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INSIDE

SPORTS

SINNER AND ALCARAZ HEADLINE THE ATP FINALS WITH DJOKOVIC OUT



Delhi Police fails yet another rape victim in the Capital

SAUMYA SHUKLA ■ NEW DELHI

Evoking horrific memories of the 2012 Nirbhaya gangrape case, and the 2002 Maulana Azad Medical College student rape case that shook the Nation, three men allegedly gangraped a 34-year-old researcher and social worker at midnight on October 10, near Rajghat in the heart of the National Capital. The police arrested the third accused on November 4, the first two had been arrested on November 2 and October

30. When asked about why the police kept the matter under wraps for about a month, Deputy Commissioner of Police (southeast) Ravi Kumar Singh said that "the issue was sensitive amid the ongoing festival season. When the accused were caught, we shared the details to the public." According to police sources, the sexual assault took place in a deserted area near the ITO metro station, and again in an autorickshaw near Rajghat. The victim who hailed from Odisha was

CASES THAT HAUNT

SWAROOP NAGAR RAPE CASE (2023)

A nine-year-old girl was abducted, raped and then strangled to death by her 52-year-old landlord, who dumped her body in a canal in outer Delhi's Swaroop Nagar on December 12, 2023. He was later arrested by the police.

HAUZ KHAS VILLAGE RAPE CASE (2017)

In February 2017, a woman was raped by an acquaintance she had met at a party in the upscale Hauz Khas Village in Delhi. After the party, the accused offered her a ride home but instead took her to a secluded location and assaulted her. The accused was later arrested.

CHHAWLA GANG RAPE AND MURDER (2012)

A 19-year-old woman from Uttarakhnad was kidnapped, gang-raped, tortured, and murdered in Delhi's Chhawla area. She was abducted while returning home from work and found three days later with severe injuries. She had been brutally tortured, and her body was discarded in a field. In 2014, the Delhi High Court sentenced three men to death for the crime. However, the Supreme Court later acquitted them.

NIRBHAYA GANG RAPE (2012)

A 23-year-old physiotherapy intern was brutally raped and assaulted on a moving bus by six men, including a juvenile, on the night of December 16, 2012, which shook the entire nation. The attack

left her with severe internal injuries, and she succumbed to her injuries on December 29, 2012. All the accused were arrested and charged with sexual assault and murder.

KHOONI DARWAZA RAPE CASE (2002)

The victim, a fourth-year student of the Maulana Azad Medical College (MAMC), was raped at knife point on the terrace of the Mughal monument 'Khooni Darwaza' in central Delhi on November 15, 2002. The trial court had awarded Rahul and Amit life imprisonment and acquitted two other accused, Ashok, of the charge of harbouring the accused, and Mohan Lal, of the charge of dishonestly receiving stolen property from the accused.

eventually left bleeding on the road. According to police, the victim had travelled to Delhi from Odisha on May 9, reportedly without informing her family who had filed a missing person's report in Puri. Police said the woman holds a postgraduate degree in social work from Utkal University of Culture, Bhubaneswar, has been a research fellow, and has over eight years of work experience in the social sector. The DCP said that a PCR call at 3.15 am on October

11 about a woman, wearing a red kurta, bleeding profusely from her wounds near Sarai Kale Khan. She was spotted by a Naval officer who was passing by. "At 3:15 am, the officer made a PCR call to the Sunlight Colony police station where he expressed concern that the girl might have been injured or subjected to wrongful assault. The police rushed her to AIIMS Trauma Centre where she disclosed that she was raped by three unknown men," he said.

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National counter-terrorism policy soon: HM

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Thursday said the Government will soon bring a national counter-terrorism policy and strategy to fight terrorism, terrorists and their ecosystem. Addressing an anti-terrorism conference here, Shah also said that while law and order is a state subject and states have the geographical boundaries and constitutional limitations, terrorism doesn't and hence all security agencies - Central and States - must work in close coordination, chalk out joint strategies and share intelligence. He said the Government has come up with a vision on model anti-terrorism squad (ATS) and model special task force (STF) for the States and Union Territories, which, if adopted, will work as a



common structure and platform to deal with the menace of terrorism. "We need to work together to fight terrorism, terrorists and their ecosystem. And that's why, we will soon bring a new national counter-terrorism policy and strategy in which you all will play a key role," he said at the conference, which was attended by chiefs of State police forces and other top

security officials of states and the Centre. The Home Minister said the new policy will help states and central agencies to work in close coordination to deal with terrorism. On the model ATS and STF, he said the standard operating procedures (SOPs) are being shared with the states and they can be tweaked according to their respective requirements. Shah said to

make India developed by 2047 as envisioned by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, everyone has to deal with all security challenges and have a unified terror-fighting ecosystem. "This (adopting model ATS and STF) doesn't reduce the rights of States," he said. The Home Minister said the Modi Government is committed to eradicating terrorism in the country and moving forward with a solid strategy against it. Security forces have to well equip young officers and use technology to combat terrorism, he said. Highlighting the achievements of the Modi Government against terrorism since 2014, during which terror incidents have come down by 70 per cent in comparison to the previous decade, Shah said now the shelf life of terrorists has decreased from two years to a few days.

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Get ready to pay double penalty for stubble burning

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Amid worsening air quality in Delhi and neighbouring areas, the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) has updated air quality management rules on Thursday, doubling the penalty amount for stubble burning, effective immediately, under which farmers are required to pay an environmental compensation on the size of their land holdings. A notification to this effect came after the Supreme Court pulled up the government for 'toothless environmental laws' to curb Delhi's deteriorating air quality every winter. Under the new rules, farmers with less than two acres of land will face a fine of Rs 5,000. Those with between



two and five acres will be fined Rs 10,000, while farmers with more than five acres of land will be penalised Rs 30,000 for engaging in stubble burning. The revised rules come into effect immediately. Meanwhile, farmers' leaders from Punjab have strongly condemned the Centre's move of raising fines for

stubble burning and asked why the government was not providing crop residue management machinery to them to check farm fires. Reacting to the union government's move, farmers' unions pointed out that farmers never want to set the crop residue on fire but they are forced to do so for want of required machinery. They also asked why farmers were always being "targeted" for pollution, and asked the government about action taken against the industry for polluting the environment. Bharti Kisan Union (Ekta Ugrahan) general secretary Sukhdev Singh Kokrikalan slammed the Centre for its "anti-farmer" move of increasing fine on farmers. "We strongly condemn this decision," Kokrikalan said.

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Terrorists kill two Village Defence men

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Two members of the Village Defence Group (VDG) were reportedly shot dead by terrorists in the upper reaches of Kishtwar on Thursday. The bodies of two VDG members have not been recovered by the police till late evening. According to police, the slain VDG members have been identified as Nazir Ahmed S/O Mohd Khalil and Kuldeep Kumar S/O Amar Chand both residents of Ohli Kuntwara. Unconfirmed reports claimed both the VDG members were kidnapped during the day and their dead bodies, with marks of bullet injuries, were found in the evening. A lesser-known terrorist outfit Kashmir Tigers has also claimed responsibility for the attack while releasing images in social media.

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Summer breaks rechristened 'partial court working days': SC

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has rechristened its traditional summer vacations as "partial court working days". The change assumes significance in the wake of the recent criticism from various quarters that the top court enjoys long breaks. The development was a part of an amendment in Supreme Court Rules, 2013, which have now become Supreme Court (Second Amendment) Rules, 2024, notified on November 5. "The length of the partial court working days and the number of holidays for the court and the offices of the court shall be such as may be fixed by the Chief Justice and notified in the official gazette so as not to exceed ninety-five days excluding Sundays," read the notification. It further stated that the Chief Justice may appoint one or more judges to hear during partial court working days or holidays, all admissions, after notice, regular matters of urgent nature or such other matters "as the Chief Justice may direct".



The existing system had the Supreme Court taking the summer and winter breaks each year. The SC, however, was not fully closed during these periods. During summers, "vacation benches" were set up by the Chief Justice to hear important and urgent matters. Notably, the term "vacation judge" has now been replaced with "judge" in the newly-amended rules. According to the recently-published 2025 Supreme Court calendar, partial court working days would start

from May 26, 2025 and end on July 14, 2025. Chief Justice DY Chandrachud had asserted that judges remained dedicated to their work even during vacations. "Judges are not gallivanting or goofing off during vacations. They are deeply committed to their work, even on weekends, often attending functions, visiting high courts, or engaging in legal-aid work," he had remarked at an event. In May, a top court bench of Justices B R Gavai and Sandeep Mehta said people criticising the apex court over long vacations did not understand that judges didn't have holidays even on weekends. The SC's view was prompted by Solicitor General Tushar Mehta sharing a similar sentiment. "All those who criticise that Supreme Court and high courts are on long vacations, they don't know how judges work," Mehta said when the court was hearing a lawsuit filed by the West Bengal government accusing the CBI of going ahead with its probe without securing the prerequisite state nod.

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CHHATH PUJA BLESSINGS



Devotees during Chhath Puja festival, at the Ganga Ghat in Patna, Thursday

As left-out BJP legislators along with the Leader of the opposition Sunil Sharma stood their ground in the house the speaker decided to adjourn the house without transacting any business. After a brief pause when the house was reconvened, it again witnessed acrimonious scenes. The speaker again adjourned the house till tomorrow.

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Who ate my samosa? CID probe ordered

PTI ■ SHIMLA

Samosas and cakes meant for Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu were served to his security staff instead, the goof-up snowballing into controversy and necessitating a Criminal Investigation Department (CID) probe that termed it an "anti-government" act. Those responsible acted according to their own agenda, a highly placed official in the CID said in his note on the October 21 incident when the chief minister was visiting the CID headquarters. The brouhaha started when three boxes of the refreshments were brought from Hotel Radisson Blu in Lakkar Bazaar to be served to the chief

minister who had gone to the CID headquarters to attend a function. However, the eatables were served to the CM security staff, according to the enquiry report conducted by a deputy SP rank officer. The report stated that an officer of IG rank had asked a sub-inspector (SI) of police to get some eatables from the hotel for the CM's visit. The SI in turn directed an assistant SI (ASI) and a head constable to bring the refreshments. The ASI and head constable exchanged several hands in the process. Interestingly, a highly placed official in the CID department wrote in his noting that all persons named in the enquiry report have acted in anti-CID and anti-government manner due to which the items could not be served to the VVIPs. They acted according to their own agenda, the note added.

chief minister, they said they were not included in the menu. The enquiry report said only the said SI, who deputed the ASI and the head constable with the task of getting the snacks from the hotel, was aware of the fact that the three boxes were for Sukhu. The lady inspector, to whom the food items were handed over, did not ask any senior officer and sent the refreshments to the mechanical transport (MT) section which deals with refreshments. The three boxes of refreshments exchanged several hands in the process. Interestingly, a highly placed official in the CID department wrote in his noting that all persons named in the enquiry report have acted in anti-CID and anti-government manner due to which the items could not be served to the VVIPs. They acted according to their own agenda, the note added.

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■ NEW DELHI

In an impressive feat of efficiency during the ensuing festive season of Chhath, Indian Railways this week recorded a historic milestone by transporting more than three crore passengers on one single day - November 4, 2024 - which adds up to more than the population of Australia and New Zealand. The passengers were transported from various regions of the country like Delhi, Mumbai, Surat, Bengaluru, Chennai and maximum number were bound to destinations in Bihar and Jharkhand where the Chhath festival is celebrated with great fervor and spirit. "Three crore passengers boarded railways which is more than the population of Australian and New Zealand combined. A total of 120.72 lakh (19.43 lakh reserved and 101.29 unreserved non-suburban) passengers were carried in November 2024. The 180 lakh suburban traffic tackled by Indian Railways is the



highest record-breaking day for Indian Railways or could be a world record which will be verified in due course," a Railway spokesperson told The Pioneer. Approximately 7.5 Crore passengers were carried by national transporter to Bihar, Eastern Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand during the festive period, Durga Puja, Diwali, Chhath,

beginning October 1 to November 5 through special trains. Railways had to put in service a record 7666 special passenger train services to clear the rush during this period. In the same period last year 4,429 trips were operated. "This is 73 per cent more than last year," the spokesperson added. To cater to the returning passengers,

the Railways has scheduled a substantial number of special trains, ensuring smooth travel for the thousands of people returning from festive destinations. From November 8 to November 11, 2024, the Indian Railways will run special trains to manage the Chhath Puja return rush. The official said anticipating a similar rush for return journeys since Friday onwards a meeting was held at the Railway Board to channelise the process for safe and sure return and onwards journeys for which two railway divisions in Bihar, Samastipur and Danapur, have been asked to spruce up the arrangements. "Enhanced crowd management by putting in additional staff, security personnel, and volunteers deployed at stations to manage the large crowds and maintain order to avoid any Mumbai type mishaps on the platform. Special control rooms have been set up to monitor train punctuality, track delays, and ensure seamless coordination between stations and divisions," added the railway official.

After protests, BJP leader withdraws slur on Sharad

T N RAGHUNATHA ■
MUMBAI

After vociferous protests and severe flak from various quarters, a chastened BJP MLC Sadabhau Khot on Thursday expressed regret and withdrew his scurrilous remarks against NCP (SP) chief Sharad Pawar. Khot's regret came a day after he spoke about Pawar's illness and surgeries that the latter had undergone in the past, in the presence of deputy chief minister Devendra Fadnavis at an election rally. "Sharad Pawar says he wants to change the face of Maharashtra... Does he want to make Maharashtra look like his own face?", Khot had asked, while speaking at an election rally. Khot's remarks against Sr Pawar had triggered public uproar so much so that NCP (SP) supporters staged protests against Khot and BJP in Pune and other places,



demanding an unconditional apology from him. Coming down heavily on Khot for his remarks against the NCP (SP) chief, Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Sanjay Raut dubbed the BJP MLC as a 'poodle of Fadnavis'. "The people of Maharashtra are watching everything and will teach the BJP an appropriate lesson for the insults heaped on a senior leader like Sharad Pawar whom even Prime Minister Narendra Modi considers a 'mentor',"

Raut said. Taking serious exception to Khot's statement, State NCP chief Jayant Patil said that the BJP MLC's remarks reflected the 'crooked mentality' of the BJP-MahaYuti leaders. Not to be undone, even NCP (AP) chief and deputy chief minister Ajit Pawar - whose party is a constituent in the ruling MahaYuti - condemned Khot's remarks against the NCP (SP) chief which "were not in line with Maharashtra's culture".

Ajitdada, as Ajit Pawar is known in the state political circles, called up Khot and gave his peace of mind. He warned Khot to be careful about the choice of his words and not to indulge in "below-the-belt" criticism against anyone.. "We have been taught by Maharashtra's first chief minister late Y B Chavan not to use uncivilised language against political rivals. You may make allegations and counter-allegations, but not indulge in personal attack like Khot has done. I told him that his remarks are unacceptable and it is wrong to make such personal attacks against a senior leader like Pawarsaheb," Ajitdada said.

Later, talking to media persons, an embarrassed Khot said: "I regret having made such remarks. I am withdrawing my remarks, and this will never happen again in future".

RG Kar: Doctors expected more from SC, CBI

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The Bengal junior doctors fighting for justice in the Kolkata lady doctor rape and murder case betrayed dejection following Supreme Court's refusal on Thursday to transfer the trial out of Bengal as also the regular long gaps between hearings. "We had hope on the judiciary... we still repose faith in it as we have nowhere else to go but the question is how long Abhaya (as the victim has been pseudo named) and her family and the citizens, particularly the women of Bengal will wait to get justice if delivery of justice gets delayed... justice delayed is justice denied," said one of the junior doctors even as one of their leaders Doctor Kinjal Nanda once again gave out a call for citizens' march on November 9. Another doctor said, "we being doctors ourselves have an idea of what is rape and what is gang rape... putting all the evidences together and the fact how the evidences were tampered... the CBI should have been more comprehensive... we don't say it



is not efficient... we expected stronger directions from the Courts if there was any doubt of the Agency being pulled from behind from doing its duty." Incidentally the prime accused Sanjoy Roy had earlier told the media for the first time that he was being framed and that the State Police department had forced him to keep silent. "I have been forced and threatened into silence by the Department... this Government is falsely framing me... I have not committed rape or murder," he had told the media a couple of days ago from inside

the prison van. Earlier after going through the status report of investigation submitted by the Central Bureau of Investigation the Supreme Court directed the central agency to carry on its work and submit the seventh status report after four weeks. During the hearing the Apex Court turned down the plea made by a senior counsel to transfer the case out of Bengal. While the advocate submitted that charges had already been framed and trial started with Sanjoy Roy as the prime and only accused of rape and murder the Bench headed by Chief Justice D Y

Chandrachud said the trial court had sufficient powers to order another investigation upon feeling it necessary after examining the evidence. A postgraduate lady doctor of RG Kar Medical College and Hospital in Kolkata had in the small hours of August 9 been brutally raped and murdered triggering a nationwide stir and worldwide condemnation of how a woman was victimized thus inside her work place. Though the CBI which has been investigating the case following a Calcutta High Court order had arrested several other persons including Sandip Ghosh the former Principal of the RGMCH and an officer in-charge besides another doctor and a security guard those arrests had been made on ancillary charges and not the main case. This, where as medical experts and former police and CBI bosses --- like Upen Biswas who cracked the Bihar animal husbandry case --- repeatedly demanded a wider investigation taking into view the facts of tampering of evidences.

Poll manifesto: Shiv Sena (UBT) promises to scrap Dharavi redevelopment, Barsu refinery projects

T N RAGHUNATHA ■
MUMBAI

In a development that has put the BJP-led ruling MahaYuti in a spot of bother, the Opposition Shiv Sena (UBT) on Thursday

promised to scrap two major projects -- the Dharavi redevelopment project in Mumbai and Barsu super-refinery project in Ratnagiri district, if the Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) come to power in the

state. Making an announcement to this effect at a function organised to release his party's manifesto, Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray said: "We will scrap the existing tender for the Dharavi redevelopment project

in Mumbai. We will also scrap the super-refinery project at Barsu". The scrapping of Dharavi and Barsu are two of the promises made in the manifesto of the Shiv Shiv Sena(UBT). "We will

give houses to Dharavikars in Dharavi and they would also be able to do business there," Uddhav said. The other promises made in the Sena (UBT)'s manifesto include free education for male stu-

dents, stabilising prices of essential items, construction of temples of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj in each of the 36 districts of the state and scrapping of cluster development of Koliwad and Gaothans.

The release of the manifesto a day after the Congress released its five Assembly poll guarantees to the people of the state, at a joint rally of the Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA).

Apart from its welfare measures, the Shiv Sena (UBT) has laid emphasis on the scrapping of Dharavi redevelopment project in Mumbai and Barsu super-refinery project in Ratnagiri district.

National counter-terrorism policy soon: HM

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He said due to the joint efforts of State and Central Governments, violence has been controlled to a great extent in Jammu and Kashmir, Naxal-affected areas and the northeastern states in the last 10 years. Shah asked representatives of the state police forces at the conference, most of whom are DGP-rank officers, to invoke the anti-terrorism law Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) wherever required. The Home Minister said the Central government's anti-terrorism probe agency National Investigation Agency (NIA)

utilises UAPA in all terror cases and as a result so far out of 632 cases registered by it, charge sheet has been filed in 498 cases, conviction in almost 95 per cent. He asked the police chiefs of the States to establish a synergy down to the level of police stations and set up a strong ecosystem against terrorism. Shah said a 25-point integrated plan has been prepared to stop the funding of terrorism, including Jihadi terror and Left Wing Extremism. He said the scope of Multi Agency Centre (MAC), an intelligence gathering mechanism, was expanded, and SOPs were created under it to monitor

cyber security, narco terror and emerging radical hotspots, which has led to success in preventing many crimes before they happen. Shah said he has given medals to 11 NIA officers for their hard work and successes and it is just a small recognition of their extraordinary contribution in the fight against terror. "Their contribution and dedication is much bigger and more inspiring than this medal." The two-day anti-terror conference, which began here on Thursday, is expected to further enhance coordination among agencies to strengthen India's security bastion.

Summer breaks rechristened 'partial court working days': SC

From page 1

"People who criticise, don't understand that we don't have holidays on Saturdays and Sundays. There are other assignments, conferences," remarked Justice Gavai. The long summer breaks in the SC were a part of the colonial era. During the British rule, judges who were unable to handle the summer heat would sail back to England or mountains, only to return during the Monsoon.

Shah Rukh Khan gets death threat

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
MUMBAI/RAIPUR

Bollywood actor Shah Rukh Khan has received a death threat, and a demand for Rs 50 lakh, Mumbai police said on Thursday, adding an extortion case has been filed in this connection. The Mumbai police have summoned a lawyer from Raipur as the threat call was made from a phone number registered in his name, a senior police official from the Chhattisgarh capital said. The lawyer told the police that he lost his phone last week

and had filed a police complaint, the official said. The threat to Shah Rukh Khan follows a series of threats issued to fellow actor Salman Khan, allegedly from the Lawrence Bishnoi gang. "Bandra police station received a call threatening Shah Rukh Khan and asking for Rs 50 lakh. An offence has been registered. No arrest has been made yet," a senior police official said. A case has been registered by the Bandra police under sections 308(4) (extortion involving threats of death or serious injury) and 351(3)(4) (criminal intimidation) of



Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) against the caller who threatened Shah Rukh Khan, the official said. Police teams have been dispatched to various places for further investigation, he said. While there was no confirmation from Mumbai

police on reports that the call was made from Chhattisgarh, a Raipur police official said their counterparts from the Maharashtra capital on Thursday served a notice to a man from the city in connection with it. As part of their investigation into the threat to Shah Rukh Khan, Mumbai police visited Raipur and summoned a man, identified as Faizan Khan, who lives within the limits of Pandri police station here, Raipur Senior Superintendent of Police Santosh Singh told PTI. Police had earlier identified the man as Faiyaz Khan.

Environment ministry doubles stubble...

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The ministry notified the Commission for Air Quality Management in the National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas (Imposition, Collection and Utilisation of Environmental Compensation for Stubble Burning) Amendment Rules, 2024, for doubling of environmental compensation imposed against stubble burning. The amended rules were notified under the Commission for Air Quality Management in the National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas Act, 2021, and will come into effect immediately, without a draft being placed in the public domain for public consultation. As many as 12,514 burning events were detected in the six states between September 15 and November 6, according to the satellite data monitored by the Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI). Majority of cases were reported from Punjab (5041), followed by Haryana (888), Uttar Pradesh (1544), Delhi (12), Rajasthan (1332) and Madhya Pradesh (3697). However, the number of fire counts in Punjab have dropped significantly from 19,463 reported last year to 5,041 this year.

and Imposition of Penalty) Rules, 2024. It laid down the process of filing complaints with pollution control boards, the Commission for Air Quality Management, and offices of the Union environment ministry. It also laid out the process of holding an inquiry on complaints against environmental pollution and that of adjudicating such complaints. Stubble burning also contributes to it, along with rising levels of emissions from vehicles, industries and waste-burning in and around the National Capital. The government has been urging farmers to shift to more sustainable ways of managing the stubble, which has also significantly brought down the number of fire counts over the years. According to a Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) analysis, the city experiences peak pollution from November 1 to 15 when the number of stubble-burning incidents in Punjab and Haryana increases. Major factors behind stubble burning include the paddy-wheat cropping system, cultivation of long-duration paddy varieties, mechanised harvesting that leaves standing crop stubble in the field, labour scarcity, and the lack of a viable market for crop residue. Studies estimate that during peak burning periods, farm fires contribute up to 30 per cent of PM levels in the Delhi-NCR region and surrounding areas. However, according to senior environmentalist Sunita Narain, the episodic burning of crop residue by farmers in winter is not the primary concern for poor air quality in Delhi-NCR. Instead, the persistent and major sources of pollution within the city, including transport and industries, are more worrisome.

Two Village Defence men shot...

