and a positive experience for the devotees. In preparing for the

320 buses allotted from 8 depots of Varanasi region

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The Roadways buses for Mahakumbh-2025 going from Kashi to Tirthraj Prayag will be seen in one colour making it easy for passengers to identify them from a distance. At the same time, a total of 320 buses have been allotted for the Mahakumbh Mela from eight depots of Varanasi region. Mahakumbh is going to be organised in Prayagraj from January and the state government is busy in preparations to provide smooth and safe travel to the devotees. The passengers going to Prayagraj Mahakumbh will be able to identify the buses of Uttar Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation (UPSRTC) from a distance. There is a proposal to keep the buses in one colour. For this, orange colour is in priority. Regional Manager of UPSRTC Varanasi Parshuram Pandey said the

logo of Mahakumbh will also be installed on all the buses. A total of 320 buses from eight depots of Varanasi region are proposed to operate. Additionally, counselling of bus staff will be done so that they can help the passengers. For the convenience of the passengers, he said a 24-hour help desk will be active at the bus stations. Instruction has been given to keep first aid facility in buses. Both the drivers and conductors of the buses will be in uniforms and for the convenience of the passengers, checking squad will also be active in uniform at various places. The number of buses from different depots of Varanasi region for Mahakumbh-2025 includes 52 from Varanasi Cantt Bus Depot, 55 from Kashi, 33 from Varanasi Rural (contracted), 25 from Chandauli, 40 from Ghazipur, 55 from Jaunpur, 32 from Sonbhadra and 28 from Vindhyanagar.

Maha Kumbh, the authorities are combining tradition with modern technology, ensuring that this once-in-a-lifetime gathering will be as safe, respectful and efficient as possible. **REVIEW MEETING:** To ensure safe and smooth conduct of the Maha Kumbh Mela Police Commissioner Tarun Gauba held a review meeting regarding the traffic system of the city area and Kumbh Mela area at Triveni Auditorium Reserve Police Lines on Sunday. He gave necessary guidelines to ensure smooth traffic system. During it various points ranging from city traffic to other

points were discussed. A detailed discussion was held on traffic management of major routes. The Police Commissioner directed the official concerned to identify the obstructing factors in the smooth traffic of the city area and resolve them immediately. While discussing the problem of traffic jam in the city area, instructions were given to develop an effective action plan regarding the parking arrangement of e-rickshaws, autos etc. Instructions were given to use high-resolution cameras through ICCCT for smooth traffic system in the city.

'Dashak Utsav' celebrated

Varanasi (PNS): Subah-e-Banaras, a regular morning event — a combination of prayers (Ganga-aarti), yagya, yoga and music — completed 10 years of its continuous existence at Assi Ghat here on Sunday. On the occasion 'Dashak Utsav' was celebrated with joy and devotion. MLA of Varanasi Cantt Saurabh Srivastava, former Chief Secretary of Uttar Pradesh Durga Shankar Mishra and Brigadier Anirvana Dutta lit the lamp and started the spiritual hymn before sunrise with the morning aarti based on Vedic mantras. Under the leadership of 'Vidushi' Sanjivani Pandey, the 'Rishi' girls performed the yagya for world peace and human welfare. Thereafter, sacred Gangaajal was offered to Lord Surya in which the guests along with the devotees also participated. In the regular session of 'Prabhati', renowned artist Dr Kamala Shankar mesmerised everyone with her composition in Vilambit Teen Taal in Rah Ahir Bhairava on Shankar Guitar. In the end she delight-



ed everyone with 'Paayo Ji Maine Ram Ratan Dhan Paayo...'. Along with this, she received applause for the excellent accompaniment by Pandit Lalit Kumar on the tabla. The artistes were felicitated by former CS Durga Shankar Mishra and his wife Meera Mishra. Welcoming the guests, Subah-e-Banaras president Padma Shri Dr Rajeshwar Acharya described this ritual which has been going on for the past decade, as a form of rejuvenation of the inner conscience and the refinement of the environment with Shuchimantra. On the occasion, vice-president Pt Pramod Mishra greeted all the saints present in the event and praised the founder secretary Dr Ratnesh Verma, calling him the mastermind of the

entire event. Dr Verma expressed good wishes to all the members, well-wishers, artistes and others for the successful organisation of this spiritual ritual. In the end, while expressing his gratitude, Dr Virendra Pratap Singh paid tribute to founder of Banaras Hindu University (BHU) Bharat Ratna Mahamana Pt Madan Mohan Malaviya. In the special ceremony, renowned cultural expert Prof Maruti Nandan Tiwari, Vishisht Seva Medal recipient 39 GTC Varanasi Brigadier Anirvan Dutta and Air Commodore Kunal Kala of Air Force Recruitment Board Varanasi, Commandant CRPF Rajeshwar Balaputkar and Circle Head of HDFC Bank Manish Tandon were honoured.

Workshop provides training on advanced statistical tools

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

The School of Business Management successfully concluded a one-week workshop on Advanced Research Methodology attended by 31 participants on Saturday. The workshop provided in-depth training on advanced statistical tools and their practical applications with a focus on techniques such as Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), moderation and mediation. Hands-on learning was emphasised to enhance research skills and foster a deeper understanding of these methodologies. The valedictory ceremony marked the culmination of an engaging and insightful week. Convener Prof Sudhanshu Pandey congratulated the participants on their successful completion of the workshop and highlighted the growing importance of advanced research methods in academic and professional domains. Prof Ashish Srivastava, librarian, encouraged participants to utilise research resources effectively and continue their journey of learning and application.

Dr Rakesh Kumar, the resource person for the workshop, emphasised the significance of such initiatives for budding scholars, enabling them to produce high-quality publications and advance their research capabilities. Pallavi Mishra conducted the valedictory proceedings with great efficiency, ensuring a memorable closing to the event. The vote of thanks was jointly delivered by Dr Mohit and Dr Pravin Agrawal, co-conveners, who expressed gratitude to the convener, resource persons and participants for their active involvement and contributions. Participants gave a positive feedback about the workshop and requested an extension or another series to explore the topics further. **ANNUAL DAY CELEBRATED:** The Air Force School Chakeri celebrated its 61st Annual Day on Saturday evening. Air Commodore MK Praveen, VM, Air Officer Commanding, Air Force Station, Kanpur, was the chief guest. The event featured a variety of mesmerising cultural programmes by the students, including dance, music, drama, and more, highlighting the creativity and hard work of students.

Danish students make educational tour to PM's adopted village

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

A team of 60 foreign students from Denmark made an educational visit to Nagepur, an adopted village of Prime Minister Narendra Modi under Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana here on Sunday. In the welcome ceremony organised at Lok Samiti Ashram, the samiti workers under the leadership of Lok Samiti convener Nandlal Master and gram pradhan Mukesh Kumar welcomed the guests by giving them Rudraksha garlands, *angavastra* and applying *tika*. During the educational visit, the visiting Danes saw the Lok Samiti Ashram, Asha Samajik Vidyalaya, Nandghar, Krishi Prashikshan Kendra, Yatri Pratikshal Kendra, Ambedkar Park and 'izzatghars' (toilets) built in the village through Lok Samiti. During this, the Danish students met the girls, women and youths of the village. They also studied the social and educational work being carried out by Asha Trust and Lok Samiti and shared many experiences with the girls and women of the village. When many girls of the village said that they do not

want to get married at a young age and want to stand on their own feet by studying, the Danish students were very excited to hear this answer. Among the guests, Professor Ole Drub, Lise, Anne Meijin, Jane Kristen from Hasseris Gymnasium College of Denmark expressed their views. During this, a workshop on better education system and environmental protection was organised with the Danes. The speakers said that the whole world is struggling with water crisis and global warming and in such a situation it is important for all of us to save our culture and environment along with modern development. The guests along with the villagers gave the message of environmental protection by planting trees in the village. Mainly gram pradhan Mukesh Kumar, Nandan Upadhyay, Rajan, Soni, Anita, Asha, Manisha, Avnish, Shivkumar, Rambachan, Shyamsundar Master, Sunil, Ashish, Vidya, Shama Bano, Manjita, Jyoti, Seema, Manish etc were present in the programme which was conducted by Nandan Upadhyay.

Vocalist enthral audience



Noted vocalist Manisha performing in a musical concert on Saturday night.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Noted vocalist of the city Manisha Singh enthralled the audience in a musical concert organised by the Rohatgi Music & Art Gallery at United Public School auditorium on Saturday. Not only in folk songs, Manisha equally did justice to her presentation on geet and ghazals. An ace and experienced singer, Manisha earned credit of being a vocalist of national repute by performing at various musical concerts and other programmes in the city and other parts of the country so far. She has been felicitated with many prestigious awards and earned accolades from serious music lovers. Starting with the bhajans presented by the budding singer Ritisha Rohatgi, Manisha's thumri presentation in 'Saanwaria Dekh Zara Is Ore' and 'Aan Milo Sajna, Chanda Aye Taare Aye' stole the show. Her presentation was followed by a number of ghazals in 'Neyyat-e-Shauq Bhar Na Jaye Kahin' and 'Ghazal Ke Saaj Uthao, Badi Udas Hai Raa' compelled the audience to remain glued to their chairs for long. Raj Kumar Singh and Nishant Singh accompanied her on harmonium and tabla respectively

BHU signs MoU with VNN on solid waste management

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The Banaras Hindu University (BHU) has made a significant stride towards a cleaner and greener campus by signing a long-awaited Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Varanasi Nagar Nigam (Varanasi Municipal Corporation) on solid waste management. This landmark agreement will enable BHU to effectively manage solid waste on campus and contribute to a more sustainable future. As a first step, the university successfully transported and disposed of 3,625 kilogrammes of garbage at the Waste Treatment Plant (WTP) in Karsada, Varanasi on Saturday. This achievement marks a crucial milestone in overcoming the long-standing challenge of waste management within the campus. Under the leadership of Vice-Chancellor (V-C) of BHU Prof Sushir K Jain, the university is actively promoting a culture of cleanliness and shared responsibility. "A university's culture profoundly shapes its students, leaving an enduring legacy," remarked Prof Jain. He emphasised that BHU is committed to cultivating habits and values that foster a clean and respectful environment, which one can carry forward into society. Professor-in-Charge of Sanitary and Support Services (SSS) and Horticulture Unit Prof Sarfaraj Alam said with the aim of revolutionising sanitation and support services at the university, the BHU efficiently utilises the resources of both units to achieve optimal

results. He praised the exceptional efforts of the SSS team, stating that under the supervision of Sompal, Deputy Sanitary Inspector and other supervisors, the staff has done an outstanding job in managing waste on campus. He said despite shortage of manpower, the team successfully segregated garbage in strict adherence to municipal guidelines. At the same time, they efficiently met the faculty's requirements for various functions, seminars, programmes, marriages and parties, thereby contributing to revenue generation. Tasks were strategically assigned to dedicated staff ensuring the smooth execution of responsibilities. Their commitment and hard work have been instrumental in achieving these remarkable results, he added. According to him, earlier this month, the SSS launched door-to-door waste collection services to ensure high standards of cleanliness and a hygienic environment on campus. "This initiative has been widely appreciated by the university community, which recognises the unprecedented cleanliness achieved through these collective efforts. The university has also undertaken several initiatives to strengthen waste management practices, including promoting waste segregation by instructing residents and caterers to use separate bins for food and plastic waste during events, upgrading waste disposal infrastructure through the renovation of deteriorated concrete bins with clear bilingual instruc-

tions, issuing guidelines for the responsible disposal of medical waste and establishing compost pits at various locations to process organic waste from households, hostels, and canteens," said Prof Sarfaraj Alam, adding that additionally, the university encourages the use of eco-friendly products to minimise waste generation. He said the university is now planning to implement various other initiatives and sanitation programmes. "As part of this, the installation of sanitary incinerators at various locations within the university campus for the disposal of used diapers and sanitary napkins has been planned. Currently, agencies within the city collect disposable diapers and napkins, but the disposal of these items has been a common issue within the university campus. Therefore, it is necessary to permanently destroy them through incinerators, which will help maintain a clean and hygienic environment. This will ensure safe and environmentally friendly disposal of used diapers and sanitary napkins through these incinerators," he said. The BHU reaffirmed its commitment to sustainability by participating in national campaigns like 'Swachhta Hi Seva 2024' and organising tree planting activities under the 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' initiative, culminating in Swachh Bharat Diwas on October 2 last. The university remains steadfast in its mission to become a garbage-free institution, setting a benchmark for academic institutions nationwide.

Urgent need to combat climate change discussed

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

The Sir Padampat Singhania Education Centre (SPSEC) organised an informative and interactive workshop for the students and staff of the school on Saturday. The distinguished former director of the National Sugar Institute, Kanpur, Professor Narendra Mohan, conducted an insightful session on sustainability and climate change to make students exercise conscious efforts towards greener environmental practices. School Principal Bhawna



Gupta extended a warm welcome and expressed her gratitude to the eminent speaker. The session brought together students and faculty to discuss pressing global environmental issues and explore solutions for a sustainable future.

Prof Mohan, renowned for his efforts on recycling waste materials into usable resources, began the session by explaining the concept of sustainability. He emphasised on the importance of balancing environmental, social and economic aspects to

ensure a better quality of life for future generations. He delved into the causes and effects of climate change, highlighting the role of human activities such as the burning of fossil fuels, deforestation and inefficient waste management in

exacerbating environmental degradation. Discussing the urgent need to combat climate change, resource person outlined practical measures to mitigate its impact. He called for a global shift away from fossil fuels, advocated for cessation of deforestation and stressed the importance of efficient waste management systems. His discussion also focused on the significance of green energy sources such as biofuels and other non-conventional energy alternatives in reducing carbon footprints and promoting

decarbonization. He encouraged the attendees to adopt water saving practices both at the individual and community levels, recognising the vital role of water in sustaining life and ecosystems. The professor also commended the efforts of SPSEC in contributing to the sustainability movement. He praised the school's Annual Theme 'Sustainability: Cleaner and Greener Kanpur' initiative. An engaging Question/Answer session inspired all the students for participating in environmental conservation.

Man killed in mishap

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

A 45-year-old man was killed when the motorcycle he was riding was hit by a speeding Tata Magic vehicle near the petrol pump in front of Kapasa village on Phoolpur Mubarakpur Road on Sunday. As a result bike-borne Mata Pher Chaurasia of Kapasa under Baharia, police station died on the spot. His family members are inconsolable. Mata Pher Chaurasia's daughter's wedding was solemnised on Saturday night. The accident took place when on Sunday morning when they were going

back to the shop with the grocery items left from the wedding. The villagers gathered at the spot informed the Phoolpur police about the incident. On getting information, the area incharge of Phoolpur police station reached the spot with force and took the body into possession. Meanwhile the Tata Magic vehicle that caused the accident fled from the spot. Phoolpur Station House Officer (SHO) Deendayal said that the Tata Magic driver managed to escape with the vehicle. The body has been sent to the mortuary for an autopsy.

Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue to be held in Delhi on January 11-12: PM Modi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday announced that a "Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue" will be held on January 11-12 here and said the initiative was part of efforts to connect youngsters having no political background with politics. He said Swami Vivekananda's 162nd jayanti on January 12 would be celebrated in a very special way next year. On this occasion, a "Maha Kumbh" of young minds will be held at Delhi's Bharat Mandapam on January 11-12 and the initiative will be called the Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue. "Crores of youths from all over India will participate in it. Two thousand such youths selected from villages, blocks, districts and states will gather at Bharat Mandapam for the Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue," Modi said. In the 116th episode of his monthly "Mann Ki Baat"

radio broadcast, Modi also called on people to celebrate inspiring stories of the Indian diaspora who made their mark globally, contributed to freedom struggles and preserved "our heritage." "You might remember that from the ramparts of the Red Fort, I urged such youths to join politics, none of whose family members or even the entire family have had a political background. To connect one lakh such youths, new youths, to politics, many special campaigns will be run in the country. The Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue is one such effort," he said. Noting that experts from the country and abroad would be present for it, Modi said many national and international personalities would also be there and he would be present for as much time as possible. The prime minister also hailed the National Cadet Corps (NCC) and noted that the NCC name reminded one of their school and college days. "I myself have been an NCC

cadet, so I can say with full confidence that the experience I got from it is invaluable for me. The NCC instils a spirit of discipline, leadership and service in the youth," he said. The compassion and energy of India's "Yuva Shakti" in helping senior citizens is commendable, Modi said and cited the example of a young person from Lucknow helping the elderly submit digital life certificates. He also talked about a person from Ahmedabad who is warning and making the elderly aware about cyber-crimes, including digital arrests. "I had discussed digital arrest in the last episode of 'Mann Ki Baat'. The elderly are the most common victims of such crimes. In such a situation, it is our responsibility to make them aware and help them stay safe from cyber fraud," he said. "We have to explain to people again and again that there is no provision of digital arrest in the government; this is a blatant lie, a conspiracy to



trap people. I am happy that our young friends are participating in this work with full sensitivity and motivating others as well," Modi said. Talking about his recent visit to Guyana, Modi said thousands of kilometres away from India, a 'mini India' dwelled there. "Around 180 years ago, people from India were taken to Guyana to work in the fields and for other tasks. Today, people of Indian origin in Guyana are leading the country in every field -- be it politics, business, education or culture. The President of

Guyana, Dr Irfan Ali, is also of Indian origin and is proud of his Indian heritage," he said. "When I was in Guyana, a thought struck my mind that I am sharing with you. Just like Guyana, there are lakhs of Indians in dozens of countries across the world. Their ancestors have their own stories of decades; even those over 200-300 years ago. Can you be on the lookout for such stories of how Indian immigrants made their mark in different countries?" he said. "How they took part in their freedom struggle! How they

kept their Indian heritage alive! I want you to find out such true stories, and share them with me. You can also share these stories on the NaMo app or on MyGov with #IndianDiasporaStories," the prime minister said. Modi also highlighted an extraordinary project underway in Oman and said numerous Indian families had been living in the country for many centuries, with most of them who settled there being from Kutch in Gujarat. These people created important trade links and, even today, they have Omani citizenship but Indianness is ingrained in their personae, he said. "With the support of the Indian Embassy in Oman and the National Archives of India, a team has started the work of preserving the history of these families. Thousands of documents have been collected under this campaign so far. These include diaries, account books, ledgers, letters and telegrams. Some of these documents even date back to the

year 1838. These documents are full of sentiments," he said. The "Oral History Project" is also an important basis of this mission and, in this mission, senior people from there have shared their experiences, he said. A similar "Oral History Project" is being carried out in India as well, he added. Under this project, history enthusiasts are collating the experiences of the victims during the country's Partition, the prime minister said. "Now, there are very few people left in the country who have witnessed the horrors of Partition. In such a situation, this effort has become even more significant. The country that preserves its history, its future is also secure. With this very thought in mind, an effort has been made in which a directory has been created to preserve the history of villages," Modi said. Talking about the Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam campaign, Modi said people from all over the country participated in it with great enthusiasm.