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The VDG members act as force multipliers in the far-flung areas of the Jammu region assisting ground forces during search operations and maintaining a tight vigil in and around their villages. For a long time, they were complaining about the lack of sophisticated weapons and recently the government fulfilled their demand by providing them with the latest weapons. The government of India had decided to provide the latest weapons to Village Defence Guards in the form of SLR. Earlier the VDG had .303 guns, but now they are equipped with modern SLRs.

Another gangrape in the National Capital

From page 1

The victim is a dedicated researcher, facilitator, and community leader, the police disclosed. "She holds a Master's degree in Social Work from Utkal University of Culture, Bhubaneswar, she has actively contributed to various developmental organisations. She also worked as a Research Fellow at Kalinga Network for Living with HIV/AIDS, Community Leader at Women Power for Sanitation Awareness, and Counsellor at One Stop Centre, Puri in Odisha," the police said. The DCP said, "On October 10, the accused, 32-year-old Parmod alias babu, who is an alcohol addict closed his shop as per his usual routine and got drunk. He noticed a girl sitting nearby. Shortly after, another accused, 29-

year-old Mohammad Shamsul who is a physically handicapped beggar, and also an alcoholic arrived at the scene. Both accused persons conspired to sexually assault the girl, assuming she was 'mentally unsound' and an easy target." The accused first raped the girl by forcibly dragging the girl to a deserted area near the ITO metro station. While they were committing the heinous crime, a 28-year-old auto driver Prabhu Mahto witnessed the incident and joined them. He forced the girl in his auto (bearing registration number DL 1 RAA 9327) and raped her near Rajghat. After the incident, the accused dumped the victim on the secluded ring road from where she walked in a semi-nude state to Sarai Kale Khan.

Nearly a month after she was brutally raped, the victim is still undergoing treatment at All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Delhi. After her initial statement, the victim could not cooperate further with the investigation or hospital staff due to her fragile mental condition. "As she was not able to share vital clues, thus during the operation, special permission was taken from the management staff of AIIMS Trauma Centre, and a woman officer Sangeeta took cover as a social worker, while a native Odia woman took cover as a nurse and they were assigned to take care of the victim to try to build trust and gather crucial information from her," the DCP said. He said that Sangeeta won over her trust and was able to

get some important details from the victim, the involvement of an unknown autorickshaw driver who allegedly dumped her after the rape and two other persons, one of who had a physical handicap. "The victim was unable to reveal other crucial details regarding the time and place of the incident due to her mental health challenges and trauma from the incident," he said. With the limited details, a total of 10 police teams were formed and more than 700 CCTV cameras were reviewed along with the verification of more than 150 suspected auto-rickshaws through the combinations of visible and non-visible digits. "On October 30, police arrested Prabhu Mahto, and subsequently, Pramod Babu and Mohammad Shamsul

were also identified and arrested on November 2 and November 4, respectively," the officer said. A missing person report was registered by her parents on June 9 at Kumbharpada police station in Puri. After she came to the city, she was residing with one of her acquaintances. "However, during her stay, the victim began to exhibit 'abnormal behaviour'. On being intimidated by the friend, staff of Kishangarh police station informed the victim's family. However, she denied going back to Odisha with her family and also ended her temporary stay. Thereafter, she took temporary shelter at public places like bus stops, railway stations and foot over bridges and severed all contact with her family," a police officer said.

Ruckus continues in J and K Assembly

From page 1

The Assembly on Wednesday passed a resolution asking the Centre to work out a Constitutional mechanism for restoring special status to Jammu and Kashmir that was revoked on August 5, 2019. The resolution was hailed by Valley-based political parties while it prompted protests by the main opposition BJP which demanded its rollback. Reacting to the developments in the house, the BJP said it was "unfortunate" that the ruling National Conference has "compromised the integrity" of the assembly, and made a "joke" of democracy by bringing a resolution that questions a decision of the country's Parliament. "This is a fraud, a drama that has been attempted with the people of J-K," BJP MLA from Ramnagar, RS Pathania, told reporters after the Assembly was adjourned for the day following an uproar over the special status resolution.

"Article 370 is history now. The Supreme Court has said that there is nothing like special status. It is as simple as that. This assembly which is a statute under the Reorganisation Act cannot question Parliament and the Supreme Court. There is no question of that," he said. Pathania said the resolution, which was passed through a voice vote by the assembly on Wednesday, was "a piece of paper, a piece of scrap," and "even if a peon or a clerk receives it, he will throw it into the dustbin." Interacting with the media outside the Assembly hall, a Leader of the Opposition, Sunil Sharma, also blamed the Speaker for "allowing" Sheikh Khurshed into the well of the House with a banner. "An MLA was allowed with a banner. Is there any such precedence in this House? The speaker and the assembly staff allowed him. He (the Speaker) turned on the microphones of the treasury benches to show

that he was the speaker of the NC and not of the House. The House was turned into a fish market," Sunil Sharma said. When asked if the BJP members had stood at the tables of the assembly, the LoP said the opposition members had no choice as they were not allowed to speak. "LoP was standing and his microphone was turned off. Our MLAs were marshalled out, so what option do we have?" he said. "I challenge Chief Minister Omar Abdullah to show the article under which the NC is demanding special status for J-K," Sunil Sharma said, adding the article says it is a temporary provision till the Indian Constitution is fully implemented in J-K. "There is nothing called special status. Special status is (National Conference founder) Sheikh Abdullah's Constitution which is there in the Gupkar house of (NC president) Farooq Abdullah in which it is written that Kashmiri Pandits be thrown

out from here and killed," he said. "What has happened on August 5, 2019, is now history. Special status cannot be repeated (restored) now," the LoP added. Referring to the conduct of the deputy chief minister Surinder Choudhary and minister Satish Sharma - both of whom are from Jammu, BJP MLA RS Pathania said, "There are some Jaichands from Jammu, but they have been exposed now." "People have understood what they did. They have kneeled before the pro-Pakistan and pro-separatist narrative. This narrative is a fraud and there is no legal or constitutional basis of that narrative. This narrative has resulted in the killings of security forces personnel and civilians," the MLA said. Referring to the brawl that took place in the assembly between the BJP MLAs and the marshals, BJP MLA Sham Lal Sharma said the blame lies with Speaker

Abdul Rahim Rather. "The members do not have the right to bring such posters inside the assembly. We wanted to know how the speaker allowed that. Where was the security check? The situation in J-K is such today that if there is any doubt on any member, then he should be searched, he can bring anything inside. "It started from there, so the fault lies with the Speaker. The banner should have been snatched away from him. He should have been marshalled out like the members of the BJP were," he said. The BJP MLA from Chenani, Balwant Singh Mankotia, while referring to the fresh resolution moved by PDP, Peoples' Conference and others, said this is "emotional blackmail" of the people. "We will not allow the people of J-K to be befooled. We will not allow the NC, Congress and Kashmir-centric parties to emotionally blackmail the people," he said.

Meanwhile, Jammu and Kashmir Assembly Speaker Abdul Rahim Rather on Thursday rejected the BJP demand for either rolling back the special status resolution passed by the House or stepping down, and said if the party does not have faith in him it should bring a no-confidence motion. He also rebuked the party for its "cheap sloganeering" and said he cannot tolerate members entering into the Well of the House and stomping over the national emblem placed on the Assembly Secretary's chair. "They (BJP) are asking the Speaker to take back the resolution. The Speaker does not have the powers. Anything passed by the House can only be undone by the House itself. Speakers cannot do it. The Speaker has limited powers in these issues... he has to preside, count and give decisions based on the facts before him," Rather said.

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Birsa Munda Jayanti to be observed as Gaurav Diwas

STAFF REPORTER ■
RAIPUR

Chhattisgarh is going to organize a 'Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas' on November 14 and 15 to commemorate the birth anniversary of the legendary tribal personality Birsa Munda.

An official communiqué on Thursday said this year marks the 150th birth anniversary of Munda, which will be observed with grandeur across the state. A programme will be held at the Science College premises.

The Principal Secretary of Tribal Affairs, Sonmoni Borah, on Thursday took a virtual meeting and instructed officials regarding the preparations.

This programme will be organised under the leadership of



Tribal Welfare Minister Ramvichar Netam.

The communiqué said the tribals have a glorious history and many eminent freedom fighters were born in the community.

"The tradition of fighting for the nation has existed within this community since time immemorial. Brave warriors like Shaheed Veer Narayan Singh, Gainsingh, and Gundadhar made supreme sacrifices for the nation," it said.

The motive of the programme was to safeguard the interests of tribals, the communiqué said, adding that tribal culture was deeply spiritual, embodying a harmonious coexistence with nature.

"The valour of Birsa Munda continues to inspire courage in the lives of many. He envisioned a society free from exploitation," it said.

Chhattisgarh man summoned over death threat to Shahrukh

STAFF REPORTER ■
RAIPUR

Mumbai Police have summoned a lawyer from Raipur after a death threat and a ransom of Rs 50 lakh was made to Bollywood star Shah Rukh Khan, the police said on Thursday.

Raipur-based lawyer Faizan Khan of Pandri area has been summoned, Raipur Senior Superintendent of Police Santosh Singh said.

As per preliminary information, the threat call to the actor was made from a phone number registered in the name of Khan.

Khan has been asked to appear for questioning at the Bandra police station in Mumbai.

A Mumbai police team arrived in Raipur and informed officials about the case following which Khan



was called for questioning.

Khan told the Chhattisgarh Police that he had lost his phone last week and had lodged a complaint with the police here.

A case has been registered for extortion involving threats of death or serious injury and criminal intimidation against the person who threatened Shahrukh Khan.

Woman Maoist with Rs 1L bounty surrenders

STAFF REPORTER ■
SUKMA

A woman Maoist carrying a reward of Rs 1 lakh surrendered to security forces in Sukma district of Chhattisgarh, police said on Thursday.

Padam Some (29) turned herself in on Wednesday, Sukma Superintendent of Police Kiran Chavan said.

She was the Janatana Sarkar head under the Singhanmadgu unit of the outlawed Maoist outfit.

She was involved in



several instances of Maoist violence in Maraiguda, Kistaram and Chintagufa areas in the district.

Chhattisgarh's first BSL-3 virology lab to come up at AIIMS-R

STAFF REPORTER ■
RAIPUR

The All India Institute of Medical Sciences - Raipur (AIIMS-R) marked a significant achievement in public health as Bhoomi Poojan was performed on Thursday for setting up Chhattisgarh's first Bio-Safety Level-3 (BSL-3) Virology Lab.

The lab has been sanctioned by the Indian Council of Medical Research



(ICMR).

The event was led by Lt. Gen. Ashok Jindal (Retd.), Executive Director and CEO of AIIMS Raipur who emphasized the lab's crucial role in advancing virus research and diagnostics in the state.

The lab, operated by the Department of Microbiology, will support advanced research on viruses.

Dr. Anudita Bhargava, head of the department, highlighted its potential in

the development of antiviral drugs. Lab in-charge Dr. Sanjay Negi mentioned the importance of conducting virus studies in a safe environment.

The project is being implemented by HLL Lifecare Ltd, an Indian government enterprise.

This facility reflects AIIMS-R's commitment to advancing healthcare research and strengthening the region's capacity to combat viral threats.

How air pollution is contributing to cancers in India

AGENCIES ■

Increased exposure to carcinogens in the air is increasing the incidence of cancers of the lungs, bladder, breast, prostate, and blood, said health experts on National Cancer Awareness Day on Thursday.

National Cancer Awareness Day is observed on November 7 every year in India to raise awareness about the growing cancer burden in the country and inspire action towards prevention, early detection, and treatment.

India is home to over 1.4 billion people. Lifestyle changes, tobacco use, poor dietary habits, and inadequate physical activity are leading to a rapid surge in cancer cases.

About 800,000 new cancer cases are expected each year, with tobacco-related cancers accounting for as much as 35-50 per cent of all cancers in men and 17 per cent in women, According to estimates from the Health Ministry.

"Cancer rates are rising in India and have seen an upward trend in annual incidence rate. Currently, India records more than 14 lakh new cancer patients every year, and close to 9 lakh people die of it annually," Dr. Abhishek Shankar, Assistant Professor, Department of Radiation Oncology, Dr BR Ambedkar Institute Rotary Cancer Hospital at AIIMS, Delhi, told IANS.

He attributed this rise to an increase in the "use of tobacco, alcohol, infections like HPV, Hepatitis virus and Helicobacter pylori, lifestyle changes, environmental factors, poor diets, and sedentary lifestyles".

While lifestyle factors play a major role, environmental changes -- particularly rising air pollution -- are also significant.

"India's high levels of air pollution, especially PM2.5 exposure, are linked to rising lung cancer rates, including cases in non-smokers. Water and soil contamination from industrial pollutants increase risks for various cancers, impacting communities in industrial areas," Shankar said.

The air quality in Delhi-NCR remained



alarmingly poor on Thursday. As per the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), the average Air Quality Index (AQI) in the city was recorded at 362.

There is also substantial evidence from studies of humans and experimental animals as well as mechanistic evidence to support a causal link between outdoor (ambient) air pollution, especially PM 2.5 in outdoor air, with lung cancer and breast cancer incidence and mortality.

"It has a risk for other cancer types, such as bladder cancer, prostate cancer, leukaemia (blood cancer) but in limited numbers. Outdoor air pollution may also be associated with poorer cancer survival, although further research is needed," Shankar said.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has classified outdoor air pollution as a Group 1 carcinogen, meaning there is sufficient evidence to conclude that it causes cancer in humans.

Air pollution in India is primarily caused by

emissions from vehicles, industrial activities, and burning of biomass.

Dr Sajjan Rajpurohit, Senior Director - Medical Oncology, Max Super Speciality Hospital, told IANS that these pollutants contain carcinogenic substances such as benzene, formaldehyde, and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs). Prolonged exposure to these substances can lead to cellular mutations and the development of cancer.

"Particulate Matter (PM2.5) is also one of the most harmful components of air pollution. The tiny particles can penetrate deep into the lungs and enter the bloodstream," Rajpurohit said.

The health expert noted that children, the elderly, and individuals with pre-existing health conditions are particularly vulnerable to the effects of air pollution. Their increased susceptibility can lead to higher cancer rates in these groups, exacerbating the public health crisis.

Shankar called for a healthy lifestyle, including a balanced diet, regular exercise, and avoiding tobacco and alcohol along with reducing PM-2.5 exposure.

Dr. Sachin Trivedi, Director-Medical Oncology, HCG Cancer Center, also stressed the need for early detection for better treatment outcomes.

He called for "regular screenings for breast, lung, colorectal, and oral cancers to help effectively manage cancer".



Chhath Pooja: Devotees offering Arghya to Sun God at Chhuiya Talab in Chhattisgarh's capital Raipur on Thursday. **Pioneer Photo**

GGV gets position in QS World Varsity Rankings

STAFF REPORTER ■
BILASPUR

Chhattisgarh's Guru Ghasidas Vishwavidyalaya (GGV), Bilaspur, a Central university, has been included in the prestigious QS World University Rankings for Asia in the 801-850 band.

Additionally, the university has secured the 263rd position in the QS World University Rankings for South Asia's 'New Entrants' category for 2025.

A communiqué from the university said the achievement was the result of three years of positive efforts and initiatives under the guidance of Vice-Chancellor



Alok Kumar Chakrawal.

This was the first time the university took part in the QS World University Rankings.

Expressing his joy, Chakrawal thanked the entire university family for their exceptional support.

"My priorities after assuming office was securing

a NAAC A++ grade and helping the university gain national and international recognition through university rankings," he said. Chakrawal said the QS rankings was a significant achievement for both the university and for Chhattisgarh.

बैंक ऑफ बड़ोदा **Bank of Baroda** **Regional Office, Jeevan Prakash.L.I.C. Building, Pandri, Raipur (C.G.)**
PH: 0771- 4222611, 4222612, E-mail: recovery.raipur@bankofbaroda.com

(Publication in the Newspapers in case of return/failure of service of 60 day's Notice U/s.13 (2) of SARFAESI Act, 2002).

The Authorized Officer, Bank of Baroda had issued 60 day's Notices to under mentioned borrowers / Guarantors U/s.13(2) of Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act,2002 by Registered A/D/speed post. But these Notices were returned by the Postal authorities due to the reason of refusal to take delivery/wrong address/person left the place/city. These borrowers/guarantors have given their under mentioned movable/immovable assets by way of hypothecation / mortgage as security to secure the various credit limits granted by the Bank to the borrower(s). Due to non-payment of Bank's dues and non-fulfillment of terms and conditions of the loan, default has been committed by the borrower (s) / guarantor (s) in payment of bank loan and interest and the loan account has become NPA as per RBI guidelines. In view of the above, a 60 days Public Notice is given to the following borrower(s)/guarantor(s) to pay the bank dues as stated below alongwith interest till payment failing which the bank will be constrained to enforce its security interest without intervention of Court or Tribunal by taking recourse to one or more of the measures under Chapter - III of the Act. The borrower/guarantors are also directed by this Notice that in terms of Section 13(13) of the Act they shall not transfer by way of sale/lease or otherwise (other than in ordinary course of business) any of the secured assets charged to the bank without prior consent of the bank. The details of borrower/guarantors and secured assets is as follows, against whom the bank will start initiating action after 60 days in the event of non-payment of banks' dues by them.

Sl No.	Name of the Bank Branch & Phone No.	Name of the Borrower & address	Outstanding Amount as per Demand Notice	Details of Secured assets (NPA Date:08.10.2024) (Notice Date:09.10.2024)
01	Avanti Vihar Branch Raipur 9752410719	MR. PUSHPENDRA PRATAP SINGH & MRS. RANU SINGH H NO. W E 235 NEAR PATWARI OFFICE, BHATAGAON, RAIPUR, C.G. - 492001	Rs. 8,36,345.00 + Unapplied interest + other charges	Land & building situated at Plot No. - 5, Block No. F, Sai Ram City Colony situated at Khasra No. - 1062/4, 1063/2, 1078/4, 1062/1, 1078/1, 1062/2, 1078/2, 1066, 1067, Total Area - 915 sqft, PH No. : 81/02, Vill. : Pacheda, RIC Mandir Hasaud, Tehsil Arang, Dist. - Raipur, C.G. in the name of Mrs. Ranu Singh W/o Mr. Pushpendra Pratap Singh. Boundary - North : Plot No. 6, South : Plot No. 4, East : Plot No. 16, West : Road.

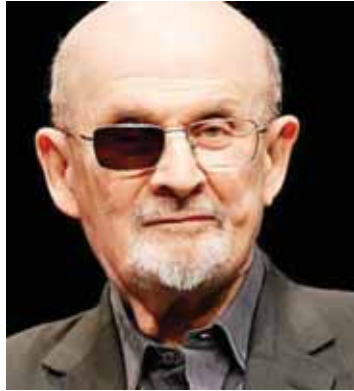
Date:08.11.2024, Place:Raipur, Chhattisgarh Authorized Officer, Bank of Baroda

DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL, JABALPUR
797-II, Shantikunj, South Civil Lines, Jabalpur (M.P.) 482001
 Form.No.4
 [See Regulation-15 (1) (b)]
NOTICE UNDER SECTION 17 OF SECURITIZATION ACT/RW PROVISIONS OF THE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL ACT AND THE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL (PROCEDURE) RULES, 1993 AS AMENDED FROM TIME TO TIME
Securitisation Application No.1090/2024
In the matter of : Applicants Under Pre-chandani
Versus
 Cholamandalam Investment And Finance Company Ltd. : Respondents
To,
 2. Shri Kanhaiya Premchandani Son Of Under Prechandani H.No. 1-18, Street No-4 Avani Vihar Mova Dalal Seoni Raipur (C.G.) 492001
 3. Smt. Riya Premchandani Wife Of Kanhaiya Premchandani H.No. L-18, Street No-4 Avani Vihar Mova Dalal Seoni Raipur (C.G.) 492001
 4. Shri Yogesh Premchandani Son of Under Prechandani H.No. L-18, Street No-4 Avani Vihar Mova Dalal Seoni Raipur (C.G.) 492001
 5. M/s Apex Ns, Indra Gandhi Market Vyvaysayik Parisar, Shop No. C-18, Raipur C.G. 492001
 Through its Proprietor
 An application under Section 17(1) of the Securitization & Reconstruction of Financial Assets & Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 has been filed before this Tribunal (A copy of application is enclosed).
 Show cause as to why the relief prayed for should not be granted. You are required to file reply, if any, in your defence in the paper book form in two complete sets and produce all the documents and affidavits in your support in the Tribunal personally or through your duly authorized agent or legal practitioner and appear before this Tribunal on 12th day of November, 2024 at 10.30 A.M. failing which the application shall be heard and decided in your absence. You are further directed to supply advance copy of the reply to the SA to the Counsel for the Applicants.
 Given under my hand and the seal of this Tribunal on this 7th day of November, 2024.
Registrar
Debts Recovery Tribunal
Jabalpur

Delhi HC closes plea against ban on Rushdie's The Satanic Verses

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has closed the proceedings on a petition challenging the Rajiv Gandhi government's decision in 1998 to ban the import of Salman Rushdie's controversial novel, *The Satanic Verses*, after authorities failed to produce the relevant notification. The court noted it has to be presumed that such a notification does not exist. In an order passed on November 5, a bench headed by Justice Rekha Palli observed that the petition, which was pending since 2019, was therefore infructuous and the petitioner would be entitled to take all actions in respect of the book as available in law. The Centre banned the import of the Booker Prize-winning author's *The Satanic Verses* for law-and-order reasons in 1988, after Muslims across the world



viewed it as blasphemous. Petitioner Sandipan Khan had argued in court that he was unable to import the book on account of a notification issued by the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs on October 5, 1988, banning its import into the country in accordance with the Customs Act, but the same was neither available on any official

website nor with any of the authorities concerned. "What emerges is that none of the respondents could produce the said notification dated 05.10.1988 with which the petitioner is purportedly aggrieved and, in fact, the purported author of the said notification has also shown his helplessness in producing a copy of the said notification during the pendency of the

present writ petition since its filing way back in 2019," the bench, also comprising Justice Saurabh Banerjee, observed. "In the light of the aforesaid circumstances, we have no other option except to presume that no such notification exists, and therefore, we cannot examine the validity thereof and dispose of the writ petition as infructuous," it concluded. Besides assailing the ban notification, the petitioner had sought to set aside other related directions issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs in 1988. The petitioner had also sought directions to enable him to import the book from its publisher or international e-commerce websites. During the course of the proceedings in the court, authorities had said the notification was untraceable, and therefore, could not be produced.

CPCB rejects Lancet study linking air pollution to 33,000 deaths in India

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) opposed the findings of a Lancet study in the National Green Tribunal (NGT), which claimed poor air quality had severely affected mortality rates in 10 major Indian cities. Claiming the study's data may not be "absolute," the CPCB said the deaths couldn't be attributed to pollution alone and that the satellite data and modelling techniques used for extrapolations in it may not necessarily represent the "realistic Indian scenario". The NGT had taken suo motu cognisance of a newspaper report quoting the study, which stated approximately 33,000 annual deaths were linked to air pollution levels that exceeded the World Health Organisation guidelines. The study examined the cities of Delhi, Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Chennai, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Mumbai, Pune, Shimla, and Varanasi.



In its reply dated November 4, the CPCB said the study analysed the daily average Particulate Matter (PM) 2.5 concentrations at one square kilometre spatial resolution across the country between 2008 and 2020. It also used mortality records from each municipal corporation in the 10 cities. "The study concludes that short-term PM2.5 exposure was associated with a high risk of death in India, even at concentrations below the current Indian PM2.5 standard. These associations were stronger for locally generated air pollutants.

However, the study has limitations," claimed the CPCB report. According to the pollution control board, the "variability in the strength of death registration systems across different states and cities" and the analyses of "cause-specific mortality" as "the international classification of disease codes" was not done by the authors for most cities. "In the absence of cause of death data, several extrapolations of data take place. Therefore, the deaths cannot be attributed to air pollution alone and thereby may not portray a correct

comparison," it claimed. Regarding the adverse health impact of PM2.5 and other pollutants, the CPCB report said air pollution was one of the factors affecting respiratory ailments and associated diseases. It said an individual's health was also influenced by several factors, including food habits, occupational habits, socio-economic status, medical history, immunity and heredity. "Ground monitors-based data and satellite study-based data have been used for PM2.5 measurements using a generalised model. Satellite data and modelling techniques used for extrapolations may not necessarily represent the realistic Indian scenario and that such an analysis may not be absolute," it added. The CPCB said cities exceeding the national ambient air quality standards for PM10 concentrations for five consecutive years had been designated as non-attainment cities.

SC: No change in Government recruitment rules, after process starts

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Bringing transparency in Government recruitments, the Supreme Court (SC) on Thursday held that rules of the game for appointment in Government jobs cannot be changed midway unless the procedure permits so. A five-judge Constitution Bench headed by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud said recruitment process commences from the issuance of advertisement calling for applications and ends with filing up of vacancies. "Eligibility criteria for being placed in the select list notified at the commencement of the recruitment process can't be changed midway through the recruitment process unless the extant rules so permit or the advertisement which is not contrary to the extant rules so permit," the bench said. The bench, also comprising Justices Hrishikesh Roy, P S Narasimha, Pankaj Mishra and Manoj Misra, unanimously held if change of criteria is permissible



under the extant rules or advertisement, it would have to meet the requirement of Article 14 (right to equality) of the Constitution and satisfy the test of non-arbitrariness. "Recruiting bodies subject to the extant rules may devise appropriate procedure for bringing the recruitment process to its logical end provided the procedure so adopted is transparent, non-discriminatory, non-arbitrary and has a rationale nexus to the object sought to be achieved," Justice Misra said while pronouncing the verdict. The bench said that extant rules having statutory force are binding on the recruiting bodies both in terms of procedure and eligibility.

"Placement in the select list gives no indefeasible right to appointment. The state or its instrumentality for bona fide reason may choose not to fill up the vacancy," it said. However, the bench clarified if vacancies exist, the State or its instrumentality cannot arbitrarily deny appointment to persons who are in the zone of consideration in the select list. The top court said that if the extant rules or the advertisement provides for setting of benchmarks for different stages of recruitment process and if any such benchmark is set, the same should be stipulated before the commencement of the recruitment process. "But if the extant rules or the advertisement inviting application empowers the competent authority to set benchmarks at different stages of the recruitment process, then such benchmarks may be set anytime before that stage is reached so that neither the candidates nor the valuator/examiner/interviewer is taken by surprise," the bench said.

SC refuses to transfer Kolkata rape-murder case trial outside West Bengal

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday refused to transfer the rape and murder trial pertaining to a doctor in Kolkata outside West Bengal. A bench headed by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud said the trial court judge had sufficient powers to order another investigation upon feeling it necessary after examining the evidence. The top court also examined the sixth status report filed by the CBI in relation to the case of rape and murder at Kolkata's RG Kar Medical College and Hospital, but refrained from making observations saying the probe was underway. The apex court noted that a Kolkata court had framed charges against prime accused, Sanjay Roy, on November 4 and a day-to-day trial in the case would start November 11 onwards. During the hearing, the National Task Force (NTF), formed to create a protocol over the safety of health professionals, submitted its

report in the apex court. The top court directed the NTF's report to be shared with all states and union territories and posted the hearing after four weeks. The top court on October 15 questioned the West Bengal government over the hiring of civic volunteers in the state and sought data on their recruitment and appointment process. On August 22, the SC pulled up the Kolkata police over the delay in registering the case of unnatural death of the deceased, calling it "extremely disturbing" while frowning upon the sequence of events and the timing of its procedural formalities. The top court had constituted a 10-member NTF to formulate a protocol for ensuring the safety and security of doctors and other healthcare professionals. Terming the incident as "horrific," the SC court had censured the state government over the alleged delay in filing of the FIR and allowing a crowd of thousands to vandalise the state-run facility.

840 tonne onions arrive in Guwahati via rail for distribution in Northeast

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre on Thursday said 840 tonnes of onions have arrived by rail rake in Guwahati to boost availability of the key kitchen item in northeastern states. In an official statement, the Department of Consumer Affairs said it "maintains tempo of bulk disposal as a shipment of 840 tonnes onion by rail rake arrived at Changsari Station in Guwahati on November 5, 2024". Onion is being distributed by the NCCF (National Cooperative Consumers' Federation) in various districts of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and other northeastern states. "This will ensure wider availability of onions in north-eastern states ensuring its availability at a very reasonable price to consumers," the statement said. Bulk transportation of onions from Nashik to major destinations like Delhi, Chennai and Guwahati by rail rake has been adopted for the



first time this year for a more cost-effective and efficient disposal. On October 18, 1,600 tonnes of onion was dispatched from Nashik by Kanda Express and arrived at Kishanganj Station in Delhi on October 20, 2024. That apart, on October 23, 840 tonnes of onion had been dispatched from Nashik by rail rake, which arrived at Chennai on October 26, 2024. A shipment of 840 tonnes of onion by rail rake to Delhi arrived on October 30, 2024. Another rail rake of 840 tonnes was dispatched on October 30, 2024, to Guwahati for disposal in Assam and other northeastern states.

"Bulk disposal of onions in major mandis has helped in augmenting availability and in bringing down the prices," the department said. The government had procured 4.7 lakh tonnes of rabi onion for the price stabilisation buffer this year, and started releasing from September 5, 2024, through retail sales at Rs 35 per kg and also through bulk sales in the country. To date, over 1.50 lakh tonnes of onion in the buffer has been dispatched from Nashik and other source centres through trucks by road transport and rail.

International climate funding increases, but billions more needed for adaptation, says UN

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

International public finance to help developing countries adapt to climate change increased from USD 22 billion in 2021 to USD 28 billion in 2022, but there remains a huge gap between what is needed and what is being delivered, according to a new UN report. At the UN climate conference in Glasgow in 2021, developed nations were urged to at least double their adaptation funding for developing countries from about USD 19 billion in 2019 by 2025. The UN climate summit in Dubai in December 2023 repeated this call, asking developed countries to report progress in 2024.



The "Adaptation Gap Report 2024: Come Hell and High Water" from the United Nations Environment Programme on Thursday said even achieving the Glasgow Climate Pact goal would only reduce the adaptation finance gap, estimated at USD 187-359 billion per year, by around 5 per cent. Earlier in the day, European climate change agency

Copernicus said it is almost certain that 2024 will be the warmest year on record and the first with an average temperature at least 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, following the second-warmest October in history. UNEP's Emissions Gap Report, released last month, said the world is on course for a catastrophic temperature rise of 2.6-3.1 degrees Celsius this century without immediate and major cuts to greenhouse gas emissions. "Global average temperature rise is still below 1.5 degrees Celsius, yet climate change is already hitting communities across the world hard, particularly the most poor and vulnerable. And it will get much worse... So, it is for good

reason that UNEP's Adaptation Gap Report 2024 calls on nations to dramatically increase efforts to adapt to climate change, starting with a commitment to act ambitiously on adaptation finance at COP 29," UNEP's Executive Director Inger Andersen said. She said the enormous gap between adaptation finance needs and flows means that the world is failing to adapt to current impacts - with adaptation planning slowing and implementation falling behind. According to the report, 171 countries now have at least one national adaptation policy, strategy, or plan in place. Of these, 51 per cent have a second, and 20 per cent have a third.

SC restores DRI officers' powers to issue show-cause notices under Customs Act to recover dues

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In a significant decision impacting customs enforcement across the country, the Supreme Court held on Thursday that officers of the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) have the authority to seek recovery of duties on goods already cleared for import by the customs department. Allowing a review plea of the customs department, a bench comprising Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and Justices J B Pardiwala and Manoj Misra overturned the apex court's 2021 ruling, penned by the then CJI S A Bobde, that DRI officers are not "proper officers" for issuing notices

under section 28 of the Customs Act, 1962. Writing a 162-page judgment for the bench, Justice Pardiwala upheld the authority of DRI officers to issue show-cause notices and recover duties under the Act. The verdict came as a boost to the customs department, which has several proceedings related to duty dues pending. "Subject to the observations made in this judgment, the officers of the DRI, Commissionerates of Customs (Preventive), Directorate General of Central Excise Intelligence and Commissionerates of Central Excise and other similarly-situated officers are proper officers for the

purposes of section 28, and are competent to issue show-cause notices thereunder," the bench held. "The petition seeking a review of (the) Canon India (judgment) is allowed for the following reasons... In other words, the judgment in Canon India was rendered without looking into the circular and notification, therefore seriously affecting the correctness of the same. The decision in Canon India failed to look into the statutory scheme," it said. The court also issued specific instructions to streamline the handling of the pending cases challenging show-cause notices issued by DRI officers. "Where the show-cause notices issued under section

28 of the Act have been challenged before the high courts directly by way of a writ petition, the respective high courts shall dispose of such writ petitions in accordance with the observations made in this judgment and restore such notices for adjudication by a proper officer under section 28," it said. Where the petitions have been disposed of by the high courts and appeals preferred against such orders, which are pending before the apex court, they shall be disposed of in accordance with this decision, the bench said, adding that the show-cause notices shall be restored for adjudication by a proper officer under section 28.

India's climate policies expected to reduce CO2 emissions by around four billion tonnes by 2030: Report

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

India's current climate policies are projected to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by around four billion tonnes between 2020 and 2030, and drive a 24-per cent reduction in coal-based power generation, according to a new report. This is significant considering the fast-developing South Asian country, now the fifth-largest economy in the world, had committed to reducing emissions by one billion tonnes by 2030 at COP26 in Glasgow. The study by Delhi-based independent think tank Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW) said policies for India's power, residential and transport sectors have already

saved 440 million tonnes of carbon dioxide (MtCO2) between 2015 and 2020. According to the report, in the power sector alone, policies promoting renewable energy are expected to drive a 24 per cent decline in coal-based electricity generation by 2030, relative to a no-policy scenario. This is equivalent to avoiding 80 GW of coal-based power plants, which would have otherwise been installed to meet India's burgeoning power demand, CEEW said. At present, India generates around 71 per cent of its electricity using coal. Further, with strategic support and competitive tenders, the share of combined solar and wind power in India's energy mix is projected to rise to 26 per cent by 2030 and 43 per

cent by 2050, up from only around 3 per cent in 2015. This shift will decisively reduce reliance on coal, which is currently the source of nearly half of the country's total carbon dioxide emissions. This transition is crucial for bending India's emissions curve downward, but achieving net zero by 2070 will require even more ambitious action. India has been pushing for a higher share of renewables in its energy mix, increased adoption of electric vehicles and improved energy efficiency in domestic air-conditioning and lighting. It has also launched programmes like the National Solar Mission, the FAME I and II schemes, the Standards and Labelling scheme and the UJALA programme, which



will continue to affect future energy demand and supply. Arunabha Ghosh, CEO, CEEW, said, "India has demonstrated formidable climate leadership over the past decade, from scaling renewables to advancing energy efficiency and electric mobility through policies. This

has not only diversified our energy mix and doubled down on energy security, but also created new markets and significantly cut carbon dioxide emissions. "The road to net zero needs bolder action and the foot cannot be taken off the pedal now. To enable the global

south's efforts, COP29 must ensure climate finance flows to developing countries like India, without riders. This would deepen renewable markets and a sustainable future for all." In the transport sector, the CEEW study has found that policies, such as the FAME (2015-2022) schemes, have set the stage for significant growth in the Electric Vehicle (EV) market. Projections show that by 2030, electric two-wheeler and four-wheeler sales could account for 19 per cent and 11 per cent of their respective segments. This could lead to a 13 per cent reduction in oil and gas demand in this decade. By 2050, these figures are expected to rise dramatically to above 65 per cent for both EV categories, resulting in a 55

per cent reduction in the sector's oil and gas demand relative to the no-policy scenario. In the residential sector, the 2006 Standards and Labelling programme has led to significant energy efficiency improvements in air-conditioning and cooling. The study has found that air conditioning-related electricity consumption in Indian households is projected to double between 2020 and 2030, and then soar by almost 10 times by 2050. This growth would be driven not just by hotter summers and higher incomes but also due to lower electricity prices, supported by higher renewable energy penetration. The UJALA programme -- by promoting and distributing more than 36.7 crore energy-

efficient LED bulbs since 2015 -- is projected to reduce residential lighting electricity use by 48 per cent by 2030 and 59 per cent by 2050 relative to the no-policy scenario. Vaibhav Chaturvedi, senior fellow, CEEW, and the lead author of the study, said, "Our findings show that current policies have set India on the right path. New policies that build on existing climate policies are already being formulated to accelerate efforts to meet the 2070 net-zero target." Immediate steps should include scaling up investments in renewable energy, enhancing the domestic Carbon Credit Trading Scheme and focusing on energy efficiency in key sectors like industry, transport and buildings, he added.

First India-Bhutan check post opened in Assam

PTI ■ DARRANGA/ASSAM

The first Integrated Check Post (ICP) along the India-Bhutan border was inaugurated at Darranga in Assam on Thursday. Assam Governor Lakshman Prasad Acharya inaugurated the ICP in presence of Prime Minister of Bhutan Dasho Tshering Tobgay. ICP Darranga, sprawling across 14.5 acres and located about 700 metres from the India-Bhutan border, is equipped with state-of-the-art facilities including an office complex, parking areas, loading and unloading zones, a weighbridge, a warehouse, and residential quarters for officials. Developed by Land Ports Authority of India, it also features inspection spaces, plant quarantine systems and parking facilities to ensure efficient operations.



The strategic location of Darranga is further boosted by its connectivity. On the Indian side, it is well-connected to National Highway 27 near Rangia, while on the Bhutanese side, robust customs infrastructure at Samdrup-

Jongkhar ensures efficient trade. Ongoing improvements to the highway from Samdrup-Jongkhar to Tashigang are expected to further enhance connectivity and trade prospects. Bhutan Prime Minister Tobgay, in his speech, invited Indian investors to his country for individual as

well as collaborative ventures, especially in the eastern part of the country. "We want to prosper together with India. We export boulders to Bangladesh, but we are also exporting some manufactured goods and we want to boost it further," Tobgay said, adding that Bhutan is getting both goods and services from India, which can be increased further. "We must build on our friendship and what better way that through people-to-people contact. This ICP will help in tourist as well as business exchanges," he said. "I also want to commit to a special programme to market eastern Bhutan and northeastern India together to the world," Tobgay added, referring to the shared heritage with the region.

it a historic moment, said, "The ICP will strengthen the deep ties between the two nations. It will help not only trade but also cultural exchange." Stressing the age-old relations between India and Bhutan, he said, "These ties have only deepened over the years. The King of Bhutan visiting Assam last year has further boosted our ties." "Religion and culture are important for both our countries and these are among the main common ties binding us," he added. Acharya also maintained that India has been performing its duties towards its neighbouring countries by cooperating and collaborating with them in various spheres. Bhutan Prime Minister Tobgay, in his speech, invited Indian investors to his country for individual as

Maharashtra Assembly Elections 2024: Campaign set to gather steam next week

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Prime Minister and key BJP campaigner Narendra Modi will address at least a dozen rallies across Assembly poll-bound Maharashtra from November 8 to 14, while Congress leaders, including Mallikarjun Kharge and Rahul Gandhi, will be on a week-long campaign trail from November 12. The electioneering will begin to peak when Modi addresses the first two rallies in north Maharashtra - Dhule and Nashik - on Friday, while he will hold public rallies at Akola and Nanded on November 9. And at Chandrapur, Chimir, Solapur, and Pune on November 12. Later on November 14, he will address rallies at Chhatrapati Sambhajanagar (erstwhile Aurugabad), Sambhajanagar, Navi Mumbai, and Mumbai. Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin



Gadkari, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and Maharashtra deputy chief minister Devendra Fadnis will be other key campaigners for the BJP. While Fadnis is expected to address 60 rallies, Gadkari will hold 50-odd rallies across the state. A rabble-rouser that he is, Modi - who had addressed 18 rallies during the recent Lok Sabha polls - will once again try to whip up frenzy among the people harping on the now-familiar issues. Given that the Prime Minister had not elicited the desired impact

from voters during the Lok Sabha poll campaign, it remains to be seen if the Modi factor will work in this election. At their rallies, the BJP leaders will focus on the MahaYuti government's schemes and achievements like the Ladli Behna Yojana, an electricity waiver for 44 lakh farmers, and other initiatives that are personally benefiting the public. There will also be a refrain on re-electing the "double-engine" government in Maharashtra. From the Congress side, Mallikarjun Kharge will hold a series of rallies across the state from November 13 to 18. Rahul Gandhi will undertake an extensive campaign on November 12, 14 and 16, while Priyanka Gandhi will take a break from her campaigning in the Wayanad LS by-polls to canvass to campaign for the Congress-led MVA candidates on November 13, 16 and 17.

BJP pulls out all stops for Budhni by-election, eyes seat with non-Kirar candidate Ramakanth Bhargava



GIRISH SHARMA ■ BHOPAL

The ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in Madhya Pradesh is leaving no stone unturned in campaigning for Budhni by-election. This is for the first time that the BJP is making hectic efforts to wrest the Budhni seat, probably due to fielding of non-Kirar community candidate Ramakanth Bhargava. Till last Assembly elections

in 2023, former chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan contested the election from this constituency and no major effort was made during electioneering by Shivraj or the BJP. At times, when the Congress leaders tried to corner him, making efforts to defeat him, Shivraj openly challenged stating that he would visit Budhni only to file his

nomination papers. He used to say, public of the constituency would contest election on his behalf. Since, 2006, there have been elections, when Shivraj did not visit Budhni and only his wife Sadhna Singh and son Kartikey Singh Chouhan campaigned for him. Political observers feel that this time the Budhni by-election is not easy for the BJP as for the first time after decades, the BJP has fielded non-Kirar community candidate Ramakanth Bhargava. On the other hand, the Congress has fielded Rajkumar Patel, who is Kirar by caste. The Kirar community is sizeable in the constituency and play a decisive role in the outcome. Budhni constituency comprises of three tehsils - Nasrullahganj, Shahganj and Rehati. Kirars are spread in all the three tehsils and play important role in the elections.

BJP insiders say that the voters in the constituency are annoyed with the BJP as they had elected Shivraj Singh Chouhan and he was forcibly removed. Being in the constituency of chief minister, the locals had several benefits which they are being deprived of now. While talking to The Pioneer, a local BJP leader in Shahganj said, the only chance of BJP winning the by-poll is only if Shivraj visits door to door convincing the voters. Shivraj, who is Union Agriculture Minister is already campaigning in both Budhni and Vijaypur constituencies. Spokesperson of the State unit of BJP Rajneesh Agrawal said cast factor does not matter in Budhni constituency. This is for sure that the BJP candidate will win with margin of more than one lakh voters, he claimed.

NCP (SP) chief Sharad Pawar slams Mahayuti Government, accuses PM Modi of favoritism

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NAGPUR

NCP (SP) chief Sharad Pawar on Thursday hit out at the Mahayuti government in Maharashtra, saying it has failed to safeguard the interests of farmers, protect women and provide jobs, and urged people not to allow them to continue in power. He also targeted Prime Minister Narendra Modi, accusing him of working in the interest of a particular state. Pawar was addressing a campaign rally for NCP (SP)'s Nagpur East candidate Duneswar Peth. Assembly elections are scheduled to be held on November 20. "Nagpur has a deep relationship with the Congress and its ideology, with leaders from Vidarbha, including Vasantrao Naik and Sudhakarrao Naik, serving as the chief minister of Maharashtra and empowering the state," he said.

But those who are in power today have failed to solve the problems faced by farmers and the number suicides by farmers in Vidarbha is very big. Farmers had to take the path of suicide because the government not solve their issues, the former Union agriculture minister said. A few days back, a report on the standard of living of people came out, he said. "There was a time when Maharashtra was at number one position in the country in terms of standard of living. However, it slid down to the sixth position after the BJP came to power," Pawar said. On the law and order situation in Maharashtra, he said around 630 females, including girls, have gone missing from Nagpur and nearby areas in the last six months. "The state government has the responsibility of protecting women and it has failed to carry out this responsibility," he alleged. Pawar further said,

"Those leaders in power who cannot protect the interest of the farmers, cannot provide protection to women and cannot give jobs to the youth should not be given power again. People have to take a decision to snatch away the power from these people. Political leaders were expected to carry out the industrial development of Vidarbha. When the Congress and allies were in power, they brought industries in Butibori and other areas of Nagpur, according to him. "But today, we can see that no industries are coming to Vidarbha and even if they come, they are shifted out of the state," he said, and cited the example of Vedanta - Foxconn semiconductor plant that was shifted to Gujarat from Maharashtra. Foxconn was supposed to set up its plant in Maharashtra and had the capacity to generate thousands of jobs. But it was shifted to Gujarat.

The Centre gave suggestion to the management of Foxconn to shift to Gujarat. Similarly, Airbus and Boeing companies were supposed to set up their manufacturing units in Nagpur, but they were also shifted to Gujarat, he charged. "Today, the prime minister of the country intervenes in such matters. I have a complaint against him that a prime minister is the head of a country and if the PM starts taking a stand in the interest of a particular state, then you and me can question him whether he has the right to hold the post or not," Pawar said. "We need to change the picture and provide employment to people, improve farming and protect women folk and this cannot be done by those who are in power and we need to snatch away the power from their hands. You and I need to do this work and the upcoming assembly polls are important to change this scenario," he said.

Dalits to be appointed in key positions in Juna Akhara for Maha Kumbh

BISWAJEET ■ LUCKNOW

In a groundbreaking move, 370 Dalit saints will be appointed to prestigious religious positions such as Mahamandaleswar, Mandaleswar, Mahant, and Peethadheeshwar in Juna Akhara during the upcoming Maha Kumbh at the Sangam. This historic decision is part of a broader initiative to promote the protection and preservation of Sanatan Dharma, with a special focus on including saints from deprived and marginalized communities. The list of these 370 Dalit saints has been finalized, and they will be formally anointed under the religious flag of Juna Akhara on the banks of the Sangam, in Prayagraj marking a significant step towards their active involvement in the promotion of Sanatan Dharma. Following their anointment, each will be assigned specific



responsibilities to further the cause of Sanatan culture and spiritual practices. This initiative is being led by Mahant Hari Giri, the General Secretary of the Akhara Parishad and Patron of Juna Akhara, alongside Jagadguru Mahendranand Giri, the Gujarat Peethadheeshwar of Junagadh. Mahendranand Giri has been instrumental in this process, having already given Sanyas Diksha (spiritual initiation) to 907 people from various

backgrounds, including 370 from Dalit communities. These newly initiated saints have undergone rigorous training on the purity and conduct of Sanatan Dharma, including understanding its rituals and practices. Swami Mahendranand Giri, himself from the Dalit community, emphasized that the inclusion of Dalit saints is a crucial step in uniting all sections of society for the preservation of Sanatan Dharma. "To preserve

Sanatan Dharma, we are connecting the deprived from across the world," he said. "It is essential to involve them in this sacred cause to safeguard our spiritual heritage." Earlier this year, Dalit saint Kailashananda was appointed Mahamandaleswar in the Maujiri temple complex on the banks of the Yamuna. This marked another milestone in Juna Akhara's efforts to empower Dalit saints within the spiritual fold. Mahendranand Giri noted that in the current era, people who believe in Sanatan Dharma, regardless of their religious or sectarian affiliations, face challenges and attacks. "In such times, it is vital to raise awareness among Sanatanis and introduce future generations to the deep-rooted significance of our ancient traditions," he added. In a related event, the Girinar Parikrama will begin on November 12 in Junagadh,

Gujarat, and will continue until November 16. This four-day religious gathering is expected to attract lakhs of devotees from across the country. The Parikrama of Lord Girinar is considered a spiritual pilgrimage, where devotees will offer prayers and partake in prasad offerings. Mahendranand Giri, the manager of the fair organizing committee, explained that performing the Parikrama not only brings immense spiritual merit but also fulfills all wishes of the devotees. "Girinar is a land of Lord Krishna's leela, and people from every corner of the country will gather here to experience its divine blessings," he said. The upcoming events reflect Juna Akhara's commitment to fostering unity and spiritual growth, while making significant strides in social inclusion and the promotion of Sanatan Dharma.