"I am very happy to tell you that this campaign has crossed the important milestone of planting 100 crore trees. Hundred crore trees, that too, in just five months," he said. Modi pointed out that the campaign was now spreading to other countries as well. "You must have noticed that as soon as someone mentions a 'government office', a picture of a pile of files emerges in your mind. You must have seen something similar in films, too," he said. "So many jokes are made on these piles of files in government offices; so many stories have been written. These files used to gather dust after lying in offices for years and years, and would start accumulating dirt," he added. A special Swachhata Abhiyan was launched to remove such decades-old files and scrap and this campaign brought amazing results in government departments, he said, adding that the cleanliness drive freed up a lot of space in offices.

Army Chief's Nepal visit culminates in stronger defence, bilateral ties

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Army Chief General Upendra Dwivedi's five-day official visit to Nepal has culminated in stronger defence and bilateral ties. He returned to New Delhi on Sunday after a resoundingly successful visit, army said here. The visit, which exceeded all stated objectives, further solidified the robust defence cooperation, cultural ties, and mutual respect between the two nations. It underscored the shared commitment of the Indian and Nepali Armies to fostering peace, security, and partnership in the region. During his visit, the Army chief engaged extensively with Nepal's political and military leadership. He held high-level meetings with President of Nepal Ram Chandra Paudel, Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli and Defence Minister Manbir Rai. He also engaged in meaningful discussions with General Ashok Raj Sigdel, chief of Nepal Army along with other senior military officers. These interactions were charac-



terised by exceptional openness and mutual respect, reflecting the shared commitment to strengthening bilateral relations. Strengthening India-Nepal ties was a central theme of the visit. General Upendra Dwivedi and his Nepalese counterpart discussed aspects of mutual interest and avenues to strengthen bilat-

eral defence cooperation. General Dwivedi was briefed by the Director General of Military Operations (DGMO) of the Nepali Army and engaged in high-level discussions with other senior military leaders. These discussions focused on enhancing military bonds, joint exercises, training cooperation, and capability development, rein-

forcing the shared commitment to global peace and security. As a gesture of friendship between the two armies, the Indian Army presented Valour Mount horses and Sentinel dogs to the Nepali Army. General Dwivedi was conferred the Honorary Rank of General of the Nepali Army by President Paudel. This

unique tradition underscores the deep-rooted historical and cultural ties between the Indian and Nepali Armies. Enlightening the future leaders at the Nepal Army Command and Staff College in Shivapuri, the visiting Army chief delivered a lecture on "The Changing Character of War". He emphasised on strengthening and deepening the engagements for mutually building the competencies & capabilities of both Armies. He attended an Ex-Servicemen Rally at the Pension Paying Office in Pokhara, interacting with Gorkha veterans and Veer Naris of the Indian Army. The bond between the veterans and the Indian Army was very visible and thriving, reflecting their strong ties. This visit, marked by comprehensive discussions and mutual respect, has reinforced the strong partnership between the Indian and Nepali Armies. The outcomes of the visit are expected to usher in a new era of collaboration, with a greater focus on defence cooperation, cultural exchange, and regional security.

CRPF sets up three new forward bases in Chhattisgarh's hardcore naxal areas

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ RAIPUR

The Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) has opened three new forward bases in the "hardcore" Maoist violence affected districts of Chhattisgarh's Bastar region to provide security forces with "strategic" hubs for launching intensified anti-Naxal operations. The forward operating bases (FOB) have come up in Tumpalpad and Rayagudem in Sukma district and Kondapalli in the adjoining Bijapur district. These bases have been made operational over the last week or so, officials told PTI. The central force is working on a strategy to make inroads into "hardcore" Naxalite areas of the state where the final battle against Left Wing Extremism (LWE) is concentrated. The FOBs act as launching pads for all security forces, including the CRPF and state police units, to launch specific and intelligence-based anti-Naxal operations in core areas, they said.



All these three villages in the two districts of Bastar region have served as the logistical centres for the Maoists for decades. Kondapalli, as per LWE theatre experts, used to be an important recruitment centre for the "most vital" PLGA battalion no. 1 of the Maoists. The village located on the banks of river Talperu also served as a training area for the Maoists. Similarly, Tumpalpad, on the banks of the Chintavagu river, served as a halt area and corridor for the Naxals, the experts said. The Tumpalpad FOB was operationalised by the 74th battalion of the force while the Kondapalli base has been created by the 170th CRPF unit.

The specialised jungle warfare unit of the CRPF, Command Battalion for Resolute Action (CoBRA), provided active security to the teams which created these FOBs, the officials said. These FOBs will act as physical barriers and curb the free movement of Naxals in these areas called as 'no go' territories for government authorities and security forces till now, they said. The CRPF has created more than 40 such FOBs in Chhattisgarh over the last three-four years as the toughest anti-Naxal operations combat remains concentrated in Bastar that borders Odisha and Telangana.

Centre issues guidelines for disability reservation to ensure uniformity

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre has issued comprehensive guidelines to streamline reservation and identification of posts for persons with at least 40 per cent disabilities, mandating periodic identification of such posts and formation of committees to assess them. The guidelines also state that if a post is deemed suitable for them, all subsequent promotional posts will also be reserved for persons with disabilities. The guidelines are in line with the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016. The move comes after the Delhi High Court flagged inconsistencies in implementation of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016 and criticised entities like the Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan (KVS) for unauthorised actions in identifying posts. The high court earlier this month observed that KVS had overstepped its authority by independently identifying posts for PwBDs and highlighted inconsistencies in the understanding of the Act among various departments. The court mandated the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD) to establish uniform guidelines. The updated guidelines aim to ensure inclusivity, fairness, and uniformity in the employment of persons with disabilities across central government establishments. The new guidelines also ask ministries and departments to form committees, including representatives with dis-



abilities, to assess all posts for their suitability. A comprehensive review of identified posts is required every three years to incorporate technological advancements and evolving job requirements. The guidelines also mandate a four per cent reservation in direct recruitment and promotions across categories, including blindness, locomotor disability, hearing impairment, and intellectual disabilities. Additionally, they emphasise timely filling of backlog vacancies, wide publicity to ensure accessibility, and a three-year validity period for exemptions from reservation policies. The government has also clarified that exemptions from reservation are valid for a maximum of three years and must be periodically reviewed. The move aims to ensure fairness while leveraging advancements in assistive technology. Effective immediately, these guidelines supersede all previous instructions on the matter, except notifications issued in 2021 and 2022. Arman Ali, Executive Director, National Centre for

Promotion of Employment of Disabled People (NCPEDP), said identifying posts suitable for persons with benchmark disabilities is not just about fulfilling reservation mandates; it's a stepping stone to enabling career growth. Extending this process to promotional positions ensures that persons with disabilities are not confined to entry-level roles but have equal opportunities to advance in their careers. "It's important to emphasise that the one per cent reservation for different categories of disabilities does not imply any hierarchy or chronology. While these measures need to be enforced more effectively in the past I welcome this step as a positive move towards inclusivity. The formation of expert committees and their regular meetings must be strictly adhered to," he said. "I see the two most crucial tasks of the committee are to ensure the inclusion of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities which is the most important part and to have people with disability have a seat on the table," he said.

Ex-CJI Chandrachud removed fear of law from political defectors: Raut

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut on Sunday slammed former Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud, alleging that he had removed the fear of the law from politicians who defected from parties in Maharashtra. Raut claimed that by not deciding on the disqualification petitions, Chandrachud kept doors and windows open for defections. The Shiv Sena (UBT) leader's statement comes after his party faced a severe drubbing in the state assembly elections, as it managed to clinch only 20 out of 95 seats it contested as part of the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA). The performance of the



party's alliance partners was no better, with the Congress winning only 16 out of 101 seats and NCP (SP) getting only 10 out of 86 seats it con-

tested. Talking to reporters, Raut alleged, "He (Chandrachud) has removed the fear of the law from defectors. His name will be written in black letters in history." Following the split in the undivided Shiv Sena in 2022, the party's faction headed by Uddhav Thackeray filed petitions in the Supreme Court on the disqualification of party MLAs who defected along with Eknath Shinde. The apex court put the onus on the assembly Speaker to decide on the disqualification petitions, which he did earlier this year, declaring the Sena bloc led by Shinde as the "real political party". Raut alleged that the results of the assembly election were pre-decided. If the then CJI had decided on the disqualification petitions on time, the outcome would have been different.

"We are sad but not disappointed. We will not leave the fight incomplete. Division of votes was also a factor, and the RSS played an important role in the election. The poisonous campaign impacted us negatively," he said. He said the swearing-in ceremony for the new government should be held in neighbouring Gujarat. Meanwhile, in his weekly column "Rokhthok" in the party mouthpiece "Saamana", the Shiv Sena (UBT) leader claimed that it was time to offer condolences to the Election Commission, which turned a blind eye to the use of money power. "The courts have been in the ICU for a long time," he alleged.

Cong's performance shocking, worst-ever in Maharashtra polls, says Chavan

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Senior Congress leader and former Maharashtra chief minister Prithviraj Chavan on Sunday said his party's defeat was "shocking" and dubbed it as the "worst-ever" loss in the state assembly polls. Talking to PTI, Chavan said the Mahayuti government's Ladki Bahin Yojana, for providing financial assistance to women, clicked with voters in rural areas while polarisation hit the opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi's (MVA) prospects in urban parts of the state. "It is difficult to say whether there was a wave or tampering," said Chavan, who lost from his Karad South seat. The results of the November 20 polls to the 288-member state assembly were announced on Saturday. Several bigwigs from the MVA, including Chavan, were defeated. The Congress, which contest-



ed 101 seats as part of the MVA, posted its worst-ever defeat by managing to win only 16 seats. Chavan said he was expecting to win his Karad South seat in Satara district by 5,000 to 6,000 votes. But, all MVA nominees in the district lost by nearly a margin of 40,000 votes, he noted. BJP's Atul Bhosale defeated the former CM in Karad South by a margin of 39,355 votes, as per the results announced by the Election Commission on Saturday.

Puri Jagannath temple administration urges ASI to start repair work of Ratna Bhandar

PTI ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) has requested the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) authorities to immediately take up the repair, maintenance and conservation work of the entire Ratna Bhandar (treasury) in the 12th century shrine in Puri. SJTA chief administrator Arabinda Padhee on Saturday said the temple administration will extend all its cooperation to ASI in the repair and maintenance of the Ratna Bhandar. "We have received the report of the Ratna Bhandar's GPR-GPS survey conducted by the ASI", Padhee said. He said the SJTA has all along been careful about the stability and security of the temple. Earlier, the ASI had conducted the GPR-GPS survey of the 12th-century shrine's Ratna



Bhandar (treasury) with the assistance of Hyderabad-based NGRI (National Geophysical Research Institute). Padhee said the ASI has given a 45-page report on the survey. "There has been indication of damage done to the floor and wall of the Ratna Bhandar. However, the technical report needs to be studied further by our team", he said. Ratna Bhandar was reopened in July this year after 46 years for an inventory of valuables and the repair of its structure, officials said.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Mixed bag

Ruling JMM retains Jharkhand and the BJP-led Mahayuti, Maharashtra, indicating anti-incumbency is not at play right now

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), alongside its allies, achieved significant electoral victory in Maharashtra while the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) fought its way to victory in Jharkhand despite many handicaps proving once again that it is difficult to read the voters' mind. In Maharashtra, the BJP-led Mahayuti coalition, including factions of the Shiv Sena and the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), secured a decisive majority, capitalising on effective consolidation of OBC votes and strategic welfare schemes like direct cash transfers for women. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership and grassroots outreach programmes further bolstered their appeal. Meanwhile, in Jharkhand, the BJP failed to wrest power from the ruling alliance of JMM. It could not emphasise governance issues and leverage dissatisfaction with the Hemant Soren-led coalition. The JMM's success was amplified by strong voter mobilisation in tribal areas and development-focused messaging. In Maharashtra, the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) alliance, comprising the Congress, Shiv Sena (UBT), and the original NCP, struggled with internal divisions and a lack of clarity on critical issues such as reservations for the Maratha community.



In Jharkhand, the BJP's limited reach and failure to address rural distress effectively diminished its appeal. The electoral outcome in Maharashtra underlines the BJP's ability to adapt and dominate state politics. All this while the Opposition struggled to regain voter trust. The NDA led by the BJP, achieved notable success in Maharashtra due to a combination of strategic alliances, effective voter outreach and targeted welfare initiatives. In Maharashtra, the BJP presented itself

as a cohesive force with Eknath Shinde's Shiv Sena faction and Ajit Pawar's Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) group, ensuring a consolidated voter base. The party's focus on OBC consolidation, welfare schemes such as direct cash transfers for women, and the influence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership resonated strongly with voters. But it was different story in Jharkhand where the BJP could not harness dissatisfaction with the governance of the Hemant Soren-led coalition and failed to highlight local issues like unemployment and tribal welfare and banked more on its national agenda. The JMM also benefited from a grassroots campaign that addressed tribal and rural voter concerns, further solidifying its position. Similarly, in Maharashtra the opposition failed to effectively capitalise on the BJP's perceived shortcomings, such as economic challenges and allegations of governance lapses. In Maharashtra, the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) coalition, comprising the Congress, Shiv Sena (Uddhav), and Sharad Pawar's NCP, struggled with internal divisions and inconsistent messaging, particularly on sensitive issues like Maratha reservations. In Jharkhand, JMM and Congress were able to counter the BJP's narrative and present a compelling vision for change. These results indeed underscore the innate acumen of the voters to vote on the issues they deem important.

PICTALK



Artistes dressed as clowns perform during the International Clown Festival, in Chennai

Grey divorce: The new reality of modern relationships

Far from a rash dissolution of vows, grey divorce is reshaping societal views on commitment, showcasing that it can lead to new beginnings

The entertainment media is abuzz with news of AR Rahman's separation from his wife of many years, Saira Banu. It is not the first time that famous couples, married for several years, have called it quits. What was once anathema in the old scheme of things—namely, a marriage breakup—has now become a lot more common, giving rise to a new term in the nuptial dictionary: grey divorce.



erating at the same time. We have now entered a new era of human relationships, where binding and breaking look like two sides of the same coin. While separation at a younger age is more common than parting at twilight or thereabouts, even long-standing unions are no longer immune to the reconfigurations of modern relationships. Grey divorce has come to symbolise not just the unravelling of a marriage but the assertion of individuality—a reclaiming of one's universe after years of compromise and shared existence. For couples who part ways after decades together, it is not a rash decision taken in the heat of conflict but the culmination of deep reflection and an honest appraisal of their shared journey. It is not about undoing the years they spent together or

dismissing the love they once held; rather, it is about recognising that their paths have diverged, their goals have shifted, and their needs have evolved in ways that no longer align. Marriage, in its ideal form, is a partnership where two people grow together while allowing each other room to flourish individually. But as life unfolds with its relentless demands and shifting priorities, it is not uncommon for this delicate balance to tilt. What once felt like a harmonious duet may start to sound discordant, not out of malice or neglect, but simply because human beings are not static.

Divorce in later years, though heart-wrenching, is often an act of self-preservation—a decision to honour the person each has become rather than clinging to a version of themselves that no longer exists. It is a painful shedding of skin that no longer fits, and like all transformations, it comes with its share of sorrow and scars. Yet, it is also an opportunity for renewal, a chance to readjust one's life with one's inner truth. Couples who choose to separate after years together are not betraying the

sanctity of marriage; they are embracing the courage to let go of something that no longer serves their mutual wellbeing.