Rahul Gandhi's remarks on caste representation spark controversy

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ LUCKNOW

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's recent remarks on the lack of Dalit, OBC, and tribal representation in administrative roles have ignited a political firestorm, drawing a sharp response from Uttar Pradesh Minister Dinesh Pratap Singh, who termed the comments "laughable" and "baseless." The controversy began during a recent District Development Coordination and Monitoring Committee meeting in Rae Bareilly, where Gandhi claimed that administrative positions in the region were dominated by members of two specific castes, leaving Dalits and OBCs underrepresented. Recounting his experience, Gandhi said, "I asked all officers to introduce

themselves, and during the introductions, I did not hear a single name from the Dalit or OBC communities." Responding to Gandhi's claims, Minister Singh refuted the account, stating that officers introduced themselves voluntarily rather than at Gandhi's request. He criticized Gandhi's remarks as an attempt to create "unrest" in Rae Bareilly and beyond. "These comments are not just about Rae Bareilly; they are aimed at creating discord across the nation," Singh argued. Singh also rejected Gandhi's suggestion that Dalits, OBCs, and tribals are underrepresented in the judiciary, pointing out that many judges were appointed during Congress rule. He remarked, "Congress has

a history of neglecting Dalits and OBCs. Under Modi and Yogi's rule, no one faces injustice." Gandhi's remarks also stirred attention when he claimed that Congress had historically discriminated against Dalits and backward communities, specifically in Rae Bareilly, where no Dalit or backward candidate has reportedly been given a ticket since 1951. Singh countered by questioning why Gandhi had not fielded a Dalit candidate from his own Wayanad constituency, labeling the statement as "divisive." With both sides exchanging sharp rhetoric, Gandhi's comments have underscored ongoing political divides over caste representation and social justice.

Kerala BJP's infighting reaches boiling point ahead of Palakkad by-election

KUMAR CHELLAPAN ■ KOCHI

The last nail has been driven into the coffin of Kerala BJP by a group of leaders including the party's State president K Surendran. The fact that the group fighting, shadow boxing and the mutually assured destruction have come at a party time the BJP candidate C Krishnakumar was fighting the by-election from Palakkad scheduled for November 20. The infighting in the Congress and the CPI(M) over the selection of candidates has been eclipsed by the chaos in the Hindutva party. The party's state chief K Surendran faces a criminal case under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) in connection with the money heist from Vadakara alleged to have taken place during the 2021 assembly election. Unaccounted cash to the tune of Rs 3.5 crore which was being transported to the party's Thrissur district office



was waylaid by a group of people and taken away making one of the couriers in the vehicle to file a police complaint. Though the police, after initial investigation, chose not to proceed with the case the Kerala High Court in a directive asked the cops to take up the case and investigate the same. Surendran had been grilled by the police in connection with the PMLA case which earned him the rare "distinction" of becoming the one and only state chief of a national party to have been interrogated by

the police in a criminal case. Even as the police resumed the probe, a former office secretary of the Thrissur district BJP came out and declared that the waylaid money was unaccounted cash and was meant for distribution among the party candidates. Meanwhile, Shobha Surendran, a party leader who has declared her intention to become the party president declared that a powerful group in the BJP was subverting her works in the party as they do not want her to remain in the BJP. She claimed she has a plan of action ready to ensure at least 25 party candidates would get elected to the legislative assembly in the 2026 election. Along with Shobha Surendran, the BJP's television spokesman Sandeep Varrier too has raised a flag of revolt questioning the propriety of Surendran's continuation as party chief despite a series of

failures in the parliamentary and assembly polls. The BJP failed to win at least a single seat in the 2021 assembly election. The party's major achievement till date has been the 2016 victory of nonagenarian O Rajagopal from Neman assembly constituency and that of Suresh Gopi in the 2024 Lok Sabha poll from Thrissur. "The Palakkad poll had offered an opportunity to the party to open its account in the assembly. But the infighting and one-upmanship by leaders divided on caste lines is destroying the BJP in Kerala. Right now the party is under the control of the powerful Theyaya community from Malabar. Surendran and V Muralreedharan are from this caste and both of them do not like the Eezhavas or Nairs and this is costing the party dear," said Sudheer Damodaran, political observer and a former associate of Prashant Kishor told the Pioneer.

Assam CM slams Congress' 'Dynasty Politics' over Samaguri Assembly Seat nomination

PTI ■ NAGAON

Targeting Congress MP Rakibul Hussain over his son Tanzil getting the nomination for the bypoll to the Samaguri assembly seat, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Thursday said "dynasty politics" of the opposition party was preventing talented youths from coming into politics. Addressing an election rally, Sarma said the BJP was working hard to attract around 1.5 lakh youths into politics to shape the country's political landscape in coming years. "In Samaguri assembly seat, we are not just fighting Congress, we are up against an entrenched and corrupt family-led club. We are grateful to the people who have decided to join us in this fight," the CM said. Hussain won the recent Lok



Sabha polls from Dhubri by a margin of more than 10 lakh votes and he could have given the Samaguri ticket to any hard-working Congress worker, but they don't believe anyone else other than their wards, Sarma said. "Will anyone be able to tell who the MLA in Samaguri will be after Tanzil? It will obviously be his son. Only their children and grandchildren will be the next leaders... Others will sip Amul milk from the sidelines and Tanzil will become the MLA," he added. Sarma said Samaguri has seen

only dynasty politicians as first it was Nurul Hussain, former Congress minister, then his son Rakibul Hussain, who was also a minister, and now it is Tanzil. The CM wondered if anyone from the crowd knew the name of the father of Dipu Ranjan Sarma, the BJP candidate for the bypoll, or any of the nearly 10 MLAs sitting on the dais. "Dynastic politics is never beneficial for us. A few days ago, PM Narendra Modi told me that Congress started bad politics. After the father, the son will come and then the grandchildren. If this continues, then brilliant youths willing to work for society will never join politics." He told me that we should work in such a way that 1.5 lakh youths from villages and towns who do not identify with their father's identity can

join politics. That is what we are trying now," he said. Sarma also alleged that the Congress' only intention was to put hurdles in the state's development and likened the opposition party to a "male cow" that cannot produce milk (development). "If the MLA is from the BJP with BJP governments at Dispur and Delhi, they will work together. But if the Congress candidate wins, he will later say that he cannot get things done as the BJP is in power in the state and at the Centre," he said. "The Congress is like a male cow, you can feed it as much as you want but it cannot give you milk. You can vote for the Congress, but it cannot give you development," he said. Sarma claimed that the BJP would be in power in Assam for at least 50 years, and was the "milching cow," giving 16 litres of milk every day.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

A turning point

While the US-India relationship is poised to deepen in defence and trade, there will also be hurdles in some areas

Donald Trump's return to the presidency brings a new chapter in US foreign policy that holds considerable implications for India. The outgoing Biden administration though not averse to India had reservations about the way domestic politics was shaping in India. But with Trump at the helm of affairs that reservation may quietly go and the Trump administration may go an extra mile to accommodate New Delhi. Trump's victory could reshape strategic alliances, redefine trade relations and impact key regional dynamics that matter to New Delhi. The US-India defence relationship saw considerable progress during Trump's previous tenure. He promoted India as a key strategic partner in the Indo-Pacific to counterbalance China's rising influence, leading to initiatives such as increased military sales and the signing of defence agreements, including BECA (Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement). Trump's victory may reinforce these policies, as he is likely to continue focusing on Indo-Pacific security. A renewed push for defence cooperation, joint military exercises, and arms deals could bolster India's military capabilities in the region.



However, not all his policies may be to India's liking. In his earlier tenure, Trump prioritised American industry, his trade policies often led to increased tariffs and renegotiations that impacted India. His 'America First' approach pressured India into trade reforms to reduce the US trade deficit. This time, India might face similar pressures, particularly in the technology and pharmaceutical sectors, but could also see openings to negotiate more favourable terms, especially if Trump seeks to reduce dependency on Chinese goods. There is potential for renewed trade deals, but both sides will likely need to balance protectionism with mutual growth. Trump's previous immigration policies, which included tighter visa regulations, impacted the Indian IT workforce, particularly regarding H-1B visas. If his administration continues down this path, it could further restrict Indian tech talent. However, there may be room for negotiation to secure beneficial terms for skilled Indian workers, especially if Trump seeks closer ties with India on other fronts. Both Trump and India share a common concern over China's assertive actions in Asia. Trump's firm stance against China aligns with India's interests, especially in light of the India-China border standoff. Trump's support for a 'Free and Open Indo-Pacific' and his scepticism towards Chinese trade practices resonate well with India's own strategic goals. Under Trump, the US could be a more vocal supporter of India's position on regional issues, potentially even playing a bigger role in multilateral forums like the QUAD. Trump's stance on energy independence for the US could be beneficial for India's energy security goals. Trump's victory offers both opportunities and challenges for India. For India, the priority will likely be to build on common ground, particularly in areas where interests align, and work diplomatically to address any points of contention.

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PICTALK



A trader with his camel at the annual Camel Fair at Pushkar, in Ajmer

PTI

Gen Z: Hyper-connected yet shallow relations

In an age where friendships are as easy as a "follow" or a "like," Gen Z finds itself paradoxically more isolated than ever

In a world where friendships are just a tap away, Gen Z is paradoxically more connected and yet more alone than ever. With countless social media networks, endless group chats, and online "friends," you'd think they'd feel fulfilled. But under the endless likes, comments, and selfies, there's a haunting emptiness. I often meet young people who, despite their vast online networks, feel utterly isolated. They are connected to everyone, yet truly close to no one. Take Rhea, a 22-year-old with a picture-perfect online life. Her feed is filled with smiling photos, exotic vacations, and witty captions. But behind this flawless facade lies a young woman scarred by painful experiences. She lost her father at five, faced years of abuse, and carries a deep, invisible wound. Rhea carefully hides this pain, crafting an online persona that feels safe and acceptable. "I keep thinking if I post the right picture, maybe I'll finally feel like I belong," she admitted once, her voice breaking. Yet the emptiness doesn't fade. Her online "friends" see



the bright exterior, but none see the broken girl within. Another story is of Arjun, a young man shaped by a chaotic home and constant content bombardment. Now 20, he spends hours scrolling through his feed, comparing himself to others who appear effortlessly perfect. "Everyone seems so complete," he said, "but I feel like I'm failing." In a crisis, Arjun realises he has no one to truly rely on. His friendships, based on memes and brief exchanges, feel hollow when life gets tough. The endless scrolling only deepens his loneliness, as he sees everyone's best

moments while silently suffering through his worst. Rhea and Arjun's stories echo a painful truth for many in Gen Z. Friendships today are often shallow, based on convenience rather than commitment. They form and dissolve easily, leaving young people adrift in a sea of acquaintances who vanish when things get real. This generation's friendships are filtered through screens, built on quick likes and superficial messages. The traditional bonds of trust and time are slipping away, leaving behind connections that feel fleeting and, ultimately, empty.

What's missing here is depth — the kind of friendship that stands the test of hardship, that offers warmth and understanding beyond a screen. For Rhea, there's a wounded inner child who craves a friend who will listen and care beyond the "perfect" image she shows online. For Arjun, there's a desperate need to find a friend who sees his struggles, not just his shared posts. As a society, we need to understand that true friendship isn't about quick exchanges or temporary validation.

It's about sharing real moments, both joyful and painful. It's about listening, being there, and caring without conditions. Perhaps, as Felice Buscaglia once said, "It's not enough to have lived." True living means creating joy, sharing love, and holding each other through life's storms. Until Gen Z learns to build friendships beyond the screen, they'll remain in search of bonds that can truly make them feel seen, safe, and understood. (The writer is a psychologist and mindset coach; views are personal)

KAVITA KABIRA



In an age where friendships are as easy as a "follow" or a "like," Gen Z finds itself paradoxically more isolated than ever

What's missing here is depth — the kind of friendship that stands the test of hardship, that offers warmth and understanding beyond a screen. For Rhea, there's a wounded inner child who craves a friend who will listen and care beyond the "perfect" image she shows online. For Arjun, there's a desperate need to find a friend who sees his struggles, not just his shared posts. As a society, we need to understand that true friendship isn't about quick exchanges or temporary validation. It's about sharing real moments, both joyful and painful. It's about listening, being there, and caring without conditions. Perhaps, as Felice Buscaglia once said, "It's not enough to have lived." True living means creating joy, sharing love, and holding each other through life's storms. Until Gen Z learns to build friendships beyond the screen, they'll remain in search of bonds that can truly make them feel seen, safe, and understood. (The writer is a psychologist and mindset coach; views are personal)

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Donald Trump's historic comeback

With a Republican majority in the Senate, Trump re-enters the White House with renewed authority, poised to reshape both American politics and global dynamics



KALYANI SHANKAR



The much-awaited US presidential election ended on November 5, and former President 78-year-old Donald Trump triumphed by winning the White House. This would be his second inning and an extraordinary comeback for Trump. He will be the 47th president of the US. Reactions to Trump's election performance started coming in even before the final votes were counted in the US some leaders, like Israel's, showed enthusiasm as they dealt with an ongoing multi-front war. Others like Ukraine President Zelenskyy expressed anxiety. In contrast, some of America's long-standing European allies expressed anxiety about the election results. It was a nail-biting wait. Vice President Kamala Harris and Donald Trump were virtually tied in the polls, adding to the suspense. The odds that the race comes down to a few swing states are high, further prolonging the anticipation. Trump vowed to remove Democrats from the White House by defeating Kamala Harris. Kamala lost to Trump, just like Hillary Clinton lost in 2016. Clinton was the first woman nominated for president by her party. Trump built

a diverse group of voters, more than any Republican nominee in the last 20 years, even though he ran a campaign that was racially charged and attacked immigrants. Trump's election is not just a national event, but a global one. Its impact will be felt not only in American politics but also in global affairs, particularly in the ongoing Middle East and Ukrainian conflicts. The historic polls have denied a chance for a woman to preside over the White House. Vice President-elect JD Vance has an Indian connection as his wife, Usha, is an Indian. In the last 20 years, the most recent Republican presidential candidate to win the nationwide popular vote was George W Bush in 2004. This historical context is crucial as it underscores the unique nature of the US election process. In 2000, he won the Electoral College and the presidency but lost the popular vote to Al Gore. Donald Trump became president in 2016 by securing more than 270 votes in the Electoral College, a system where each state is assigned a certain number of votes based on its population. Despite losing the popular



ITS IMPACT WILL BE FELT NOT ONLY IN AMERICAN POLITICS BUT ALSO IN GLOBAL AFFAIRS, PARTICULARLY IN THE ONGOING MIDDLE EAST AND UKRAINIAN CONFLICTS

vote to Hillary Clinton by more than 2.8 million votes, Trump's victory in key states gave him the necessary Electoral College votes. In 2020, Trump lost the Electoral College and the popular vote to Joe Biden by over 7 million. The final results of the 2020 election hinged on the meticulous absentee ballot procedures in four crucial swing states — Arizona, Nevada, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin. These procedures, which can take days to conclude, hold the key to the outcome as they determine the validity of votes cast by mail. It was these battleground states and their absentee ballots that ultimately decided Trump's win. Donald Trump won the presidency in 2016 by getting more than 270 votes in the Electoral College. However, he lost the popular vote to Hillary Clinton by over 2.8 million votes. In 2020, Trump lost the Electoral College and the popular vote to Joe Biden by more than 7 million votes. With Trump's victory, the fears of potential violence have been allayed. The predicted disturbances during the oath-taking ceremony of President Biden in

January 2021 are less likely to occur. The power transition is expected to be peaceful, bringing a sense of reassurance to the nation. Trump was not willing for a smooth transition in 2021 claiming the results were not correct and he was cheated by becoming the victim. Trump's victory can be attributed to the diverse issues he addressed, such as immigration and the economy. In this election, Trump not only secured the White votes but also a diverse group of voters, a testament to the complexity and diversity of the American electorate. Exit polls show that nearly 20 per cent of Trump voters were people of colour. In his first election in 2016, only about 13 per cent of his voters were people of colour. Simultaneously, Republicans have snatched control of the Senate, propelled by wins in West Virginia and Ohio. Democrats previously held a narrow majority in the Senate. It will make Trump's job easy. (The writer is a popular columnist currently travelling the US; views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

TRUMP WINS AGAIN

Madam — It's Trump again in America and the Americans cast their votes for reclaiming the presidency for Trump over Kamala Harris, and probably the voters were colourblind by giving an edge over to Trump to lead again. The last few weeks were certainly a grinding one for Trump and Harris and it was an evenly poised battle till the end. When Biden opted himself to bring in Kamala Harris into the fray, it was appreciable on the part of Harris to put up a brave fight to win over the hearts of voters in a closely contested election in America. The voters' keenness was visible even on election day while the voters continued to queue, adding to the record-breaking 84 million early ballots already submitted. Though the economy, immigration, and the preservation of democracy were among the pressing issues driving the voters to the polls, Trump gained momentum in his campaign after the attempt of assassination and was probably lucky enough to escape for a rebirth as the President again by winning the Presidency. By his victory, the Americans may have to wait for some more time to elect their first female president, which has been eluding the country for a long time.

A P Thiruvadi | Chennai

ARTICLE 370 CONTROVERSY

Madam—The present NC-Congress Govt in J and K is posing a grave danger to the parliamentary democracy and the constitution and thus be sacked forthwith for taking up and passing a resolution for restoration of Article 370, which was abrogated by the Parliament of Bharat. As everybody knows the problems it created in the way of integration of Jammu and Kashmir with the rest of Bharat and ultimate elimination of Kashmiri Pandits from the valley with continuing Jihadi Terror till date. The Supreme Court unnecessarily interrupted into the matter and forced premature election in the state,

Canada must take action



Propos to "Cowardly attack" published on November 6. The violence at Hindu Sabha Mandir in Brampton is reprehensible, and it has once again exposed Canada's inept handling of a sensitive situation. The

Trudeau government has been burning bridges with India after Nijjar's murder last year. On one side, he says that every Canadian has the right to practice his or her faith freely, but sadly, he cannot protect them and provide safety.

When the Canadian government can appoint India-designate terrorists like Pannun, Sandeep Singh Sidhu, and Sgt Harinder Sohi in the government or government agencies, then nothing better can be expected out of the Trudeau government. Canada, which otherwise proudly claims to be a peace-loving nation, has to deal strictly with all those elements who are destroying communal harmony and public order. Trudeau cannot allow to spew venom against India in the name of freedom, and he will have to salvage India-Canada ties before it is too late.

Bal Govind | Noida

which was limping back to normal steadily under the central rule. Muslims in the valley are still against Bharat and Hindus while expecting everything to be free from the state and are still intolerant against the return of Pandits in the valley. The regiment that supports the restoration of Art. 370 cannot be allowed to run the affairs of the state. The Supreme Court should be told in no uncertain terms not to interrupt J&K affairs any more.

Jai Prakash Gupta | Ambala Cantt

INDIA BIDS FOR OLYMPICS

Madam — India has taken a concrete step towards hosting the Olympics and Paralympics by formally expressing interest in hosting the big ticket events. The Indian Olympic Association (IOA) officially submitted a Letter of Intent to the Future Host Commission of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), formally expressing India's interest in hosting the Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2036, officially known as the Games of the XXXVI

Olympiad. India's top sports administrators, including IOA President PT Usha, were at the Paris Olympics earlier in the year to lobby for the country's selection. There have been reports that India would push for the inclusion of indigenous disciplines like yoga, kho kho and kabaddi if the bid is successful.

IOC President Thomas Bach had also supported India's case, claiming that there was a "strong case" for India to host the Olympic Games. In the process, India joined nine other countries that have expressed interest in hosting the 2036 Games. The 10 countries that have shown initial interest in hosting the 2036 Games include Mexico (Mexico City, Guadalajara-Monterrey-Tijuana), Indonesia (Nusantara), Turkey (Istanbul), India (Ahmedabad), Poland (Warsaw, Krakow), Egypt (New Administrative Capital), and South Korea (Seoul Incheon).

Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee | Faridabad

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



FIRST COLUMN

UNDERSTANDING THE MIND OF GOD

Aligning our actions with divine wisdom can only steer us through life's hardships



AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

We want to live a nice life, but we do not know how. Individually, we all try but come up short except for a few, who seriously take shelter of God. Because God only can make a difference. A big percentage of us, if not all humans, are aware of God but are unable to become serious about making a proper attempt to link with God – the Creator. I will try in this article to get you interested in getting started in this noble act. I am using similes and contrasts – the usual ways to compare. And I have chosen an example of a businessman for this purpose. God is the Creator; we are aware of this fact. A businessman is a prime mover for a business venture. God creates the entire solar system. In the case of a businessman, he starts small and tries to grow it into a vast business empire.

A businessman is intrinsically small, i.e., will always remain small, no matter how big his business empire may become. God is incomprehensibly big and will always be. Our problem is to think of God to be a person like us, just as He incarnates to teach us what is proper for us. Our ignorance is not limited to this fact only but extends to what we know. A businessman falsely assumes that what he knows about a business is sufficient.

What happens? Many businesses fail. What he could have done? He could have prayed to God for guidance. God would have given him instructions through mediums, those around him. And the business would have succeeded, because God is omniscient, i.e., He



knows past, present and future also; God always knows what will work. God is also omnipresent, i.e. present everywhere all the time. A businessman tries to replicate and over-stress himself frequently. God can help if one remains in His shelter. Then, it becomes God's business, literally so. The businessman will get a partner, who owns everything in the first place.

All businesses face challenges of many kinds because this earth's planet is a place of misery. (The Bhagavad-Geeta 8.15) Smooth sailing is out of the question. When God – the Controller gets involved, then, success is guaranteed, no matter what challenges come. The Omnipotent God takes care of them. A businessman is limited to what his 'karmaphalas' (fruits of past 'karmas') ordain. We can understand this by the fact that the extent of success of a business is widely varied. All work hard but destiny rules. With God in the picture, He becomes the 'Karta' (doer). My business survived even in the extreme conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic. We even paid bonuses to our employees in this period, because God is involved. Where do many businesses falter?

They don't follow 'dharma' (the highest religious/moral principles). And God is all for upholding dharma. So there is no help from God. You cross 'maryada' (acceptable limits) and face the music. Failed businessmen blame their luck for it. It is true because that was ordained. Bad luck could have been nullified if one had pleased God by staying within the dharma.

The conclusion is to start with accepting that God is one and incomprehensibly big, and we are small parts of Him. We should take shelter from God and remain there. Then, we will be best served in whatever proper, i.e. according to dharma we do. God will guide help, and even micromanage our lives.

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

Trump 2.0: What lies ahead in his second term



NILANTHA ILANGAMUWA

For ardent supporters, it's a long-anticipated victory, a "Make America Great Again" revival, while critics recoil at the reality of his return



He's back. Brace yourselves: Donald Trump is set to reclaim the White House as the 47th President of the United States. He would become the first president since Grover Cleveland in 1892 to serve two terms that were not consecutive. Love him or loathe him, this moment is nothing short of historic. For his supporters, it's a long-awaited reckoning; for his critics, it's a nightmare realised. Hollywood elites—George Clooney, Leonardo DiCaprio, and Oprah Winfrey among them—are likely stewing in disbelief, unable to reconcile with the stark message that America is prepared to usher in another Trump era. Meanwhile, personalities like Megyn Kelly and Tucker Carlson bask in the triumph of what they perceive as the return of their "Messiah," the man who vowed to Make America Great Again. This is democracy in action, like it or not. In his first victory speech, Trump wasted no time hammering home his agenda: "I will not let my supporters down," he declared. "America's future will be bigger, better, bolder, richer, safer, and stronger than it has ever been." Bold words, indeed. Yet the question hangs—what will the cost of 'greatness' be in a nation this divided? This time, he returns stronger, fortified by allies like Elon Musk, while other titans—Jeff Bezos, for one—strive to remain neutral.