It is a quiet revolution in the way society views commitment—not as an unyielding contract but as a partnership rooted in growth, love, and respect, even when that means stepping away. While the process is undeniably painful, it also holds the promise of freedom and self-discovery. It allows individuals to reclaim their lives, find joy in their own company, and pursue paths that were perhaps once abandoned for the sake of togetherness. Grey divorce is not the undoing of a life lived together; it is the rewriting of two lives that are still unfolding. It reminds us that while love may not always last in its original form, the lessons it imparts and the growth it inspires are eternal. And in that, there is hope—a hope that even in endings, there can be beginnings. As Rahman said, they will eventually find meaning in the shattering.

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



ASHA IYER KUMAR

Emerging contours of artificial intelligence



VINAYSHIL GAUTAM

The interplay between AI and human intelligence offers both challenges and opportunities, heralding a future where adaptability and innovation are key

The foundation of understanding an organisation lies in understanding the role relationships within it. An individual may even, lose their identity in living up to the requirements of his organisational role. Illustratively, the President of an organisation is no longer just an individual who occupies that position. The person who occupies that position becomes the President of the organisation with the President's characteristics, the President's traits, and the President's attributes.

Being a true President may often require his acting in denial of his inclinations in favour of the role requirement. This issue has usually constituted the foundation of organisation analysis and operations. The theoretical basis of this thinking was laid out in 1952 by Elliott Jaques in his classical book "Changing Culture of a Factory." This was a report of 1948 and 1950 of a Glacier Metal Company, London. The Tavistock Institute of Human Relations was the sponsor.

The significance of the book lies, among other things, in the theoretical and operational implications of the research findings. The study went back to 1938. That is another story. Since then, few things have so fundamentally affected organisations understanding till the coming of artificial intelligence (AI). These are indeed seminal times in terms of understanding organisations. AI has affected how one looks at manufacturing, finance, logistics, and more. The expressions of job design have changed. If the basis of job design has changed, the understanding of organisational structure stands to change. The key issue is whether the fundamental changes through the new model of business products for increasing profit have impacted organisational operations. And how they have affected pricing, job market changes, and created or altered new revenue streams. Currently, the world of products and academia is dealing with a lot of jargonise. The popular references are two models, one is the platform-based model, other is the subscription model.



There may be several others but are yet to acquire significance. Many of them who would survive, would get modified, and much of them would evolve into something totally different. Time can tell. For the present, efforts are being made to understand business models and their impact on work conduct. An obvious outcome of AI is the redundancy of many tasks. As the character of tasks changes, the character of organisational models is open to change.

The whole approach of aggregation of organisational tasks into job designs has undergone a fundamental change. Many humanly rendered tasks have become redundant, and they have then been replaced either by machines or machine-led aggregation of skills. This whole process is akin to a major revolution in the understanding of the work. It needs to be realized that once such forces are generated, there is no reversal that can take place in its entirety. It also impacts job designs, which for whatever reason may not change. Put simply, the nature of the task itself has revolutionized organizations. Practically everyone needs to understand AI because there is nothing that can be quite untouched by that process. The overlapping jobs



THE WHOLE APPROACH OF AGGREGATION OF ORGANISATIONAL TASKS INTO JOB DESIGNS HAS UNDERGONE A FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE. MANY HUMANLY RENDERED TASKS HAVE BECOME REDUNDANT, AND THEY HAVE THEN BEEN REPLACED EITHER BY MACHINES OR MACHINE-LED AGGREGATION OF SKILLS

would disappear, skill shifts would take place, and reskilling and upskilling would become the order of the day as never before. When such fundamental changes are let loose, job displacement is not just job displacement but the seedbed of new forms of job creation. The interesting thing is that AI acquires some human characteristics that are still in the domain of documentation, understanding, and interpretation. The bias in AI would have been the act of abbreviation and one might say, even the dispensation of organizational fair play. Privacy and security are concepts that change, and nothing stays quite what it was even a quarter of a century ago.

The upshot of all these is the creation of a paradigm of organization management, whether the top management may not be necessary at the top but acquire primacy even while imbibed in the heart of an organization. This would happen because of the ability of the AI specialist to affect the nature of the work itself. The chances are clear that AI as a service is on the way to acquiring a character of its own. For some AI will be the first language, and they will affect the running of the organization in a very critical manner. For the

rest, AI would be a second language, and everyone would need to understand a little bit of the nature of AI.

Put simply, the future of work will be a diligent factor in many ways, which might be an outcome of the revolution of AI. The fascinating thing is to observe how the character of AI affects other functions of the organization like finance, marketing, the functioning of ports, and more. The above is not to say that pathways are clear and the shift in organisational nature is irrevocable. The AI is a job in progress. It's a work in progress that is still taking shape and a character that remains in service of organization management, will only gradually become clear. How this will roll out is difficult to predict, but one thing is clear:

AI is here to stay. All in all, it will be interesting to observe how AI and human intelligence deal with each other and create an amalgam of human efforts for organizational growth. The future is here, and over time, it will take shape with better clarity and hopefully some predictability.

(The writer is a well-known management consultant of international repute. The views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

ADANI GROUP CONTROVERSY

Madam— Adani Group Chairman Gautam Adani, his nephew Sagar Adani and six others were indicted by US prosecutors in New York on Wednesday (November 20) in an alleged Rs 2,029 crore bribery case that could be a much bigger blow for business than the Hindenburg report. Side by side, it could upset the group's global expansion ambitions, hinder capital-raising and tarnish the fundraising abilities of other Indian firms by association. Though the White House expressed confidence in the resilience of India-US ties despite allegations against industrialist Gautam Adani and his associates of orchestrating a \$265 million bribery scheme to secure state energy contracts.

Even after all this, citizens of the country strongly believe that whether Adani paid the bribe or not is to be probed by the agencies. When Indian agencies failed, US court indicted him for the bribery. Let Adani & his companies defend themselves in the US courts. If Adani has invested in the minerals, forests, lands and other resources of those states. Where Indian compromised agencies failed, the US caught him on the wrong foot. Let him and his other conspirators face the music. Remember, the US laws are very strict in the cases of bribery or anti-competition laws. Let Adani face the music in the US courts and international financiers or hawala money suppliers. Whatsoever, for the clean image of the country, India must also set up a probe into this matter and be prepared to go by the evidence presented to the US regulators and courts to determine if there has been wrongdoing on our soil.

Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee | Delhi

MAHAYUTI WINS MAHARASHTRA

Madam— The Mahayuti alliance in Maharashtra has won the Assembly elections 2024 is a double booster for BJP after its recent surprise win in Haryana. It's a celebration time for the CM and Shiv Sena

Women's hockey team wins ACT



The Indian women's hockey team has created history once again by retaining the Asian Champions Trophy title after beating China. It would always be a moment of pride seeing Indian women securing victory in India's national sport, hockey. The title is extremely prestigious for all of us, and our women players deserve this victo-

ry due to their constant hard work of managing seven victories in the seven matches. India beat China with 3-0 and holds the ACT (Asian Champion Trophy) crown once again, for the third time now, after securing the same in 2016 and 2023.

The team under Harendra Kaur is collecting worldwide appreciation for their high-quality, victorious performance and hopefully, if Team India continues the same magic in the upcoming Los Angeles session in 2028, we all back at home will be in the epitome of cheers for our girls. Meanwhile, it's time for Indian women's hockey to enjoy and dip into the victory celebration. The nation extends heartfelt congratulations to them for their success.

Kirti Wadhawan | Kanpur

leader Eknath Shinde.

The magic wand of Sharad Pawar had lost its power while his breakup factions of Sena and NCP led by Uddhav Thackeray and Sharad Pawar, had seen the downside quite significantly. The Shiv Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray termed the victory as note-jihad by attacking the BJP leader Vinod Tawde and alleged that cash for votes marred the end results. While all parties facilitate cash for votes, it's not that how much one bribe matters and, at the end, how much of welfare the party extends to the people that brings such a huge victory need to be respected. The BJP has used their arm of RSS to campaign to target women, farmers and OBCs in the last six months and has gained momentum by a constructive approach to focus on this landmark victory.

A P Thiruvadi | Chennai

LONG-TERM PLANNING NEEDED

Madam— This refers to the editorial, 'Cars the Main Culprit', wherein it was observed that the real culprit behind Delhi's toxic air is not stubble burning but the city's over-

whelming vehicular emissions. The Supreme Court, concerned about the health of the residents of the capital and commuters, has taken a commendable initiative to close schools up to class 12 and implement all the necessary restrictions of the Graded Response Action Plan-Stage 4. A section of the society is praising the commendable effort of the judiciary wholeheartedly.

The Aam Aadmi Party in Delhi has come under fire over the deteriorating air quality in the national capital. But instead of controlling the worsening conditions, the Aam Aadmi Party is bent on criticising the Modi government at the Centre. Before the upcoming Assembly elections, the Atishi government will have to show its work on the ground in Delhi. The Central and State governments should together take practical steps on a concrete action plan to reduce pollution and improve the environment in Delhi.

Yugal Kishore Sharma | Faridabad

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



FIRST COLUMN

ONLINE PREDATORS

They exploit the anonymity and reach of digital platforms to target vulnerable individuals, particularly children



SHAINY SHARMA

The emergence of the internet has revolutionised the way an individual connects, communicates and accesses information. However, alongside its numerous benefits, this emergence has also given rise to various dangers, one of the most concerning being the presence of online predators - someone who uses the internet to exploit others for personal gain, often engaging in deceptive and manipulative behaviour. These individuals exploit digital platforms to manipulate, exploit and harm unsuspecting victims, often targeting vulnerable populations such as children and teenagers.

Social media platforms, online gaming environments, chat rooms and even educational forums provide predators with access to potential victims. The motives range from financial fraud and identity theft to emotional manipulation, sexual exploitation and many more. The anonymity of the internet emboldens these individuals, allowing them to craft fake personas and deceive others without immediate risk of detection.

Online predators employ various strategies to target and exploit their victims. One of the most common is grooming, a process in which predators build trust and emotional connections over time. This tactic often begins with flattery, attention or shared interests making the victim feel valued and understood. Once the trust is established, the predator isolates the victim by discouraging contact with family or friends, making the victim more dependent on them. Not only this, but these predators also exploit vulnerabilities, such as low self-esteem, loneliness or a desire for acceptance. They use threats, blackmail or promises of love or gifts to control their victims. In some cases, the



predators coerce victims into sharing sensitive information or explicit content, which can later be used as leverage. Victims falling prey to an online predator can be devastating. They may experience emotional trauma, anxiety, depression and a loss of trust in others and if it's a minor then the outcomes are even worse affecting their development and relationships.

A combination of education, vigilance and robust digital safeguards and awareness campaigns can teach individuals, especially young people, about the risks of interacting with strangers online for they tend to put up in place as younger influencers who will share their lives on camera. And the importance of protecting personal information.

Technological solutions, such as parental controls, advanced privacy settings and reporting mechanisms, can also help deter predators. There is no denying that the threat of online predators is a sobering reminder of the darker side of the digital age. While the internet offers incredible opportunities for connection and growth, it also demands vigilance and responsibility from all users.

By understanding the tactics of online predators and implementing protective measures, individuals can work toward a safer online environment. Only when education, communication and technology unite to combat this pervasive issue, can society ensure that the Internet remains a tool for empowerment rather than exploitation.

If you suspect someone is being targeted by an online predator, report it to the authorities or an organisation like NCMEC (National Centre for Missing & Exploited Children) through their CyberTipline. (The writer is an educator; views are personal)



DIVYA BHATIA

Goa has long been a dream destination for both domestic and international travelers. Its blend of scenic beauty and cultural richness has earned it a prominent place on the global tourism map. But is the charm of Goa fading? Is it losing its allure? Certainly not. In fact, anyone visiting Goa would find its flights fully booked well in advance, its hotels packed, and its beaches bustling with lively crowds. However, some media reports have suggested a decline in its popularity, which seems at odds with the reality and the figures.

For decades, Goa has been synonymous with sun-kissed beaches, lively shacks, and a carefree lifestyle that has charmed travellers from

around the world. Beyond its picturesque coastlines lies a treasure trove of history, culture, and tradition waiting to be discovered. Ironically, a report from the CEIC (China Economic Information Centre) claimed a drastic drop in foreign tourist arrivals to Goa, alleging a fall from 8.5 million in 2019 to just 1.5 million in 2023. This nar-

rative suggested that Goa was losing its allure to international competitors like Thailand, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam. Interestingly report is bereft of the details of the sources and how they were collected. Casting aspersions on the motive of the report in first place. These claims have been contested by Goa's Tourism Department, which points out significant discrepancies in the data. Official figures indicated approximately 450,000 foreign arrivals in 2023—a notable recovery post-pandemic-while domestic tourism surged to 8.17 million in 2023, surpassing the 7.12 million recorded in 2019. Altogether, Goa welcomed 8.62 million tourists in 2023, exceeding pre-pandemic levels. Addressing these concerns,

Tourism Minister Rohan A Khaunte has criticised the report, describing it as a deliberate attempt to misrepresent Goa's standing. "The numbers are manipulated to present a false narrative," he stated. "In 2023, we recorded 4.5 million international tourists and about 9 million domestic tourists. It's not just about quantity but the quality of tourism and the revenue it generates. Domestic tourists are now spending more, opting for premium accommodations." To further boost the international Khaunte stresses the importance of improving Goa's international connectivity, particularly with emerging markets in Southeast Asia, the West Asia and Europe. He revealed ongoing efforts to establish direct flight routes to



key destinations such as the UAE, Malaysia and South Korea. "These regions hold immense potential for quality tourism," he noted. In fact, Goa has gone notch up to promote tourism that is both sustainable and rejuvenating. In 2023, Goa launched a pioneering regenerative tourism campaign, emphasising sustainability across the pillars of economy, environment, and society. This initiative aims to go beyond sustainable prac-

tices, creating tourism models that leave a positive impact on local communities while offering unique, meaningful experiences for travelers. "Regenerative tourism is about ensuring that tourism not only sustains but enriches the local culture, economy, and environment," Khaunte explains. Despite its many strengths, Goa faces ongoing challenges. The lack of app-based taxi services and disputes among taxi operators have been longstanding grievances for visitors, often resulting in complaints about high fares. Additionally, while Goa offers accommodations catering to all budgets, from luxury to backpacker-friendly, the state has been criticised for expensive lodging options. Khaunte acknowledged these concerns,

emphasising the need for improved public transportation and better policies to enhance the tourist experience. Indeed the 'Unverified data without revealing the methodology employed and source makes the data suspect and report motivated. What sets Goa apart is its versatility. Whether you're seeking beach parties, adventure sports, spiritual retreats, or cultural festivities, Goa caters to a wide range of interests. This adaptability has been the cornerstone of its enduring appeal. Goa's enchanting landscapes and vibrant culture have long served as a cinematic muse, making it a favored backdrop for filmmakers worldwide. From Bollywood blockbusters to Hollywood thrillers, Goa's charm has been

immortalised on screen. Iconic films like *Ek Duje Ke Liye* (1981) was all about love in the Goan air, while *Dil Chahta Hai* (2001) redefined the idea of weekend getaways, inspiring a generation to explore its idyllic beaches. *Dear Zindagi* (2016) captured its serene vibe, while the *Golmaal* series (2006-2010) added a playful twist to its allure as a honeymoon destination. Even international cinema embraced its beauty, with *The Bourne Supremacy* (2004) using Goa as a stunning backdrop for its high-stakes drama. Whether on screen or off, the magic of Goa continues to captivate and mesmerise, unaffected by reports or negative propaganda. (The author is travel writer and influencer; views are personal)

Trump 2.0: Stark challenges for the climate and global stability



B K SINGH

With promises to overhaul bureaucracy, impose steep tariffs and retreat from climate commitments, Trump's policies are set to reshape the US and the world

Donald Trump will take over as US President on January, 20 2025 and his pre-election promises would have economic and environmental consequences. On the economic front, countries worldwide would face still stronger dollars sucking money out of emerging markets, high protectionist tariffs imposed and consequent trade war slowing the growth and increasing inflation globally. His regime is not only committed to sacking thousands of bureaucrats and replaced by his supporters but has also announced a new department named the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) to be headed by Elon Musk and Vivek Ramaswamy to slash the bureaucracy. No doubt it would disrupt the continuity of the functioning of government, and it would also lead to job losses. Nationwide federal government employs nearly 3 million people. Trump says Musk and Ramaswamy would dismantle government bureaucracy, slash excess regulations, cut wasteful expenditure and restructure federal agencies. While Musk has announced to cut \$2 trillion from the federal budget, Ramaswamy has proposed to eliminate the education department and FBI.

Internal Revenue Service as well as cutting the federal workforce by 75 per cent in a mass layoff. Trump has consistently maintained to levy a 10 per cent tariff on all imports in the US, 60 per cent on imports from China and 100 per cent on cars imported from China. This would mean cutting imports from many countries which may even result in trade wars. Capacities created in countries like China would be rendered unutilised. With limited domestic consumption in China, the country would face a backlash.

If all countries take action to cut on imports, it certainly boomerangs somewhere and exports would be adversely impacted in most cases. A 10 per cent tariff on imports would increase US prices of goods by at least 3 per cent and a continued trade war may even further raise the prices. While domestic producers in the US would welcome it, the consumers will have to pay more. Tariff is not the solution to all problems. Trump's idea to shift manufacturing back to the US may be hit by supply chain disruption on account of higher tariffs.

The job creation in the US may be impacted. In his first term, Trump increased tariffs on Aluminum and Steel to bring its manufacturing back to the US, but the goal was not achieved. His acceptance of higher prices to be paid by consumers, while protecting producers had also made consumers pay 18 per cent extra on Washing machines in 2018. Later some of Trump's tariff was increased by Biden too. It went up to 100 per cent on electric vehicles, 50 per cent on solar cells and 25 per cent on batteries from China. It had its impact on climate action too - the transition to cleaner energy was slowed down. Herbert Hoover, a Republican, US President nearly a century ago had similarly announced the imposition of tariffs, which ultimately culminated in the adoption of the Smoot-Hawley Act, of 1930 and increased tariffs by 40 to 60 per cent.

It led to a trade war and the US faced retaliation from its trade partners too. It triggered the great depression and the



IN HIS FIRST TERM, TRUMP INCREASED TARIFFS ON ALUMINUM AND STEEL TO BRING ITS MANUFACTURING BACK TO THE US, BUT THE GOAL WAS NOT ACHIEVED

worst economic crisis humankind has ever experienced. Presently global economy is already facing considerable headwinds, any trade war can have disastrous consequences. US's technological advancement for decades has placed it as the leading powerhouse in the world.

Its investment in research and development has been quite rewarding as evident from the fact that there have been more Nobel laureates in the last five or six years than the rest of the world put together have produced. With its technological superiority, the rest of the world is dependent on it economically too and the tariff policy would leave them behind in the trade war. So far China's growth has been manufacturing followed by exports. With the slowdown in exports, it is dealing with the problem of overcapacity of its industries and making efforts to boost domestic consumption. There has been budget constraint in Europe - money is spent on subsidies in several countries, causing growth retardation. Germany, to continue producing in the country has to match the US subsidy offering 900 million euros to Swedish battery makers Northvolt, which is experiencing sluggish growth of the economy. Subsidies continue to slow the growth globally.

As the growth suffers, climate action also suffers. For instance, countries in the African subcontinent have vast potential for solar and wind energy, which has remained untapped so far. China's interest in Africa is going up through its belt and Road initiatives; it has an eye on the natural resources of the continent. It is

to be seen whether Trump 2.0 can counter China in Africa.

In his election speeches, Trump has already sought to restore US manufacturing and has targeted to end the Chinese dominance in sectors like advanced information technology, high-end numerical control machinery, robotics, aviation equipment, maritime engineering technology, sophisticated rail equipment, energy-saving vehicles, electrical equipment, medical devices and agriculture machinery etc.

European business finds it now difficult to continue investing in China and India should try to leverage the churn to its advantage. President-elect has already announced Immigration hardliner Tom Homan for the deposition of illegal immigrants. He said that there is nobody better in policing and controlling US borders and there is no doubt that Homan will do a fantastic job which has been long awaited.

Homan also spoke to the press supporting the deportation of even US-born children of undocumented immigrants. Another Immigration hardliner Stephen Miller has been announced to be deputy Chief of Policy in the new administration. Unprecedented deportation is around the corner, which is bound to impact the labour force. What will happen to manufacturing? Also, his tax cut promise would lead to a fiscal deficit; the US has one of the highest fiscal deficits 22 per cent of GDP, more than four times as high as India.

The country is already under heavy debt and indebtedness would further increase the deficit. Despite a good chemistry between Trump and Modi, India

may not be spared of 10 per cent tariff, which may impact our imports. By 2028, when Trump's term ends, not only the US, but many other countries will be reeling under high inflation and poor growth. UN is also reconciled to accept a cut in US funding in Trump 2.0. A US retreat at the UN is likely to open the door for China, which has been building influence in global diplomacy. The best part of Trump's promises is that he would stop funding war. The end of war in West Asia and Ukraine is expected soon. The re-election of Trump has cast a shadow on the ongoing world climate summit in Baku, Azerbaijan. His withdrawal from the Paris Agreement in his first term and halting climate funding has slowed down the progress globally.

Trump in his election campaign has vowed to ignore any climate emergency. He has been categorical in his election speeches - abandon climate, drill, baby, drill. He has also joked in speeches that if the sea level rises, we will have more properties facing the sea. In some other speeches, he said that why should we be concerned if the sea level rises by a thousandth of an inch after thousands of years? Global leaders at Baku perceive the inaction and obstructions from the US and debate whether they can afford such inaction for four more years. They must work out the strategy and pursue advanced climate actions and goals. Barbados PM has invited Trump for a face-to-face meeting on climate.

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

Goa's timeless allure: Ultimate destination despite misleading claims

Recent reports claiming a decline in its popularity seem at odds with the reality on the ground

Goa has long been a dream destination for both domestic and international travelers. Its blend of scenic beauty and cultural richness has earned it a prominent place on the global tourism map. But is the charm of Goa fading? Is it losing its allure? Certainly not. In fact, anyone visiting Goa would find its flights fully booked well in advance, its hotels packed, and its beaches bustling with lively crowds. However, some media reports have suggested a decline in its popularity, which seems at odds with the reality and the figures.



DIVYA BHATIA

For decades, Goa has been synonymous with sun-kissed beaches, lively shacks, and a carefree lifestyle that has charmed travellers from

around the world. Beyond its picturesque coastlines lies a treasure trove of history, culture, and tradition waiting to be discovered. Ironically, a report from the CEIC (China Economic Information Centre) claimed a drastic drop in foreign tourist arrivals to Goa, alleging a fall from 8.5 million in 2019 to just 1.5 million in 2023. This nar-

rative suggested that Goa was losing its allure to international competitors like Thailand, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam. Interestingly report is bereft of the details of the sources and how they were collected. Casting aspersions on the motive of the report in first place. These claims have been contested by Goa's Tourism Department, which points out significant discrepancies in the data. Official figures indicated approximately 450,000 foreign arrivals in 2023—a notable recovery post-pandemic-while domestic tourism surged to 8.17 million in 2023, surpassing the 7.12 million recorded in 2019. Altogether, Goa welcomed 8.62 million tourists in 2023, exceeding pre-pandemic levels. Addressing these concerns,

Tourism Minister Rohan A Khaunte has criticised the report, describing it as a deliberate attempt to misrepresent Goa's standing. "The numbers are manipulated to present a false narrative," he stated. "In 2023, we recorded 4.5 million international tourists and about 9 million domestic tourists. It's not just about quantity but the quality of tourism and the revenue it generates. Domestic tourists are now spending more, opting for premium accommodations." To further boost the international Khaunte stresses the importance of improving Goa's international connectivity, particularly with emerging markets in Southeast Asia, the West Asia and Europe. He revealed ongoing efforts to establish direct flight routes to



key destinations such as the UAE, Malaysia and South Korea. "These regions hold immense potential for quality tourism," he noted. In fact, Goa has gone notch up to promote tourism that is both sustainable and rejuvenating. In 2023, Goa launched a pioneering regenerative tourism campaign, emphasising sustainability across the pillars of economy, environment, and society. This initiative aims to go beyond sustainable prac-

tices, creating tourism models that leave a positive impact on local communities while offering unique, meaningful experiences for travelers. "Regenerative tourism is about ensuring that tourism not only sustains but enriches the local culture, economy, and environment," Khaunte explains. Despite its many strengths, Goa faces ongoing challenges. The lack of app-based taxi services and disputes among taxi operators have been longstanding grievances for visitors, often resulting in complaints about high fares. Additionally, while Goa offers accommodations catering to all budgets, from luxury to backpacker-friendly, the state has been criticised for expensive lodging options. Khaunte acknowledged these concerns,

emphasising the need for improved public transportation and better policies to enhance the tourist experience. Indeed the 'Unverified data without revealing the methodology employed and source makes the data suspect and report motivated. What sets Goa apart is its versatility. Whether you're seeking beach parties, adventure sports, spiritual retreats, or cultural festivities, Goa caters to a wide range of interests. This adaptability has been the cornerstone of its enduring appeal. Goa's enchanting landscapes and vibrant culture have long served as a cinematic muse, making it a favored backdrop for filmmakers worldwide. From Bollywood blockbusters to Hollywood thrillers, Goa's charm has been

immortalised on screen. Iconic films like *Ek Duje Ke Liye* (1981) was all about love in the Goan air, while *Dil Chahta Hai* (2001) redefined the idea of weekend getaways, inspiring a generation to explore its idyllic beaches. *Dear Zindagi* (2016) captured its serene vibe, while the *Golmaal* series (2006-2010) added a playful twist to its allure as a honeymoon destination. Even international cinema embraced its beauty, with *The Bourne Supremacy* (2004) using Goa as a stunning backdrop for its high-stakes drama. Whether on screen or off, the magic of Goa continues to captivate and mesmerise, unaffected by reports or negative propaganda. (The author is travel writer and influencer; views are personal)

Women score low in a women-led election

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In an election where the BJP-led MahaYuti's flagship scheme "Mukhya Mantri Ladki Bahin Yojana" proved to be a game-changer that ensured its return to power in Maharashtra, only 21 women have been elected to the 288-member State Legislative Assembly. Of the total 4,136 candidates in fray, there were 3,771 men and 363 women. Given that 21 women candidates out of the total 363 female candidates romped home in the polls, the women representation in the 288-Assembly is meagre 7.29 per cent. That only 21 women candidates have emerged victors in the State Assembly polls is ironic considering that both the ruling MahaYuti and Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) had made pink as the theme in the polls and they reached out in a big way to the women voters in the state. While the BJP went to polls with a promise to increase the quantum of assistance under the "Mukhya Mantri Ladki Bahin Yojana" from Rs 1,500 to 2,100 per month, the Opposition MVA promised a Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) of Rs 3,000 per month for



women under its Mahalakshmi Yojana. Between the two women assistance schemes, "Mukhya Mantri Ladki Bahin Yojana" proved to be a hit with the women voters across the state and it contributed to the BJP-led MahaYuti's historic victory in the polls. So much so that Chief minister Eknath Shinde, his deputies Devendra Fadnavis and Ajit Pawar have attributed a large share of the MahaYuti victory to its 'Mukhya Mantri Ladki Bahin Yojana' (Chief Minister's Beloved Sister Scheme) which

was announced in the State Budget 2024-25. "I salute women across the state. The Mukhya Mantri Ladki Bahin Yojana proved to be a game-changer for us.... Remember every one wrote us off after the Lok Sabha polls. If the people, especially women across the state, have given us resounding victory, it is because of the development work and welfare schemes like the Ladki Bahin scheme, which helped us script an unprecedented win in the polls," Shinde said on Saturday, while addressing a joint news

conference after the MahaYuti's thumping victory in the Assembly polls. In the backdrop of the euphoria over the contribution of women voters to the ruling MahaYuti's landslide victory in the polls, the number of women elected to the new Maharashtra Assem Out of the total 21 new women MLAs elected to the State Assembly, 20 are from the ruling MahaYuti. Of these 20 new women MLAs, the BJP accounted for a lion's share of 14. Of the 14, 10 women MLAs have been re-elected.

They are Shweta Mahale (Chikli constituency), Meghana Bordikar (Jintur), Devyani Farande (Nashik Central), Seema Hiray (Nashik West), Manda Mhatre (Belapur), Manisha Chaudhari (Dahisar), Vidya Thakur (Goregaon), Madhuri Misal (Parvati), Monica Rajale (Shevgaon) and Namita Mundada (Kaij). The four BJP women nominees, who have been elected as MLAs for the first time are: Shreejaya Chavan (Bhokar), Sulabha Gaikwad (Kalyan East), Sneha Pandit (Vasai) and Anuradha Chavan (Fulambari). Similarly, Manjula Gavit (Sakri) and Sanjana Jadhav (Kannad) have been elected to the State Assembly on the ruling Shiv Sena tickets, while the three new NCP MLAs are Sulbha Khodke (Amravati), Saroj Ahire (Deolali), Sana Malik (Anushaktinagar) and Aditi Tatkare (Shrivardhan). The lone opposition MLA in the Maharashtra Assembly is Dr Jyoti Gaikwad, who has won the Dharavi seat for the Congress. She is the sister of Mumbai Congress President Prof Varsha Gaikwad, who is Mumbai North Central MP and daughter of late Eknath Gaikwad, a former MLA and MP.

Furious India rejects 'unfair', 'stage-managed' climate finance deal

PTI ■ BAKU (AZERBAIJAN)

India on Sunday fiercely rejected the paltry USD 300 billion climate finance package for the Global South and said the COP29 presidency and the UN climate change office forced through the deal before allowing it to voice its objections. Making a strong statement on behalf of India at the closing plenary of the UN climate conference here, Chandni Raina, Adviser, Department of Economic Affairs, termed the adoption process "unfair" and "stage-managed" and said it reflected the troubling lack of trust in the UN system. The UN climate conference adopted a new climate finance package of a meagre USD 300 billion annually by 2035, replacing the USD 100 billion pledge made in 2009. The USD 300 billion figure is a far cry from the USD 1.3 trillion the Global South has been demanding over the past three years of talks to tackle climate change. India said its request to speak before the adoption of the climate finance package was ignored. "We had informed the presidency and the secretariat that we wanted to make a statement before any decision on the adoption. However, and this is for everyone to see, this has been stage-managed, and we are extremely disappointed with this incident," Raina said. "We have seen what you have done. However, we would want to say that gaveling and trying to ignore parties from speaking does not behave of the UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) system, and we would want you to hear us and also hear our objections to this adoption. We absolutely object to this," she said drawing loud applause in a plenary full of diplomats, civil society members and journalists. Raina said that only trust and collaboration can drive meaningful action against



Yalchin Rafiyev, Azerbaijan's COP29 lead negotiator, left, Mukhtar Babayev, COP29 President, center, and Simon Stiell, United Nations climate chief, talk ahead of a plenary session at the COP29 U.N. Climate Summit, Sunday, Nov. 24, 2024, in Baku, Azerbaijan AP/PTI

climate change, which is one of humanity's greatest existential challenges. "It's a fact that both (trust and collaboration) have not worked today and we are deeply hurt by the actions of the presidency and the (UNFCCC) Secretariat," she said. India said the new climate finance package of a meagre USD 300 billion annually by 2035 is "too little and too distant" and it does not accept it in its present form. Developed countries, which have historically been responsible for most of the greenhouse gas emissions driving climate change, are required to provide finance, technology, and capacity-building support to developing and low-income economies to help them cope with a warming world. In 2009, they pledged to provide USD 100 billion per year by 2020. However, this pledge was only met in 2020, with around 70 per cent of the funds coming in the form of loans. USD 300 billion does not meet the needs and priorities of developing countries. It is incompatible with the principle of CDBR (Common but Differentiated Responsibilities) and equity, regardless of the battle with the impact of climate change, Raina said. Supporting India, Nigeria said the USD 300 billion climate

finance package was a "joke". Malawi and Bolivia also lent support to India. Raina said the outcome clearly reflects the unwillingness of developed countries to fulfil their responsibilities. She said that developing countries are the most impacted by climate change and are being pushed to transition to low-carbon pathways, even at the cost of their growth. They are also facing unilateral measures, such as the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism, by developed countries, which does not make the transition easier. Raina said the proposed outcome will further affect the developing world's ability to adapt to climate change and greatly impact its climate goal ambitions and growth. Issued after tiring, mind-numbing negotiations that continued for an extra day, the deal document said that countries would marshal a total of USD 300 billion per year by 2035 from a wide variety of sources - public and private, bilateral and multilateral, including alternative sources. The USD 1.3 trillion figure is in the document, but it calls on "all actors", including public and private, to "work together" to reach this level by 2035. It does not place the responsibility solely on developed countries.

East is India's growth engine: PM Modi

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi asserted on Sunday that his government considers India's eastern region as the country's growth engine, while the area was considered backward earlier. Addressing a gathering at the "Odisha Parba" event here, the prime minister said investments of Rs 45,000 crore have been approved within 100 days of the formation of a new government in the state. "Odisha has always been a land of seers and scholars. The way the scholars here took our religious texts to every household and connected the public with those, it has played a crucial role in the cultural prosperity of India. "There was a time when India's eastern region and the states there were called backward. However, I consider India's eastern region as the country's growth engine. That is why we have prioritised the development of India's eastern region," he said.

Manipur CM assures action on poppy plantations

STAFF REPORTER ■ GURUGRAM

Manipur Chief Minister N. Biren Singh on Sunday said action will be taken against poppy planters and their accomplices following an ultimatum by a Naga village authority. Singh's assurance came after a police team, led by an additional SP, and village volunteers were allegedly targeted by armed planters when they attempted to destroy poppy cultivation in Kangpokpi district recently. In a post on X, Singh said, "I appreciate the Makhan Village Authority for taking a strong stand against poppy cultivation in their villages. Let me assure you that central security forces and state police are always on standby, ready to take necessary action against poppy cultivation and its accomplices." He also urged everyone to "come forward and join this movement to eliminate drugs from Manipur." On Saturday, the Makhan Village Authority issued an ultimatum to the Manipur government, demanding



action within four days against poppy planters in Kangpokpi district. In a statement, the village authority said on November 20, volunteers and a police team were confronted by armed men while attempting to destroy poppy cultivation in the hill areas of the district. "Wielding guns and weapons, the poppy planters attacked the volunteers and the police team and damaged the equipment brought to cut poppy plants, thereby incapacitating the mission," the statement added. The village authority also criticised the police team, accusing them of "literally running away from the poppy planters," calling the act "a complete mockery of their arms and uniform."