Yet the fallout is profound. Influential voices such as Robert Kagan, a staunch advocate of liberal internationalism and husband of the American diplomat Victoria Nuland, have resigned, signalling that the ground is shifting. For mainstream media—outlets like The New York Times, NBC, and CNN—the election results are a rebuke they cannot ignore. These media powerhouses, which for years wielded narratives against Trump, now face a public that feels increasingly alienated from the polished, elitist stories they've been fed. The trust gap widens as citizens see the chasm



THIS IS DEMOCRACY IN ACTION, LIKE IT OR NOT. IN HIS FIRST VICTORY SPEECH, TRUMP WASTED NO TIME HAMMERING HOME HIS AGENDA: "I WILL NOT LET MY SUPPORTERS DOWN," HE DECLARED

between elite narratives and their lived realities. Trump's second term will likely turn a blind eye to the domestic affairs of other nations, signalling potential cuts in funding to so-called civil society organisations and other international interests maintained by the US State Department and its clandestine bodies. Immigration policy, too, could see a harsher edge, as tensions over border security and the influx of immigrants under Biden intensify. This stricter stance could stoke the fires of domestic unrest as Americans grapple with yet another transformation of national priorities. The war in Ukraine may come to an end sooner rather than later, potentially through a bitter compromise with Russia, as many countries in Europe may not align with Trump as they did under the Biden administration.

However, if Ukrainian President Zelenskyy has a different understanding of the situation, it may be time for him to seriously consider pursuing the Chinese peace proposal. Meanwhile, the conflict in West Asia is likely to pause, but tensions could rise, possibly leading to new forms of attacks on Iran. The relationship between Iran and the Trump administration will be crucial in determining the future scenario in West Asia, as decisions made in this context could significantly alter the region's geopolitical dynamics. One should not forget that it was during Trump's first administration that Qasem Soleimani, an Iranian military officer who served in the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, was assassinated in Baghdad, Iraq, using a reaper drone (Predator B).

Soleimani was a key enabler of Iranian actions, and even now, he is widely regarded as a major influence in Iran and its alliances. On the home front, the controversial Project 2025 blueprint stands as a bold bid to remodel US government institutions in line with a nationalist, ultra-conservative vision. Critics warn of an authoritarian slide. Trump himself claimed he had "no hand in the policy," even as his campaign speeches echoed its themes. Dismantling regulatory agencies, installing ideologically driven personnel, and consolidating executive power—such moves could test the very checks and balances that underpin the American system.

The potential cost? A dramatic weakening of civil liberties, environmental protections, and democratic norms, is likely to spark deep political divisions and civil unrest. If realised, this vision would also redefine America's role on the global stage. The "America First" doctrine, which shaped Trump's prior foreign policy, may once again destabilise multilateral efforts on urgent issues like climate change, nuclear disarmament, and trade. Trump's rhetoric could erode US alliances, and as Washington retreats from the mantle of democracy promotion, a vacuum forms—one that China, no doubt, is eager to fill. Worth noting is Trump's first note during his visit to the CIA headquarters, right after becoming the 45th president. Mainstream narratives often painted him as dismissive of the intelligence apparatus, but Trump's note challenged that view, acknowledging the agency's

importance. Now, as political winds shift, Trump is rumoured to be eyeing Kash Patel, an Indian-American with roots in counterterrorism and intelligence reform, as his new CIA head. Patel's controversial stance on challenging the so-called "deep state" marks a radical shift in US intelligence policy—likely a step towards Trump's broader agenda of power consolidation within the federal government.

Patel, known for his book *Government Gangsters: The Deep State, the Truth, and the Battle for Our Democracy*, is expected to tackle intelligence reform head-on, aligning with Trump's vision of shaking up entrenched power structures. A second Trump administration would also stoke tensions with China, particularly in the Indo-Pacific, where US-China rivalry is reaching new heights. Trump's hawkish stance on Taiwan and the South China Sea could signal increased military presence, arms deals, and strengthened alliances with Japan, South Korea and India.

The administration is likely to challenge China's Belt and Road Initiative and impose sanctions on Chinese firms, aiming to limit Beijing's influence. Smaller nations in the region, meanwhile, could find themselves stuck in a high-stakes dilemma—aligning with the US risks Beijing's wrath while leaning towards China risks Washington's ire. With Trump redefining US foreign policy, these nations may face an impossible choice in a tightening geopolitical vice.

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

PM-Vidyalaxmi: A yet another 'Modi Kee Guarantee' for learners

The Government has initiated this financial aid programme to harness the potential of the youth from the weaker sections

India has the largest number of millennials and Gen Zs in the world. This population constitutes a critical mass for increasing GER in higher education from the current 28 per cent to 50 per cent by 2035 as envisaged in NEP-2020. Moreover, India's working population in the age bracket of 15-64 is nearly 68 per cent. The current demographic dividend will not be available for a longer period as the youth population will turn old and thus will become non-productive. Precisely for this reason, PM Modi called the current time window in the lifespan of Bharat the 'Amrit Kaal' and has given a clarion call for making it 'Viksit' by 2047 through self-reliant measures. Skilled youth are in high



RAGHAVENDRA P TIWARI

demand the world over and this trend will always remain as skilling, upskilling and reskilling will always be required to cope with ever-evolving job profiles in the workplace. However, owing to the economic transformation that the nation has witnessed over the last decade, living standards have greatly improved leading to an enhanced cost of living. And, education is no exception.

The Central Government has taken several initiatives to ensure hassle-free access to quality higher education, especially regarding NEP-2020 implementation. These include multidisciplinary and learning outcome-based curriculum for holistic learning; innovative pedagogy (experiential learning, internship, field immersion, etc); evaluation to test the learning outcomes; Academic Bank of Credits; Multiple Entry-Exit; Dual degree, joint degree and twin degree programmes; emphasis on Indian Knowledge System and Universal Human Values, etc. The latest edition to the long list is the PM-Vidyalaxmi scheme to provide collateral-free, guarantor-free financial loans to needy meritorious stu-

dents covering all categories to ease them from financial constraints for pursuing quality higher education. Approved by the Cabinet on November 5, 2024, as a Deepawali Gift to the nation, PM-Vidyalaxmi is a mission mode, simple, transparent, student-friendly and fully digital mechanism to facilitate easy access to loans to meritorious students admitted in, to begin with, top 860 quality higher education institutions. This initiative provides a single-window integrated platform for students seeking educational loans to apply for it and to track their applications. PM Vidyalaxmi will add to the scope and reach of earlier initiatives of the current government for maximising access to quality higher education for socially deprived sec-



tions of society. Under this scheme, students will be eligible to obtain collateral-free, guarantor-free loans from banks and financial institutions to cover the full amount of tuition fees and other expenses to be incurred for pursuing academic programs. Under PM Vidyalaxmi, the government will also provide a 75 per cent credit guarantee of outstanding default for loan amounts up to? 7.5 lakhs to support banks to

expand coverage. The scheme will also provide for 3 per cent interest subvention on loans up to Rs 10 lakh during the moratorium period for those students having an annual family income of Rs 8.00 lakhs and are not covered under any government scholarship of interest subvention. This will be in addition to full interest subvention already offered to students with up to Rs 4.5 lakhs annual family income. Interest subvention will be paid through E-vouchers and Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC) wallets. An outlay of Rs 3,600 Crore has been made available for the period from 2024-25 to 2030-31, and 7 lakh fresh students are expected to get the benefit of this interest subvention during the above timeslot. PM-Vidyalaxmi will supple-

ment the two components of the scheme of Pradhan Mantri Uchchatar Shiksha Protsahan (PM-USP), namely, the Central Sector Interest Subsidy (CSIS) and Credit Guarantee Fund Scheme (CGFS) for education loans, already offered by the Ministry of Education. Under the PM-USP-CSIS, students pursuing technical/professional courses from approved institutions. PM Vidyalaxmi, in a nutshell, is an entirely new scheme launched for empowering youth, especially of the middle class, with necessary financial support for pursuing the education of their choice. The scheme will operate in tandem with PM-USP to provide financial support to all deserving students to pursue quality higher education and techni-

cal/professional education in select quality Higher Education Institutions in India. The newly launched scheme, apart from making quality higher education available to meritorious students, will ease the impounding stress of students opting for loans and will enable them to fully concentrate on learning. Kudos to PM Narendra Modi and Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan for launching a new learner-centric scheme for spearheading the implementation of NEP-2020. PM Vidyalaxmi is in fact, a confluence of Vidya, the Goddess of Knowledge, and Laxmi, the Goddess of Wealth! (The writer is Vice Chancellor, Central University of Punjab, Bathinda; views are personal)

Trump has vowed to shake some of democracy's pillars

AP ■ WASHINGTON

American presidential elections are a moment when the nation holds up a mirror to look at itself. They are a reflection of values and dreams, of grievances and scores to be settled. The results say much about a country's character, future and core beliefs. On Tuesday, America looked into that mirror and more voters saw former president Donald Trump, delivering him a far-reaching victory in the most contested states. He won for many reasons. One of them was that a formidable number of Americans, from different angles, said the state of democracy was a prime concern. The candidate they chose had campaigned through a lens of darkness, calling the country "garbage" and his opponent "stupid," a "communist" and "the b-word." The mirror reflected not only a restive nation's discontent but childless cat ladies, false stories of pets devoured by Haitian immigrant neighbours, a sustained emphasis on calling things "weird," and a sudden bout of Democratic "joy" now crushed. The campaign will be remembered both for profound developments, like the two assassination attempts on Trump, and his curious chatter about golfer Arnold Palmer's genitalia. Even as Trump prevailed, most voters said they were very or somewhat concerned that electing Trump would bring the US closer to being an authoritarian country, where a single leader has unchecked power, according to the AP VoteCast survey. Still, 1 in 10 of those voters backed

him anyway. Nearly 4 in 10 Trump voters said they wanted complete upheaval in how the country is run. In Trump's telling, the economy was in shambles, even when almost every measure said otherwise, and the border was an open sore leeching murderous migrants, when the actual number of crossings had dropped precipitously. All this came wrapped in his signature language of catastrophism. His win, only the second time in US history that a candidate won the presidency in non-consecutive terms, demonstrated Trump's keen ear for what stirs emotions, especially the sense of millions of voters of being left out — whether because someone else cheated or got special treatment or otherwise fell to the ravages of the enemy within. That's whom Americans decisively chose. The centuries-old democracy delivered power to the presidential candidate who gave voters fair warning he might take core elements of that democracy apart. After already having tried to disrupt the peaceful transfer of power when he lost to President Joe Biden in 2020, Trump mused that he would be justified if he decided to pursue "the termination of all rules, regulations, and articles, even those found in the Constitution." This, in contrast to the oath of office he took, and will again, to "preserve, protect and defend the Constitution" as best he can. One rough and decidedly imperfect measure of whether Trump might mean what he says is how many times he says it. His direct threat to try to end or suspend the Constitution was largely a one-off. But the 2024 campaign was thick with his vows, rally after rally, inter-

view after interview, that if realised would upend democracy's basic practices, protections and institutions as Americans have known them. And now, he says after his win, "I will govern by a simple motto: promises made, promises kept." Through the campaign, to lusty cheers, Trump promised to use presidential power over the justice system to go after his personal political adversaries. He then raised the stakes further by threatening to enlist military force against such domestic foes — "the enemy from within." Doing so would shatter any semblance of Justice Department independence and turn soldiers against citizens in ways not seen in modern times. He's promised to track down and deport immigrants in massive numbers, raising the prospect of using military or military-style assets for that as well. Spurred by his fury and denialism over his 2020 defeat, Trump's supporters in some state governments have already engineered changes in how votes are cast, counted and affirmed, an effort centered on the false notion that the last election was rigged against him. On Tuesday, Trump won an election in the time of a Democratic administration. The effort to revise election procedures will now be fought out by states in his time. Yet another pillar of the system is also in his sights — the non-political civil service and its political masters, whom Trump together calls the deep state. He means the generals who didn't always heed him last time, but this time shall. He means the Justice Department



people who refused to indulge his desperate effort to cook up votes he didn't get in 2020. He means the bureaucrats who dragged their heels on parts of his first-term agenda and whom Trump now wants purged. Trump wants to make it easier to fire federal workers by classifying thousands of them as being outside civil service protections. That could weaken the government's power to enforce statutes and rules by draining parts of the workforce and permit his administration to staff offices with more malleable employees than last time. But if some or all of these tenets of modern democracy are to fall, it will be through the most democratic of means. Voters chose him — and by extension, this — not Democrat Kamala Harris, the vice president. And by early measures, it was a clean election, just like 2020. Eric Dezenhall is a scandal-manage-

ment expert who has followed Trump's business and political career and correctly predicted his wins in 2016 and now. He also foresaw that the criminal cases against Trump would help, not hurt, him. Sussing out what Trump truly intends to do and what might be bluster is not always easy, he said. "There are certain things that he says because they cross his brain at a certain moment," Dezenhall said. "I don't put stock in that. I put stock in themes, and there is a theme of vengeance." So it remains to be seen whether America will get two special days Trump has promised. Upon taking office again, he said, he'll be a "dictator," but only for a day. And he's promised to let police stage "one really violent day" to crack down on crime with impunity, a remark his campaign said he didn't really mean, just as his peo-

ple said he wasn't serious about subverting the U.S. Constitution. The voters also gave Trump's Republicans clear control of the Senate, and therefore majority say in whether to confirm the loyalists Trump will nominate for top jobs in government. Trump controls his party in ways he didn't in his first term, when major figures in his administration repeatedly frustrated his most outward ambitions. "The fact that a once proud people chose, twice, to demean itself with a leader like Donald Trump will be one of history's great cautionary tales," said Cal Jillson, a constitutional and presidential scholar at Southern Methodist University whose new book, "Race, Ethnicity, and American Decline," anticipated some of the existential issues of the election. "Donald Trump's actions will be as divisive, ill-considered, and mean-spirited in his second term as in his first," he said. "He will undercut Ukraine, NATO, and the U.N. abroad and the rule of law, individual rights, and our senses of national cohesion and purpose at home." From the political left, any threats to democracy were not on the mind of independent Sen. Bernie Sanders of Vermont when he offered a blistering critique of the Democratic campaign. "It should come as no surprise that a Democratic Party which has abandoned working people would find that the working class has abandoned them," he said in a statement. "Will they understand the pain and political alienation that tens of millions of Americans are experiencing?" He concluded: "Probably not." For his part, Trump says he is intent on restoring democracy, not tearing it down. There was nothing democratic, he and his allies assert, in seeing military leaders defy the elected commander in chief, whether the issue was troop deployments or his wish for a splashy military parade. Or in seeing Democratic presidents establish immigration policy and vast student loan relief though executive action, bypassing Congress. But that case is built from the ground up on the lie of a stolen 2020 election, his machinations to stall the certification of that vote and his mob's bloody attack on the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021. He comes to office intending to pardon some of the people convicted for that riot and perhaps clear himself of criminal cases against him. Guardrails remain. One is the Supreme Court, whose conservative majority loosened the leash on presidential behavior in its ruling expanding their immunity from prosecution. The court has not been fully tested on how far it will go to accommodate Trump's actions and agenda. And which party will control the House is still yet unknown. The Republican's victory came from a public so put off by America's trajectory that it welcomed his brash and disruptive approach. Among voters under 30, just under half went for Trump, an improvement from his 2020 performance, according to the AP VoteCast survey of more than 120,000 voters. About three-quarters of young voters said the country was headed in the wrong direction, and roughly one-third said they wanted total upheaval in how the country is run. By Trump's words, at least, that's what they'll get.

I concede this election, but not the fight: Harris

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Shortly after conceding the presidential race to Donald Trump, Vice President Kamala Harris urged supporters to accept the election results and pledged to ensure a peaceful transfer of power to the Republican leader. In an emotional concession speech at her alma mater Howard University, 60-year-old Harris said the "light of America's promise will always burn bright" and vowed to keep up the "fight" that fuelled her campaign. "My heart is full today — full of gratitude for the trust you have placed in me, full of love for our country, and full of resolve," she said in an attempt to lift the spirits of her supporters. "The outcome of this election is not what we wanted, not what we fought for, not what we voted for. But hear me when I say, the light of America's promise will always burn bright," she added. "I know folks are feeling and experiencing a range of emotions right now. I get it. But we must accept the results of this election," she said, adding that a fundamental principle of democracy is to accept the election outcomes. Harris said she spoke to President-elect Trump and congratulated him on his victory. "I told Trump that we will help him and his team in their transition and that we will engage in a peaceful transition of power," she said. "In our nation, we owe loyalty not to a president or a party but to the constitution of the United States," she added. "While I concede this election, I do not concede the fight that fuelled this campaign," Harris said. Harris also called on her supporters not to give up their fights to protect the country's foundational principles. "Sometimes the fight takes a while, but that does not mean we will not win; the important



"Sometimes the fight takes a while, but that does not mean we will not win; the important thing is don't ever give up"

thing is don't ever give up," she said. In the election, 78-year-old Trump pulled off an incredible comeback wresting 291 electoral college votes as against Harris' 223 in a fierce contest that almost left the Americans with two world views. While Harris projected herself as an "agent of change," Trump constructed a campaign on people's concerns over economy and immigration. "The fight for freedom, opportunity, for fairness and dignity of all people will continue,"

Harris said in her address. The vice president said she will never give up the fight for democracy, rule of law and for equal justice. "The fight for our freedom will take hard work, but as I always say we like hard work; the fight for our country is always worth it," she said. "I know many people feel like we are entering a dark time, but for the benefit of us all, I hope that is not the case," she added. The mood at the rally was incredibly sombre. The crowd of what appeared to number several thousand was very quiet. Harris campaign aides stood to one side of the stage as she spoke and exchanged hugs, including Jen O'Malley Dillon, David Plouffe, and Brian Fallon. Former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and DC Mayor Muriel Bowser were seen conversing in the crowd. Several of Harris's younger family members were wiping away tears as they left the rally.

Biden calls Trump to congratulate him on his victory

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

US President Joe Biden on Thursday made a phone call to president-elect Donald Trump and congratulated him on his victory, the White House said. Biden also spoke over the phone with Vice President Kamala Harris and congratulated her on her historic campaign, the White House said. In his call with Trump, Biden expressed his commitment to ensuring a smooth transition and emphasised the importance of working to bring the country together. "He also invited president-elect Trump to meet with him in the White House. The staff will coordinate a specific date in the near future. Tomorrow, President Biden will address the nation to discuss the election results and the transition," the White House said. "President Joe Biden called President Donald J. Trump to congratulate him on his victory and extended an invitation to the White House to ensure a smooth transition between the current administration and the incoming administration. President Trump looks forward to the meeting, which will take place shortly, and very much appreciated the call," Steven Cheung, Trump Campaign Communications Director, said. Meanwhile, President Joe Biden on Wednesday applauded Vice President Kamala Harris for leading a historic campaign under extraordinary circumstances. "What America saw today was the Kamala Harris I know and deeply admire. She's been a tremendous partner and public servant full of integrity, courage, and character," Biden said in a statement. "Under extraordinary circumstances, she stepped up and led a historic campaign that embodied what's possible when guided by a strong moral compass and a clear vision for a nation that is more free, more just, and full of more opportunities for all Americans," he said. "As I've said before, selecting Kamala was the very first decision I made when I became the nominee for president in 2020. It was the best decision I made. Her story represents the best of America's story. And as she made clear today, I have no doubt that she'll continue writing that story," he said. "She will continue the fight with purpose, determination, and joy. She will continue to be a champion for all Americans. Above all, she will continue to be a leader our children will look up to for generations to come as she puts her stamp on America's future," Biden said.

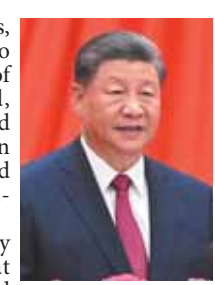


US should find 'right way' to manage differences, says China

PTI ■ BEIJING

Chinese President Xi Jinping on Thursday congratulated President-elect Donald Trump on his election victory and called for China and the US to find the right way to manage the differences by strengthening dialogue and communication. Trump won the US presidential election for a second term on Wednesday in one of the most remarkable comebacks in American electoral history. Xi, in his congratulatory message to Trump, called for the two countries to strengthen dialogue and communication, properly manage differences and expand mutually beneficial cooperation, official media reports here said. "I urge China and the US to expand mutually beneficial cooperation," Xi said. "I call for the right way for China, and the US to get along in the new era," he said, adding that both

the countries, the top two economies of the world, should strengthen dialogue and communication. History teaches that China and the United States gain from cooperation and lose from confrontation, Xi said, noting that a stable, sound and sustainable China-US relationship serves the two countries' shared interests and meets the aspirations of the international community. He expressed the hope that the two sides will uphold the principles of mutual respect, peaceful coexistence, and win-win cooperation, strengthen dialogue and communication, properly manage differences



and expand mutually beneficial cooperation. Also on Thursday, Chinese Vice President Han Zheng congratulated J D Vance on his election as vice president of the United States, state-run Xinhua news agency reported. As the results of the US presidential elections poured in on Wednesday pointing to a sweeping victory for Trump, who pursued a tough policy against China in his first term including clamping tariffs on over USD 380 billion Chinese exports to the US, Beijing reacted guardedly and said that it respects the choice of the American people. Our policy towards the United States has been consistent and we will continue to view and handle the China-US relations in accordance with the principles of mutual respect, peaceful coexistence and win-win cooperation," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Mao Ning told a media briefing here.

UK PM Starmer covers defence, security in first call with Trump

PTI ■ LONDON

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer touched upon a range of topics, including defence and regional security, during his congratulatory phone call with US President-elect Donald Trump after a "historic" election victory. During the call on Wednesday evening, both leaders agreed to work towards strengthening the "incredibly strong" US-UK special relationship and committed to ensure the bilateral ties continue to thrive. "The Prime Minister offered his hearty congratulations and said he looked forward to working closely with President-elect Trump across all areas of the special relationship. From defence and security to growth and prosperity, the relationship between the UK and US was incredibly strong and would continue to thrive for many years to come, the leaders agreed," a Downing Street

spokesperson said. Starmer is said to have also reflected on the situation in the Middle East and "underscored the importance of regional stability". They went on to discuss their recent meeting at Trump Tower when Starmer was in New York for the United Nations General Assembly. "The leaders fondly recalled their meeting in September, and President-elect Trump's close connections and affinity to the United Kingdom and looked forward to working with one another," Downing Street added. The phone call came after a heated first exchange between Starmer and the newly elected UK Leader of the



Opposition Kemi Badenoch in the House of Commons. The Conservative Party chief challenged the Labour leader over his party volunteers having flown in to support the campaign of Trump's Democrat rival Kamala Harris. "I am very sure that President Trump will soon be calling to thank him for sending all of those north London Labour activists to campaign for his opponent," Badenoch taunted. "It is absolutely crucial that we have a strong relationship — that strong, special relationship, forged in difficult circumstances — between the US and the UK. We will continue to work, as we have done in our four months in government, on issues of security, our economy and global conflict," Starmer responded. Earlier, Starmer had been forced to stress that any party activists in the US during the election campaign were there as volunteers on their own time.

European leaders assess how Trump will affect their fortunes

AP ■ BUDAPEST (HUNGARY)

Around 50 European leaders, including Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte, will be reassessing their trans-Atlantic relations in the hope that Donald Trump's second US presidency will avoid the strife and political pitfalls of his first administration. Further compounding an already complicated situation, Germany — Europe's troubled economic juggernaut — sank into political crisis after German Chancellor Olaf Scholz fired his finance minister. It raises the spectre of an election in a few

months and yet another standoff between the emboldened hard right and the establishment parties in Europe. Those two combined "adds even more pepper and salt to this situation," Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk said. But the US election fallout still took centre stage. "Our relationship with the US is essential and we are ready to deepen it," European Council President Charles Michel said. The 27 nations from the European Union bloc will be meeting in a separate summit as soon as other leaders from the United Kingdom,



Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, center, and Latvia's Prime Minister Evika Silina, right, arrive for the European Political Community (EPC) Summit at the Puskas Arena in Budapest, Hungary, on Thursday. AP/PTI

Turkey and the Balkans leave in the evening. During his election campaign, Trump had threatened anything from a trade war with Europe to a withdrawal of NATO commitments and a fundamental shift of support for Ukraine in its war with Russia — all issues that could have ground-breaking consequences for nations across Europe. Summit host and ardent Trump fan, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban, said early Thursday he already had a phone call with the incoming president overnight, announcing that "We have big plans for the future!"

So did hard-right Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, who lauded the "deep and historic strategic partnership that has always tied Rome and Washington." That partnership came under constant pressure during Trump's first term, from 2017-2021. "Trump's administration slapped tariffs on EU steel and aluminum in 2018, based on the claim that foreign products, even if produced by American allies, were a threat to US national security. Europeans and other allies retaliated with duties on US-made motorcycles, bourbon, peanut butter and jeans, among other items."

The impact of the US election result could be felt in Europe for years to come, on issues including the wars in Ukraine and the Middle East, as well as migration and climate change. Among the leaders due to attend on Thursday is Zelenskyy, who is expected to make another plea for more aid as his country finds off Moscow's invasion. The timing is laden with significance as Trump has vowed to end the war "within 24 hours" of being elected — something leaders in Kyiv interpret as an impending evaporation of US support following Trump's win.

European agency says this will likely be hottest year on record — again

AP ■ CHICAGO
For the second year in a row, Earth will almost certainly be the hottest it's ever been. And for the first time, the globe this year reached more than 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) of warming compared to the pre-industrial average, the European climate agency Copernicus said Thursday.

record-breaking temperatures without the constant increase of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere driving global warming. He cited other factors that contribute to exceptionally warm years like last year and this one. They include El Nino — the temporary warming of parts of the Pacific that changes weather worldwide — as well as volcanic eruptions that spew water vapor into the air and variations in energy from the sun. But he and other scientists say the long-term increase in temperatures beyond fluctuations like El Nino is a bad sign. "A very strong El Nino event is a sneaky peek into what the new

normal will be about a decade from now," said Zeke Hausfather, a research scientist with the nonprofit Berkeley Earth. News of a likely second year of record heat comes a day after Republican Donald Trump, who has called climate change a "hoax" and promised to boost oil drilling and production, was reelected to the presidency. It also comes days before the next U.N. climate conference, called COP29, is set to begin in Azerbaijan. Talks are expected to focus on how to generate trillions of dollars to help the world transition to clean energies like wind and solar, and

thus avoid continued warming. Buontempo pointed out that going over the 1.5 degree Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) threshold of warming for a single year is different than the goal adopted in the 2015 Paris Agreement. That goal was meant to try to cap warming at 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) since pre-industrial times on average, over 20 or 30 years. A United Nations report this year said that since the mid-1800s on average, the world has already heated up 1.3 degrees Celsius (2.3 degrees Fahrenheit) — up from previous estimates of 1.1 degrees (2

degrees Fahrenheit) or 1.2 degrees (2.2 degrees Fahrenheit). That's of concern because the U.N. says the greenhouse gas emission reduction goals of the world's nations still aren't nearly ambitious enough to keep the 1.5 degree Celsius target on track. The target was chosen to try to stave off the worst effects of climate change on humanity, including extreme weather. "The heat waves, storm damage, and droughts that we are experiencing now are just the tip of the iceberg," said Natalie Mahowald, chair of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences at Cornell University.

Going over that number in 2024 doesn't mean the overall trend line of global warming has, but "in the absence of concerted action, it soon will," said University of Pennsylvania climate scientist Michael Mann. Stanford University climate scientist Rob Jackson put it in starker terms. "I think we have missed the 1.5 degree window," said Jackson, who chairs the Global Carbon Project, a group of scientists who track countries' carbon dioxide emissions. "There's too much warming." Indiana state climatologist Beth Hall said she isn't surprised by the latest report from

Copernicus, but emphasized that people should remember climate is a global issue beyond their local experiences with changing weather. "We tend to be siloed in our own individual world," she said. Reports like this one "are taking into account lots and lots of locations that aren't in our backyard." Buontempo stressed the importance of global observations, bolstered by international cooperation, that allow scientists to have confidence in the new report's finding: Copernicus gets its results from billions of measurements from satellites, ships, aircraft and

weather stations around the world. He said that going over the 1.5 degree Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) benchmark this year is "psychologically important" as nations make decisions internally and approach negotiations at the annual U.N. climate change summit Nov. 11-22 in Azerbaijan. "The decision, clearly, is ours. It's of each and every one of us. And it's the decision of our society and our policymakers as a consequence of that," he said. "But I believe these decisions are better made if they are based on evidence and facts."

Australia plans social media ban for children under 16

AP ■ MELBOURNE
The Australian government announced on Thursday what it described as world-leading legislation that would institute an age limit of 16 years for children to start using social media, and hold platforms responsible for ensuring compliance. "Social media is doing harm to our kids and I'm calling time on it," Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said. The legislation will be introduced in Parliament during its final two weeks in session this year, which begin on Nov. 18. The age limit would take effect 12 months after the law is passed, Albanese told reporters. The platforms including X, TikTok, Instagram and Facebook would need to use that year to work out how to exclude Australian children younger than 16. "I've spoken to thousands of parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles. They, like me, are worried sick about the safety of our kids online," Albanese said.

The proposal comes as governments around the world are wrestling with how to supervise young people's use of technologies like smartphones and social media. Social media platforms would be penalized for breaching the age limit, but under-age children and their parents would not. "The onus will be on social media platforms to demonstrate they are taking reasonable steps to prevent access. The onus won't be on parents or young people," Albanese said. Antigone Davis, head of safety at Meta, which owns Facebook and Instagram, said the company would respect any age limitations the government wants to introduce. "However, what's missing is a deeper discussion on how we implement protections, otherwise we risk making ourselves feel better, like we have taken action, but teens and parents will not find themselves in a better place," Davis said in a statement.

She added that stronger tools in app stores and operating systems for parents to control what apps their children can use would be a "simple and effective solution." X did not immediately respond to a request for comment on Thursday. TikTok declined to comment. The Digital Industry Group Inc., an advocate for the digital industry in Australia, described the age limit as a "20th Century response to 21st Century challenges." "Rather than blocking access through bans, we need to take a balanced approach to create age-appropriate spaces, build digital literacy and protect young people from online harm," DIGI managing director Sunita Bose said in a statement. More than 140 Australian and international academics with expertise in fields related to technology and child welfare signed an open letter to Albanese last month opposing a social media age limit as "too blunt an instrument to address

risks effectively." Jackie Hallan, a director at the youth mental health service ReachOut, opposed the ban. She said 73% of young people across Australia accessing mental health support did so through social media. "We're uncomfortable with the ban. We think young people are likely to circumvent a ban and our concern is that it really drives the behavior underground and then if things go wrong, young people are less likely to get support from parents and carers because they're worried about getting in trouble," Hallan said. Child psychologist Philip Tam said a minimum age of 12 or 13 would have been more enforceable. "My real fear honestly is that the problem of social media will simply be driven underground," Tam said. Australian National University lawyer Associate Prof. Faith Gordon feared separating children from these platforms could create pressures within families.

Albanese said there would be exclusions and exemptions in circumstances such as a need to continue access to educational services. But parental consent would not entitle a child under 16 to access social media. Earlier this year, the government began a trial of age-restriction technologies. Australia's eSafety Commissioner, the online watchdog that will police compliance, will use the results of that trial to provide platforms with guidance on what reasonable steps they can take. Communications Minister Michelle Rowland said the year-long lead-in would ensure the age limit could be implemented in a "very practical way." "There does need to be enhanced penalties to ensure compliance," Rowland said. "Every company that operates in Australia, whether domiciled here or otherwise, is expected and must comply with Australian law or face the consequences," she added.

SCBA seeks comprehensive immigration reform in US

PTI ■ WASHINGTON
Observing that this election cycle was a divisive one, filled with uncertainty and anxiety about the future of the nation and democracy, the South Asian Bar Association (SCBA) has pushed for a comprehensive immigration reform, including improving the H-1B programme. The H-1B visa programme allows US companies to employ foreign workers in speciality occupations that require theoretical or technical expertise. Technology companies depend on it to hire tens of thousands of employees each year from countries like India and China. "This election cycle was a divisive one, filled with uncertainty and anxiety about the future of our nation and democracy," Keerthi Sugumar, president of the South Asian Bar Association (SABA) North

America and Mona Shah, its executive director, said. SABA North America said it is committed to working with president-elect Donald Trump and his administration to ensure that the voices of its members are heard on a broad range of policy issues impacting the South Asian community, from racial justice and immigration to religious discrimination, reproductive rights, and the rule of law. Immigration reform, reproductive justice freedoms and nomination of qualified South Asian attorneys are its key priorities, SABA North America said. "These issues, which were at the forefront of South Asian voters in this election, will undoubtedly remain key policy issues for the upcoming administration," it said. "Pushing for comprehensive immigration reform, as it did in

December 2023 when it submitted its comments to USCIS's proposal for improving the H-1B programme and registration process under the Biden-Harris Administration. Lobbying for reproductive justice freedoms, an issue that uniquely affects Asian American and South Asian American women; and advocating for key endorsements and nominations of qualified South Asian attorneys to the judiciary, including the US Supreme Court," the press release said. SABA, it said, remains steadfast in its "support of our members and members of the South Asian community to exercise their fundamental rights and liberties under the Constitution." SABA continues to work with its chapters and community partners to ensure that the rights and liberties of its members and the South Asian community are protected.



In this photo provided by Ukraine's 24th Mechanised Brigade press service, servicemen of the 24th Mechanised Brigade improve their tactical skills at the training field in Donetsk region, Ukraine. AP/PTI

Large airstrikes hit Beirut suburbs as Israel expands Gaza operations

AP ■ BEIRUT
Several large airstrikes hit Beirut's southern suburbs early Thursday, including one on a site adjacent to Lebanon's only international airport. The Israeli military had issued an evacuation notice for the site, saying there were Hezbollah facilities there, without giving more details. Also Thursday, the Israeli military announced it expanded its month-old ground operation in northern Gaza to include part of Beit Lahiya, a town that has been heavily bombed since the earliest days of the war, where Israel says Hamas militants have regrouped. Hezbollah leader Naim Kassem said in a speech aired Wednesday that the Lebanese militant group is open for cease-fire negotiations only once "the enemy stops its aggression." His speech marked the 40-day mourning period since former Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah was assassinated in Beirut. Hezbollah began firing into

Israel on Oct. 8, 2023, in solidarity with the Hamas militant group in the Gaza Strip. Since the conflict erupted, more than 3,000 people have been killed and some 13,600 wounded in Lebanon, the Health Ministry reported. The Israel-Hamas war began after Palestinian militants stormed into Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, killing some 1,200 people — mostly civilians — and abducting 250 others. Israel's military response in Gaza has killed more than 43,000 people, Palestinian health officials say. They do not distinguish between civilians and combatants, but say more than half of those killed were women and children. Israel announces \$5.2 billion fighter jet deal with Boeing: Israel says it has reached an agreement to purchase 25 advanced F-15 fighter jets from U.S. aerospace giant Boeing for \$5.2 billion. The Defense Ministry said the agreement, concluded Wednesday, was part of a broader aid package approved

by the U.S. government earlier this year. Deliveries will begin in 2031, and there's an option for the purchase of an additional 25 aircraft. The United States has provided crucial military support to Israel as it has battled Hamas in Gaza, Hezbollah in Lebanon and traded fire with Iran. The Biden administration recently warned Israel that if it did not facilitate the delivery of more aid to Gaza, U.S. laws may force the administration to curb some of its military support. The State Department said this week that Israel had yet to sufficiently improve aid deliveries ahead of a mid-November deadline. President-elect Donald Trump has vowed to end the wars in the Middle East without saying how he plans to do it. He was a staunch supporter of Israel during his previous term but also cultivated close ties with Arab Gulf leaders. Israeli military extends shutdown of Al Jazeera's West Bank bureau: The Al Jazeera

news network says the Israeli military has extended the order shutting down its bureau in the occupied West Bank. Walid al-Omari, the network's bureau chief, said Israeli troops raided the office in Ramallah again early Thursday and posted a notice extending the closure for an additional 45 days. Israel had previously raided the office and shut it down on Sept. 22. Earlier this year, authorities took the rare step of barring the Qatar-based network from operating in Israel. Israel accuses Al Jazeera of serving as a mouthpiece for Hamas, an allegation denied by the network. Last month, Israel accused six Al Jazeera journalists in Gaza of being Palestinian militants, which the network also denied. Al-Jazeera has provided near 24-hour coverage from inside Gaza since the start of the Israel-Hamas war, with a heavy focus on the war's toll among Palestinian civilians. Several of its correspondents have been killed or wounded by Israeli forces.

Indian consulate in Canada cancels consular camps due over security issues

PTI ■ TORONTO
The Consulate General of India in Toronto on Thursday said it is cancelling some of its scheduled consular camps after the Canadian security authorities conveyed their inability to provide minimum security protection to its organisers. The announcement comes days after an incident of violent disruption by protestors carrying Khalistani flags at a consular event co-organised by the Hindu Sabha temple in

Brampton and the Indian Consulate. "In view of the security agencies conveying their inability to provide minimum security protection to the community camp organisers, the Consulate has decided to cancel some of the scheduled consular camps," the Consulate General of India said in a post on X. On November 3, the protest occurred at the Hindu Sabha temple in Brampton and unruly videos circulating on social media appeared to show demonstrators holding banners

in support of Khalistan. The protestors clashed with people and disrupted the consular event. The incident was condemned by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau who said every Canadian has the right to practice their faith freely and safely. India condemned the attack with an expectation that those indulging in violence "will be prosecuted." In a statement, the Ministry of External Affairs said that New Delhi remains "deeply concerned" about the safety and security of Indian nationals in

Canada. The relations between India and Canada came under severe strain following Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's allegations in September last year of a "potential" involvement of Indian agents in Khalistan extremist Hardeep Singh Nijjar's killing. New Delhi rejected Trudeau's charges as "absurd." India has been maintaining that the main issue between the two countries is that of Canada giving space to pro-Khalistan elements operating from Canadian soil with impunity.

Canada orders TikTok's business to be dissolved, won't block app

AP ■ TORONTO
Canada announced Wednesday it is ordering the dissolution of TikTok's Canadian business after a national security review of the Chinese company behind the social media app but said it won't block access. Industry Minister François-Philippe Champagne said it is meant to address risks related to ByteDance Ltd.'s establishment of TikTok Technology Canada Inc. "The government is not blocking Canadians' access to the TikTok application or their ability to create content. The decision to use a social media application or platform is a personal choice," Champagne said. Champagne said it is important for Canadians to adopt good cybersecurity practices, including protecting their personal information. He said the dissolution order was made in accordance with the Investment Canada Act, which allows for the review of foreign investments that may harm Canada's national security. TikTok Canada did not immediately respond to a request for comment. TikTok is wildly popular with young people, but its Chinese ownership has raised fears that

Beijing could use it to collect data on Western users or push pro-China narratives and misinformation. TikTok is owned by ByteDance, a Chinese company that moved its headquarters to Singapore in 2020. TikTok faces intensifying scrutiny from Europe and America over security and data privacy.

LOST & FOUND
My name is Muhib Ahmed S/o Mohd Hanif resident of Muradnagar, I have got my passport number F5489202 from the Passport Office Ghaziabad, I have kept my passport in my document file, I need my passport for any necessary work, I did not get my passport, I tried to find my passport at every possible place and also from my family members.
Muhib Ahmad, Mob. No.9718983333

PUBLIC NOTICE
My client Sh. Sanjay S/o Late Sh. Babbar Singh owner of Residential house no. 121 M/G Property 10 no. K/2/4/18 area measuring 100 sq. yards, having covered area 900 sq. ft. comprising of Khewal/Khatta no. 714/661, Khatoli no. 204 Rikhsra no. 567, Situated in the Residential Colony known as Village Khansha, Tehsil Kadpur District Gurgaon Haryana through Registered Reinvestment Deed Dated 16.09.2024 executed by (1) Sh. Deshpak, (2) Smt. Saroj, (3) Smt. Manju & (4) Smt. Geeta in favour of Sh. Sanjay S/o Late Sh. Babbar Singh Vide Reg. no. 8597, at SR Gurgaon the above mentioned property is going to be mortgaged with Federal Financial Services Limited. If any person/bank/financial institution having any claim/right, lien, any objection whatsoever in regard to the above property, should notified to the undersigned Mr. Vishal Mehan, E-713, Karkardooma Court, Delhi-110092 along with documentary evidence under address through registered within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice failing which any claim, lien or objection shall be deemed to have been waived.
Adv. Vishal Mehan, E-713, Karkardooma Court, Delhi-110092, Mobile No. 9811251811

Scholz fires his finance minister, coalition collapses

AP ■ BERLIN
Germany's centre-left Chancellor Olaf Scholz announced Wednesday he was firing Finance Minister Christian Lindner, signalling the collapse of the ruling three-party coalition that relied on Lindner's pro-business party. Scholz announced the move at a news conference following weeks of disputes among the coalition partners over ways to boost the country's ailing economy. He said he would seek a vote of confidence in January that he said might lead to early elections that otherwise would be due next September. "I feel compelled to take this step

to prevent damage to our country. We need an effective government that has the strength to make the necessary decisions for our country," Scholz said. Lindner, from the pro-business Free Democrats, had rejected tax increases or changes to Germany's strict self-imposed limits on running up debt. Scholz's Social Democrats and the environmental Greens, who are also part of the coalition, wanted to see massive state investment and rejected the Free Democrats' proposals to cut welfare programmes. Lindner responded to his dismissal by accusing Scholz of failing "to recognise the need for a

new economic awakening in our country. He has played down the economic concerns of the citizens." He said the chancellor's proposals to reenergise the economy were "dull, unambitious and make no contribution to overcoming the fundamental weakness of our country's growth." Scholz said about Lindner that "he has broken my trust too often. He has even unilaterally cancelled the agreement on the budget. After we had already agreed on it in long negotiations. There is no basis of trust for further cooperation. Serious government work is not possible like this."

He accused Lindner of publicly calling for a fundamentally different economic policy, including what Scholz said would be tax cuts worth billions for a few top earners while at the same time cutting pensions for all pensioners. "That is not decent," Scholz said. Scholz said he would seek the vote of confidence in Germany's Bundestag, or parliament, on January 15, which would "allow the members of the Bundestag to decide whether to clear the way for early elections." The election could then "take place at the end of March at the latest, in compliance with the deadlines set out in constitution," he said.

THE PIONEERS CLASSIFIED
CHANGE OF NAME
I, SHELLY, SHELLY BANSAL, SHAILY BANSAL, W/O JALAJ GUPTA, D/O SANDEEP KUMAR BANSAL, R/O B-347, THIRD FLOOR, STREET NO 04, MAJLIS PARK, ADARSH NAGAR, DELHI-110033 HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO SHAILY GUPTA FOR ALL PURPOSES.
PD(898)C
I, RAJESH KUMAR, S/O RAMJI LAL, R/O D- 1830/31, JAHANGIRPURI DELHI 33. I HAVE CHANGED MY NAME FROM RAJESH BANSIWAL TO RAJESH KUMAR, FOR ALL PURPOSES.
PD(899)C

CORRIGENDUM NO. 01 & 02 AGAINST TENDER NOTICE NO. : CE/CON/2024/OCT/03, Dated : 21-10-2024
Corrigendum-01 & 02 for Tender No. CE-CON-DK-PW-2024-05 has been published. For details please visit www.ireps.gov.in.
Chief Engineer/Con-6, Maligaon, Northeast Frontier Railway (Construction Organisation) "SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE"

PUBLIC NOTICE
My client Suresh Kumar S/o Suraj Pal and his wife Saroj H No 80 Block 20, JJ Colony Dakshinpur, New Delhi- 62 got fed up with the wrong behavior of their Son Rakesh and Daughter-in-law Madhu Mehraula and dispossessed all their movable and immovable property and severed the relationship. My client will not be responsible for any of their dealings.
S.P Pandey (Adv)

PUBLIC NOTICE
Notice is hereby given on behalf of RAVI SINGHAL who is purchasing the HOUSE NO. R-7/119, AREA MEASURING 200 SQ. YDS., SECTOR-7, RESIDENTIAL COLONY, KNOWN AS RAJ NAGAR, TEHSIL AND DISTRICT-GHAZIABAD U.P. FROM SARVENDRA KUMAR TYAGI who had purchased the same by virtue of Sale Deed dated 13.02.2023 bearing Document no.1388, Book no.1, Volume no.9744, and pages 293-318, Dated 13.02.2023 from Mr. Amit Tyagi, and intend to mortgage against the financial assistance from Aditya Birla Housing Finance Limited. To comply the requirements of BANK/NBFC, we give this public notice that if any Person having any type of claim (right/title)/interest/creating mortgage over the said property, may inform in writing, at the address mentioned below, about his objections, within 7 days from today, failing which it shall be presumed that the said property is free from all type of Encumbrances, lien etc. Lucem Legal LLP Plot No.136, (Basement) Uday Park, New Delhi-110049, Contact # 011-40046316

Supreme Court orders liquidation of grounded Jet Airways' assets



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court (SC) on Thursday exercised its extraordinary constitutional powers and ordered the liquidation of grounded air carrier Jet Airways' assets. A bench of Chief Justice DY Chandrachud and Justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra set aside the National

Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) decision upholding the resolution plan of Jet Airways, which approved the transfer of its ownership to Jalan Kalrock Consortium (JKC). Pronouncing the judgement for the bench, Justice Pardiwala allowed the plea of the State Bank of India (SBI) and other creditors against the NCLAT decision that

upheld the resolution plan of Jet Airways in favour of JKC. It said the liquidation of the air carrier was in the interest of creditors, workers and other stakeholders. The bench came down on the NCLAT, which the SC held disregarded the court's 2023 ruling. "We have no doubt that the NCLAT acted contrary to settled legal principles...

NCLAT incorrectly interpreted our order," the court noted in the judgment. The fundamental concern is not only to do substantial justice but also to bring speedy disposal of dispute, it further noted. The court used its powers under Article 142 of the Constitution which gives it the power to make orders and decrees to ensure complete justice in any matter or cause pending before it. The NCLAT on March 12 upheld the resolution plan of the grounded air carrier and approved the transfer of its ownership to JKC. The SBI, Punjab National Bank (PNB) and JC Flowers Asset Reconstruction Private Limited had challenged the NCLAT verdict. Additional Solicitor General (ASG) N Venkataraman appeared for the SBI - the lead lender of Jet Airways, while Senior Advocates Mukul Rohatgi and Gopal Sankaranarayanan represented the Successful Resolution Applicant (SRA) Jalan KalRock Consortium (JKC). In the past, Jet was the second largest carrier in India.

Markets snap rally ahead of Fed interest rate decision



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Benchmark Sensex and Nifty tumbled more than 1 per cent on Thursday after a two-day rally as investors remained on the sidelines ahead of the US Federal Reserve interest rate decision and unabated foreign fund outflows. The BSE Sensex tanked 836.34 points or 1.04 per cent to settle at 79,541.79. During the day, it slumped 958.79 points or 1.19 per cent to 79,419.34. The NSE Nifty dropped 284.70 points or 1.16 per cent to finish at 24,199.35. From the 30-share Sensex pack, Tata Motors, Tech Mahindra, UltraTech Cement, JSW Steel, Sun Pharma, Asian Paints, IndusInd Bank and ICICI Bank were the major losers.