Use tech to resolve public grievance: Haryana chief sec

STAFF REPORTER ■ GURUGRAM

Haryana Government Chief Secretary Vivek Joshi has said that officers should establish such a system in their department that the complaints and problems of the general public should be resolved quickly. In this, new technology and expert services should be used, he said. Addressing the meeting of officers of departments like GMDA, MCG, HSIIDC, NHAI etc., here in Gurugram on Sunday, the Chief Secretary said that if any contractor or private company associated with the government system does not meet the standards of

the department, then legal action should be taken against it. "Officials should ensure that people here are not troubled due to basic problems like electricity, water, road. Also ensure that if any citizen faces such a problem, it should be resolved on the spot. The services of city cleanliness, waste management, MCG or GMDA should be linked to new technology. Officers can also take the services of skilled experts or companies from another state," he said. While discussing the projects of GMDA and MCG, the Chief Secretary said that the residents of Gurugram City should get adequate public facilities.

Soren to take oath as CM on November 28

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Soren also revealed that the swearing-in ceremony is scheduled for Thursday, November 28, at the historic Morhabadi Ground in Ranchi, though he declined to share details about the new cabinet's composition. Earlier in the day, INDIA block MLAs convened at the CM's residence, where Soren was unanimously elected as the alliance leader.

It is expected that, alongside Soren as CM from the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM), six MLAs will be sworn in as ministers-four from the Congress, one from the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), and another from the JMM. Discussions are going on regarding the potential inclusion of the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Lennist) in the coalition government, with the

possibility of introducing fresh faces to the cabinet. As four ministers of Hemant Soren's cabinet lost the Assembly polls, new faces will surely be inducted in the cabinet. It is being said that Hemant Soren's wife Kalpana Soren or his brother Basant Soren will be inducted in the cabinet apart from the loyal faces of JMM. From the Congress' side senior leaders such as Pradeep Yadav,

Rameshwar Oraon, RK Kishore and young leaders such as Shilpi Neha Tirkey, Sonam Ram Sanku, Shweta Singh and Jaimagal Singh are being considered as probable candidates for ministerial berths. Sources said that Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, senior leader Rahul Gandhi, and RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav may attend Soren's swearing-in ceremony on November 28.

Pawar credits MahaYuti win to Yogi

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Nationalist Congress Party (SP) chief Sharad Pawar on Sunday attributed the rout of the Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) to the UP chief minister Yogi Adityanath's divisive slogan 'Batenge to katenge', MahaYuti's flagship scheme "Mukhya Mantri Ladki Bahin Yojana", use of large sums of money by the ruling alliance and lack of adequate support from the OBC voters. "The poll outcome is totally unexpected. After all, it is a verdict given by the people in the state. I have not seen this kind of an electoral outcome in my entire political career. That being the case, we need to study the reasons for the Opposition MBA's debacle in the polls and go back to people and work enthusiastically once again". Queried as to what could be the reasons for the Opposition MVA's shocking defeat, Pawar said: "One of the reasons is that the 'Batenge to katenge' slogan given by Yogi Adityanath contributed to polarisation among voters.

Accused in policeman murder...

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A joint team from the Special Cell (New Delhi Range) and Narcotics Cell, South East District, which had been working together since the incident, went to the area connecting Sangam Vihar to Surajkund Road to verify the information," the officer said. He added that the accused was identified close to midnight. However, when the police asked him to surrender, the accused opened fire at the police personnel who retaliated in self-defence and injured the accused. "Not heeding to the calls made by the police, the

suspect, in a premeditated manner, opened fire from a close distance at the police party using a firearm that he was carrying. The police team retaliated in self-defence, which led to the suspect being injured by gunshot wounds," another official said. The suspect was immediately rushed to ESIC Hospital, Okhla, where he passed away due to the injuries suffered in police action. A pistol with two cartridges has been seized, the police officer said, adding no police official was injured in the encounter. "All protocols as laid down by law for instances of death in police action are being

followed," the official said. Constable Kiran Pal, posted at Govindpuri Police Station, was on night patrolling duty when he stopped three people riding a two-wheeler in the early hours of Saturday. "The accused threw stones at the constable to evade arrest but he managed to waylay them by putting his bike in front of their vehicle," the officer said. "The constable also took away the keys of the two-wheeler and started questioning the trio during which the accused stabbed him," the officer added. The constable is survived by his widowed mother and an elder brother, who is currently unemployed.

Violence erupts at Sambhal...

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Yadav further claimed that the BJP government was using such incidents to sideline discussions on governance failures and election-related malpractice. Following the violence, Maulana Shahabuddin Razvi Bareilly, president of the All India Muslim Jamaat, appealed to the Muslim community to maintain peace and avoid acts of violence. "Islam promotes peace, and we must follow the Prophet's message. The legal battle over the historical Jama Masjid will be fought strongly in court," he said.

Shinde, Fadnavis, Pawar in Delhi...

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The BJP-led MahaYuti, on Saturday retained power in the state by bagging 230 of the 288 Assembly seats. The Congress-led Maha Vikas Aghadi's (MVA) dream of wresting power fizzled, with the opposition combine managing to garner just 46 seats. The BJP bagged 132 seats, the SS won 57, while the NCP got 41 seats. In the MVA, the Nationalist Congress Party (Sharadchandra Pawar) (NCP-SP) candidates won 10 seats, the Congress won 16, while the Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray) (SS-UBT) won 20 seats.

Bawankule said the decision on CM would be taken by the Mahayuti leaders and the BJP's parliamentary board. "The selection process would be in-line with the alliance's plans for governance," he added. Notably, the Mahayuti's landslide in Maharashtra will leave the state Assembly without a Leader of Opposition as no party outside the ruling alliance has been able to get the mandatory minimum 29 seats. "The mandate of the people in this Assembly election is against the Congress. Having no leader of Opposition in the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly is the karma of Congress," Bawankule said. NCP (SP) chief Sharad Pawar

on Sunday said the Ladki Bahin scheme, women's participation in voting in large numbers, and a religious polarisation may have played a role in Mahayuti's victory in Maharashtra Assembly polls. He said the election results, declared on Saturday, are not on the expected lines but he would revitalise his party. Responding to a query on his retirement from active politics, Pawar tersely said he and his party colleagues will decide. Responding to a query on EVMs, a day after SS (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut expressed doubts over the massive verdict in Mahayuti's favour, Pawar said he would speak about EVMs only if he has official data.

BJP win dampens Opposition plans

From page 1

Raising the issue of violence in Manipur, Gogoi said the ruling dispensation jailed the Jharkhand chief minister (Hemant Soren) and made changes in Jammu and Kashmir for a variety of reasons, but kept its faith in Chief Minister of Manipur N Biren Singh, despite his alleged involvement in violence. The matter must be debated in the Parliament, he said. The Winter Session is scheduled to be held from November 25 to December 20. At the meeting, two BJP allies from Andhra Pradesh — Telugu Desam Party (TDP) and Jana Sena Party (JSP) —

raised the issue of pending implementation of the promises made during the division of the state in 2014 under the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, saying the Parliament should know their present status. "We want the government to put the status on record," TDP leader Lavu Sri Krishna Devarayalu said, noting that while some promises have been fulfilled and some are being taken up, a few still remain unfulfilled. Jana Sena leader Balashowry Vallabhaneeni spoke on similar lines. DMK asked the Centre to withdraw the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, which the government is keen to table in

the session despite opposition by several Muslim organisations. The Opposition members in the Waqf panel are demanding an extension in the timeline to submit its report accusing the JPC Chairman and BJP MP Jagdambika Pal of bulldozing the committee's meetings, the opposition members sought the intervention of Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla. Commenting on the matter, Rijju said there is a provision to extend the tenure of the JPC but as of now, there have been no discussions on it. He also underlined that the business advisory committee of the Lok Sabha is the right platform to discuss the issue

of extending the JPC's timeline. As many as eight bills, including the Waqf (Amendment) Bill and the Mussalman Wakf (Repeal) Bill, are pending in the Lok Sabha. According to a Lok Sabha bulletin, two bills are pending with the Rajya Sabha. A Rajya Sabha bulletin said an additional bill -- The Bharatiya Vayuyan Vidheyak -- passed by the Lok Sabha is pending with the Upper House. A set of proposed bills to implement simultaneous elections in the country are not part of the list yet, though some reports suggested that the government is likely to bring the proposed legislation in the coming session.

The King and The Prince

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The straight six off Lyon with the turn was exhilarating as young Nitish Reddy (38 not out off 27 balls) only enhanced his reputation with some muscular IPL-like strokes that took India past the 500-run mark. Before 'King Kohli' took charge, the new 'Prince' Jaiswal, just a month short of his 23rd birthday, notched up a classic fourth century in Tests. The knock has provided his skipper Bumrah with enough ammunition to exploit the treacherous bounce that is starting to trouble batters. The post-lunch session turned out to be the most productive one for Australia since the

opening day as India, starting the session at 275 for 1, slumped to 321 for 5 but by then, the lead was well past the 360-run mark and it didn't hurt the team much. With no seam movement, Kohli was able to control the other factor -- variable bounce -- and his front-foot stride was way more assured than the first essay. While he was completely side-on in his stance while facing the pacers, against Lyon, he turned it into an open-chested one. There was a minor back-foot trigger before he would stride on the front-foot for either drive or defence. However, if India go on to win the Test match, Jaiswal and KL Rahul (77's) 201-run opening stand would be as important

as Bumrah's first innings five-for. Jaiswal 'Arrives' in Australia Exactly 32 years ago, 17-year-old Sachin Tendulkar became a global phenomenon with a hundred for the ages at the old WACA ground on a track that had those snake-like cracks and in the last two days, Jaiswal has shown the entire world that he is here to be the torch-bearer of Indian batting for the next decade and a half. He became the second youngest Indian batter after Sachin Tendulkar to score a hundred at Perth. Jaiswal completed his fourth Test hundred and first in a SENA country with a beautifully executed ramp shot off a bouncer bowled by Josh Hazlewood.

The celebration was one for the keeps with hands in the air and gratitude towards the almighty before showing his lean but muscular biceps. All his four Test hundreds are now scores of 150 plus. The six also ensured that Jaiswal and KL Rahul's opening pair surpassed the previous record stand of 191 set by Sunil Gavaskar and Krishnamachari Srikkanth way back in Sydney in 1986. When Jaiswal was finally out trying to cut a long hop from Mitchell Marsh, the 'Prince' looked distraught even as the entire stadium gave him a standing ovation while the 'King' clapped with his bat at the other end as one witnessed a silent passing of the baton.

Israeli strike kills Lebanese soldier, wounds 18

AP ■ BEIRUT

An Israeli strike on a Lebanese army centre on Sunday killed one soldier and wounded 18 others, the Lebanese military said. The Hezbollah militant group meanwhile fired barrages of rockets into northern and central Israel, wounding at least five people. Israeli strikes have killed over 40 Lebanese troops since the start of the war between Israel and Hezbollah, even as Lebanon's military has largely kept to the sidelines.

There was no immediate comment from the Israeli military, which has said previous strikes on Lebanese troops were accidental and that they are not a target of its campaign against Hezbollah.

Lebanon's caretaker prime minister, Najib Mikati, condemned it as an assault on US-led cease-fire efforts, calling it a "direct, bloody message rejecting all efforts and ongoing contacts" to end the war. "(Israel is) again writing in Lebanese blood a brazen rejection of the solution that is being discussed," a statement from his office read. The strike occurred in south-

western Lebanon on the coastal road between Tyre and Naqoura, where there has been heavy fighting between Israel and Hezbollah. Hezbollah fires rockets after strikes on Beirut. Hezbollah began firing rockets, missiles and drones into Israel after Hamas' October 7, 2023, attack out of the Gaza Strip ignited the war there. Hezbollah has portrayed the attacks as an act of solidarity with the Palestinians and Hamas. Iran supports both armed groups.

Israel has launched retaliatory airstrikes since the rocket fire began, and in September the low-level conflict erupted into all-out war, as Israel launched waves of airstrikes across large parts of Lebanon and killed Hezbollah's top leader, Hassan Nasrallah, and several of his top commanders.

Hezbollah fired barrages of rockets into northern and central Israel on Sunday, some of which were intercepted. Israel's Magen David Adom rescue service said it was treating two people in the central city of Petah Tikva, a 23-year-old man who was lightly wounded by a blast and a

70-year-old woman suffering from smoke inhalation from a car that caught fire. The first responders said they treated three other people in northern Israel, including a 60-year-old man in serious condition. It was unclear whether the injuries and damage were caused by the rockets or interceptors.

Israeli airstrikes early Saturday pounded central Beirut, killing at least 20 people and wounding 66, according to Lebanon's Health Ministry. Israeli attacks have killed more than 3,500 people in Lebanon, according to Lebanon's Health Ministry. The fighting has displaced about 1.2 million people, or a quarter of Lebanon's population.

On the Israeli side, about 90 soldiers and nearly 50 civilians have been killed by bombardments in northern Israel and in battle following Israel's ground invasion in early October. Around 60,000 Israelis have been displaced from the country's north.

EU envoy calls for pressure on both sides to reach a truce. The Biden administration has spent months trying to broker a cease-fire, and US envoy Amos Hochstein was back in

the region last week.

The European Union's top diplomat called for more pressure on both Israel and Hezbollah to reach a deal, saying one was "pending with a final agreement from the Israeli government."

Josep Borrell spoke Sunday after meeting with Mikati and Lebanese Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri, a Hezbollah ally who has been mediating with the group. Borrell said the EU is ready to allocate 200 million euros (USD 208m) to assist the Lebanese military, which would deploy additional forces to the south.

The emerging agreement would pave the way for the withdrawal of Hezbollah militants and Israeli troops from southern Lebanon below the Litani River in accordance with the UN Security Council resolution that ended the 2006 war. Lebanese troops would patrol the area, with the presence of UN peacekeepers.

Lebanon's army reflects the religious diversity of the country and is respected as a national institution, but it does not have the military capability to impose its will on Hezbollah or resist Israel's invasion.

'Rabbi, who went missing, was killed'

AP ■ TEL AVIV

Israel said Sunday that the body of an Israeli-Moldovan rabbi who went missing in the United Arab Emirates has been found after he was killed in what it described as a "heinous antisemitic terror incident." The statement from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said Israel "will act with all means to seek justice with the criminals responsible for his death." There was no immediate comment from the UAE. Zvi Kogan, 28, an ultra-Orthodox rabbi who went missing on Thursday, ran a kosher grocery store in the futuristic city of Dubai, where Israelis have flocked for commerce and tourism since the two countries forged diplomatic ties in the 2020 Abraham Accords.

The agreement has held through more than a year of soaring regional tensions unleashed by Hamas' October 7, 2023 attack into southern Israel. But Israel's devastating retaliatory offensive in Gaza and its invasion of Lebanon,



after months of fighting with the Hezbollah militant group, have stoked anger among Emiratis, Arab nationals and others living in the UAE. Iran, which supports Hamas and Hezbollah, has also been threatening to retaliate against Israel after a wave of airstrikes Israel carried out in October in response to an Iranian ballistic missile attack. The Emirati government did not respond to a request for comment. Early Sunday, the UAE's state-run WAM news agency

acknowledged Kogan's disappearance but pointedly did not acknowledge he held Israeli citizenship, referring to him only as being Moldovan. The Emirati Interior Ministry described Kogan as being "missing and out of contact."

"Specialised authorities immediately began search and investigation operations upon receiving the report," the Interior Ministry said. Netanyahu told a regular Cabinet meeting later Sunday that he was "deeply shocked" by Kogan's disappearance and death. He said he appreciated the cooperation of the UAE in the investigation and said that ties between the two countries would continue to be strengthened.

Israel's largely ceremonial president, Isaac Herzog, condemned the killing and thanked Emirati authorities for "their swift action." He said he trusts they "will work tirelessly to bring the perpetrators to justice."

Kogan was an emissary of the Chabad Lubavitch movement, a prominent and highly obser-

vant branch of ultra-Orthodox Judaism based in Brooklyn's Crown Heights neighborhood in New York City. It said he was last seen in Dubai. The UAE has a burgeoning Jewish community, with synagogues and businesses catering to kosher diners.

The Rimon Market, a Kosher grocery store that Kogan managed on Dubai's busy Al Wasl Road, was shut Sunday. As the wars have roiled the region, the store has been the target of online protests by supporters of the Palestinians. Mezuzahs on the front and the back doors of the market appeared to have been ripped off when an Associated Press journalist stopped by on Sunday.

Kogan's wife, Rivky, is a US citizen who lived with him in the UAE. She is the niece of Rabbi Gavriel Holtzberg, who was killed in the 2008 Mumbai attacks.

The UAE is an autocratic federation of seven sheikhdoms on the Arabian Peninsula and is also home to Abu Dhabi. Local Jewish officials in the UAE declined to comment.

Israel cracks down on Palestinian citizens

Umm al-Fahm (AP): Israel's yearlong crackdown against Palestinian citizens who speak out against the war in Gaza is prompting many to self-censor out of fear of being jailed and further marginalised in society, while some still find ways to dissent — carefully.

Ahmed Khalefa's life turned upside down after he was charged with inciting terrorism for chanting in solidarity with Gaza at an anti-war protest in October 2023. The lawyer and city councillor from central Israel says he spent three difficult months in jail followed by six months detained in an apartment. It's unclear when he'll get a final verdict on his guilt or innocence. Until then, he's forbidden from leaving his home from dusk to dawn.