State Bank of India emerged as the only gainer from the pack. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 4,445.59 crore on Wednesday, according to exchange data. In Asian markets, Seoul, Shanghai and Hong Kong settled higher while Tokyo ended lower. European markets were trading in positive territory. Wall Street ended significantly higher on Wednesday. Global oil benchmark Brent crude dipped 0.33 per cent to USD 74.67 a barrel. The BSE benchmark jumped 901.50 points or 1.13 per cent to settle at 80,378.13 on Wednesday. The Nifty soared 270.75 points or 1.12 per cent to 24,484.05.

Q3 rural consumption volume outgrows urban markets by two times: NielsenIQ report

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Urban and rural markets have shown a sequential recovery in consumer demand and rural areas continue to surpass urban areas in volume growth across most regions of India, according to a report from data analytics firm NielsenIQ. According to the latest NielsenIQ's FMCG Quarterly snapshot, the Indian Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) industry witnessed a 5.7 per cent value-based growth and 4.1 per cent volume growth on a 1.5 per cent price growth in the July-September quarter. "Urban consumption growth in Q3 24 was 2.8 per cent, while rural growth increased to 6 per cent from 5.2 per cent in the previous quarter, 2X faster growth than urban," the report said. Small and medium FMCG companies had a rebound after facing a decline in some quarters. They had faster growth helped by the food segment in comparison to large FMCG giants in terms of value and volume. In the September quarter results leading FMCG companies including HUL, Nestle, Dabur, and Tata Consumer Products have reported a softness in the demand from the

urban market, mainly on account of high food inflation. According to industry observers, the urban market contributes to around 62 to 65 per cent of FMCG sales and the rest is from the rural market, which is largely dominated by food products and small offerings. Moreover, in the September quarter, the FMCG industry also had "slight improvement" on the volume front sequentially, the report said. "Food consumption growth increased to 3.4 per cent in Q3'24 compared to 2.1 per cent in Q2'24," it said. This uptick in volume growth is largely attributed to staple categories such as edible oils, packaged atta, and spices despite price growth. "In Home & Personal Care (HPC) categories, the consumption growth stabilised at 6 per cent in Q3' compared to Q2'23 at 6.7 per cent," it added. This stabilisation in consumer demand for HPC categories, which includes categories such as skin cleansers, shampoo, body lotion, shower gel, toothpaste, laundry detergents etc, was observed in both urban and rural markets. Small manufacturers recovered from the decline of the last three quarters and grew faster than big companies, helped by a sharp recovery in volume growth.

HDFC raises lending rate on select maturity

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

HDFC Bank on Thursday raised the marginal cost of funds-based lending rate (MCLR) by 5 basis points (0.05 percentage points) on select maturity. The benchmark one-year tenor MCLR, which is used to price most consumer loans like auto and personal, has been retained at 9.45 per cent, according to the bank website. The overnight MCLR has risen to 9.15 per cent from 9.10 per cent, while the one-month rate has been increased by 5 basis points to 9.20 per cent. Rates on other buckets have been left unchanged.

Vedanta, Oil India bag critical mineral blocks

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Vedanta Group has won four blocks while state-owned Oil India Ltd (OIL) bagged one in the fourth round of critical mineral blocks auction, the government said on Thursday. While Vedanta bagged vanadium and graphite mine in Arunachal Pradesh, cobalt, manganese and iron (polymetal) mine in Karnataka, Hindustan Zinc Ltd (HZL) -- a subsidiary of Vedanta -- won tungsten and associated minerals block in Andhra Pradesh and a tungsten mine in Tamil Nadu. Oil India Ltd has bagged graphite and vanadium block in Arunachal Pradesh, the government said. Vedanta Ltd had earlier bagged two critical mineral blocks in Karnataka and Bihar in the second and third



auction rounds. Mamco Mining Pvt Ltd and Orissa Metaliks Pvt Ltd are the other two companies that have bagged blocks in this round of auction. "The Ministry of Mines has successfully concluded the auction of eight critical mineral blocks, launched under tranche IV of the auction of critical and strategic mineral blocks," an official statement said. Following the issuance of the

Notice Inviting Tender (NIT) for 21 mineral blocks on June 24, the auction attracted strong interest from industry stakeholders. "After the evaluation of technical bids, 10 mineral blocks advanced to the second round of e-auction, which included three first attempt blocks and seven second attempt blocks," the mines ministry said. These blocks contain deposits of strategic minerals such as

phosphorite, graphite, and vanadium, essential for high-tech and green energy applications. Auction process for the eight blocks have successfully concluded and for the remaining two blocks the process will be completed by December 2. With the auction of these critical mineral blocks, the total number of successfully auctioned critical and strategic mineral blocks has reached 22. The fourth round of auction has marked a beginning for the Northeast into India's mineral auction landscape, with four maiden blocks successfully auctioned. Significantly, this tranche features the first successful auction of a tungsten and two cobalt blocks. These minerals are essential for high-tech, defence, and energy storage applications.

JK Lakshmi Cement reports revenue drop

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

JK Lakshmi Cement has reported a consolidated net loss of Rs 19.24 crore for the second quarter ended September 30, 2024 on account of drop in sales realisation. The company had posted a profit of Rs 95.87 crore in the July-September period a year ago, according to a regulatory filing from JK Lakshmi Cement Ltd (JKCL), a flagship company of JK Organisation. Its revenue from operations was down 2.16 per cent at Rs 1,234.29 crore in the September quarter. It was at Rs 1,574.53 crore in the year-ago period.



Total expenses of JKCL were at Rs 1,263.01 crore, down 1.27 per cent in the September quarter of FY25. JKCL's total income, which includes other income, was also down 2.17 per cent to Rs 1,242.67 crore. During the quarter, JKCL's sales volume declined 1.40 per cent to 18.66 lakh tonnes. "The profitability of the company for the quarter has been impacted due to a sharp drop in sales realisation in our primary markets," Vinita Singhania, chairperson &

managing director said. The cement industry has witnessed a decline in sales realisation due to falling cement prices on an year-on-year basis. The company, however, remained bullish in its outlook for the sector based on the government's spending on infrastructure projects. "Given government's focus on infrastructure development and higher budgetary allocation and various other Initiatives for housing and road development, the outlook for the cement sector is positive in the coming year," it said. Shares of JK Lakshmi Cement Ltd on Thursday were trading at Rs 772 per scrip on BSE.

Nissan cuts jobs as sales tank

AP ■ TOKYO

Nissan reported Thursday a loss for the latest fiscal quarter as its vehicle sales sank while costs and inventory ballooned, prompting the Japanese automaker to slash 9,000 jobs. Chief Executive Makoto Uchida said he was taking a 50 per cent pay cut to take responsibility for the dismal results, while promising that a turnaround was coming. Nissan Motor Corp announced a global workforce reduction of 9,000 people, or about 6 per cent of its more than 1,33,000 employees, as well as a plan to slash global production capacity by 20 per cent. Uchida declined to say which regions will be affected by the cuts or give specifics. For the latest quarter through September, Nissan racked up a 9.3 billion Yen (USD 60 million) loss, a reversal from the 190.7 billion Yen profit recorded the same quarter a



year ago. Quarterly sales fell to 2.9 trillion Yen (USD 19 billion) from 3.1 trillion Yen. Uchida acknowledged Nissan didn't respond quickly or flexibly enough to global changes, including market tastes and soaring raw material costs. "I take this situation very seriously," he told reporters. "Nissan will restructure its

business to become leaner and more resilient." Nissan models did not sell well in the US, one of the most lucrative auto markets in the world that's recently been dominated by Ford, Toyota and Tesla. All aspects of Nissan's operations and plans will be under review, Uchida said. Nissan, based in the port city of Yokohama, reported fiscal first half sales revenue of 5.98 trillion Yen (USD 39 billion), edging down 1 per cent from the more than 6 trillion Yen the same period last year. Its April to September profit totaled 19.2 billion Yen (USD 124 million), declining sharply from the 296.2 billion Yen earned over the six months last year. Nissan lowered its sales revenue forecast for the fiscal year through March 2025 to 12.7 trillion Yen (USD 82 billion) from an earlier projection for 14 trillion Yen (USD 91 billion).

It did not give a net profit forecast, citing uncertainty. It promised to give a profit forecast as soon as possible. Earlier, Nissan was forecasting an annual profit of 300 billion Yen (USD 1.9 billion). The company misread the trend on hybrid and electric vehicles, Uchida further added. "We did start to understand this trend towards the end of last fiscal year," he said, adding that making some changes to core models didn't go as smoothly as planned. Nissan now expects to sell 3.4 million vehicles around the world in the fiscal year ending in March 2025, down from an earlier projected 3.65 million vehicles. The new number is about the same that Nissan sold last fiscal year. Nissan said it's appointing a chief performance officer tasked with turnaround decision-making, who will begin his job next month.

ED searches premises of Amazon, Flipkart vendors

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate Thursday conducted searches against some of the "main vendors" operating on platforms of e-commerce giants Amazon and Flipkart as part of a foreign investment "violation" investigation, official sources said. A total of 19 premises of these "preferred" vendors located in Delhi, Gurugram and Panchkula (Haryana), Hyderabad (Telangana) and Bengaluru (Karnataka) were covered as part of the action, the sources said. It is learnt that the ED inspected documents and took copies of some from the premises of about six such vendors who were not named. The sources said a probe has been initiated by the federal agency under the provisions of the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA) after it received several complaints against the



two large e-commerce companies where it is alleged that they were "violating India's Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) rules by directly or indirectly influencing the sale price of goods or services and not providing level playing field for all the vendors". There was no immediate response from the two e-commerce companies. Meanwhile, the

Competition Commission of India (CCI) had also issued "penalty notices" to Amazon and Flipkart, and their "preferred" sellers, for "engaging" in anti-competitive practices that have adversely affected small traders and 'kirana' (grocery) stores. The CAIT and mainline mobile retailers' association AIMRA had also petitioned the CCI sometime back seeking immediate suspension of operations of Flipkart and Amazon as they alleged that the companies engaged in predatory pricing and were burning cash to offer heavy discounts on products. These practices, in turn, are creating a grey market of mobile phones, causing losses to the exchequer "as players in the grey market evade taxes", they had said. The CCI is already looking into the practices of e-commerce companies.

Scindia rules out spectrum auction pitch by Ambani, Mittal

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Communications minister Jyotiraditya Scindia has said the spectrum for satellite broadband will be allocated and not auctioned as sought by Indian billionaires Mukesh Ambani and Sunil Mittal. The statement is being seen as a potential win for Elon Musk's Starlink. The satellite broadband spectrum will however be not given free and sector regulator TRAI will fix a price for the resource, he told PTI in a text and video interview. "Every country has to follow the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), which is the

organisation that lays out the policy for spectrum in space or satellites, and the ITU has been very clear in terms of the spectrum being given out on an assignment basis. In addition, if you look across the world today, I cannot think of a single country that auctions spectrum for satellite," Scindia said. India is a member of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), a UN agency for digital technology. Musk's Starlink and global peers like Amazon's Project Kuiper back an administrative allocation. While Ambani's Reliance Jio has been vocal



about the need to allocate that spectrum through an auction to provide a level playing field to legacy operators who buy airwaves and set up infrastructure like telecom towers. Mittal, last month at an industry event, where Prime

Minister Narendra Modi was also present, articulated the need to use bidding for such allocation. Jio and Bharti Airtel - India's largest and second-largest operators, respectively - feel that giving away the satellite broadband airwaves at a pre-decided price by the government will create an uneven playing field since they had to compete in an auction to get spectrum for their terrestrial wireless phone networks. The two are vying for a piece of the satellite broadband segment as well. Musk-led Starlink is demanding administrative

allotment of licences in line with the global trend as it looks to tap into the world's fastest-growing mobile telephony and internet market. Scindia said the Telecom Act of 2023 passed in December has put the matter in 'Schedule 1', which means that the Satcom spectrum will be allocated administratively. Such an allocation will be at a government-decided price, and allow foreign firms like Starlink to offer voice and data services. If the spectrum were to be auctioned, it would have made it costlier for Starlink to roll out services. Starlink has applied for a

licence to start operations in the country. Scindia, however, offered no clues on the fate of his application. The minister said that the regulatory process is very clear and transparent. The new Telecom Act has been passed, and the Satellite spectrum is very clearly a part of that in schedule one, he pointed out. "We are open to looking at the application of any entity that wants to invest in India at this point in time. I think only one or two licenses have been given out. And whoever else wants to participate, India is surely going to welcome that," the minister said.

INBRIEF

VIT-AP UNIVERSITY HOSTS IHEF 2024

AMRAVATI: VIT-AP University today hosted its first-ever International Higher Education Fair (IHEF) 2024, bringing together prestigious educational institutions from abroad to showcase graduate, research, and professional study programs.

POWERGRID POSTS PAT

Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (POWERGRID) has announced the Unaudited Financial Results for the quarter and half year ended 30th September 2024. At the end of Q2FY25, the total transmission assets of POWERGRID and its subsidiaries stood at 1,78,195 ckm of transmission lines, 279 substations strategically placed across the country.



THE RAMAYANA

A CONTEMPORARY REVIVAL

Dushyanth Sridhar's Ramayanam is a contemporary translation that makes the ancient epic accessible to modern readers, preserving its themes of love, duty, and human relationships

BY KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

My first-ever foreign tour was to Indonesia in 2011 as an Indian delegate to attend an international workshop on the Tsunami Early Warning System. I was put up at Hotel Borobudur in Jakarta by the hosts, the UNDP.

While the workshop was from 8 am to 6 pm (with an hour-long lunch break and two high-tea sessions each of 15 minutes' duration), the delegates were free after the day's engagements. What caught my attention was the Ramayana Ballet staged daily in the ballroom of the hotel. Since admission was restricted by tickets, I had to collect the details from the hotel staff about the show.

A hotel staff member told me that Ramayana Ballet was a daily event not only in this star hotel but in most of the islands in the archipelago. "The story is the same as that played out in India. Maybe the dance and music associated with the Ramayana are different from what they are in your country," he said.

Lord Anjaneya (Hanuman) was the mascot of the 1997 edition of the South East Asian Games held in Jakarta. This shows the kind of reverence with which the commander of the Monkey Brigade is held in Indonesia, the country with the largest Muslim population in the world. Nicholaz Kazanas, director, OMILOS Meleton Cultural Institute, Greece, in his 2011 lecture held at Madras University, said that the Rig Veda is the oldest published literature of science and culture in the world and the Ramayana and Mahabharata are not mere epics but chronicles of events.

We Indians are still to accord the due status to these works. But for Ramanand Sagar and B. R. Chopra, who took the initiatives in making television series about the Ramayana and Mahabharata

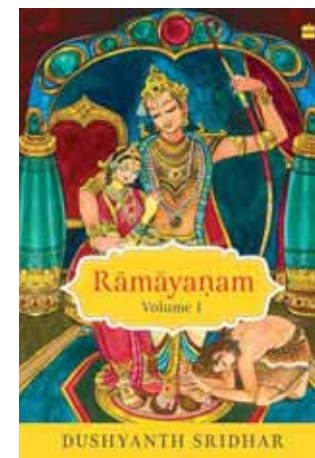


which were telecast through Doodarshan, these epics would have been forgotten long ago. I can still remember the cynicism on the faces of the Left Liberals when these works were aired by Doodarshan. Our contempt for our own culture and tradition inspired Wendy Doniger, the modern-day Lucille Ball (of I Love Lucy fame), to write *The Hindus: An Alternative History*. She had to meekly surrender and withdraw the book following a suit filed by Dinanath Batra under Section 295A of the IPC. The lady had to withdraw the book lest she would have to undergo imprisonment and pay a hefty

amount for offending sentiments of religious communities. The Sanatanis do not react to the insults meted out to them by self-styled intellectuals who publish all kinds of nonsense against the culture, literature, and great epics of India. Many "scholars" have tried to tarnish Indian culture. The name that comes to mind is that of A. K. Ramanujan, who authored an essay "Three Hundred Ramayanas; Five Examples and Three Thoughts on Translation". Ramanujan, known as a poet and scholar of Indian literature and linguistics, portrayed Lord Rama and Sita as siblings and

this upset the believers. Batra himself approached the court and dragged the essay by Ramanujan to the court demanding it be withdrawn from the undergraduate curricula of Delhi University, and the academic council removed the same from the syllabus. The move by the University antagonised the Left intellectuals who described Batra's action as Fascist. It is in this background that *Dushyanth Sridhar*, a young Vedic scholar, chose to translate the Ramayanam by Valmiki into English. *Sridhar* is familiar to people in South India as a leading Harikatha artist (an art

form of telling stories from the Puranas and that too with eloquence). The dying art of Harikatha Kalakshepam got a new lease of life thanks to scholars like Sridhar. His latest work *Ramayanam Translation* proves that his achievements in the field of Vedic literature are not a flash in the pan and Sridhar is here to stay for many decades. Volume one of the book has Ayodhyakhanda (Ayodhya Canto) and concludes with Lord Rama mourning the passing of his father, King Dasaratha. The information about Dasaratha's death was conveyed to him by Bharata and his entourage who went to the



"THE STORY IS THE SAME AS THAT PLAYED OUT IN INDIA. MAYBE THE DANCE AND MUSIC ASSOCIATED WITH THE RAMAYANA ARE DIFFERENT FROM WHAT THEY ARE IN YOUR COUNTRY"

forest pleading with Rama to return to Ayodhya and take over the reins of the kingdom. The remaining volumes are expected shortly, and it is worth waiting to read how *Sridhar* has portrayed Lord Anjaneya and other characters. What is unique about the Ramayana is the theme Mata, Pita, Guru, Deivam (Mother, Father, Teacher and God) – a statement that makes it unambiguously clear that it is through the first three named that one is led to spirituality and truth, the two terms that encompass God. The Indian system of knowledge makes it clear that the Guru is as

important as mother and father. For Rama, Sage Vasishtha was the God incarnation because he had his education under him. A student organisation in Kerala has put flex boards in all college campuses and schools stating that "Teachers are not Gods. Students are not slaves!" This is what information technology and artificial intelligence of the modern day propagate.

Sridhar, having directed a Sanskrit movie *Sakuntalam*, displays his prowess in movie making in the book. The intercuts between what happened after Rama's return to Ayodhya from the Vana Vasa and spurning his royal consort in the jungles as the beginning of the story is intriguing. But more than that, what stands out is Dasaratha's consultation with other Kings about who should be the future emperor of Ayodhya. It is not a namesake discussion but a serious exchange of views. The Kings wanted Rama to be coronated as the next emperor, and they had their own reasons for their stance. It is not like the meetings of the working committees and political affairs committees summoned to sign on the dotted line choosing the son/daughter handpicked by the family patriarch as his heir apparent.

We learn new and newer things each time we read the Ramayana. *Sridhar's* mission is to take the Ramayana to the new age youth who may not be well-versed in Sanskrit. He has edited 24,000 slokas from Valmiki's Ramayana and made it easy for the modern-day youth to comprehend the great epic. People do not just read the Ramayana; they comprehend the work and learn new things each time they go through the work.

What adds to the beauty of the book is the caricatures by Keshav, formerly working with a newspaper known as the English edition of *Deshabhimani*, the CPI(M) mouthpiece. Now over to you, dear readers.

NEW ARRIVALS

NOVEMBER MUST-READ

Publisher: Niyogi Books



Citizen Charles

By MUSTANSIR DALVI

(PRICE: ₹299, PAGES: 204)

Citizen Charles is the first biography of architect Charles Correa (1930–2015), exploring his profound impact on Indian modernism. The book traces his journey from Art Deco Bombay to his advocacy for urban equity in post-independence India, highlighting his commitment to ensuring decent housing and public spaces for all citizens. Through triumphs and challenges, this monograph reflects on Correa's legacy as a pioneering architect who merged contemporary design with Indian culture.

Shyam Benegal: Film-maker of the Real India

By ARJUN SENGUPTA

(Price: ₹299, Pages: 248)

Shyam Benegal: Film-maker of the Real India delves into the life and career of one of India's most acclaimed filmmakers. With a career spanning five decades, Benegal has been a pioneer of alternative cinema, using film to expose societal inequalities and injustices. This book examines his evolution as a filmmaker, exploring his choice of subjects, cinematic techniques, and philosophical perspectives. It also features a chapter dedicated to his work in television and an exclusive interview discussing his craft. Accessible and insightful, this monograph offers a valuable analysis of Benegal's contributions to Indian cinema and cultural history.

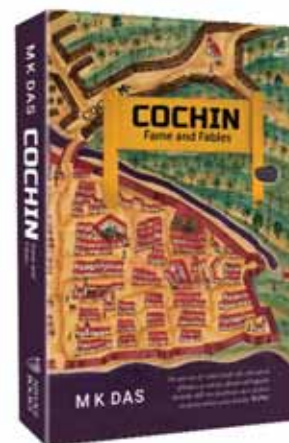
From Port to Cultural Gem

Cochin, once a small fishing village, is now a vibrant city rich in culture and history. In 'Cochin: Fame and Fables', M.K. Das shares the stories of its people and the events that shaped its identity, showing how this city has embraced change while holding onto its roots, writes SAKSHI PRIYA



Welcome to Cochin, a city alive with stories. Set along Kerala's stunning coastline, this vibrant place has witnessed countless changes over the centuries. Once a small fishing village, it grew into a bustling port that attracted traders from around the globe. *'Cochin: Fame and Fables'* by M.K. Das takes readers on a journey through this remarkable city, revealing the rich history and diverse cultures that have shaped it. In his book, M.K. Das captures Cochin's spirit, sharing stories of its people and the challenges they faced. Through his words, we discover how the city has transformed while staying true to its roots. *Das* examines Cochin's role in the spice trade, which made it a major trading hub. Known as "black gold," pepper attracted traders from Rome, Arabia, China and eventually Europe. In the chapter "Birth of a City," *Das* explains how Cochin's location along the Malabar Coast turned it into a gateway for both commerce and culture. The spice trade brought prosperity but also made the city a target for foreign powers, with pepper trade playing a role in diplomacy and negotiations. A major theme in *'Cochin: Fame and Fables'* is the impact of colonisation. The Portuguese, Dutch and British each

sought control over Cochin's valuable trade routes and resources. *Das* describes how these foreign powers altered the city's governance, trade, and architecture. Despite the disruptions, Cochin's people adapted and resisted, maintaining a distinct cultural identity while navigating these political shifts. This theme of resilience underscores the book, as *Das* shows how the city's people absorb outside influences while preserving their roots. The author paints a vivid portrait of the Maharajas of Cochin, modest rulers who focused on the well-being of their people. Unlike the luxuries typically associated with Indian royalty, the Maharajas of Cochin emphasised unity and harmony, providing a peaceful coexistence among the city's diverse communities. Another focus of *Das's* research is the broader impact of global trade. The discovery of the Cape of Good Hope route expanded Cochin merchants' access to international markets, allowing the city's economy to flourish beyond traditional trade routes. These shifts reinforced Cochin's position in international trade. Cochin's religious and cultural diversity stands out as well. Known for inclusivity, the city has welcomed people of various



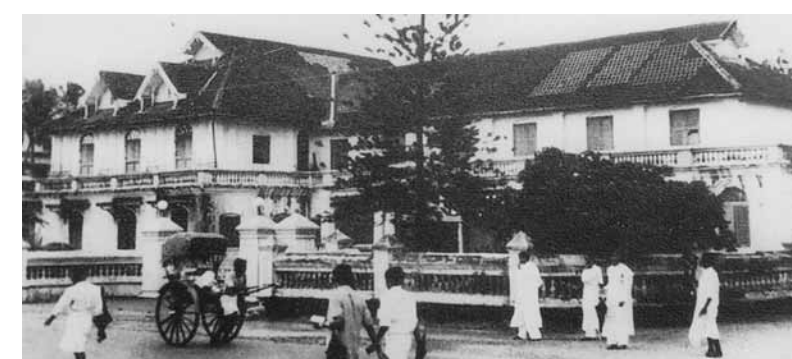
ABOUT THE BOOK

Book : COCHIN : Fame and Fables by M K DAS

Publisher : Niyogi Books

₹795.00

Pages : 300



faiths for centuries. *Das* describes the coexistence of Hindu temples, Christian churches and Jewish synagogues, highlighting a long history of religious tolerance and diversity that has given Cochin a unique character. *Das* also explores Cochin's architectural heritage, a blend of traditional and colonial influences. The city's architecture serves as a visible record of its history, with ancient structures standing alongside colonial buildings, illustrating its journey and adaptation over time. In the book's final chapters, *Das* reflects on Cochin's modern identity, connecting its historical legacy with its current role as a cultural and economic

hub. He argues that Cochin's resilience and openness to new influences continue to define it today, suggesting that understanding the city's past is essential for appreciating its present. 'Cochin: Fame and Fables' is a well-researched account that captures the essence of a city with a rich and complex history. *Das* braids together themes of trade, culture and resilience, offering readers an insightful look into Cochin's evolution. For those interested in Indian history, colonialism or cultural exchange, this book provides a comprehensive view of a city that has retained its identity while embracing change.

INDIA'S SECOND LINE STARS LOOK FOR A BREAKAWAY SERIES AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA

PTI ■ DURBAN

As India firmly embraces a transition phase, a clutch of second line stars such as Sanju Samson and Abhishek Sharma will be hoping for a breakaway series in the four T20Is against South Africa, starting with the first contest here Friday.

It is imperative for them to shed the tag of sidekicks and establish themselves as the first-choice players in this format.

The recent home T20I series against Bangladesh was a precursor. Samson received a chance to open consistently against the neighbours, and he made most of it slamming a 47-ball 111. In the post-Rohit Sharma era in T20Is, Samson would like to further buttress his claim for a regular opening slot with a few fruitful outings against the Proteas. This is an important series for Abhishek as well. The dashing left-hander showed his impressive skills while hammering a 47-ball hundred against Zimbabwe at Harare in July, but his other six international innings have produced - 0, 10, 14, 16, 15, 4. Abhishek will be keen to be more consistent to safeguard his place, and he will also be looking to be more penetrative with his left-arm spin. Tilak Varma offers a similar case. The left-hander has somewhat fallen off the radar after making a solid beginning to his T20I career against the West Indies in August 2023.

Since then, his 12 outings in the shortest format have produced just one fifty and has not featured in the blue jersey after appearing against Afghanistan earlier this January. So, the Hyderabad will be keen to impress the selectors with some meaningful efforts against the Africans, and he has also started using his off-spin more regularly. This series also offers an excellent



opportunity for wicketkeeper batter Jitesh Sharma, who has slipped a few rungs below in the pecking order, and spinner Varun Chakravarthy, who impressed against Bangladesh taking five wickets, to keep themselves afloat over the competition. The selectors will also closely monitor how a new-look pace bowling unit - Arshdeep Singh, Avesh Khan, Vyshak Vijaykumar and Yash Dayal - fare against South Africa. While Arshdeep and Avesh have their moments at the top-level, Vyshak and Dayal will look to carry their success in domestic circuit and in the IPL to international

cricket. Randeep Singh, who was retained by Kolkata Knight Riders after a productive IPL 2024, will be eager to replicate his success here. Randeep brings to the table exciting multiple skillsets - a daring batter down the order, useful medium pacer and a gun outfield fielder.

The seniors in the side like skipper Suryakumar Yadav, all-rounders Hardik Pandya and Axar Patel, the only member from the Test side here, will be hoping for a strong outing so that India can apply some balm over the wounds from their recent home series defeat against New Zealand.

On a personal level, four players - Arshdeep, Avesh, Jitesh and Vyshak - will want impact outings here after not getting retained by their respective franchises ahead of the IPL mega auction November 24 and 25.

All other 11 players in the side have managed to get a retention from their IPL teams.

South Africa will be looking to add a touch of revenge to the series after losing to India in the T20 World Cup final in June, the last time these two sides met.

Teams (from)

India: Suryakumar Yadav (C), Abhishek Sharma, Sanju Samson (WK), Rinku Singh, Tilak Varma, Jitesh Sharma (WK), Hardik Pandya, Axar Patel, Randeep Singh, Varun Chakravarthy, Ravi Bishnoi, Arshdeep Singh, Vijaykumar Vyshak, Avesh Khan, Yash Dayal.

South Africa: Aiden Markram (c), Otneiv Baartman, Gerald Coetzee, Donovan Ferreira, Reeza Hendricks, Marco Jansen, Heinrich Klaasen, Patrick Kruger, Keshav Maharaj, David Miller, Mithali Mpongwana, Ngaba Peter, Ryan Rickelton, Andile Simelane, Lutho Sipamla (3rd and 4th T20Is), and Tristan Stubbs.



Jurel shines, Rahul fails as India A flounder bounce test

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Dhruv Jurel showcased his sound technique and cool temperament while wickets fell like ninepins at the other end in another shoddy batting display by India A on the opening day of the second unofficial Test against Australia A at the iconic MCG on Thursday, Jurel (80 off 186 balls), who came to bat in the third over scored nearly half of India A's paltry first innings total of 161 in 57.1 overs with only other batter to cross 20-run mark was Devdutt Padikkal (26). Veteran KL Rahul (4), opening the batting, done in by a peach of a delivery from Scott Boland (1/51 in 15 overs). Michael Neser (4/27 in 12.2 overs), one of the finest and unluckiest among contemporary Australian pacers, dealt a telling blow in the opening over from which India A couldn't recover. At stumps, Australia A were 53 for 2 in reply with Mukesh Kumar again looking best among Indian bowlers. What stood out during the day was Jurel's composure and ability to play late, using soft hands. When there was extra bounce, he would quickly loosen his bottom hand grip to ensure that the ball didn't go to slip or gully region. He judged the length perfectly and the flicked six off Boland was a treat to watch. While Rishabh Pant is the first-choice wicketkeeper batter, Jurel's ability to leave deliveries on length should put him in a better position than Sarfaraz Khan in the middle-order batter role. It was also the day when one got an indication that India senior team might bank on Rahul's experience of opening the innings if Rohit Sharma skips a match. However, Boland got him with a perfectly pitched delivery that straightened to take his outside edge. But Rahul would be any day better than Abhimanyu Easwaran (0) who is increasingly looking out of sorts at this level. This was after Neser bowled a hostile opening over with Easwaran left in a complete tangle to a well-disguised short ball that ballooned to gully. In-form Sai Sudharsan (0) then got a Neser delivery that was aimed at his midriff and he tried to fend it, resulting in a regulation catch in the slips. Skipper Ruturaj Gaikwad's suspect technique got exposed when he jabbed with hard hands at a delivery that bounced a tad extra from length to be caught at slips. Nitish Reddy (16) played the most indiscreet shot as he tried to dance down the track to counter the steep bounce, getting ousted by Beau Webster.



Sinner and Alcaraz headline the ATP Finals with Djokovic out

AP ■ TURIN (ITALY)

He beat Sinner for the title last year. Federer, who announced his retirement in 2022, won the event six times after making his debut in 2002; Nadal, who is retiring after playing in the Davis Cup the week after finals, was the runner-up twice at the finals but never won it. Sinner withdrew from last week's Paris Masters due to a virus and showed up early in Turin for training.

"This is for me the main event of the end of the year," Sinner said. A final decision in Sinner's doping case is still pending. As an Italian, Sinner will be the main focus of attention in Turin. It's the first time that Sinner will be playing at home since it was announced before his U.S. Open title that he had tested positive in two separate drug tests earlier in the year. A decision to clear Sinner of wrongdoing was appealed by the World Anti-Doping Agency in September and the Switzerland-based Court of Arbitration for Sport is expected to make a final ruling on the case early next year. Alcaraz has won all 3 of his official meetings with Sinner this year. Sinner opened this year by winning the Australian Open to become the first Italian man to win a Grand Slam singles title in nearly a half-century - since Adriano Panatta raised the French Open trophy in 1976. Alcaraz then claimed the French Open and Wimbledon titles to raise his career total to four Grand Slams. Sinner responded by winning the U.S. Open.

Jannik Sinner and Carlos Alcaraz are poised to add another entry into their rapidly developing rivalry when the ATP Finals open Sunday without any members of the Big Three for the first time in nearly a quarter century. The top-ranked Sinner and No. 3 Alcaraz evenly split the year's Grand Slam titles between them with two apiece and it would be fitting if the pair meet again in Turin.

And since Alcaraz was overtaken by Alexander Zverev in the rankings this week, the Spaniard could be placed in the same round-robin group as Sinner. The draw for the eight-man event is scheduled for later Thursday.

After the round-robin stage, the top two finishers in each group advance to the semifinals. The other qualifiers are: Zverev, Daniil Medvedev, Taylor Fritz, Casper Ruud, Alex de Minaur and Andrey Rublev.

The big name missing is that of defending champion Novak Djokovic, who withdrew on Tuesday due to an unspecified injury.

23 years since Djokovic, Federer and Nadal missed the finals. Not since 2001 has the finals been held without at least one of Djokovic, Roger Federer or Rafael Nadal. This season also was the first since 2002 without at least one Grand Slam title for a member of that trio. Djokovic has won the ATP Finals a record seven times.

CAPRI GLOBAL CAPITAL LIMITED Registered & Corporate Office :- 502, Tower-A, Peninsula Business Park, Senapati Bapat Marg, Lower Parel, Mumbai-400013
Circle Office :- 9-B, 2nd floor, Pusa Road, Rajinder Place, New Delhi-110060

**APPENDIX- IV-A [See proviso to rule 8 (6) and 9 (1)]
Sale notice for sale of immovable properties**

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8 (6) and 9 (1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower (s) and Guarantor (s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the Constructive/physical possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of Capri Global Capital Limited Secured Creditor, will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" on dates below mentioned, for recovery of amount mentioned below due to the Capri Global Capital Limited Secured Creditor from Borrower mentioned below. The reserve price, EMD amount and property details mentioned below.

SR.	1. BORROWER(S) NAME	DESCRIPTION OF THE MORTGAGED PROPERTY	1. DATE & TIME OF E-AUCTION	2. RESERVE PRICE
1.	1- Mrs. Kumkum Chhattri ("Borrower") 2- Mr. Sushil Kumar Chhattri 3-M/S Unique Boutique (Co-borrower) LOAN ACCOUNT No. LNMEIND00019404 (Old)/80400005653311 (New) Rupees 25,05,147/- (Rupees Twenty Five Lacs Five Thousand One Hundred Forty Seven Only) as on 24.09.2024 along with applicable future interest.	All that piece and parcel of Khassa No. 192, 191/13, PH No. 114, Mouja Amlihdh, Ward No. 46, Rajendra Prasad Ward, Raipur, Chhattisgarh - 492001, Bounded As: East By - Road, West By - Maa Bhagwati Seva Samiti, North By - Residence of Santoshi Verma, South By - Vacant Plot	1. E-AUCTION DATE: 26.11.2024 (Between 3:00 P.M. to 4:00 P.M.) 2. LAST DATE OF SUBMISSION OF EMD WITH KYC: 25.11.2024 3. DATE OF INSPECTION: 23.11.2024	RESERVE PRICE: Rs. 28,98,000/- (Rupees Twenty Eight Lacs Ninety Eight Thousand Only) EARNEST MONEY DEPOSIT: Rs. 2,89,800/- (Rupees Two Lacs Eighty Nine Thousand Eight Hundred Only) INCREMENTAL VALUE: Rs. 20,000/- (Rupees Twenty Thousand Only)

For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided in Capri Global Capital Limited Secured Creditor's website i.e. www. Capriglobal.in/auCTION/TERMS & CONDITIONS OF ONLINE E-AUCTION SALE:-

- The Property is being sold on "AS IS WHERE IS, WHATEVER THERE & WITHOUT RECOURSE BASIS". As such sale is without any kind of warranties & indemnities.
- Particulars of the property / assets (viz. extent & measurements specified in the E-Auction Sale Notice has been stated to the best of information of the Secured Creditor and Secured Creditor shall not be answerable for any error, misstatement or omission. Actual extent & dimensions may differ.
- E-Auction Sale Notice issued by the Secured Creditor is an invitation to the general public to submit their bids and the same does not constitute and will not be deemed to constitute any commitment or representation on the part of the Secured Creditor. Interested bidders are advised to peruse the copies of title deeds with the Secured Creditor and to conduct own independent enquiries /due diligence about the title & present condition of the property / assets and claims / dues affecting the property before submission of bids/.
- Auction/bidding shall only be through "online electronic mode" through the website https://sarfaesi.auctiontiger.net or Auction Tiger Mobile APP provided by the service provider M/S eProcurement Technologies Limited, Ahmedabad who shall arrange & coordinate the entire process of auction through the e-auction platform.
- The bidders may participate in e-auction for bidding from their place of choice. Internet connectivity shall have to be ensured by bidder himself. Secured Creditor /service provider shall not be held responsible for the internet connectivity, network problems, system crash own, power failure etc.
- For details, help, procedure and online bidding on e-auction prospective bidders may contact the Service Provider M/S e-Procurement Technologies Ltd. Auction Tiger, Ahmedabad (Contact no. 079-61200531/576/596/559/598/587/594/). Mr. Ramprasad Sharma Mob. 800-002-3297/ 79-6120 0559. Email: ramprasad@auctiontiger.net.
- For participating in the e-auction sale the intending bidders should register their name at https://sarfaesi.auctiontiger.net well in advance and shall get the user id and password. Intending bidders are advised to change only the password immediately upon receiving it from the service provider.
- For participating in e-auction, intending bidders have to deposit a refundable EMD of 10% OF RESERVE PRICE (as mentioned above) shall be payable by interested bidders through Demand Draft/NEFT/RTGS in favour of "Capri Global Capital Limited" on or before 25-Nov-2024.
- The intending bidders should submit the duly filled in Bid Form (format available on https://sarfaesi.auctiontiger.net) along with the Demand Draft remittance towards EMD in a sealed cover addressed to the Authorized Officer, Capri Global Capital Limited Regional Office Unit No. 101-103, First Floor, Plot No. 103/4, Krishna Tower, Scheme No. 140, Above ICICI Bank, Pipiyane Square Indore, Madhya Pradesh latest by 03:00 PM on 25-Nov-2024. The sealed cover should be super scribed with "Bid for participating in E-Auction Sale - in the Loan Account No. _____ (as mentioned above) for property of "Borrower Name".
- After expiry of the last date of submission of bids with EMD, Authorized Officer shall examine the bids received by him and confirm the details of the qualified bidders (who have quoted their bids over and above the reserve price and paid the specified EMD with the Secured Creditor) to the service provider M/S eProcurement Technologies Limited to enable them to allow only those bidders to participate in the online inter-se bidding /auction proceedings at the date and time mentioned in E-Auction Sale Notice.
- Inter-se bidding among the qualified bidders shall start from the highest bid quoted by the qualified bidders. During the process of inter-se bidding, there will be unlimited extension of "10" minutes each, i.e. the end time of e-auction shall be automatically extended by 10 Minutes each time if bid is made within 10 minutes from the last extension.
- Bids once made shall not be cancelled or withdrawn. All bids made from the user id given to bidder will be deemed to have been made by him alone.
- Immediately upon closure of E-Auction proceedings, the highest bidder shall confirm the final amount of bid quoted by him by E-Mail both to the Authorized Officer, Capri Global Capital Limited, Regional Office Unit No. 101-103, First Floor, Plot No. 103/4, Krishna Tower, Scheme No. 140, Above ICICI Bank, Pipiyane Square Indore, Madhya Pradesh and the Service Provider for getting declared as successful bidder in the E-Auction Sale proceedings.
- The successful bidder shall deposit 25% of the bid amount (including EMD) on the same day of the sale, being knocked down in his favour and balance 75% of bid amount within 15 days from the date of sale by DD/Pay order/NEFT/RTGS/Chq favouring Capri Global Capital Limited.
- In case of default in payment of above stipulated amounts by the successful bidder / auction purchaser within the stipulated time, the sale will be cancelled and the amount already paid (including EMD) will be forfeited and the property will be again put to sale.
- At the request of the successful bidder, the Authorized Officer in his absolute discretion may grant further time in writing, for depositing the balance of the bid amount.
- The Successful Bidder shall pay 1% of Sale price towards TDS (out of Sale proceeds) and submit TDS certificate to the Authorized officer and the deposit the entire amount of sale price (after deduction of 1% towards TDS), adjusting the EMD within 15 working days of the acceptance of the offer by the authorized officer, or within such other extended time as deemed fit by the Authorized Officer, failing which the earnest deposit will be forfeited.
- Municipal / Panchayat Taxes, Electricity dues (if any) and any other authorities dues (if any) has to be paid by the successful bidder before issuance of the sale certificate. Bids shall be made taking into consideration of all the statutory dues pertaining to the property.
- Sale Certificate will be issued by the Authorized Officer in favour of the successful bidder only upon deposit of entire purchase price / bid amount and furnishing the necessary proof in respect of payment of all taxes / charges.
- Applicable legal charges for conveyance, stamp duty, registration charges and other incidental charges shall be borne by the auction purchaser.
- The Authorized officer may postpone / cancel the E-Auction Sale proceedings without assigning any reason whatsoever. In case the E-Auction Sale scheduled is postponed to a later date before 15 days from the scheduled date of sale, it will be displayed on the website of the service provider.
- The decision of the Authorized Officer is final, binding and unquestionable.
- All bidders who submitted the bids, shall be deemed to have read and understood the terms and conditions of the E-Auction Sale and be bound by them.
- The movable articles lying in the property is not part of this sale. +
- Please Note that there is one Securitization Application Pending before DRT-Jabalpur vide S.A. No 1084/2024.
- For further details and queries, contact Authorized Officer, Capri Global Capital Limited: Mr. Dharendra Singh Mob. No. 9425018963 and for other queries Ms. Kalpana Chetanwala-7738039346.
- This publication is also 15 (Fifteen) days notice to the Borrower / Mortgagee / Guarantors of the above said loan account pursuant to rule 8(6) and 9 (1) of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, about holding of auction sale on the above mentioned date / place.

Special Instructions / Caution: Bidding in the last minutes/seconds should be avoided by the bidders in their own interest. Neither Capri Global Capital Limited nor the Service Provider will be responsible for any lapses/failure (Internet failure, Power failure, etc.) on the part of the bidder in such cases. In order to ward off such contingent situation, bidders are requested to make all the necessary arrangements / alternatives such as back-up power supply and whatever else required so that they are able to circumvent such situation and are able to participate in the auction successfully.

Place : RAIPUR (CHHATISGARH) Date : 08-NOV- 2024
Sd/- (Authorized Officer) Capri Global Capital Ltd.

ESAF REGD. OFFICE: ESAF Bhavan, Mannuthy, Thrissur - 680 651, Kerala.
ESAF SMALL FINANCE BANK

GOLD AUCTION NOTICE

Notice is hereby given for the information of all concerned that Gold ornaments pledged with ESAF Small Finance Bank and not redeemed by borrowers, despite repeated reminders and notices, of our branches, are listed below. This will be auctioned as per the details given below:

DATE OF AUCTION: 15-11-2024 TIME: 2 PM TO 5 PM
AUCTION VENUE: THROUGH E-AUCTION
AUCTION ADDRESS: https://gold.matexnet.net/ Contact Number: 9500173386/9962979770

To register as bidder for the e-Auction with terms and conditions, and full details of e-auction please visit the above site.

BRANCHES & LOAN ACCOUNT NUMBERS

AKALTARA: 75240000627361, 666186, 837305, **BAGBAHARA:** 63230000353922, 458494, 458664, 63240000060344, 75230002129493, 75240000649079, 728501, **BAIKUNTHPUR:** 75240000111472, 1440999, **BALOD:** 63240000166294, 75230001153575, 554259, 6424, 75240000196380, 628799, **BALRAMPUR:** 63240000153529, 75240000749651, **BHATAPARA:** 63240000166444, 75230002109951, 75240000340990, 522698, 716234, 727886, **BHILAI:** 63230000425977, 437264, 716940, 124274, 171424, 205043, 208537, 231473, 231553, 236054, 242072, 259160, 75230002101375, 125480, 135871, 75240000172385, 246177, 255160, 270831, 418404, 419593, 421388, 421398, 467031, 473639, 487663, 487833, 526521, 675979, 706293, 749011, 782397, 827154, 832714, **BILASPUR:** 63240000080735, 192724, 75230002091672, 156321, 164715, 75240000096558, 269924, 317834, 411267, 418274, 440182, 449025, 486634, 616844, 652523, 658462, 670638, 746376, 746716, 765800, 811384, 884735, 885274, **CHAMPA:** 63240000236604, 75230001548851, 555337, 560097, 683035, 32314, 56099, 72418, 112464, 159553, 75240000340630, 494439, 642392, 656075, 728851, 738052, **CHANDIGARH:** 63240000100410, 102246, 134005, 136472, 140534, 166134, 186446, 240645, 75240000306145, 704106, 818952, **DHAMTARI:** 63240000107287, 158370, 752300002059123, 75240000484618, 901635, **DONAGARGARH:** 6324000023254, 63598, 102986, 107077, 75230002040919, 61289, 87130, 147398, 75240000071285, 257686, 383898, 430271, 646354, 700574, 757485, 771348, 836697, **DURG:** 63230000328540, 432083, 63240000047249, 243800, 247253, 271556, 75240000383188, 812763, **JAGDALPUR:** 63240000275049, **JASHPUR:** 75240000677715, **KATGHORA:** 63240000122928, 167563, 169449, 752400000836507, **KAWARDHA:** 75230002100637, 75240000631673, 640755, 788236, 821865, 870452, 903882, **KHARSI:** 63230000450519, 456958, 75230002009259, 752400000690110 **KORBA:** 63240000121430, **MAHASAMUND:** 63240000039354, 105901, 183592, 75240000248034, 273315, 341858, 344273, 435112, 534335, 534485, 573201, 679542, 683064, 732373, 899057, **MUNGELI:** 75230002043743, 75240000418524, 437588, 463338, 494779, 522768, 533857, 575947, 578452, 592634, 661455, 700464, 722192, 752794, 771628, 772096, 789164, 811664, 837515, 879365, 881721, **PAKHANJORE:** 63230000430227, 431535, 449952, 63240000234917, 282095, 75240000775261, **PITHORA:** 63240000119444, 155625, 246624, 246754, 296459, 75230002070452, 70592, 119482, 136369, 75240000266899, 378298, 395325, 517168, 645736, 758704, 898929, **RAIGARH:** 63230000439131, 63240000072281, 109714, 116480, 151823, 161124, 166234, 179930, 193433, 212639, 237732, 258672, 264240, 269891, 280259, 293024, 294233, 7523000199594, 200174, 201743, 218131, 279594, 337996, 344013, 378778, 433375, 536482, 545194, 579900, 584030, 587834, 617100, 623928, 643710, 747044, 812973, **RAJNANDGAON:** 63230000434740, 75230001020930, 685652, 75240000519234, 609755, 821945, 823912, **SARANGARH:** 63230000433252, 63240000166814, 275019, 75230002010096, 12523, 26216, 51498, 158207, 75240000075488, 609565, 746476, **SHIVRINARAYAN:** 63240000294823, 75230002082179, 103262, 75240000192457, 273091, 639278, 639598, 669041, 671636, 672204, 683164, 728381, 740707, 814039, 814309, 814549, 814569, 814649, 830058, 838364, 908083.

Customers who are interested to release the ornaments by paying the total due amount may do so, at the respective branches, on or two days before the date of the auction.

Bidders who wish to participate in the auction shall produce their KYC documents. GST No. is mandatory for registered firms/companies. Bidders shall deposit a sum of Rs.50,000 as EMD before participating in the auction.

Thrissur Sd/-
Date: 08-11-2024 Authorized Signatory