Khalefa is one of more than 400 Palestinian citizens of Israel who, since the start of the war in Gaza, have been investigated by police for "incitement to terrorism" or "incitement to

violence," according to Adalah, a legal rights group for minorities. More than half of those investigated were also criminally charged or detained, Adalah said.

"Israel made it clear they see us more as enemies than as citizens," Khalefa said in an interview at a cafe in his hometown of Umm al-Fahm, Israel's second-largest Palestinian city. Israel has roughly 2 million Palestinian citizens, whose families remained within the borders of what became Israel in 1948. Among them are Muslims and Christians, and they maintain family and cultural ties to Gaza and the West Bank, which Israel captured in 1967.

Israel says its Palestinian citizens enjoy equal rights, including the right to vote, and they are well-represented in many professions. However, Palestinians are widely discriminated against in areas like housing and the job market. Israeli authorities have opened

more incitement cases against Palestinian citizens during the war in Gaza than in the previous five years combined, Adalah's records show. Israeli authorities have not said how many cases ended in convictions and imprisonment. The Justice Ministry said it did not have statistics on those convictions.

Just being charged with incitement to terrorism or identifying with a terrorist group can land a suspect in detention until they're sentenced, under the terms of a 2016 law. In addition to being charged as criminals, Palestinians citizens of Israel — who make up around 20 per cent of the country's population — have lost jobs, been suspended from schools and faced police interrogations posting online or demonstrating, activists and rights watchdogs say. "Anyone who tries to speak out about the war will be imprisoned and harassed in his work and education," said Oumaya

Jabareen, whose son was jailed for eight months after an anti-war protest. "People here are all afraid, afraid to say no to this war."

Jabareen was among hundreds of Palestinians who filled the streets of Umm al-Fahm earlier this month carrying signs and chanting political slogans. It appeared to be the largest anti-war demonstration in Israel since the Oct. 7 Hamas attack. But turnout was low, and Palestinian flags and other national symbols were conspicuously absent. In the years before the war, some protests could draw tens of thousands of Palestinians in Israel. Authorities tolerated the recent protest march, keeping it under heavily armed supervision. Helicopters flew overhead as police with rifles and tear gas jogged alongside the crowd, which dispersed without incident after two hours. Khalefa said he chose not to attend. Shortly after the Oct. 7 attack, Israel's far-right government

freedom to incite ... which harms public safety and our security," his office said in a statement.

But activists and rights groups say the government has expanded its definition of incitement much too far, targeting legitimate opinions that are at the core of freedom of expression. Myssana Morany, a human rights attorney at Adalah, said Palestinian citizens have been charged for seemingly innocuous things like sending a meme of a captured Israeli tank in Gaza in a private WhatsApp group chat. Another person was charged for posting a collage of children's photos, captioned in Arabic and English: "Where were the people calling for humanity when we were killed?" The feminist activist group Kayan said over 600 women called its hotline because of blowback in the workplace for speaking out against the war or just mentioning it unfavorably.

The task force is led by Itamar Ben-Gvir, a hard-line national security minister who oversees the police. His office said the task force has monitored thousands of posts allegedly expressing support for terror organizations and that police arrested "hundreds of terror supporters," including public opinion leaders, social media influencers, religious figures, teachers and others. "Freedom of speech is not the

Rising debt costs threaten Trump's growth promises

AP ■ WASHINGTON

Donald Trump has big plans for the economy — and a big debt problem that will be a hurdle to delivering on them. Trump has bold ideas on tax cuts, tariffs and other programs, but high interest rates and the price of repaying the federal government's existing debt could limit what he's able to do.

Not only is the federal debt at roughly USD 36 trillion, but the spike in inflation after the coronavirus pandemic has pushed up the government's borrowing costs such that debt service next year will easily exceed spending on national security. The higher cost of servicing the debt gives Trump less room to maneuver with the federal budget as he seeks income tax cuts. It's also a political challenge because higher interest rates have made it costlier for many Americans to buy a home or new automobile. And the issue of high costs helped Trump reclaim the presidency in November's election.

"It's clear the current amount of debt is putting upward pressure on interest rates, including mortgage rates for instance," said Shai Akabas, executive director of the economic policy programme at the Bipartisan Policy Centre. "The cost of housing and groceries is going to be increasingly felt by households in a way that are going to adversely affect our economic prospects in the future."

Akabas stressed that the debt service is already starting to crowd out government spending on basic needs such as infrastructure and education. About 1 in 5 dollars spent by the government are now repaying investors for borrowed money, instead of enabling investments in future economic growth. It's an issue on Trump's radar. In his statement on choosing billionaire investor Scott Bessent to be his treasury secretary, the Republican president-elect said Bessent would "help curb the unsustainable path of Federal Debt".

The debt service costs along with the higher total debt complicate Trump's efforts to renew his 2017 tax cuts, much of which are



set to expire after next year. The higher debt from those tax cuts could push interest rates higher, making debt service even costlier and minimising any benefits the tax cuts could produce for growth. "Clearly, it's irresponsible to run back the same tax cuts after the deficit has tripled," said Brian Riedl, a senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute and a former Republican congressional aide. "Even congressional Republicans behind the scenes are looking for ways to scale down the president's ambitions." Democrats and many economists say Trump's income tax cuts disproportionately benefit the wealthy, which deprives the government of revenues needed for programs for the middle class and poor.

"The president-elect's tax policy ideas will increase the deficit because they will decrease taxes for those with the highest ability to pay, such as the corporations whose tax rate he's proposed reducing even further to 15 per cent," said Jessica Fulton, vice president of policy at the Joint Centre for Political and Economic Studies, a Washington-based think tank that deals with issues facing communities of colour.

Trump's team insists he can make the math work. "The American people re-elected President Trump by a resounding margin giving him a mandate to implement the promises he made on the campaign trail, including lowering prices. He will deliver," said Karoline Leavitt, the Trump transition spokeswoman. When Trump was last in the White House in 2020, the federal government was spending USD 345 billion annually to service the national debt.

I see climate crisis in terms of karma and dharma: Ghosh

London (PTI): Celebrated author Amitav Ghosh will receive the prestigious Erasmus Prize at a grand ceremony at the Royal Palace in Amsterdam on Tuesday for his contributions to the theme of "imagining the unthinkable" around the climate change crisis. As the first South Asian recipient of the honour, the Kolkata-born author says he feels "very, very privileged" to have been chosen for an award that has had a diverse range of recipients over the decades — from artists such as Charlie Chaplin and Ingmar Bergman to most recently Trevor Noah. The Praemium Erasmianum Foundation, behind the annual award, chose Ghosh as the 2024 Laureate for his ability to make an uncertain future palpable through compelling stories about the past. "I'm not a great believer in this whole dualism between optimism and pessimism, or optimism and despair. I think, as someone from an Indian background, I tend to think of these things in terms of karma and dharma," Ghosh told PTI in an interview ahead of the awards ceremony in the Netherlands next week.

"I think whether things are going to get bad or not, it's our dharma to try and do whatever we can. It's our duty to do whatever we can, to try and hold back the terrible disruptions that we are almost certainly going to see in the future," he said. The author of "The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable" laments that the current process to tackle the issue through the Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), commonly known as COP, has been "broken for a very long time."

Musk, Ramaswamy seen as biggest threat to Beijing

PTI ■ BEIJING

US President-elect Donald Trump's plan to overhaul the government with a new department headed by tech billionaire Elon Musk and Indian-origin entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy will be the biggest threat to China as it has to compete with far more efficient US political system, a policy advisor to the Chinese government said. China's biggest risk during Donald Trump's 2.0 would be US government overhauls driven by Musk and Ramaswamy, according to Zheng Yongnian, China's top academic and policy advisor to Beijing.

"A more efficient US political system would put huge pressure on China's current system," Zheng, dean of the School of Public Policy at the Chinese University of Hong Kong's Shenzhen campus, said while speaking at Baichuan Forum hosted by the Institute for International Affairs (IIA) on



Saturday. "Of course, the pressure is not exclusive to China but also others, especially Europe," he said. Trump named Musk and Ramaswamy to lead a new Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE). The duo has already planned to scrap "thousands of regulations" and reduce the size of the government workforce. Zhena said, "In the medium to long term, the greatest pressure on China may come from

changes within the US." If Trump succeeds in his efforts to overhaul the government, the US would "develop a new, more competitive system", Zheng said, calling it a form of "state capitalism with American characteristics". "I think we should not underestimate the institutional reforms prioritised by figures like Musk," he warned, the Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post reported on Sunday.

China is gearing up for Trump's second term, beginning on January 20 next year, on several fronts, including his threat to impose a 60 per cent increase of tariffs on its over USD 427 billion annual exports to the US.

Trump, who acted tough on China during his previous term, is expected to reinforce measures against Beijing on various global fronts, including Taiwan and the South China Sea. China asserts Taiwan as part of its mainland and claims ownership over most of the South China Sea. The Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan have counterclaims over the area.

To counter tough tariff increases by the incoming Trump administration in the US, China announced new policy measures on Thursday to back its export sector against "unreasonable foreign trade restrictions" and to create a "good environment" for its exports.

At the APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting in Peru and the 20 summit in Brazil last week, Chinese President Xi Jinping during his meetings with a host of world leaders reaffirmed China's commitment to promote "high-standard opening up" for investment and trade.

As part of new measures to open up, China on Friday added nine more countries, including Japan to its unilateral visa-free entry scheme, taking the total to 38. Zhena said that to counter the US internal changes China should expand opening up countermeasures. Zheng said Trump may damage bilateral ties with tariffs but "he does not want to go to war with China". Trump's "tariff stick" against China under his "America First" policy approach would not only "maximally" damage bilateral relations but also sabotage the international trade system, he added.

Uruguay's once-dull election now a dead heat in presidential runoff

AP ■ MONTEVIDEO

Uruguayans went to the polls Sunday for a second round of voting to choose their next president, with the conservative governing party and the left-leaning coalition locked in a close runoff after failing to win an outright majority in last month's vote.

The election has turned into a hard-fought race between Álvaro Delgado, the incumbent party's candidate, and Yamandú Orsi from the Broad Front, a coalition of leftist and centre-left parties that governed for 15 years until the 2019 victory of centre-right President Luis Lacalle Pou. It oversaw the legalisation of abortion, same-sex marriage and the sale of



marijuana in the small South American nation. Orsi's Broad Front took 44 per cent of the vote while Delgado's National Party won just 27 per cent in the first round of voting October 27. But the other conservative parties that make up the government coalition — in particular, the Colorado Party

— notched 20 per cent of the vote collectively, enough to give Delgado an edge over his challenger this time around. Congress ended up evenly split in the October vote. Most polls have shown a virtual tie between Delgado and Orsi, with nearly 10 per cent of Uruguayan voters undecided even at this late

stage. Analysts say the candidates' lackluster campaigns and broad consensus on key issues have helped generate extraordinary voter indecision and apathy in an election dominated by discussions about taxes and social spending but largely free of the anti-establishment rage that has vaulted populist outsiders to power elsewhere.

"The question of whether Frente Amplio (the Broad Front) raises taxes is not an existential question, unlike what we saw in the U.S. with Trump and Kamala framing each other as threats to democracy," said Nicolás Saldías, a Latin America and Caribbean senior analyst for the London-based Economist Intelligence Unit.

UN peacekeeping mission flops as gang violence surges in Haiti

AP ■ SAN JUAN

When Kenyan police arrived in Haiti as part of a UN-backed mission earlier this year to tackle gang violence, hopes were high.

Coordinated gang attacks on prisons, police stations and the main international airport had crippled the country's capital and forced the prime minister to resign, plunging Haiti into an unprecedented crisis. But the crisis has only deepened since the international policing contingent arrived. The main international airport closed for the second time this year after gangs opened fire on commercial flights in mid-November, striking a flight attendant. Gunmen also are attacking once-peaceful communities to

try and seize control of the entire capital, taking advantage of political infighting that led to the abrupt dismissal of the prime minister earlier this month. Now, a new prime minister is tasked with turning around a nation that sees no escape from its troubles as Haitians wonder: How did the country reach this point? Bloody coups, brutal dictatorships and gangs created by Haiti's political and economic elite have long defined the country's history, but experts say the current crisis is the worst they've seen. "I'm very bleak about the future," said Robert Fattou, a Haitian politics expert at the University of Virginia. "The whole situation is really collapsing." The government is anemic, the UN-

backed mission that supports Haiti's understaffed police department lacks funding and personnel, and gangs now control 85 per cent of the capital. Then, on Wednesday, another blow. Doctors Without Borders announced it was suspending critical care in Port-au-Prince as it accused police of targeting its staff and patients, including threats of rape and death. It's the first time the aid group has stopped working with new patients since it began operating in Haiti more than 30 years ago. "Every day that we cannot resume activities is a tragedy, as we are one of the few providers of a wide range of medical services that have remained open during this extremely difficult year," said Christophe Garnier, mission director in Haiti.

Markets may react to Assembly polls outcome: Analysts

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Global factors and FII activity will dictate trends in domestic equity markets this week while assembly poll results of Maharashtra and Jharkhand may impact stocks on Monday, say analysts. Stock markets witnessed a spirited recovery on Friday with benchmark Sensex and Nifty notching the best single-day gains in more than five months and offering relief after weeks of Correction.

On Friday, Sensex jumped 1,961.32 points or 2.54 per cent to settle at 79,117.11 while Nifty soared 557.35 points or 2.39 per cent to 23,907.25. "On the domestic front, the outcomes of the Maharashtra and Jharkhand elections will

be crucial triggers. Especially Maharashtra where NDA witnessed a one-sided victory which is likely to boost bullish sentiment further. However, global factors continue to pose significant risks. Escalating tensions between Russia and Ukraine, alongside rising crude oil prices, have added to inflationary concerns," Santosh Meena, Head of Research, Swastika Investmart Ltd, said. A strengthening US dollar index and elevated US bond yields are weighing on the rupee, leading to record foreign institutional investor (FII) outflows. "The direction of FII flows will remain a key determinant for the markets following the recent correction," Meena added. The BJP on Saturday pulled



off a stunning performance in Maharashtra winning a record number of seats to propel the party-led ruling Mahayuti alliance to a landslide victory while the INDIA bloc stormed back to power in Jharkhand on the back of a spectacular showing

by the JMM. Global oil benchmark Brent crude and the rupee-dollar trend would also influence trading in the stock market. Global triggers, including US economic data such as GDP growth rate, and FOMC (Federal Open Market

Committee) meeting minutes, will play critical roles in shaping investor sentiment, Meena added. "Overall, the political outcomes, particularly in Maharashtra, suggest a positive outlook for the Indian stock market, especially in sectors that benefit from infrastructure development and political stability," Palka Arora Chopra, Director, Master Capital Services Ltd, said. "Macroeconomic indicators, including GDP and infrastructure output, will garner significant attention. Participants remain focused on FII fund flows, given their ongoing selling spree," Ajit Mishra - SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said. Last week, the BSE benchmark zoomed 1,536.8

points or 1.98 per cent, and the Nifty climbed 374.55 points or 1.59 per cent. Most sectors, except energy, contributed to the rebound, with realty, auto, and FMCG leading the pack. IT and banking played a pivotal role in capping losses and driving the recovery in the benchmark. Broader indices also edged higher, with gains ranging between 0.9 per cent and 1.8 per cent. "On Monday, the market will react to the outcome of state assembly elections in Maharashtra and Jharkhand along with other global triggers including developments in the Russia-Ukraine war," Siddhartha Khemka, Head - Research, Wealth Management, Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd, said.

FPI selling spree continues in November at ₹26,533 crore, intensity of outflow reduces

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Foreign investors have pulled out Rs 26,533 crore from the Indian equity market this month so far owing to increasing allocations to China, concerns over muted corporate earnings and elevated valuation of domestic stocks. While the sell-off continues, the quantum of net outflows has significantly reduced compared to October, when Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPI) withdrew Rs 94,017 crore (USD 11.2 billion) on a net basis. With the latest pull-out, FPI outflows on a net basis are Rs 19,940 crore in 2024 so far. Going ahead, the flows from foreign investors into the Indian equity markets would depend on the policies implemented under Donald Trump's presidency, the prevailing inflation and interest rate dynamics, the trajectory of the geopolitical landscape, and the third-quarter earnings performance of Indian companies, Himanshu Srivastava, Associate Director - Manager Research, Morningstar Investment Research India, said. According to the data, FPIs recorded a net outflow of Rs 26,533 crore so far this month (till November 22). This came following a net withdrawal of Rs 94,017 crore in October, which was the worst monthly outflow. However, in September, foreign investors made a nine-month high investment of Rs 57,724 crore. Concerns over the elevated valuations of Indian equities persist, prompting FPIs to redirect their attention toward



markets offering more attractive valuations, Srivastava said. Additionally, China continues to draw significant foreign inflows at India's expense, bolstered by its compelling valuation levels and the recent announcement of stimulus measures aimed at revitalizing its slowing economy, he said. Furthermore, India's sub-par corporate earnings and elevated inflation figures have raised concerns about potential delays in domestic interest rate cuts, he added. V K Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Financial Services, flagged investors' concerns surrounding FY25 earnings. He added that while the 'Sell India, Buy China' trade is over, 'the Trump trade' also appears to be on its last leg since valuations have reached high levels in the US. In terms of sectors, FPIs have been buying IT stocks while banking stocks have been resilient despite facing selling pressure, mainly due to support from domestic institutional investors. On the other hand, FPIs withdrew Rs 1,110 crore from the debt general limit and invested Rs 872 crore in the debt Voluntary Retention Route (VRR) this month until November 22. So far this year, FPIs invested Rs 1.05 lakh crore in the debt market.

Mobile industry seeks enhanced air cargo handling capacity

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Mobile phone players want Indian airports to ramp up their existing cargo handling capacity to support a projected eight-fold increase in device exports to USD 180 billion by 2030, industry body ICEA said. India Cellular and Electronics Association (ICEA) Chairman Pankaj Mohindroo told PTI that the turnaround time at customs is a major hurdle for the electronics industry which delays shipments' processing further. "In China, while the factory to export take-off from the cargo terminal is achieved on Day 1, in India, the export take off happens only by Day 2. This is a glaring chasm especially when seen in the context of the volume of exports which in the case of China is more than 30 times electronics output (USD 959 billion) compared to India (USD 29 billion) in 2023," Mohindroo said.



"To achieve the USD 500 billion of electronics production by 2030 requires airport capacities to increase parallelly to handle USD 180 bn of exports, the vast majority on an annual basis which would be 6 times higher than the current exports. By 2030, electronics will not only be India's top 2 exports (at the rate of USD 180-200 billion per year), but also significantly larger in terms of air cargo than compared to any other export from India," Mohindroo said. At present 55 per cent of total mobile phone exports from India are handled by Delhi, 30 per cent by Madras Airport and 10 per cent at Bangalore airport. Mohindroo said many airports lack adequate areas for essential cargo operations such as docking, unit load device (ULD) assembly, truck parking, and the smooth loading and unloading of goods. "Electronics products are highly sensitive to heat, water and other weather conditions. Also, they require to be sent with speed to ensure just-in-time production schedules. Thus, dedicated space that takes care of safety, security and ease of transport is critical

for electronics," he said. Mohindroo said that the custom brokers, who are responsible for verifying packages before shipment, often operate in an unstructured and ad-hoc manner which further adds to delays. The Indian government is aiming to set up 50 more airports in the next five years to develop the country's airport ecosystem and help boost job creation. Recently, India's commerce ministry stated that the government is considering measures to provide tax incentives, rationalization of aviation turbine fuel prices, and infrastructure development for handling air cargo. Mohindroo said that the development of some of the airports including Noida International Airport, and greenfield airports in Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra are expected to expedite exports. Apple and Samsung are the top two mobile phone exporters from India. Majority of Apple's iPhones are made in Tamil Nadu while Samsung has one of the world's largest smartphone factories in Noida.

Mcap of 8 of top-10 most-valued domestic firms jumps ₹1.55 lakh crore; HDFC Bank, TCS sparkle

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Eight of the top-10 most valued domestic firms together added Rs 1,55,603.45 crore in market valuation last week, with HDFC Bank and Tata Consultancy Services emerging as the biggest gainers, in tandem with firm trend in equities. Last week, the BSE benchmark zoomed 1,536.8 points, or 1.98 per cent, and the Nifty climbed 374.55 points, or 1.59 per cent. The BSE benchmark Sensex jumped 1,961.32 points, or 2.54 per cent, to settle at 79,117.11 on Friday. The NSE Nifty soared 557.35 points or, 2.39 per cent, to 23,907.25. From the top-10 pack, Reliance Industries and Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) were the laggards.



The market capitalisation (mcap) of Hindustan Unilever climbed Rs 13,239.95 crore to Rs 5,74,569.05 crore and that of ITC zoomed Rs 11,508.91 crore to Rs 5,94,272.93 crore. Bharti Airtel's mcap went up Rs 11,260.11 crore to Rs 8,94,068.84 crore and that of State Bank of India rallied Rs 10,709.55 crore to Rs 7,28,293.62 crore. However, the valuation of LIC declined Rs 11,954.24 crore to Rs 5,62,545.30 crore. The mcap of Reliance Industries dipped Rs 2,368.16 crore to Rs 17,13,130.75 crore. Reliance Industries remained the most valued domestic firm, followed by TCS, HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, Bharti Airtel, Infosys, State Bank of India, ITC, Hindustan Unilever and LIC.

The market valuation of HDFC Bank jumped Rs 40,392.91 crore to Rs 13,34,418.14 crore, the most among the top-10 firms. Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) added Rs 36,036.15 crore to Rs 15,36,149.51 crore in its valuation. The valuation of ICICI Bank soared Rs 16,266.54 crore to Rs 9,01,866.22 crore and that of Infosys surged Rs 16,189.33 crore to Rs 7,90,151.83 crore.



Air India Express increases flight operations from NE destinations

PTI ■ GUWAHATI

Low-cost airline Air India Express has announced an increase in flight operations from three major destinations in the northeast - Guwahati, Agartala and Imphal - as part of its winter schedule. This is part of the airlines' expansion of winter services across the country, it said in a statement here. Air India Express has increased its operations to 106 weekly flights from 63 last winter, from Guwahati. It provides direct connectivity to eight domestic destinations of Agartala, Bengaluru, Chennai, Delhi, Hyderabad, Imphal, Jaipur and Kolkata. The airline also provides one-stop connectivity to 18 domestic destinations and six international destinations from Guwahati. In Imphal, the airline hiked

its weekly flights to 34 this season, an addition of 20 over last winter, the statement said. Since adding Agartala as a station in September 2024, the airline has increased its flights from 14 to 21 weekly, and connects two destinations - Guwahati and Kolkata - directly. It also offers one-stop connectivity from Agartala to 11 domestic destinations. "The expansion not only facilitates easier travel for those wishing to explore North East, but also strengthens Guwahati's role as a vital link with the rest of the country," Chief Commercial Officer (CCO) Ankur Garg said. "With our fleet now exceeding 90 aircraft and rapidly growing, we are well-positioned to support the evolving needs of emerging Indian cities," he added.

India's 26 major listed realty firms sell ₹35,000 crore worth properties in Q2

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's 26 major listed real estate firms have sold properties worth nearly Rs 35,000 crore during the September quarter with Godrej Properties reporting highest sales bookings. According to the data compiled from regulatory filings, the 26 major listed realty firms have reported a combined sales bookings of Rs 34,985 crore in the second quarter of the current fiscal year. Bulk of pre-sales (sales bookings) came from residential segment. In terms of sales bookings, Godrej Properties emerged as the largest listed player during July-September quarter with pre-sales of Rs 5,198 crore. Mumbai-based Macrotech Developers Ltd, which sells properties under the Lodha brand, reported sales bookings of Rs 4,290 crore during the quarter under review. Delhi-NCR-based Max Estates sold properties worth Rs 4,100 crore, while Bengaluru-based Prestige Estates Projects Ltd clocked sales bookings of Rs 4,022.6 crore during the quarter. Delhi-NCR based Signature Global achieved sales bookings of Rs 2,780 crore in the September quarter, driven by strong demand for its housing projects at



Gurugram. DLF Ltd, the country's largest realty firm in terms of market capitalisation, sales bookings declined sharply during the July-September period to Rs 692 crore as it did not launch any new housing project. Among other major listed players, Bengaluru-based Brigade Enterprises Ltd reported a sales bookings of Rs 1,821 crore during July-September period of this fiscal year, while Mumbai-based Oberoi Realty did pre-sales of Rs 1,442.46 crore. Mumbai-based Aditya Birla Real Estate sold properties worth Rs 1,412 crore. Bengaluru-based Puravankara Ltd and Sobha Ltd clocked sales bookings of Rs 1,331 crore and Rs 1,178.5 crore, respectively. Delhi-based TARC Ltd also performed well and achieved pre-sales of Rs 1,012 crore during the September quarter. There were many players that

reported sales between Rs 500 crore and Rs 1,000 crore during the second quarter of this fiscal year. Pune-based Kolte-Patil Developers Ltd sold properties worth Rs 770 crore, while Mumbai-based Keystone Realtors (Rustomjee brand) achieved pre-sales of Rs 700 crore. Delhi-based Ashiana Housing Ltd reported sales bookings of Rs 673 crore during the September quarter while Bengaluru-based Shriram Properties clocked pre-sales of Rs 568 crore. Mumbai-based firms Raymond Ltd and Sunteck Realty Ltd sold properties worth Rs 562 crore and Rs 524 crore, respectively. Among listed firms that booked less than Rs 500 crore, Ahmedabad-based Arvind Smartspaces sold properties worth Rs 464 crore during the July-September period. Mumbai-based Mahindra

Lifespace Developers Ltd achieved a sales bookings of Rs 397 crore. Mumbai-based realtors Arihant Superstructures Ltd, Ajmera Realty & Infrastructure Ltd and Arkade Developers Ltd reported sales bookings of Rs 270.8 crore, Rs 254 crore and Rs 215 crore, respectively. Suraj Estate Developers sold properties worth Rs 107 crore, while Lucknow-based Eldeco Housing & Industries Ltd clocked pre-sales of Rs 102.9 crore. Mumbai-based Equinox India Developments Ltd (earlier Indiabulls Real Estate Ltd) achieved pre-sales of mere Rs 98 crore during the second quarter of this fiscal year. Sales bookings of many listed entities have declined in the second quarter of 2024-25 because of inauspicious Shraadh period, monsoon rain and also lack of regulatory approvals to launch their projects. For example, DLF Ltd's pre-sales plunged to Rs 692 crore in the September quarter from Rs 6,404 crore in the first quarter of this fiscal. Sales bookings data of many listed players was not available on the stock exchanges. Post-Covid pandemic, the residential real estate segment has revived strongly because of pent-up demand growing desire to have homeownership.

National Consumer Helpline to roll out AI-based features, partners with 1,000 firms



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

National Consumer Helpline (NCH) is set to introduce artificial intelligence-based features including speech recognition and multilingual chatbots as part of a major upgrade to its consumer grievance system. The helpline has also announced partnerships with over 1,000 companies to expedite complaint resolution. The new AI capabilities, dubbed NCH 2.0, will allow consumers to file complaints through voice input in their local languages, marking a significant technological transformation of the consumer protection platform that currently operates in 17 languages. The helpline has seen dramatic growth in usage, with monthly calls surging to 141,817 in January 2024 from 141,795 in January 2015. Monthly complaint registrations have tripled to 112,468 in 2024 from 37,062 in 2017. "These technological upgrades are aimed at making the

grievance filing process more seamless, efficient, and inclusive," the Department of Consumer Affairs said in a statement. The partnership programme, known as the Convergence Programme, has expanded to include major companies across sectors such as e-commerce, travel, education, and banking. The number of participating companies has grown nearly fourfold from 263 in 2017 to 1,009 currently. The department has identified several major companies with high grievance numbers, including Delhivery Ltd and Domino's Pizza, and plans to meet with them next week to discuss bringing them into the partnership programme. Consumers can access the helpline through multiple channels including a toll-free number (1915), WhatsApp, SMS, email, and a dedicated mobile app. Unresolved complaints can be escalated to the Consumer Commission under the Consumer Protection Act, 2019.

**AVOCADO POWER BOWL**

Recipe by Chef at World Avocado Organisation

A creamy and nutrient-packed dish to kickstart your day with a burst of energy.
SERVINGS: 2

INGREDIENTS: 1 small ripe avocado, 100g fresh or frozen mango, 1 handful of spinach, 1 small ripe banana, 2 tbsp ground almonds, 125ml milk of your choice (or coconut water)
OPTIONAL: 1 tsp honey (to taste)
TOPPINGS: Sliced kiwi, Flaked almonds, Berries, Pomegranate seeds, Fresh mint leaves
EQUIPMENT: Blender

METHOD:
Add avocado, mango, spinach, banana, ground almonds, and milk to a blender. Blend until smooth. Add honey if desired.
Adjust the consistency by adding more milk or water.
Divide into two bowls and top with sliced fruits, nuts, and fresh mint leaves.
Store leftovers in the fridge or freeze with a squeeze of lemon or lime juice to preserve the color.
PRO TIP: Prepare in larger batches and freeze portions for quick meals during busy mornings!

HEALTHY WINTER RECIPES

Winter is the perfect season to cozy up with nourishing, homemade meals that not only warm you up but also keep you energised. From vibrant power bowls to indulgent yet healthy treats, these recipes are packed with nutrients and flavour. Here are some curated for you!

**PRUNES AND VEGETABLE SOUP**

Recipe by Chef at Chilean Prunes

A comforting and fragrant blend of fruits, vegetables, and spices that's both unique and hearty.

INGREDIENTS FOR SYRUP:
1L water, 120g sugar, 1 red apple peel, 1 lemon and 1 orange (sliced), 1 star anise, 1 clove, 1 vanilla piece, 5cm cinnamon stick, 1 dried prune, 1 dried fig, 1 dried apricot, 10 mint leaves
INGREDIENTS FOR COOKED VEGETABLES AND FRUITS:
100g each of chopped carrots, celery, fennel, apples, pears, pineapple, and violet aubergines
100g each of fresh fruits: orange, banana, kiwi, cherries, apricots, peach, raisins, blueberries, currants, strawberries
GARNISH: Mint, celery leaves, tarragon, rosemary flowers, and flaked white chocolate
PREPARATION:
Prepare syrup by boiling water with sugar, spices, and peels. Let it infuse for 10 minutes, then strain.
Cook vegetables and fruits separately in the syrup until just tender.
Combine all ingredients in a bowl, garnish with red fruits and herbs, and serve warm or chilled.
CHEF'S NOTE: The syrup doubles as a flavourful base for other desserts!

DOUBLE CHOCOLATE PECAN COOKIES

Recipe by Chef at American Pecans

A guilt-free indulgence that combines rich chocolate with the crunch of pecans.

INGREDIENTS:
1/3 cup chopped American pecans, 125g all-purpose flour, 50g caster sugar, 50g brown sugar, 75g soft salted butter, 1/2 tsp vanilla essence, 2 tbsp cold milk, 1/4 tsp baking soda (mixed with flour), 75g dark and milk chocolate (chopped)
METHOD:
Cream butter, sugars, and vanilla until fluffy. Add milk and mix well.
Gradually fold in flour, then stir in pecans and chocolate chunks.
Shape into cookies and bake at 180°C for 15 minutes.
Sprinkle with flaky sea salt (optional) and cool before serving.
TIP: These cookies pair perfectly with a warm cup of spiced tea or coffee!

**WALNUT DALIYA HALWA (WITH JAGGERY)**

Recipe by Chef at Chile Walnut

A traditional dessert with a nutty twist, perfect for winter nights.

INGREDIENTS: 2-3 tbsp ghee, 1/4 cup Chilean walnuts (roasted), 1 cup broken wheat (daliya), 1/2 cup jaggery, 1 1/2 cups water, 1 tsp cardamom powder
METHOD:
Heat ghee in a pan and roast walnuts until fragrant. Set aside.
In the same pan, sauté daliya until golden. Add water and pressure cook for 2 whistles.
Transfer cooked daliya to a pan, add jaggery, and stir until dissolved.
Mix in cardamom powder and roasted walnuts. Simmer until the mixture thickens.
Serve hot, garnished with additional walnuts.
QUICK TIP: Adjust sweetness by altering the jaggery quantity as per your preference.

Enjoy a Winter of Warmth and Wellness! These recipes are designed to provide comfort while nourishing your body. Whether you're looking for a quick breakfast, a unique soup, or a sweet treat, these dishes are sure to brighten up your winter days.

PREVENTIVE POWER FOODS

By KAVITA DEVGAN

If you're aiming to keep your blood sugar levels steady and support heart health, these super foods offer powerful preventive benefits. Incorporate them into your diet consistently for best results.

**CINNAMON**

WHEN TO HAVE IT: Early morning
Cinnamon contains hydroxycinnaldehyde, which helps manage fasting glucose levels. Add a pinch daily to your tea or sprinkle it over your breakfast cereal.
FOR TRYING: Brew cinnamon tea by steeping 1/4 tsp of powdered cinnamon in a cup of boiling water for 10-20 minutes. Drink it early in the day to maximise its benefits.

TURMERIC AND BLACK PEPPER

WHEN TO HAVE IT: Early morning or bedtime
Curcumin in turmeric reduces inflammation, helping to balance blood sugar, while black pepper's vanadium content keeps blood sugar stable.
FOR TRYING: Combine them in curries or make a soothing bedtime haldi-pepper milk.

**BITTER GOURD**

WHEN TO HAVE IT: Anytime during the day
Bitter gourd (karela) has a compound similar to insulin that helps reduce blood sugar levels.
FOR TRYING: Include bitter gourd in your meals twice a week or drink karela juice 3-4 times weekly.

FOR BLOOD SUGAR CONTROL AND HEART HEALTH

**FENUGREEK SEEDS (METHI SEEDS)**

WHEN TO HAVE IT: Early morning
Fenugreek seeds help slow sugar absorption and stimulate insulin production.
FOR TRYING: Add them to dals or soak 1/2 tsp of seeds in water overnight and have in the morning.

**BARLEY**

WHEN TO HAVE IT: Lunch
Rich in soluble fiber, barley slows down digestion, preventing blood glucose spikes.
FOR TRYING: Boil soaked barley and have it for breakfast with walnuts, honey, and a sprinkle of cinnamon.

PUMPKIN SEEDS

WHEN TO HAVE IT: As a mid-meal snack
Pumpkin seeds, high in lignans and magnesium, improve insulin efficiency.
FOR TRYING: Make seedy bites by roasting 50g musk melon seeds in ghee, adding 50g jaggery, and shaping into small balls.

APPLES

WHEN TO HAVE IT: As a mid-meal snack
Apples are rich in quercetin, which enhances insulin secretion and helps reduce insulin resistance.
FOR TRYING: For a quick snack, chop an apple, add 30g pecans and 1 tbsp pumpkin seeds, and sprinkle with cheese.
— The author is a Nutritionist and has used resources from American Pecan

ADDRESSING POLLUTION-RELATED ILLNESSES

By Dr P.N. ARORA

The rising air pollution is taking a toll on people's health, influencing everything from respiratory function to cardiovascular well-being. In urban areas like Delhi-NCR, where rapid urbanisation and population growth have surged, air pollution has emerged as a crucial public health concern. Following Diwali celebrations, Delhi is facing a significant pollution crisis, with a recent survey indicating that 69% of families in the capital and the National Capital Region (NCR) report health issues stemming from deteriorating air quality. The Air Quality Index (AQI) surged to a staggering 999 on the night of Diwali, marking one of the highest levels recorded in the area. These conditions are particularly pronounced during winters when a combination of vehicular emissions, construction dust, and seasonal crop stubble burning create a toxic haze that blankets the city. This persistent state of poor air quality poses an urgent challenge, demanding immediate attention to mitigate its far-reaching health implications. A recent survey by LocalCircles highlighted the significant health impact of air pollution on residents in Delhi-NCR. The findings revealed that 31% of families reported members suffering from breathing difficulties or asthma, while another 31% experienced frequent headaches. Additionally, 23% of respondents noted symptoms of anxiety or difficulty concentrating, and 15% reported trouble sleeping due to poor air quality. On a somewhat optimistic note, 31% of



families stated that no one in their household had encountered pollution-related health issues, underscoring the varied effects of air pollution across different households. Prolonged exposure to poor air quality has far-reaching consequences for public health, affecting multiple body systems and leading to a surge in pollution-related illnesses. One of the most immediate and visible impacts of poor air quality is on respiratory health. Long-term exposure can lead to reduced lung function and increased respiratory infection risk. Pollution caused due to poor air quality also leads to inflammation and oxidative stress, increasing the risk of heart attacks, hypertension, and other cardiovascular diseases. Besides, certain groups are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of air pollution. Children, with their developing lungs and immune systems, are at a heightened risk, as prolonged

exposure can lead to stunted lung growth and a higher likelihood of respiratory diseases later in life. Older adults also face significant risks, with their age-related susceptibility making them more prone to respiratory and cardiovascular issues. Additionally, individuals with pre-existing asthma and heart diseases experience more severe health impacts, often requiring increased medical attention during high-pollution periods.

The government has also implemented several initiatives to combat poor air quality with a multifaceted approach. One of the initiatives is the imposition of GRAP, which outlines a series of measures to be enacted based on the severity of the air quality index. This plan includes a range of actions, such as controlling construction activities, enforcing vehicle restrictions, and promoting the use of public transport during periods of high pollution. Therefore, improving air quality requires collective action from both communities and individuals. Community initiatives, such as tree plantation drives, are vital in enhancing air quality. Trees act as natural air filters, absorbing pollutants and releasing oxygen. Engaging in proper waste disposal practices, including segregating waste and avoiding open burning of garbage, helps prevent the release of harmful toxins into the air. Thus, collaboration and commitment across all sectors are vital for achieving lasting improvements in air quality and safeguarding public health.

— The author is the Managing Director of Yashoda Super Speciality Hospitals



Rishabh Pant becomes most expensive IPL buy at ₹27 crore

PTI ■ JEDDAH (SAUDI ARABIA)

Rishabh Pant became the most expensive player in the history of IPL as Lucknow Super Giants splurged a humongous Rs 27 crore to buy the flamboyant India keeper-batter in the tournament's mega auction here on Sunday. The amount LSG spent for Pant ensured Shreyas Iyer's record of being the tournament's costliest player lasted barely a few minutes after Punjab Kings broke the bank to buy the India batter for Rs 26.75 crore. Moments before Pant emerged as the most expensive player, Iyer surpassed the record held by Australian pacer Mitchell Starc, who was bought by Kolkata Knight Riders for Rs 24.75 crore in the last auction. Pant went to LSG after his former franchise Delhi Capitals did not use the Right to Match card to buy him back. Starc got a much lower price this time and was sold to Delhi Capitals for Rs 11.75 crore,



while England's Jos Buttler went to Gujarat Titans for Rs 15.75 crore. Among others, left-arm seamer Arshdeep Singh's consistency earned him a massive bid of Rs 18 crore, also from Punjab Kings via the Right to Match card, while South African speedster Kagiso Rabada was bought for Rs 10.75 crore by Gujarat Titans. Iyer, the former Kolkata Knight Riders captain, started with a base price of Rs two crore. Delhi Capitals had the bid at Rs 26 crore for him but PBKS raised the amount to get the player. Chennai Super Kings started with the first bid for Arshdeep, whose base price was also Rs two crore. Eventually, after an intense bidding war, the seamer was bought back by Punjab, who exercised the right to match option to complete the deal, having released him earlier. This is the second time an IPL auction is being held outside the country after last year's event in Dubai.



I played with fearless mindset, took brave decisions: Yashasvi

PTI ■ PERTH

Yashasvi Jaiswal termed his "fearless mindset" and ability to take "brave decisions" as the catalysts behind his exceptional hundred against Australia in the ongoing first Test, here on Sunday. Jaiswal made a 161 in only his second innings on Australian soil and added 201 runs for the opening wicket with KL Rahul (77) to lay the foundation of India's imposing 533-run target. "It was a very special moment for me. I always wanted to tour Australia and do well and this knock is very important for me," Jaiswal said in the post-day press meet. "I always wanted to play with a fearless mindset. I always believe in myself and take brave decisions. So, it was an amazing experience to play against such quality bowlers in their country, and it's special to score a hundred against the world's best," he added. Jaiswal, who was dismissed for an eight-ball duck in the first innings, said the focus was on negating the new ball spell by Australian quicks. "The wicket was seaming a bit more in the first innings. In the second innings we were discussing how to play the new ball better — which balls to leave and which to play. So, it was important for the team that I play the new ball better," Jaiswal said he had set small targets for himself in the second essay. "I never thought I would get this big a hundred, as my goals were small, taking it session by session. Then I had a good partnership with (KL) Rahul bhai. He was guiding me during the partnership, so that was helpful." So, what was the conversation between him and Rahul during the alliance?

"We have been playing together for a while, we all know each other well and talk between ourselves in the dressing room. "Whenever I felt nervous in the middle, Rahul bhai was telling me to remain focused and calm. It was helpful because you are going to get some good balls in these kinds of pitches," he said. The left-hander said the team was prepared to tackle the bounce at Perth. "We knew that the ball would bounce here. We were prepared for the bounce. We had a nice camp here ahead of this Test. We were practicing in similar conditions with the same kind of mindset as how we can score runs in these conditions. It's all about practicing hard and learning what shots to play here," he explained. Jaiswal brought up his fourth Test hundred with a remarkable ramped six off pacer Josh Hazlewood. The 22-year-old said he was mentally prepared for it. "To be honest, I knew he was going to bowl a bouncer because the field was set like that and I was ready for the bounce, and I was ready to play that shot. Happy that I pulled it off and carried on for some more time," he said. "Virat paaji is incredible" Virat Kohli brought up his 30th Test hundred a while after Jaiswal reached the landmark, and the youngster said it was a privilege to watch and play alongside the star batter. "I have seen Virat paaji making runs at Perth (in 2018) on TV. Now, I have seen it live too. He has been doing it for a long, long time. So, he is just incredible. "We were so happy for him that he could finish it. We were all waiting for his 100. He played amazingly," he said.

Justin Greaves scores first century as West Indies lead Bangladesh by 410 runs



AP ■ NORTH SOUND

Justin Greaves scored a patient maiden century in only his third test before West Indies declared at 450-9 on the second day of the first test against Bangladesh. Greaves, who finished 115 not out, had a previous highest score in tests of 33 and only one century in 43 first-class matches before compiling a composed hundred from 181 balls, batting at No. 6. He completed the first century of West Indies' innings after Mikyle Louis was out for 97 and Alick Athanaze for 90 on the first day. Bangladesh was 40-2 at stumps, trailing by 410 runs when bad light stopped play with seven overs left in the day. Shahadat Hossain was 10 not out and Mominul Haque on 7. The tourists lost Mahmudul Hasan Joy (5) and Zakir Hasan (15) in 20 overs before the close.

West Indies resumed Saturday at 250-5 after being sent in when Bangladesh won the toss. They were 261-7, the match closely balanced, when Greaves was joined by Kemar Roach, batting at nine. The pair put on 140 for the eighth wicket to fully turn the match in West Indies' favor. Roach made a painstaking 47 from 144 balls, following the example of Greaves whose innings of 206 deliveries included 128 dot balls. "Me and Justin are from the same country and he understands my batting ability so he just backed me in the situation and obviously it paid off," Roach said. "We're good mates, we have very good conversations at the cricket and outside cricket so that's what helped us in the middle." The 30-year-old Greaves, playing his first test for 10 months, hit only four fours, including the boundary that

brought up his century. Otherwise, he took 52 runs from singles, 38 from twos and nine from threes in an excellent example of running between wickets. His batting form had been hinted at by the fact he scored four centuries in domestic one-day matches in West Indies. "It was a fantastic effort," Roach said. "He's one who wants to learn... I've had big hopes for him from the time he started." Roach also restrained his attacking instinct, hitting two boundaries and scoring at a strike rate of 32.6 as he played a vital support role to Greaves. When Roach came to the crease, Greaves was only 18 after resuming Saturday at 11 not out. The pair came together in the 87th over after Alzarri Joseph (4) was brilliantly caught in the gully by Zakir Hasan from the bowling of Hasan Mahmud. They built their partnership diligently, ticking off milestones. Greaves reached his half century from 88 balls and by lunch the West Indies had recovered to 336-7, scoring at a steady three runs per over. Brief rain breaks failed to disturb the batters' concentration. Roach finally was out in the 134th over when the total was 401-8. Mahmud delivered a ball outside off stump which beat Roach's shot as it curled back to hit middle. Greaves was 98 when Roach was out but kept his concentration and avoided the fate of Louis and Athanaze who both fell just short of maiden centuries. He reached his personal milestone four balls later, raising his bat to acknowledge the applause of the crowd.

Hyderabad FC host Odisha FC

PTI ■ HYDERABAD

Hyderabad FC will play hosts to Odisha FC in the Indian Super League here on Monday as both sides seek to climb up the ladder to strengthen their positions in their respective first matches after the international break. After a tough campaign last year, Hyderabad FC have shown increasingly encouraging signs by securing two victories and a draw in their seven matches thus far. Their seven points place them at the 11th spot and with the sixth-placed Punjab FC merely five points ahead (12), the home team can begin thinking towards bridging the gap with the higher-ranked opponents. Odisha FC, positioned ninth in the table, have nine points from eight games. Head coach Sergio Lobera has been amongst the most competitive tacticians in the competition regardless of the team that he has been at the helm of, and the Spaniard would hence want better



results with consistent performances from the juggernauts. This away fixture gives them the opportunity to begin maximising points in the matches coming their way. Hyderabad FC believe in making early inroads into the opposition's defence, ensuring that they set the tone for the flow of the proceedings. This has resulted in them netting 43 per cent of their goals in the opening 15 minutes of the matches in ISL 2024-25, with three out of their seven strikes so far coming in this phase of the game.

Will they push Odisha FC back with an early breakthrough here too? Interestingly though, Hyderabad FC play their best away from home. That explains their concerning home form, since they have not registered a victory in the previous 15 matches in their backyard. In fact, their last win at the stadium came back in February 2023 against Mohun Bagan Super Giant by a 1-0 margin. Having worked on their impediments this year, can they brush aside this concern to go on an upward surge? Odisha FC have recorded eight sequences of 10+ open play passes per game in ISL 2024-25. This is the highest such average by any team and it clearly suggests that Hyderabad will have to strategise through which they can secure points despite not having possession for a large chunk of the game, since Odisha FC prefer keeping the ball.

Verstappen captures 4th F1 championship

AP ■ LAS VEGAS

Max Verstappen cruised to a fourth consecutive Formula 1 championship by finishing fifth in the Las Vegas Grand Prix. Verstappen needed only to finish ahead of Lando Norris of McLaren to give Red Bull a fourth straight driver championship. The Dutchman started fifth but was already up to second by the 10th lap around the street circuit that includes the famed Las Vegas Strip on Saturday night. Norris, who had to score at least three points more than Verstappen to extend the championship fight, finished sixth. Verstappen needed only to finish higher than Norris to win the title, which he did with two races remaining on the season.

"Max Verstappen you are a four-time world champion," team principal Christian Horner said on the radio. "That is a phenomenal, phenomenal achievement. You can be incredibly proud of yourself as we are." Verstappen, only the sixth driver in F1 history to win at least four titles, sounded unusually emotional on the radio. "Oh My God, what a season. Four times. Thank you, thank you guys," he said. "We gave it all." The race was won, meanwhile, by George Russell who was followed by Lewis Hamilton in the first 1-2 sweep for the Mercedes drivers since 2022. Hamilton came from 10th on the grid — two weeks after a demoralizing race in Brazil — to capture his podium finish.



The duo crossed the finish line under a checkered flag waved by actor Sylvester Stallone. Carlos Sainz Jr. Finished third for Ferrari as the constructor championship remains a tight battle between leader McLaren and Ferrari. Charles Leclerc, his teammate, was

fourth. Red Bull had won the title that pays roughly \$150 million in prize money the last two seasons but has slipped to third in the standings. But that championship battle appears headed to next month's season finale in Abu Dhabi. Verstappen, meanwhile, made easy work of Norris after a season where the McLaren driver pushed him harder than he'd been challenged since Verstappen's 2021 first title. He was cruising in third with about 20 laps remaining and not overly pushing when Red Bull urged Verstappen to be patient over the team radio. "Max, just don't lose sight of our aim today, yeah?" he was told. Verstappen wasn't interested in receiving any instructions.

Virat Kohli doesn't have anything to prove, his contribution is unparalleled: Kapil Dev

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Legendary Kapil Dev said Virat Kohli doesn't have anything to prove and his contribution is "unparalleled" after the Indian batting star made his 30th Test hundred against Australia in the ongoing first Test at Perth on Sunday. Kohli (100 not out) joined young gun Yashasvi Jaiswal (161) in rewriting record books as they put Australia to swords on the third day of the Test with their respective tons powering India to a huge 533-run lead. Kohli also surpassed batting legend Sachin Tendulkar (6) for hitting most centuries by an Indian batter with his seventh ton Down Under. "People who have to criticise will

criticise. If a big player takes a lot of time to bounce back, (the) media's job is (to do) that," Kapil told PTI at the Vishwa Samudra Golden Eagle Golf Championship. "One has to see his ability and talent. He's a big, big player. He doesn't have to prove anybody, prove me or prove (it to) the media." "What he's done for cricket is amazing. We should all say, well done (to him). (Even) if he doesn't get too many runs, it's (also) okay. But what he's given to cricket is unparalleled," Kapil added. Kapil said he was happy to see the mix of young and senior Indian batters making their mark. "I don't like to compare. I just want to see our youngsters coming out and playing well. The new records are (always) going to be made.



(But) it's important (for) the youngsters to come out and take the responsibility, represent the country and perform better," he said. "Don't compare any player with anybody. It's unfair, (they play in) different conditions, different era.

Today's youth are far more intelligent. They are much more ruthless and they have much more confidence," he said, referring to Jaiswal. The 1983 World Cup-winning captain said Indian cricket "is in the right place" as new players like Harshit Rana and Nitish Reddy have also made a good beginning. "I just want to say it's great to see the youngsters coming out and expressing themselves. It's good, Indian cricket is (in) the right place," he said. Kapil also praised Jasprit Bumrah for leading India's fight from the front in the Perth Test and said the visitors have so far performed beyond expectations. Bumrah, the stand-in captain for the Perth Test, led the team's charge towards a vital 46-run lead

in the first innings returning 5 for 30, as Australia were bowled out for a mere 104. Bumrah's 11th five-for in Test cricket was also his seventh in SENA (South Africa, England, New Zealand and Australia), which put him at par with Kapil for most five-wicket hauls in these nations. "Special congratulations must be given to Bumrah because it is very rare that bowlers are chosen as captains and it feels very good to see him lead the way he has done," Kapil told the media. Kapil lauded Bumrah for bringing fast bowling back into the discussions in the country. "I need not say anything — his records show (how good he is). He is the top bowler in the world, what else do we need?" he said.

"I hadn't thought before that a fast bowler would be discussed so much in India but that is happening today and I feel happy and proud about that," he added. Kapil said India's performance was contrary to the expectations given the team was recently trounced 0-3 by New Zealand at home. "The team is playing really well. They should win the first Test, positive thinking should always be there," he said. "It wasn't expected that the team would play so well after the New Zealand series. You feel angry when they play badly but also (rediscover the) love when they do well," he said. "It (the praise) is for all, it is a team game. One player has done the job today for the team and tomorrow there would be someone else."

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